

VETERINARY MEDICINE LICENSING GUIDE

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1. HOW THE PROFESSION IS ORGANIZED IN MICHIGAN

OVERVIEW

This guide looks at what you must do as a foreign-educated veterinarian to become eligible for licensure in Michigan. At the same time, it includes some background and tips on the larger veterinary medicine profession to give you an idea of the variety of opportunities available as you work to build your career.

REGULATIONS OF VETERINARIAN PROFESSION IN MICHIGAN

The practice of veterinary medicine in Michigan is regulated by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) on behalf of the Michigan Board of Veterinary Medicine. You must be licensed to practice as a veterinarian in Michigan.

The guide assumes that you hold the equivalent of a U.S. doctoral degree in veterinary medicine that has been obtained from a school that is not accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and that the Michigan license will be your first U.S. veterinarian license. The AVMA does accredit a number of foreign veterinary educational programs so you should check the list of accredited programs that is available on their website at www.avma.org. As a foreign-educated veterinarian, you are required to become certified by either the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG) or the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE). Both ECFVG and PAVE also verify that you have passed the required English Proficiency examination.

You will become a Veterinarian in Michigan by applying for licensure by examination. The National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (NBVME) administers the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE), which is required to become licensed as a veterinarian in Michigan.

Internationally educated veterinarians need to meet several requirements to receive licensure by examination as a veterinarian in Michigan. The first step is to seek certification from either ECFVG or PAVE. The steps for each certification program are outlined in this section.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSING

I. ECFVG CERTIFICATION

The ECFVG certificate is accepted by all state veterinary regulatory boards. This is an educational equivalency assessment certificate program that determines whether a foreign veterinary graduate has the veterinary clinical skills and knowledge that are equivalent to those attained by an entry-level graduate of an AVMA-accredited veterinary school. The ECFVG Certificate is not a license to practice veterinary medicine. You do not need to be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States or Canada to register in the ECFVG program. One is eligible to register for the ECFVG program while on a non-immigrant work visa, student visa, or exchange visa.

The AVMA provides detailed instruction on the four steps of the ECFVG program at www.avma.org/professionaldevelopment/education/foreign. The steps below must be completed in order.

Step 1: Registration and Proof of Graduation

- Register for the ECFVG certification program by applying online at www.avma.org.
- Submit all required proof of graduation documents
- Submit the fee of \$1,400.00 (increase took effect January 1, 2015)

Step 2: English Language Ability

- Provide ECFVG with proof of English language proficiency using the pass points established by ECFVG for one of the following assessment tools:
 - Internet-based TOEFL
 - IELTS
 - CAEL Assessment
 - TOEFL and IELTS scores are valid only for two years after the date of the tests
 - Candidates completing secondary school in the U.S., United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand or Canada (except Quebec) can apply for a waiver for Step 2.

Step 3: Basic and Clinical Sciences Knowledge

- All candidates must pass the ECFVG-specific Basic and Clinical Sciences Examination (BCSE) that is designed to measure the educational equivalency of graduates of non-AVMA accredited schools.
- The fee to apply for the BCSE is \$210 (Fee increases to effect on January 1, 2015). There are additional scheduling fees if the exam is taken outside of the U.S., U.S. territories, or Canada.
- Information about the content and structure of the BCSE as well as scheduling information can be found in the Candidate Bulletin found at this website: www.avma.org/professionaldevelopment/education/foreign.

- There is no limit to the number of times a candidate can take the BCSE, but the BCSE can be taken no more than three times in a calendar year.

Step 4: Clinical Skills Assessment

- All candidates must successfully complete the Clinical Proficiency Examination (CPE) to achieve certification.
- This seven-section, clinical skills examination is designed to assess the practical clinical veterinary skills for an entry-level veterinarian.
- The CPE manual of administration (MOA) details most skills tested during the examination and should be thoroughly reviewed prior to taking the examination. This manual is updated each calendar year so it is vital to review the current MOA.
- The CPE is administered at approved colleges of veterinary medicine or other authorized testing institutions.
- The 2016 fee will be \$6,600 (USD).
- Candidates are required to submit a Surgical Experience Documentation signed by one or more licensed veterinarians in any international jurisdiction prior to being made eligible for the CPE.
- Detailed information about the CPE can be found at this website: www.avma.org/professionaldevelopment/education/foreign

Requests to have verification of ECFVG Certification sent to a licensing board must be made in writing to ECFVG. Written requests can be sent via e-mail to ecfvg@avma.org.

