Accreditation Handbook for Animal Science Programs

February 2026

Prepared by:
Animal Science Council on Accreditation

ANIMAL SCIENCE
COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION
EXCELLENCE IN ANIMAL SCIENCE EDUCATION

Note: Updates, corrections and edits to this document will be made on the online document and take precedence over all previous versions.

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Preface:

The American Society of Animal Science has accepted the responsibility of implementing a voluntary Accreditation Program available to institutions awarding four-year BS degrees in Animal Science by creating the Animal Science Council on Accreditation (ASCoA). This is in response to requests from ASAS members representing academia and industry employers of Animal Science graduates to establish standards for accreditation of animal science programs. Accreditation of professional programs, through program self-evaluation and third-party peer review processes, is a long-established, proven and accepted method of ensuring quality and consistency of academic programs and is widely used throughout academic disciplines. Accreditation of Animal Science programs will be of value to the academic departments, colleges, and institutions awarding the degrees, to the students graduating from these programs, and to the employers of graduates from these programs. Animal science professionals from academia, industry, and government are engaged to provide objective external review and attest to a program's quality and commitment to continuous improvement. With increasing expectations of accountability in higher education, accreditation provides a valued opportunity to verify program quality and capacity for training students who are prepared to enter diverse professional positions upon graduation or continue their education in professional degree programs.

Programmatic accreditation in the United States is a non-governmental process where programs voluntarily undergo a periodic comprehensive review that determines a program's success in meeting defined professional standards. Accredited Animal Science programs can document third-party peer review and evaluation of educational quality and accountability of a program in meeting essential standards identified and approved by animal science professionals from academia and industry. Accreditation does not rank programs but rather identifies if program standards are met. Accreditation of an Animal Science Program accredits the program, not the institution nor individual students.

Accreditation of Animal Science programs signifies that professionals in the Animal Science disciplines are proactively committed to high-quality education and training of the next generation of animal scientists and have identified required standards for their program. When the Animal Science Standards for Accreditation are met, it ensures that the curriculum covers essential concepts, knowledge and experiences, that appropriate institutional support is present to deliver a sustained high-quality program and that the program has the necessary components to train graduates who are well prepared and ready for employment in the diverse professions of animal science.

This handbook details the processes and requirements for Accreditation of Bachelor of Science degree programs in Animal Science.

Introduction:

The American Society of Animal Science (ASAS) exists to foster the discovery, sharing, and application of scientific knowledge concerning the care and responsible use of animals to enhance animal and human health, and well-being. As such, the following five core principles guide the work of the society:

1. Animals are essential to human life and well-being.
2. The care and use of animals are held to the highest standards of integrity and professional ethics.
3. Research and scientific information are communicated in an open, transparent, and dynamic manner.
4. Career development for animal scientists, educators, and producers is essential to the viability of the allied and animal industries.
5. Animal science and the production of animal-sourced foods must continually evolve to meet the needs and values of society.

Additional details about the ASAS can be found at www.asas.org. Pursuant to the core principles of the society as defined in the Mission Statement, and particularly core principle 4, the ASAS, in furtherance of these principles, has established the Animal Science Council on Accreditation (ASCoA) to accredit educational programs in the United States that lead to a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science.

Objectives of Animal Science Accreditation

- To advance the quality and continuous improvement of animal science education through program self-evaluation and peer review by qualified academic and industry professionals
- To foster excellence in animal science programs through periodic review and revision of standards for accreditation and to apply those standards while conducting the accreditation process
- To ensure that standards recognize and encompass the diversity of animal science programs that, in addition to production animal agriculture, may include care of companion animals, preservation of species (e.g. captive exotics), and management of laboratory animals
- Through this process, to assure students, employers, the public, and other organizations that ASCoA accredited programs have educational objectives and outcomes consistent with current professional standards for the field of animal science, and have adequate resources to accomplish these objectives

The Standards of Accreditation

The standards for accreditation describe the essential elements of a program in animal science. The following seven standards, described in detail in the document entitled Accreditation Standards for Animal Science Programs include:

1. Program mission and objectives
2. Program governance, administration, and institutional support
3. Students
4. Program learning outcomes and curriculum
5. Faculty
6. Facilities, equipment, and technology
7. Outreach and engagement with industry, public, institution

The Animal Science Board of Directors approved the Accreditation Standards for Animal Science Programs in July 2020 following posting for public review and input, and receipt, consideration, and incorporation of public input.

This Accreditation process provides latitude for an individual program to fully describe their unique initiatives, applications to educate students in animal science, and variation in how their program is implemented and accomplishes their objectives.

ASCoA recognizes the need for diversity and encourages an environment composed of students, faculty and external constituents that represent and promote communication and collaboration from representatives of different cultures, experiences and viewpoints.

It is explicitly not a goal of this program to assess the overall institution in detail. Instead, it relies upon the opinions of other accrediting bodies appropriate for such a task. To be eligible for this accreditation the institution must be accredited by a regional accrediting commission.

