Potential areas of non-compliance with *AVMA CVTEA Accreditation Standards*:

1. Institutional Accreditation

An accredited veterinary technology program in the United States must be part of an institution of higher education accredited by an agency recognized by, and in good standing with, the U.S. Department of Education. Non-U.S. programs must be part of an institution of higher learning recognized by, and in good standing with, the appropriate national, provincial, or regional agency with that authority.

CVTEA Commentary:

Institutional accreditation reviews academic and organizational structures of a college or university as a whole. Institutional accreditors may be "recognized" wherein accreditors are reviewed against established standards set by an external agency.

The U.S. Secretary of Education "recognizes" accreditors to indicate that they are reliable authorities on the quality of education or training provided by the programs and institutions they accredit. There are federal links (laws or federal programs) that require accreditation by recognized accreditors in order for academic programs and institutions to participate in federal programs such as Title IV student loans and scholarships.

Furthermore, institutional accreditation is a peer review process which assures quality of the educational experience for students enrolled at the institution. The benefits of institutional accreditation can assist in achieving the following key beneficial parameters:

- Determines whether an institution is meeting standards of education
- Improves enrollment rate by gaining trust of students & parents
- Assists employers in determining the programs credibility & knowledge level of students
- Enables graduates to participate in additional certification examinations
- Creates goals for self-improvement of educational institutions.

What process will be in place to oversee and assess the organizational structure and academic quality of the proposed apprenticeship program?

2. Finances

Sustainable financial support must be adequate for the program to attain the educational goals and support its mission.

CVTEA Commentary:

What assurance is there that the proposed apprenticeship program has or will have sustainable financial resources needed to support student learning?

3. Organization and Communications

3a. The program must develop, publicize, and follow its mission statement.

3b. There must be clearly defined lines of communication that are open and effective between the institution and the program director, program director and faculty/adjuncts, between program personnel, and between program personnel and students.

3c. Program relationships with students, faculty, administrators, and the public must be conducted with integrity. Policies and available educational services for veterinary technology students must be clearly defined.

3e. The program must have an advisory committee that meets at least annually to provide counsel regarding equipment, curriculum, demographic trends and other matters pertaining to the veterinary technology profession. Membership must include veterinarians and veterinary technicians with diverse professional interests, not currently affiliated with the program. Representation should include credentialed veterinary technicians, veterinary technician students, veterinary industry representatives, and public members.

CVTEA Commentary:

Does the apprenticeship program have a mission statement?

Are lines of communication within the organization defined and evaluated regularly for effectiveness?

Will policies for student be clearly defined?

Will the apprenticeship program have a group of professional advisors to include veterinarians and veterinary technicians to provide counsel regarding matters pertaining to the veterinary technology profession?

4. Physical Facilities and Equipment

4a. All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an environment conducive to learning and the achievement of the educational goals. Classrooms, teaching laboratories, and other teaching spaces shall be clean, maintained in good repair, adequate in number, appropriate in capacity, and provided with sufficient equipment to meet the instructional need and the number of students enrolled.

4b. All clinical facilities for primary learning must emulate contemporary veterinary facilities. Standard types of laboratory and clinical equipment, consistent with those used in contemporary veterinary facilities, shall be provided. Programs must have access to all items listed in the *Equipment and Instructional Resource List Appendix* over the sum total of all primary learning sites.

4c. Office space must be sufficient for the instructional, advisement, and administrative needs of the faculty, staff, and program.

4d. Animal housing must be consistent with accepted humane standards and federal and state regulations. See 5b.

4e. Safety of students, program personnel, and animals must be of prime consideration. (see *Statement on Safety Appendix*)

4f. All use of drugs, biologics, reagents, and other materials used in conjunction with animal care must be in compliance with state and federal regulations including current dating and appropriate labeling.

Materials used for demonstration purposes must be appropriately identified and stored. Controlled substances shall be stored and logged in accordance with state and federal regulations.

4g. Waste management shall be appropriate for the needs of the program and consistent with regulatory agency requirements.

4h. Storage must be sufficient for program needs.

CVTEA Commentary: How will facilities and equipment be assessed for providing a contemporary environment that is conducive to learning? Will the apprenticeship provide access to all *CVTEA Required Equipment and Instructional Resources* items? For your information, student instruction must include experiences with all required animal species including dog, cat, rabbit, equine, cattle, small ruminant, birds, and rats or mice. Will animal housing be compliant with acceptable humane standards including federal and state regulations? What processes are in place to ensure safety of a student in the apprenticeship program? How will biohazardous waste management be handled in the program?