II. PAVE CERTIFICATION

PAVE Certification is a program that is designed to accurately and appropriately determine educational equivalence of international veterinary graduates seeking licensure in the United States. PAVE Certification is currently accepted by 43 states. The PAVE certificate is not a license to practice veterinary medicine. The PAVE Certification program is operated by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB). AAVSB provides detailed instruction on the four steps of the PAVE program at www.aavsb.org/PAVE. Candidates can begin the PAVE application process once they have completed at least 50% of their veterinary education. The below steps must be completed in order.

Step 1: Credentials Verification

- Submit an online application during the application window that is posted on the AAVSB website, www.aavsb.org/PAVE.
- Submit the application fee of \$375 and the Qualifying Science Examination fee of \$1,500. The total of \$1,875 must be paid in full at the time of the initial application.
- Submit required credentialing information that includes identity documents, affidavit for release of information, citizenship papers, and educational documents. Specific document requirements are listed at www.aavsb.org/PAVE.

Step 2: English Proficiency (Passing scores are listed on the AAVSB/PAVE website)

- Score reports must be sent to PAVE directly from the test vendor.
- The PAVE program accepts the following English proficiency documentation:
 - TOEFL (Enter Institution Code 8216 on the TOEFL application so scores will be sent directly to AAVSB/PAVE.
 - IELTS
 - Proof that three or more years of your high school education was conducted in English. AAVSB/PAVE must receive either high school transcripts or a letter from a school official)

Step 3: Qualifying Science Examination (QSE)

- All candidates must pass the QSE that is designed to assess basic science or pre-clinical subjects taught in the first three years of the curriculum of accredited veterinary schools.
- The QSE is administered three times per year, in January, May and September.
- Information about the content and structure of the QSE as well as the Candidate Information Handbook is available at www.aavsb.org/PAVE.

Step 4: Clinical Proficiency

- Clinical Proficiency is demonstrated by completing an Evaluated Clinical Experience (ECE) at an accredited veterinary school.
- The ECE may be completed pre- or post-graduation.
- PAVE candidates enroll in an accredited veterinary college or university to complete the same clinical rotations as regularly enrolled students.
- Candidates apply directly to the college or university of their choice and pay enrollment fees directly to that institution. A list of schools that regularly accept PAVE candidates can be found at www.aavsb.org/PAVE under Evaluated Clinical Experience.
- The host veterinary school agrees to evaluate the PAVE candidates and provide the PAVE program with grade reports and verification forms.
- Before beginning clinical rotations, candidates must provide PAVE with a copy of the acceptance letter from the university and an acknowledgement form (provided by AAVSB) that is signed by the academic dean or a designated representative.

Final Steps:

- After graduation, arrange for a final official veterinary transcript, a certified/official copy of the veterinary diploma, and final clinical grade report, and the ECE completion verification form to be sent directly to PAVE from the veterinary and clinical schools.
- PAVE Committee review is completed in approximately 5 – 7 business days.
- The PAVE Certificate of Completion may be sent free of charge to the state licensing board at the candidate's request.

- A PAVE certificate is not a license to practice veterinary medicine in the United States. All PAVE candidates must meet state licensing requirements and pass the NAVLE before being eligible for licensure.
- PAVE certificates do not expire. Once a candidate is PAVE-certified, it remains valid indefinitely.

III. SUBMIT YOUR LICENSURE APPLICATION, REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND PAY APPLICATION FEE

Your application documents that are sent to the Michigan Board of Veterinary Medicine should include:

- Licensure application from LARA that can be downloaded from www.michigan.gov/bpl. The application form includes information about your education, examinations taken, and explanations for any “yes” answers on the application disclosure questions. Be truthful in your application as there are serious consequences for providing false information.
- Fee: \$80 for the veterinarian application and \$85 for the controlled substance license that is needed to prescribe controlled substances. Application fees must be paid by a check or money order drawn on a U.S. financial institution and made payable to the State of Michigan. The total fee of \$165 (USD) may be made in one payment.
- Licensure verification from any U.S. or Canadian licensing agency or board in which you were ever licensed or are currently licensed must be submitted directly from the licensing agency or board.
- Verification of certification sent directly to the Board by either ECFVG or PAVE.
- Fingerprint/Criminal Background Check report.

The licensure application and fee are valid for 2 years. If you have not passed the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE) or met other licensing requirements within these 2 years you will need to submit a new application fee to the Michigan Board.

