

American Veterinary  
Chiropractic Association  
(AVCA)

Question Writing  
Project

Guidelines

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## Introduction

Thank you for participating in the question writing project of the American Veterinary Chiropractic Association (AVCA). This project is coordinated by the Animal Chiropractic Certification Commission (ACCC) as a result of the professional practice analysis. The question writing project will continue the changes of the certification examination from a test of knowledge to an assessment of clinical decision making skills.

Certification examinations need to assess a candidate's ability to apply knowledge and skills to clinical problems. For the certification of the ACCC and AVCA, this means that the examination must assess the ability to apply knowledge and skills to the clinical problems for which clients bring their animals for treatment.

This guideline for the submission of questions to the ACCC for inclusion in the certification examination is not meant to be exhaustive, but to be a quick reference for those who are willing to participate. A lot of participants are needed to assist in this project, and the donation of your time and expertise is sincerely appreciated.

We are working on having your participation recognized through continuing education credits.

## 7 Steps to Question Submission

1. Read the **Simple Rules** section.
2. Review the **Examples** section.
3. **Contact the office** to find out for which topics questions are needed.
4. Follow the Simple Rules, and write a question (stem and 4/5 options).
5. Highlight the correct answer (star or highlighter).
6. Using the **Question Checklist**, ensure your question of good quality.
6. Using the question you have written as a template, write three/four more questions, changing the stem slightly so that the correct option changes. This way you will finish with four or five questions with the same option list and each option being the correct answer for one of the questions.
7. Repeat!

## Simple Rules

1. Questions may be submitted within an e-mail, as an attached text file or word processor file. Acceptable formats include Open Office/ Libre Office formats (.odt) or Microsoft Office formats (.doc, .rtf).
2. Questions must assess the ability to apply knowledge (no factual questions please).
3. The questions should be a clinical scenario. Use your own practice experience as a resource to developing questions.
4. Include relevant information, but keep identifying information to a minimum. Certainly include: species, height, weight, age and sex in the question, but avoid details that have no relevance to arriving at the correct answer. Such details would include, for example, color and name. Candidates have a limited amount of time, and shouldn't have to filter out the relevant information.
5. The bulk of the question and the problem directed at the candidate must exist in the stem (the question paragraph) and not in the options. Options should generally not be longer than 1 to 5 words each. Candidates should be able to read questions with the options covered and arrive at the correct answers (forward thinking).

6. All question challenges must be worded positively. For example, Which muscle is most likely involved? Negatively worded question challenges must be avoided (e.g., Which muscle is not involve?).
7. The option lists must never include the phrases “All of the above” or “None of the above”.
8. Try to avoid the overuse of “which of the following...” These should be shortened to “Which diagnosis is most correct?”, or “Which segment is most likely involved?”.

## Topic List

Content area and percent of the certification examination

- adjusting an animal's spine (30%)
- adjusting an animal's extremity (17%)
- Biomechanic/neurologic assessment (17%)
- Non-biomechanic/neurologic assessment (17%)
- Communication with owner (8%)
- Interprofessional communication (6%)
- Non-adjustive care (5%)
- Safety: animal, owner, handler and doctor (10%)

## Question Checklist

- Does the stem present a definite problem?
- Is the question forward thinking?
- Is the stem stated in positive terms?
- Is the stem free of irrelevant information?
- Is there a clear statement of the task required (challenge to the candidate)?
- Are the options grammatically consistent with the stem?
- Is there only one clearly best answer?
- Are the options that are not correct brief, plausible, and homogenous?
- Have verbal associations between the stem and correct answer been avoided?
- Do the options have a similar length?
- Have “none and all of the above” been avoided?
- Is the question relevant to the topic list?
- Is the question of an appropriate difficulty level for an animal chiropractor?

## Examples

Example 1:

1. A five-year old male dog presents with lick granulomas on the right leg, inconsistent weight bearing on the right hind, more hesitant to jump up than to jump down. The lower extremity reflexes are normal. There is tenderness on palpation of right sacro-iliac joint and lower lumbar. There is no difficulty with bowel and bladder. Which diagnosis is most likely.

- A. femoral nerve irritation.
- B. musculocutaneous nerve irritation.
- C. obturator nerve irritation.
- \*D. sciatic nerve irritation**

2. Which nerve roots are involved?

- A. C4 to C7
- B. T13 to L2
- C. L1 to L3
- \*D. L5 to S1**

Example 2:

1. A pony presents with tenderness on palpation of the gluteals, especially on the right. Motion palpation of the right tuber sacralae elicits pain and decreased motion from postero-caudal to anterior-cranial. Which listing is most likely?

- A. L4 posterior (P)
- B. right inter-transverse joint
- C. sacral-apex right (SA-R)
- D. right anterior-superior iliac spine (R-ASIS)
- \*E. right posterior-inferior (PI)**

2. What gait might be associated with this listing?

- A. flatulence with trotting and high tail carriage
- B. high tail carriage with symmetrical pelvis movement
- C. short strided to the left, asymmetrical movement of the pelvis
- \*D. short strided to the right, asymmetrical movement of the pelvis**
- E. shot strided to the right, symmetrical movement of the pelvis

Example 3:

1. A 2-year old Aussie dog refuses to jump into the back -seat of vehicle. The previous evening it could not hold a square-sit in an obedience class. On examination, neurologic, range-of-motion, and leg length are normal. On bilateral rear leg extension, pain is detected. A loss of depression between tuber sacralae is evident. Which subluxation is most probable?

- A. L5 PL
- B. AS ilium
- C. PI ilium
- \*D. sacral base posterior**