5. Resources for Clinical Instruction

5a. Programs must follow all applicable federal and state regulations and guidelines for the care and use of animals utilized by the program. The CVTEA endorses the principles of humane care and use of animals as codified in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and requires programs to follow AWA regulations and policies with respect to all animal use. All animal activities conducted by a program must be reviewed and approved by an animal care and use committee whose structure and functions are in accord with AWA requirements.

5b. Adequate numbers of common domestic and laboratory animal species are required to provide the necessary quantity and quality of clinical instruction to meet curriculum requirements without overuse of the animals or violation of AWA requirements for humane use and care. (see *Use of Animals in Veterinary Technology Teaching Programs Appendix*)

5c. Models and other alternate methods of teaching that are consistent with the goals of the curriculum must be considered to replace, reduce or refine animal use.

5e. Off-campus providers of instructional support must meet objective requirements set by the program with respect to the physical facilities, staff, and available equipment. A memorandum of understanding or contractual arrangement must be established with all off-campus sites including, but not limited to, externship, preceptorship, and distance learning sites. (see *Off-Campus Clinical Instruction Appendix*)

5f. If program staffed clinical veterinary services are offered, documented evidence must exist that clients are informed that student instruction is a major component of patient care. The primary purpose of such clinical veterinary services, regardless of animal ownership, must be teaching, not revenue generation.

CVTEA Commentary:

How will the principles of humane care and use of animals as codified in the Animal Welfare Act be applied and monitored?

What plans will be in place to ensure an adequate number of animal species will be provided to meet the necessary quantity and quality of clinical instruction?

Will teaching models or other alternative method of instruction be provided in the apprenticeship program?

Will off-campus providers of instruction support be utilized in the apprenticeship program? If yes, what objective requirements will be established with respect to facilities, staff, and available equipment?

Will clients be informed that student instruction may involve the use of their pet?

6. Library and Information Resources

6a. Libraries and information retrieval are essential to veterinary technician education and continuing education. Timely access to current information resources pertaining to veterinary technology through print, electronic media, and/or other means must be available to students, faculty, and staff. Students must have access to a qualified resource specialist.

6b. Knowledge of quality information resources, library use and development and application of information retrieval skills must be included in the educational experience.

CVTEA Commentary:

How will the apprenticeship program provide access to quality information resources including knowledge of and use of information retrieval skills?

Will students have access to a qualified library resource specialist? (Personnel with specific education in library and information science)

7. Admissions

7a. The institution and program admission policies must be well defined and documented.

7b. Applicants must have a high school diploma or its equivalent. Consideration of the qualifications of applicants for admission must include aptitude for, an interest in, and an understanding of a career in veterinary technology.

7c. The CVTEA recognizes that some institutions must perform under open admissions policies that prohibit selective entry into veterinary technician education programs. However, the development and consistent application of selective admissions standards may be helpful in admitting more qualified students, reducing attrition, and producing graduates who are most likely to succeed, and therefore should be implemented.

7d. Catalogs, website, or other official publications must contain the institutional and programmatic purposes and objectives, admission requirements and procedures, academic offerings, degree granted, and program requirements for completion of the degree, including the existence of any technical standards. This information must include the length of time necessary for completion; policies with

respect to satisfactory academic progress; policies on transfer of credits; tuition, fees, and other program costs; refund policies; and national and state requirements for eligibility for credentialing or entry into the field of veterinary technology.

7e. The institution and program must demonstrate integrity and responsibility in student recruitment practices. Admission must be non-discriminatory and in accordance with federal and state statutes, rules, and regulations. Personnel who are knowledgeable about the program and its requirements should conduct student recruitment.

CVTEA Commentary:

How will admission policies be defined and documented?

Is a high school diploma or equivalent required for admission?

Is there a plan to publish programmatic purposes and objectives, academic offerings, program requirements for completion of the program? If yes, how will these be promoted?

How will the apprenticeship program ensure that admissions and other policies are non-discriminatory and in accordance with federal and state statues, rules, and regulations?

8. Students

8a. The number of students must be appropriate to achieve the mission of the program. Enrollment must not exceed the available resources including the number of faculty and support staff needed to meet the educational goals of the curriculum. An appropriate program personnel-to-student ratio must be maintained to ensure student safety and adequate delivery of instruction in program specific courses. Program personnel to student ratios shall not exceed 1:12 for laboratory courses without animals present and 1:8 for laboratory courses with animals present.