This document defines the process for Accreditation of Animal Science programs. The standards for accreditation are detailed in: Accreditation Standards for Animal Science Programs and is included in Appendix 1. This process and the Accreditation Standards will be periodically reviewed and updated as needed by the ASAS Board of Directors.

Animal Science Council on Accreditation (ASCoA)

Responsibilities

In 2020, ASAS established the ASCoA with the following responsibilities:

1. To approve and communicate the standards of accreditation
2. To define and implement the accreditation process
3. To conduct the accreditation process

Governance and Authority

In 2020, the ASCoA was established by the ASAS Board of Directors and as a Committee/Council with the responsibility to conduct accreditation actions of Bachelor of Science degree programs in animal science.

ASAS is committed to the long-term success of the accreditation process and has established the following administrative policies in support of accreditation.

- ASAS recognizes the ASCoA as the accrediting body responsible for acting in matters of accreditation of professional animal science BS degree programs.
- ASAS expects the fees collected by the ASCoA to cover the direct costs of the accreditation site visits and Council meetings. ASAS is committed to providing support staff and overhead annually in support of the ASCoA function. The amount will be determined by the annual budget set by the ASAS Board of Directors.
- Membership to the nine-member ASCoA will be seated from applications received with selection and approval by the ASAS Board of Directors.

Membership and Seating

The Animal Science Council on Accreditation (ASCoA) is responsible for implementing and conducting accreditation actions. This includes decisions on whether requirements of accreditation have been met. Membership to the nine-member ASCoA will be established from applications received with selection and approval by the ASAS Board of Directors. The ASCoA may review applications for the Council seats and make recommendations to the ASAS Board of Directors. Representation on the Council will include:

- Six animal science educators
- Two animal science industry professionals
- One government agency or non-governmental organization professional
- Accreditation Coordinator – Non-voting

All members of the ASCoA must be current members in good standing of ASAS. Two members of the ASCoA must be current members of the ASAS Board of Directors and may align with any of the three representation categories.

ASAS will assign the Accreditation Coordinator to support Accreditation activities and Council actions.

Membership on the Council will be for a three-year term that begins January 1. A term may be renewed once for a maximum of six years continuous service. Three-year terms are staggered. The Council chair is determined by Council vote.

New members are determined by Council review of nominations and applications received and a recommendation forwarded to the ASAS Board of Directors. The final decision on new membership resides with the Board of Directors. When selecting new members, the Council and Board of Directors are expected to consider diversity and inclusion, diversity of Animal

Science programs regarding size and geographic location, and diversity of professional experience. Council members representing educators should reflect diversity in rank. Industry and government/non-government professionals serving on the Council must possess at least one degree (BS, MS, and/or Ph.D.) in Animal Science.

Council members must agree to participate in at least one face-to-face meeting held annually prior to the ASAS national meeting. At this annual meeting, Council decisions and actions on accreditation are made. Additional in person meetings may be called as needed by the Council chair. Travel and lodging for in-person meetings will be covered by ASAS. Council members should expect regular meetings bi-monthly or monthly as council workload dictates. Regular meetings are conducted by videoconferencing.

Replacement of Council members with unexpired terms will be the responsibility of the Council with approval by the ASAS Board of Directors and must fulfill the criteria of representation.

The Council will have the ability to modify operational and management processes and procedures as needed. The ASAS Board of Directors must approve any changes to the Accreditation Standards for Animal Science Programs.

Eligibility for Accreditation

To be eligible to apply for accreditation, programs must meet the following prerequisites:

- The institution must be accredited by a regional accrediting commission.
- The program must provide evidence of institutional commitment to acquiring and maintaining the accredited status of its Animal Science program.
- When completed, the curriculum must result in the awarding of a Bachelor of Science degree and meet the standards defined in Animal Science Standards of Accreditation.
- The program title or degree description must be reflective of Animal Science.

Application Process

Initiating accreditation of a Bachelor of Science program in Animal Science is a voluntary action supported by the institution's chief academic officer. An eligible program may apply for accreditation upon meeting the Standards for Accreditation and has had a least one graduating class.

A program interested in seeking accreditation must notify the ASCoA of its intention to apply in the year before submitting their application. Notices of intent to apply forms must be received by April 1 of the year before submission so that preparations can begin at the ASCoA annual meeting for the next cohort of applicants.

