

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF THE ABVP DIPLOMATE TITLE

1. Diplomates of the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners are strongly encouraged to use their title accurately and consistently. Incorrect spelling, formatting, or sloppy wording reflect poorly on professionalism. It is unethical for veterinarians to identify themselves as members of an AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organization if such certification has not been awarded.
2. ABVP Diplomates are not permitted to list any qualifications, disciplines, services, etc. that would mislead the public. It is unethical to imply specialization other than the certification earned. For example, a Diplomate certified only in Avian Practice cannot advertise "specializes in birds, ferrets, rabbits, and pocket pets". Another example of an unethical listing is "Mary Smith, DVM, DABVP (Canine and Feline Practice) has a special interest in dermatology, dentistry, surgery, etc." because this may mislead the public into thinking that Dr. Smith is a board-certified dermatologist, dentist, and/or surgeon. A practice that employs an ABVP Diplomate along with non-ABVP Diplomates cannot advertise or imply that it is a "specialty" practice because not all veterinarians are board-certified.
3. The American Veterinary Medical Association provides these rules and guidelines for Diplomates (<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/avma-policies/avma-guidelines-identification-board-certified-veterinarians>)

AVMA GUIDELINES ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF BOARD-CERTIFIED VETERINARIANS

To identify one's Diplomate status accurately and responsibly, it is important that board-certified veterinarians use very specific wording. Each recognized specialty college or board is encouraged to provide specific guidance to its members regarding the correct wording for its organization.

The following style is recommended.

Board Certified by or Diplomate of, Name of Specialty College or Board

For example:

Board Certified by the American College of Veterinary Surgeons

or

Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Surgeons

Diplomates of those specialty organizations with affiliate or subgroup categories should use the following format.

Board Certified in Equine Practice by The American Board of Veterinary Practitioners,

or

Diplomate, American Board of Veterinary Practitioners, Board Certified in Equine Practice

Board Certified in Cardiology by The American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine,

or

Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine, Board Certified in Cardiology

When a Diplomate of an AVMA-recognized veterinary specialty organization publishes an article in a veterinary journal, it is appropriate to use an acronym to identify the specialty college or board as indicated below. Acronyms should not be used in publications directed to the general public because they are unlikely to be understood.

For example:

Name, Diplomate, ACVO

or

Name, DACVO

Name, Diplomate, ACVIM (Cardiology)

Name, DABVP (Equine Practice)

The AVMA Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics state: "It is unethical for veterinarians to identify themselves as members of an AVMA-recognized specialty organization if such certification has not been awarded." Only those who are board certified may claim that status. Only those veterinarians who have been certified by an AVMA-recognized specialty organization should refer to themselves as specialists.

Board certified status in an AVMA-recognized specialty organization is an achievement and an honor of which one should be proud. Responsible use of the title when

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representing oneself to the general public and to the veterinary profession is both appropriate and encouraged. A board-certified specialist who also lists other services in an advertisement or notice should use care in wording the document so that it does not imply board certified specialty status regarding the other services. In the opinion of the AVMA and the ABVS the terms "board eligible" or "board qualified" are misleading and should not be used by any veterinarian. One is either board certified, having met all of the criteria of the specialty college or board, or one has no board credentials.