8b. Student support services must be available within the institution for program students. Interactions between students and faculty/staff must be sufficient to communicate expectations for successful academic performance, provide feedback for improvement of skills and knowledge, and encourage professional growth and development.

8c. Throughout the curriculum, students must be exposed to veterinary team concepts and appropriate modeling of ethical and professional behavior.

CVTEA Commentary:

How will the program ensure that the number of students is appropriate to achieve the mission of the program and not exceed available resources including faculty and staffing?

What types of student support services will be available for students?

What methods will be used to expose students to veterinary team concepts and appropriate modeling of ethical and professional behavior?

9. Faculty and Staff

9a. Faculty and staff numbers must be sufficient to deliver the educational program and meet the instructional goals of the program.

9b. Instructors in the program must have knowledge and expertise in the topics they teach and promote the appropriate role of the veterinary technician in the veterinary health care team. Instructional duties must not violate local, state, or federal laws regarding the practice of veterinary medicine.

9c. The program director must be a licensed veterinarian or a credentialed veterinary technician who must be a graduate of an AVMA or CVMA-accredited program. The program director must have the educational background and occupational experience appropriate to understand and fulfill program goals. The position of the program director should be full time with the institution.

9d. The director must have the responsibility, authority, and support necessary to manage the program successfully. This shall be documented in a written job description that also shall clearly define the position of the director within the institutional hierarchy. The program director must be responsible for organizing continuous program review and development processes that assure program effectiveness. The program director's appointment must include sufficient time for administrative and teaching responsibilities as well as opportunities and support for professional development.

9e. Each program must have one full-time credentialed veterinary technician who must be a graduate of an AVMA CVTEA or CVMA-accredited program. Each program must have a minimum equivalent of one full-time licensed veterinarian.

9f. Academic positions must offer sufficient compensation, incentives, and employment security to attract and retain qualified personnel in order to maintain program stability. Faculty and staff must have sufficient time for development and delivery of instruction, curriculum development, student evaluation, student advisement and counseling, and professional development. Programs should provide financial support for veterinary professional development activities.

9g. The institution must provide evidence that it evaluates program personnel regularly and assists and facilitates professional growth. Program personnel should be encouraged and financially supported to be participating members of local, state, and national veterinary professional associations.

CVTEA Commentary:

How will the apprenticeship program make sure that teaching personnel have the knowledge and expertise in the topics they teach?

Will there be a designated program director to oversee the educational apprenticeship program? If yes, will this individual be a licensed veterinarian or a credentialed veterinary technician who is a graduate of an AVMA or CVMA-accredited program?

Will program staffing include a minimum equivalent of one full-time licensed veterinarian? And will staffing also include one full-time credentialed veterinary technician who is be a graduate of an AVMA CVTEA or CVMA-accredited program?

How will the institution ensure that compensation, benefits, and employment incentives are sufficient to retain qualified personnel?

Will professional development related to instructional activities be provided for teaching personnel?

10. Curriculum

10a. The curriculum must prepare graduates who will be fully capable of performing in a wide variety of professional roles within the veterinary field. At the completion of the curriculum, graduates must have attained entry-level skills needed to support companion animal, equine, and food animal practice, biomedical research, and other veterinary medical activities. The curriculum shall provide a foundation in veterinary technology that will prepare the student to successfully become credentialed and inspire the student to continue life-long learning.

10b. The specific courses shall teach basic medical science, communication, critical thinking, decision-making, and clinical application skills. Integration of nursing, technical, and medical skills within the curriculum must use live animals. Whenever possible, animal nursing skills should be developed in a setting and under conditions that are a reflection of the manner in which graduates will use these skills.

10c. The curriculum must include general education and specific veterinary technology course content. Required materials can be offered as complete course offerings or be integrated into courses involving more than one area of recommended material. Course objectives must be clearly communicated to the student through syllabi or other course documents. Course offerings to meet curriculum requirements must constitute a minimum of 60 semester credit hours (or equivalent).

