

## Accreditation System for Veterinary Schools in Korea

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**Objectives:** Accreditation for veterinary education establishments (VEEs) and curricula is to evaluate and ensure the quality of veterinary education of students graduating from VEEs. To improve the quality of veterinary education depends upon a continuous quality improvement (evaluation-implementation-improvement-evaluation).

**Discussion:** The Accreditation Board for Veterinary Education in Korea (ABOVE-K) was founded to improve the quality of veterinary education in 2010. ABOVE-K is non-profit and non-government organization (NGO). Also it is the first accreditation body in Asia as NGO. ABOVE-K started the accreditation of VEEs and curricula from 2014.

The accreditation standards of ABOVE-K consist of 5 areas: organization and finances, curriculum, students, faculty and staff, and facilities and resources. Each area has 3 to 6 specific criteria. The total number of specific criteria is 50. ABOVE-K is currently working to develop the evaluation tools for the implementation of OIE day-one competencies for graduating veterinarians. The accreditation of ABOVE-K is classified into five types: full accreditation (5 years), limited accreditation, provisional accreditation, unsatisfactory accreditation (no-pass) and revocation of accreditation (withdraw or rescission). Full accreditation is granted when the candidate school fully meets the criteria in each of the accreditation standards. Based on the degree of compliance with the accreditation standards, the type of accreditation is determined.

The accreditation process begins with submitting an application of a candidate school to ABOVE-K. The candidate VEE next submits the self-evaluation report (SER) to ABOVE-K. The VEE is then evaluated based on the SER and site-visit by an evaluation team. The final decision of accreditation is made by the Accreditation Committee.

**Conclusion:** The success of accreditation is ensured by the active participation of VEEs, reasonable accreditation standards, and transparency in the procedures. It is necessary to harmonize the accreditation standards set by the organizations such as OIE and World Veterinary Association because the veterinary services are now considered as global public goods for the optimal health of animal, human and environment.

**Keywords:** accreditation – competencies – evaluation – improvement – self-evaluation