IV. GET FINGERPRINTED AT A MICHIGAN-APPROVED VENDOR FOR A CRIMINAL RECORD

All directions needed for completing the fingerprint check are provided once your application is received in this office. You will receive an application confirmation letter and fingerprint instructions. The cost for the background check is \$64.50. Fingerprints will be checked by both the Michigan State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Go on-line to the approved vendor to set up an appointment. It is critical that you save the receipt as proof that you have taken this step. You may need to provide it in case there are any questions about your background check.

V. REGISTER ONLINE WITH THE NATIONAL BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS (NBVME) FOR THE NAVLE EXAMINATION

Register with NBVME at www.nbvme.org for the NAVLE so that you will meet the deadline to be eligible for the next administration of the NAVLE. There are fixed examination dates for the NAVLE that include strict deadlines for registration. The NAVLE is available each year during a four-week testing window in November-December and a two-week window in April. The NAVLE fee is \$590 (as of 2014). An additional overseas fee of \$275 is assessed for candidates taking the NAVLE outside the U.S., U.S. territories, and Canada. NBVME determines the exam eligibility for all Michigan applicants for the NAVLE.

VI. RECEIVE A SCHEDULING AND ADMISSION PERMIT

NBVME will send you an e-mail message with instructions on how to access your NAVLE Scheduling and Admission Permit on-line. You must print your Scheduling and Admission Permit before contacting Prometric to schedule your exam at a Prometric Test Center (PTC). You must bring your Scheduling and Admission Permit to the test center in order to be able to sit for the examination on the date indicated in the Permit. The Permit contains a unique Candidate Identification Number that you must enter into the computer to unlock your examination.

VII. PASS THE NAVLE AND HAVE SCORE REPORT SENT TO MICHIGAN BOARD

NAVLE scores from the November-December examination are sent to the Board in mid-January and scores for the April examination are reported to the Board in mid-May.

3. TESTS

To become a licensed veterinarian in Michigan, you must pass the NAVLE examination.

The NAVLE is a computer-based test that is designed to assess the basic entry-level competence of a veterinarian. This examination covers all animal species commonly seen by private practitioners in North America and is required for licensure in every state in the U.S. The examination consists of 360 clinically relevant multiple choice questions that are administered in six blocks of 60 questions each. You will have 65 minutes to complete each block, for a total of six and one-half hours of total examination time. When you exit a block, or when time expires, no additional review of questions or changing of answers is allowed. You will have a total of 45 minutes of break time that can be used as needed. Breaks may only be taken between blocks of questions.

Detailed information about the NAVLE can be found in the NAVLE Bulletin of Information for Candidates that is posted at www.nbvme.org.

CONTENT AREAS OF THE NAVLE

The NAVLE questions are written by veterinarians representing all aspects of the profession. The exam content is based on the results of a job analysis that was conducted by NBVME in 2009 and approved in 2010. There are two dimensions to the blueprint: activities and animal species (complete list of species is printed in the NAVLE Bulletin of Information for Candidates).

ACTIVITIES

- Data gathering and Interpretation (140 items)
- Health Maintenance and Problem Management (140 items)
- Professional Behavior Communication, and Practice Management (20 items)

SCHEDULING AND TESTING SITE PROCEDURES FOR THE NAVLE

Prometric administers the NAVLE in testing centers across the U.S, U.S. territories, and Canada. On the day of the test, you must bring the Scheduling and Admission Permit and an un-expired government-issued form of identification such as a currently valid passport or driver's license that includes both a photograph and your signature. The first and last names on your identification document must exactly match the name on your Scheduling and Admission Permit. You will be fingerprinted, scanned with a metal detector wand, and photographed before your test and will be fingerprinted when you re-enter the testing area after breaks. You should arrive at least a half hour early; you will not be allowed to take the test if you arrive more than 30 minutes late for your appointment.

FAILING THE NAVLE

If you fail the NAVLE, you will be provided with a one-page diagnostic report that shows the areas that need improvement. You can use the report to learn what areas to study before you retake the exam. You must register to retake the examination with NBVME. You are allowed to take the NAVLE examination no more than five (5) times and the exam must be passed within five (5) years of the first attempt.

PRACTICING FOR THE NAVLE:

There are many different resources that can help you prepare for both the content and the computer-based testing technology. NAVLE exam review information specifically for international graduates can be found at <https://www.ecfvq.org/>. Also, the NBVME website has a practice examination with 20 additional sample items, formatted with the same tutorial and general software interface used by Prometric to deliver the NAVLE. It is highly recommended that you practice before your test date, because the tutorial at the test center is limited to 15 minutes.

