

Becoming a Veterinary Technician Specialist
Mary L. Berg, BS, LATG, RVT, VTS(Dentistry)
Lawrence, KS 66047

Due to a growing interest among veterinary technicians to attain a higher level of recognition for advanced knowledge and skills in specific disciplines, NAVTA developed the **Committee on Veterinary Technician Specialties (CVTS)**. The Committee provides a standardized list of criteria and assistance for societies interested in attaining Academy status.

The NAVTA Committee on Veterinary Technicians Specialties (CVTS) was formed in 1994 and is recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association. The CVTS provides guidelines to veterinary technician organizations to facilitate the formation of a specialty organization. Academies develop advanced pathways, which a candidate must follow and complete in order to be awarded the designation of VTS (Veterinary Technician Specialist) in their specific discipline. There are currently 15 recognized academies and more in the process of becoming recognized.

What does becoming a VTS mean?

Being a VTS means something different to everyone. For most, it is the next step to advancing your career as a veterinary technician and a way to enhance your personal growth. Becoming a VTS can be a way to help with your quest for knowledge and allow you to better help clients and pets. If you choose to pursue a VTS it should be because you are passionate about the area of specialty.

Basic Requirement for a VTS

The requirements differ between the academies but the basics requirements are: Graduation from an AVMA recognized veterinary technician program or to be a credentialed technician within your state or country. Completing 6000 hours as a credentialed technician prior to being the process to become a VTS. Research the requirements for the specific academy that you wish to apply. Some academies require an application prior to starting the process, others a letter of intent. Many academies will help you find a mentor to help you through the process. Once accepted or you decide to begin the process you will need to gather cases, write case reports, log hours and obtain the required amount of CE. Each applicant will need to pass an examination to test their skills and knowledge.

What's the difference between a Society and an Academy?

A **Society** is for individuals interested in a specific discipline of veterinary medicine that must represent a distinct and identifiable specialty, supported by an existing veterinary specialty.

An **Academy** designates veterinary technicians receiving recognition as a specialty and is restricted to credentialed veterinary technicians, who must complete a formal process of education, training, experience and testing to qualify.

Academies approved by NAVTA:

The Academy of Laboratory Animal Veterinary Technicians and Nurses is designed to promote excellence in animal welfare and medical care for animals used in laboratory animal settings by specialization in veterinary technology/nursing in the distinct field of Laboratory Animal Medicine. Contact: Stephen Cital RVT, SRA, RLAT, VTS-LAM

The Academy of Veterinary Technicians in Anesthesia and Analgesia - promotes patient safety, consumer protection, professionalism and excellence in anesthesia care and pain management. The Veterinary Technician Specialist in Anesthesia and Analgesia is there to provide your pet with exceptional care before, during and after a procedure.

The Academy of Veterinary Behavior Technicians - promotes excellence in the discipline of veterinary behavior medicine. Veterinary Technician Specialists with behavior certification will demonstrate superior knowledge in scientifically - and humanely - based techniques of behavior health, problem prevention, training, management, and behavior modification. The AVBT will advance the skills of veterinary technicians within the discipline of animal behavior and further their recognition as critical components of the veterinary behavior team in creating, maintaining, and strengthening the human-animal bond.

The Academy of Veterinary Clinical Pathology Technicians - created to advance the area of and promote excellence in the discipline of veterinary clinical pathology. **Contact:** Barbie Papajeski, MS, LVT, RLATG - avcpt.vts@gmail.com

The Academy of Veterinary Technicians in Clinical Practice - modeled after the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners, this academy has developed three initial species-specific categories: canine/feline, avian/exotic and production animal. The academy's credentialed veterinary technicians provide comprehensive, multidisciplinary care. Candidates are expected to demonstrate expertise in a range of clinical disciplines within their species specialty. **Contact:** [Liza Rudolph, LVT, CVT](#)

The Academy of Veterinary Dental Technicians - gives the technicians the opportunity to expand their knowledge and their professional value by becoming a credentialed specialist in the field of animal dentistry. For information, please contact avdtsecretary@gmail.com.