GENERAL COURSE MATERIAL:
Applied mathematics
Biological science
Communication skills
Fundamentals of chemistry

SPECIFIC COURSE MATERIAL:
Anatomy and physiology
Anesthesia, including induction, monitoring, and instrumentation
Animal husbandry, including restraint, behavior, species and breed identification, reproduction, sex determination, and human-animal bonding
Biosecurity-safety and security issues
Clinical pathology and parasitology
Communication/interaction skills with clients and colleagues
Diseases, preventive medicine (including dentistry), and nursing of companion animals, food-producing animals, horses, exotic species, and laboratory animals
Economics in veterinary practice
Ethics, professionalism, and legal applications in veterinary medicine
Humane animal care and management
Introduction to laboratory animal medicine
Life-long learning concepts
Medical terminology
Microbiology and immunology
Necropsy techniques
Nutrition and principles of feeding
Orientation to the profession of veterinary technology
Pharmacology for veterinary technicians
Principles of imaging, including radiography and ultrasonography
Safety issues, consistent with the CVTEA *Statement on Safety Appendix* with course work emphasis on zoonoses and occupational safety.
Surgical nursing and assisting, including instrumentation

Technician utilization and team concepts of health care delivery
Value of professional organizations
Veterinary practice management

10d. Practical veterinary experience that expands student knowledge and builds proficiency of acquired skills through task-specific exercises is a required portion of the curriculum. These experiences are usually termed preceptorships, practicums, internships, or externships. Practical experiences are for the purpose of honing skills learned in formal instructional settings and should be scheduled to occur following completion of skills acquisition. These practical experiences should be a minimum of 240 cumulative contact hours and must be monitored by the program director or the director's appointee who must be a program faculty or staff member who is either a licensed veterinarian or credentialed veterinary technician who is a graduate of an AVMA CVTEA/CVMA accredited veterinary technology program. Prior to the beginning of the practical experience, on-site supervisors must be contacted by the program. Students and faculty should seek progressive contemporary facilities that employ credentialed veterinary technicians to act as professional role models and mentors. During the practical experience, contact must be maintained with students and their on-site supervisors to monitor students' personal and educational experiences. It is highly recommended that such contact take place through personal visits and interviews by the program director or appointee. Specific criteria must be used to assist on-site supervisors in monitoring student progress. The program director or appointee shall review student performance evaluations by on-site supervisors, student evaluation of the experiences, and a final student performance evaluation.

10e. Successful completion of all required skills found in the *Veterinary Technology Student Essential and Recommended Skills List Appendix* must be evaluated and documented, indicating date completed, by program personnel who use standard criteria that reflect contemporary veterinary practice. Program personnel evaluating skills should be a veterinarian or a credentialed veterinary technician who is a graduate of an AVMA CVTEA or CVMA-accredited veterinary technology program. Program personnel must have a signed agreement with the parent institution, complete training in evaluating essential skills, and regularly communicate with the program director. This agreement is in addition to any facility MOU required per *Off-Campus Clinical Instruction Appendix*.

CVTEA Commentary:

How will the apprenticeship program ensure that graduates have attained entry-level skills needed to support companion animal, equine, and food animal practice, biomedical research, and other veterinary medical activities?

In addition, how will the program make sure that basic medical science, communication, critical thinking, decision-making, and clinical application skills are included in the educational experience?

Will the program integrate nursing, technical, and medical skills within the curriculum using live animals?

Will the apprenticeship program ensure a minimum equivalent of 60 semester credits is incorporated in the curriculum and provided to all students?

How will the program incorporate all required general education and veterinary technology specific course content?

Will students be given opportunities to practice or hone skills during the program?

Will students be required to successfully complete of all required skills found in the *Veterinary Technology Student Essential and Recommended Skills List?* And will the program use standard criteria that reflect contemporary practices?

11. Outcomes Assessment

11a. The program must develop program-specific outcome assessment instruments that assist in determining attainment of the educational goals. Such instruments shall include, but are not limited to:

a. Attrition rates
b. Graduate surveys
c. Employer surveys
d. Pass rates and domain scores of the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE) as compared to the average. Results from the VTNE are considered objective program-specific outcome assessment instruments.
e. Applicable state examination pass rates.

11b. CVTEA expects the institution to encourage and support the program review and evaluation process for the outcomes of the educational program. The results of all outcome assessments must be used to improve the program. In absence of significant data from peer reviewed examinations, programs must develop objective means to assess student competency.

11c. Programs must comply with VTNE reporting requirements. (see *Reporting to the Community*)

11d. The program's three year rolling average VTNE pass percentage for first time test takers must be 50% or higher.

CVTEA Commentary:

What outcome assessment instruments will be used to determine if students have met educational goals?

Does the program plan on reporting VTNE pass rates for students on its webpage?