

Designated Certificates of Advanced Veterinary Practice: Synoptic Assessment

Draft Guidelines

A synoptic assessment will normally be required for all certificates with designated subject/species titles. Candidates claiming the CertAVP without a designated title will not be required to undertake a further synoptic assessment with RCVS.

All candidates who achieve six modules (including the required key skills and at least one 'B' module) will be awarded the RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP). In addition, candidates can apply for a "designated" certificate in a particular subject/species if they have taken a particular combination of modules defined by RCVS through two or more universities. To be awarded a "designated" certificate, candidates will normally be required to undertake an additional synoptic assessment once all the necessary modules have been completed.

Aim of synoptic assessment

The aim of synoptic assessments is to ensure **that candidates are able to demonstrate coherence, integration and application of learning across the subject area concerned**. The aim is not to re-examine the knowledge base that has already been assessed in individual modules, although examiners may want to check that learning is still current if some of the modules were completed some considerable time before the synoptic assessment takes place.

What will it cover?

The final synoptic assessments will usually take the form of an oral examination, lasting no more than 60 minutes. Candidates will be asked to demonstrate that their learning experience has constituted a coherent "whole" that justifies the designation. Examiners will want to see evidence that the candidate has sufficient self-knowledge that they are aware of their own level of expertise and when to seek referral to a veterinarian with greater experience, expertise or better facilities.

Candidates will be asked questions relating to the designated subject and will be expected to demonstrate competence across all parts of the subject domain. As an example, Examiners may decide to present candidates with case material, laboratory findings, pathological specimens, surgical instruments, radiographs, photographs or other relevant materials to test their knowledge and experience.

Candidates will need to be able to demonstrate how their learning has been applied in their work, or has contributed to a particular field of study.

How will the synoptic assessment be organised?

Synoptic assessments will take place annually (or less frequently in the absence of sufficient numbers of eligible candidates). They will normally be carried out by the RCVS, but this may be delegated to a University where a candidate has completed all the modules with that particular centre. Where RCVS is running the synoptic assessments, it will appoint at least two examiners who between them will have knowledge, expertise and experience in the subject area concerned. The form of the assessment will be notified in advance to the candidate.

To claim the full certificate with a species/subject designation, the candidate will need to apply to RCVS and request a synoptic assessment.

The final certificate awarded to candidates by RCVS will list the modules achieved.

RCVS will aim to offer at least one synoptic assessment series per year, depending on demand. RCVS may need to put candidates on a waiting list for assessment, to ensure that there are sufficient candidates presenting for a subject during any one series. In the event of an assessment series being cancelled due to low candidate numbers, RCVS would aim to assess any waiting candidates at the next series, but not keep any candidate waiting for longer than 1 year.

Equally, it may be necessary, depending on candidate numbers, for RCVS to limit the number of candidates being assessed during any one series, or for any particular named certificate, depending on the availability of examiners. Candidates who are not admitted to their chosen assessment series will be added to a waiting list and entered for the next available slot.

Candidates will need to submit an entry to RCVS for their synoptic assessment by a fixed deadline; it is expected that entry dates would be around 3 months in advance of the assessment.

In cases where a synoptic assessment is not required for award of the full qualification, candidates will still be required to apply to RCVS for their certificate, confirming which modules they have achieved and the centres that awarded them. A CertAVP will be issued after the claim has been verified against RCVS's records.

Candidates who fail the synoptic assessment will be given one opportunity to retake the assessment. Candidates who fail on a second attempt may be asked to undertake further training and/or advised to retake modules at the examiner's discretion.

Appeals process

The standard RCVS examinations appeals procedure will apply.