NAVLE Self-Assessments are also available for purchase through the NBVME website. Each Self-Assessment costs \$50 and a score report is provided after completion. The score report includes a projected NAVLE score based on the performance on the Self-Assessment. Consider investing in test preparation as it may save you money by not having to pay to retake the NAVLE and by entering the job market faster.

4. TIME AND COSTS

Completing ECFVG or PAVE certification and achieving licensure as a veterinarian in Michigan depends on many factors. A few of these include:

- The completeness of your educational and professional credentials and the speed of their collection and assessment.
- The amount of time it takes to complete the ECFVG or PAVE certification process.
- Your performance on the NAVLE.
- Your free time and how much money you have to spend.

We provide two hypothetical scenarios below to show some of the variety in results that immigrant professionals may find when they seek to become a licensed veterinarian in Michigan. Please consider these scenarios as two examples out of many possibilities. Your experience will vary.

Two Hypothetical Scenarios for Licensing as a veterinarian:

| Step | ECFVG <i>Approximate Time and Cost</i> | PAVE <i>Approximate Time and Cost</i> |
|--------------------|--|---|
| 1 Certification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It takes you 6 months to get your application and graduation documents to ECFVG • TOEFL Exam (\$200) • 2 years + \$8,120 (this assumes that CPE is passed on the first attempt and candidate does not enroll in an AVMA-accredited clinical program) • It takes 6 months to complete your PAVE application • IELTS Exam (\$200) • Your documents must be translated • 1 year + \$1,875 + clinical enrollment fee (approximately \$20,000 per semester) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • |

| Step | ECFVG <i>Approximate Time and Cost</i> | PAVE <i>Approximate Time and Cost</i> |
|---|--|---|
| 2 Fingerprints | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You identify a finger printing provider and make an appointment • 1 month + \$64.50 • You identify a finger printing provider and make an appointment • 1 month + \$64.50 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • |
| 3 Submit Licensure Application to Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You assemble your licensure application packet relatively quickly • 6 months + \$165 • Your licensing application is incomplete the first time and you must resubmit it • 9 months + \$165 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • |
| 4 Register with NBVME for the NAVLE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You register for the NAVLE. • You begin a self-assessment course for the NAVLE for \$50 • \$640 total • You register for the NAVLE • You schedule your examination in another country • \$865 total | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • |
| 5 Take and Pass NAVLE – License is issued | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It takes you 2 tries to pass the NAVLE. In between tests, you enroll in a 4-month exam preparation class for \$1,400. • 8 months + \$1,590 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your skills are fresh and you've been using a self-study program throughout the process; you pass the NAVLE on the first try. Your license is received 3 months after you take the exam • 5 months | |
| | Total <i>About 3 1/2 years and \$10,775</i> | Total <i>About 2 1/2 years and \$23,165</i> |

5. OTHER CAREERS AND CREDENTIALS

LOWER-LEVEL OPPORTUNITIES

You may want to consider if taking a lower-level job in healthcare in the short-term can help you meet longer-term goals of becoming licensed as a veterinarian.

Completing the certification process and preparing for the NAVLE can take time. Working in healthcare in a different way and with fewer responsibilities may offer you some advantages, such as

- employers paying for tuition and fees associated with the NAVLE and licensing
- more energy to focus on studying
- a chance to adapt to the U.S. veterinary health care and workplace culture in a lower-pressure environment.

VETERINARY TECHNICIAN

There is a separate Michigan Veterinary Technician license that is required to work as a veterinary technician in Michigan. This license requires that you graduate from an AVMA-accredited veterinary technology program and pass a national examination. There is no provision for a foreign-trained veterinary professional to become licensed as a veterinary technician in Michigan.

ELIGIBILITY FOR VETERINARY TECHNICIAN LICENSE BY EXAMINATION (first license)

- Graduate from a veterinary technician educational program that is accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).
- Arrange for submission of verification of licensure in any state where licensed, even if the license is no longer active.
- Submit the Veterinary Technician by Examination application found at http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-27417_27529_27555---,00.html with the \$105 application fee.
- A fingerprint report and criminal background check are required. Fingerprints must be taken using the instructions and ID numbers that are sent to the applicant after the license application and fee are received.
- Pass the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE) that is administered by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB).

