



General Exam Item Writing Committee

Volunteer Role Description

Committee Description

The General Examination Item Writing Committee is composed of ACVIM Diplomates representing all six ACVIM specialties: Cardiology, Large Animal Internal Medicine, Neurology, Nutrition, Oncology, and Small Animal Internal Medicine. Committee members serve as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in their respective specialty content and practice areas and collectively contribute the breadth of expertise needed to support the General Examination. Members develop high-quality examination items within specified areas of the current General Examination blueprint. Before each item-writing cycle, committee members receive assignments based on an analysis of the existing item bank and the content areas in which additional items are needed. Members receive training in item-writing best practices and use the designated item-writing platform to develop and revise items during a defined campaign period.

Committee Member Responsibilities

1. Participate in required item-writing training and scheduled check-in meetings to discuss questions, receive guidance, address facilitator feedback, and engage in peer discussion.
2. Review the item-writing assignments and priority content areas identified through the examination item bank analysis.
3. Develop high-quality examination items that align with the current examination blueprint, assigned content areas, item-writing guidelines, and established standards for fairness and accuracy.
4. Enter items and required supporting information directly into the designated item-writing platform.
5. Provide appropriate references, rationales, media, or other supporting materials when required for the item type.
6. Review and respond to feedback from the examination-development facilitator, typically a Content Development Specialist, and revise assigned items within the established campaign timeframe.
7. Provide access to required reference materials from the current Candidate Study Guidelines when those materials are not otherwise available to ACVIM or its examination-development partner.
8. Complete required onboarding, confidentiality documentation, and preparatory activities before receiving access to examination-development systems or materials.
9. Serve as a subject matter expert when questions about submitted item content arise during later stages of examination development.
10. Maintain the confidentiality and security of all examination content, Committee discussions, data, and related materials, and comply with applicable ACVIM confidentiality requirements.

Committee members work in partnership with Committee leadership, the ACVIM staff liaison, and the examination-development facilitator throughout the examination-development process. Questions regarding assignments, examination content, process requirements, facilitator feedback, or use of the designated platform are coordinated with the appropriate staff liaison and/or facilitator to support consistent guidance, communication, and documentation.

Committee Leadership

The Assistant Chair, Chair, and Past Chair work in partnership with the ACVIM staff liaison and examination-development facilitator. Committee members contribute advanced specialty content and practice expertise across the six ACVIM specialties, while staff and facilitators contribute examination-development, assessment, process, and best-practice expertise. The Chair and staff liaison work together to guide the committee and determine how coordination and communications will be shared based on the committee's needs.

At the conclusion of the Item Writing Campaign, the Item Writing Committee Chair meets with the Item Review Committee Chair to share key outcomes, successes, challenges, and considerations for the next stage of examination development. At the conclusion of the full form-development cycle, the Item Writing, Item Review, and Form Review Committee Chairs meet to reflect on the overall development process and identify opportunities to improve future cycles. The applicable ACVIM staff liaisons attend these meetings to support the discussion, continuity, and follow-up.

The Past Chair supports continuity by advising the Chair and Assistant Chair and may participate in transition or debrief meetings when additional historical context would be beneficial.

Time Commitment, Term Length, and Term Dates

Time Commitment: Approximately 15–25 hours during the annual Item Writing Campaign. This includes one 1.5-hour virtual training session, two virtual check-in meetings of up to two hours each, and independent time to develop and revise assigned examination items. The amount of independent work may vary based on the number and type of items assigned. Committee leadership should anticipate limited additional time for transition and development-cycle debrief meetings.

Term Length: 3 years

Committee members who move into a leadership position may serve additional time to complete the Assistant Chair, Chair, and Past Chair progression.

Term Dates: January 1 through December 31

Committee Meeting Schedule

The annual General Examination Item Writing Campaign generally takes place over approximately six weeks, typically beginning in late March and concluding in early May. Committee members participate in one 1.5-hour virtual training session covering the

examination-development process, item-writing best practices, relevant guidelines, and use of the designated item-writing platform. Members then develop assigned items independently during the campaign period.

Two virtual check-in meetings, each lasting up to two hours, are scheduled during the campaign. These meetings provide opportunities to receive guidance, discuss facilitator feedback, address platform or item-development questions, and learn from examples and peer discussion. Committee members are expected to attend the training and check-in meetings, with exact dates confirmed annually.

The examination-development facilitator provides feedback on submitted items throughout the campaign, and members are expected to complete requested revisions by the established deadline.

Recommended Prior Experience

Item writers cannot be current members of the corresponding Item Review, Form Review, or Standard Setting Committee. Item writers are established professionals who exhibit a depth of knowledge within the content area being tested. Ideally, item writers possess attention to detail, the ability to analyze content, are creative thinkers with innate problem-solving skills, and enjoy working both independently and collaboratively. Prior experience in any exam development activities is a plus, but not required.

How Committee Members are Appointed

The committee consists of ACVIM Diplomates representing Cardiology, Large Animal Internal Medicine, Neurology, Nutrition, Oncology, and Small Animal Internal Medicine and the Certification Council Chair serving as ex-officio. New committee members are identified from submissions and interest indicated through the annual ACVIM Call for Volunteers and are selected to meet the diverse representation needs of the committee and confirmed by the Certification Council Chair.

Benefits

Networking, leadership skills, and a greater knowledge of the examination development process.