The Academy of Dermatology Veterinary Technicians - The purpose of ADVT is to promote excellence through specialization in the discipline of veterinary dermatology by demonstrating an advanced proficiency of dermatologic procedures, working with the veterinary team and client to advocate superior patient care, and providing cutting-edge continuing education.

The Academy of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Technicians - has a goal of certifying Veterinary Technicians is to assure the veterinary profession and the public that AVECCT certified technicians possess the knowledge and experience needed to work effectively in a well equipped and staffed emergency or critical care facility.

The Academy of Equine Veterinary Nursing Technicians mission is to advance the education and professional recognition of credentialed equine veterinary technicians who display excellence in, and dedication to, providing superior nursing care to equine patients.

The Academy of Internal Medicine for Veterinary Technicians - a group of technicians from varied backgrounds who have come together to realize the formation of a new specialty organization specifically for veterinary technicians working in Internal Medicine. Sub-specialties include: small animal medicine, large animal medicine, cardiology, oncology and neurology.

The Academy of Physical Rehabilitation Veterinary Technicians - It is the mission to provide assistance in veterinary physical rehabilitation, encouraging veterinary professionals and colleagues to further their education, while improving the quality of animals' lives.

The Academy of Veterinary Nutrition Technicians - created to develop and support the area of veterinary nutrition, develop the knowledge and expertise of veterinary technicians to become certified in the field of nutrition and endorse technicians as a vital part of the veterinary nutrition profession.

Academy of Veterinary Ophthalmic Technicians - advocate ocular health while advancing the knowledge and practice standards in the field of Ophthalmology. The Academy operates under the guidance of NAVTA and ACVO to foster yearly continuing education, professional development, and networking with industry partners.

The Academy of Veterinary Surgical Technicians - encourages experienced surgical technicians to enhance their education and training by pursuing a surgical specialty. AVST will provide a standardized route through which technicians may qualify for a national examination to become a VTS (Surgery). **Contacts:** Teri Raffel, CVT - raffelteri@gmail.com; Heidi Reuss-Lamky, LVT, VTS (Anesthesia) - frzbdogmom@aol.com.

The Academy of Veterinary Zoological Medicine Technicians - created specifically for veterinary technicians working in zoological medicine. The AVZMT offers the opportunity for zoo technicians to demonstrate excellence in the field.

Societies:

Society of Veterinary Behavior Technicians- enriches human animal interactions by promoting scientifically based techniques of training, management, and behavior modification. SVBT provides a forum for discussion and continuing education while working with allied professional organizations to strengthen the veterinary health care profession.

The American Association of Equine Veterinary Technicians- a professional Association for equine veterinary technicians, assistants and practice managers, as well as other support staff. Their mission is to promote the health and welfare of the horse through the education and professional enrichment of the equine veterinary technician and assistant.

The American Association of Rehabilitation Veterinarians (AARV) is a national association of veterinarians and veterinary technicians dedicated to improving the quality of life in animals through physical medicine and rehabilitation.

Association of Zoo Veterinary Technicians- dedicated to all aspects of quality veterinary technical care in the field of zoo animal medicine.

Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society - provides a forum for collaboration of all individuals interested and involved with veterinary emergency and critical care medicine and surgery. Their mission is to promote the advancement of knowledge and high standards of practice in veterinary emergency medicine and critical patient care.

The Society of Laboratory Animal Veterinary Technicians - formed to develop a network of professional veterinary technicians dedicated to the advancement of responsible and humane laboratory animal care and use to benefit humans and animals, to exchange of information and expertise in the care and use of laboratory animal and to advance by actively seeking continuing education opportunities for the members.

To learn more about Veterinary Technician Specialties and Societies, contact CVTS Committee Chair Ed Carlson.