ELIGIBILITY FOR VETERINARY TECHNICIAN LICENSE BY ENDORSEMENT

(currently licensed in another state)

- Arrange for submission of verification of licensure in any state where licensed, even if the license is no longer active.
- Contact the AAVSB to have VTNE scores sent to the Michigan Board.
- Graduate from a veterinary technician educational program that is accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).
- Submit the Veterinary Technician by Endorsement application found at http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-27417_27529_27555---,00.html with the \$40 application fee.
- A fingerprint report and criminal background check are required. Fingerprints must be taken using the instructions and ID numbers that are sent to the applicant after the license application and fee are received.

VETERINARY ASSISTANT OR LABORATORY ANIMAL CARETAKER

A veterinary assistant or laboratory animal caretaker tends animals in laboratories, animal hospitals, and clinics. They can perform some general duties and routine tasks under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian, scientist, or veterinary technician. A veterinary assistant or laboratory animal caretaker typically earns about \$23,000 a year if working full time.

HEALTHCARE INTERPRETER

If you are bilingual and a strong communicator, you may want to research opportunities for work in hospitals or other health care settings as an interpreter. This type of role is not regulated in Michigan, so standards for employment as well as pay and benefits may be very different depending on the employer. You are more likely to have benefits such as tuition reimbursement if you find work as a direct employee of a healthcare facility, instead of working for a company that provides interpretation services to hospitals. You may want to begin your research by directly contacting human resource departments at hospitals.

6. BEYOND LICENSING

MAINTAINING LICENSURE

Veterinarians must renew their license every 2 years. Licenses expire on December 31 every two years. LARA sends a notice reminding you to renew your license, so be certain to keep your contact information up-to-date with their office. You are responsible for renewing your license even if you do not receive a notice from the Department. You must renew online. The cost to renew on time is \$110 for the veterinary license and \$150 for the controlled substance license. You will have sixty days after the expiration date in which you may continue to practice without a lapse in your license as long as you renew within that sixty-day grace period. If you do not renew during that grace period, the expiration date of your license will revert to December 31. Be careful: if you continue to

practice after your license has expired (lapsed), you could have disciplinary action taken against you. If your license does expire, you will be required to apply for relicensure to reactivate your license.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Every time you renew your license you must state that you have met the required Continuing Education (CE) requirement. You need to keep the information on file in case you are audited. There are many opportunities to earn these hours, but special rules apply. You should check the Department website for details or consider joining a professional association that offers CE opportunities to members.

LICENSING MOBILITY (ENDORSEMENT/RECIPROCITY)

LARA does not have any shared agreement to honor the veterinarian licenses of other states. It grants licensing to veterinarians by either examination (the process described in this topic) or endorsement (where a veterinarian licensed in another state must meet all Michigan requirements for licensing). Fortunately, since the NAVLE is accepted by all states, a veterinarian wishing to relocate to Michigan will not have to retake the licensing examination.

7. IMPORTANT LINKS

MICHIGAN REGULATION:

- The [Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs \(LARA\)](#) issues licenses for veterinarians. Application packets (both by Examination and by Endorsement) can be downloaded on the homepage.
- Contact information: Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Professional Licensing, PO Box 30670, Lansing MI 48909. Telephone Number 517-373-8068; Fax: 517- 335-2044. Email: [BPLhelp](#)
- The law that regulates licensing for all health professions including veterinarians can be read at <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-368-1978-15>.
- The main page for the licensing of any health profession is www.michigan.gov/bpl. The page that specifically concerns veterinary medicine is: http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-35299_63294_27529_27555---.00.html. This page includes information regarding the board, applications and frequently asked questions.
- The Administrative Rules governing veterinary medicine practice in Michigan are located at: http://www7.dleg.state.mi.us/orr/Files/AdminCode/520_10493_AdminCode.pdf.

TESTING INFORMATION

- NAVLE Exam Application – National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners - www.nbvme.org
- NAVLE Exam Information – www.nbvme.org
- Prometric administers the NAVLE - www.prometric.com
- Exam Review information - <https://www.ecfv.org>

CREDENTIALING PROGRAMS

- ECFVG <https://ecfv.avma.org>
- PAVE www.aavsb.org/PAVE

NATIONAL AND STATE RESOURCES

- American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) represents member veterinary regulatory agencies for all 50 states.
- The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) is a national organization that represents veterinarians and advocates for veterinary medicine issues. www.avma.org.
- The Michigan Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA) is a state organization that represents veterinarians and advocates for veterinary medicine issues in Michigan. www.michvma.org.