Steps to Accreditation

1) Submission of Intent to Apply form the year preceding the submission of the completed application
2) Submission of completed Accreditation Application Documents to include:

a) A letter of support from the institution's Chief Academic Officer stating support for seeking and maintaining accreditation of the Animal Science program
b) Completed Accreditation Application Forms and Required documents
c) Self-Study Report (SSR) following ASCoA Self-Study Report Guidelines

3) Applications received on or before April 1 will be reviewed by ASCoA and a subcommittee assigned to each application. Council members are required to review all applications. Subcommittee members will be responsible for a detailed review of the application and will present an initial report to the Council at the ASCoA annual meeting. Pool size each year is limited to 5 applications.
4) Applications received after April 1 will be considered in the subsequent pool of applicants unless openings are still available for the current cohort.
5) At the annual meeting of the ASCoA:
    a) Subcommittees will present detailed individual reports to the Council on applications received.
    b) Council action will be taken on each application:
        i) Outcomes include:
            (1) Notice to Proceed.
                (a) Application ready for scheduling site visit and proceeding towards accreditation
            (2) Application is incomplete or found to be deficient in one or more of the Accreditation Standards
                (a) Applications will be returned to the programs with information identifying where the deficiencies were found or information lacking.
            (3) The application requires minimal additional documentation, which the program will be asked to provide.
                (a) Additional documentation must be provided before October 1 if the program desires to remain in the current cohort of applicants or may choose to be reconsidered in the next cycle.
6) All applying programs will receive notice of the ASCoA action taken on their application within 14 days of the ASCoA Annual Meeting.
7) For programs receiving Notice to Proceed, scheduling of site team visits will begin in Aug.
    a) ASCoA personnel will contact the applying program to identify a site visit schedule.
        i) Window for site visits is September – April
8) Site Visit. A 4-person team will visit the applying institution for 3 days on-site.
9) The Review Team Chair and Chair of the ASCoA, will incorporate input as appropriate and the Review Team Chair will submit a final report for presentation to and deliberation by the Council at the ASCoA Annual Meeting.
10) Action will be taken at the meeting by Council members. Voting outcomes include:
    a) Award Accreditation
    b) Accreditation deferred until identified corrective actions made and accepted by the Council
    c) Accreditation denied
11) The ASCoA will deliver the Council decision in writing to the program within 14 days of the ASCoA Annual meeting.

a) A program receiving a negative decision may request additional information from ASCoA on specific areas to improve the application for resubmission.

12) Programs earning/awarded Accreditation will be recognized at the ASAS Annual Meeting.

Note: Minimum time from application submission (April 1) to Accredited status is 15 months.

Accreditation Timeline and Annual Calendar

Date	Action
By April 1	Deadline for Intent to Submit form. Deadline for applicants seeking accreditation to submit completed application materials for consideration during the next annual cycle.
April - June	Subcommittees (a subcommittee assigned to each applying program) of ASCoA members review and prepare initial report for Council to be given at Annual Meeting
May/June	Annual Meeting of ASCoA a) Council reviews Intent to Submit applicants b) Council Acts on Program Applications (new applications) and identifies those moving to Site Review status c) Council Acts on Accreditation Decisions (applications in progress) d) ASCoA communicates Council decisions to the Institutions
July	Programs awarded Accreditation are recognized at the ASAS National Meeting
August	Site Reviews Scheduled with Institutions
September – March	Site visit window. Site reviews must be completed before April 1 a) Review team chair will coordinate and prepare a team report within 30 days and submit that to the ASCoA Chair b) The final report by the review team and approved by the ASCoA Chair is sent to the chief academic officer and program head (and other academic personnel as required) for review and comment on accuracy within 45 days of the visit. c) Program officials will have 14 days after receipt of the report to make comments. d) The Site Review Team submits final document to ASCoA for action at the ASCoA annual meeting. e) The final Council decision will be delivered to program officials within 14 days of the annual meeting.

Self-Study Report

Programs applying for accreditation will undergo a thorough self-evaluation to document and demonstrate compliance with the Accreditation Standards for Animal Science Programs. The self-evaluation is the most critical component of the accreditation process. The subsequent site visit is used to confirm, validate, and further comprehend the information provided in the self-study document. Programmatic ability to identify, define, and evaluate its own strengths, weaknesses, and uniqueness is critical to the accreditation process. This process of in-depth analysis provides benchmarking that can provide valuable insight for the continuous improvement goals of the program.

The self-study will provide a comprehensive description of how the institution meets or exceeds the standards and should follow the guidelines provided in the Self-Study Guidelines document. The self-study is submitted and approved as complete and acceptable by the ASCoA before a site visit is scheduled.

Site Visit

The purpose of the site visit is to gather information that corroborates and validates the self-study report and facilitate an in-person assessment of programmatic characteristics such as morale, leadership, cooperation, the environment and physical state of the learning environment or other areas not easily conveyed in written form. The visiting team will have carefully reviewed the self-study before the visit. It will use the 3-day on-site visit to assess the educational quality and accountability of the program in meeting all of the essential standards identified for accreditation. Should there be areas of questionable or non-compliance with the standards, these will be noted and become part of the review team report. The Site Review Team responsibilities include:

- Assessment of compliance with Accreditation Standards
- Investigation of questions raised from self-study document
- Meetings with students, faculty, administration, staff, other involved groups (alumni, industry)
- Visit to program facilities – animal facilities, labs, classrooms
- Conduct of exit meetings to deliver review findings to administration and program personnel
- Submission of a written report of the site visit to the ASCoA Council

Upon completion of the site visit, the Site Review Team Leader, with team member input, will prepare and submit a report within 30 days and submit to the Chair of the ASCoA. The ASCoA Chair will approve and send the report to the Program leadership including the chief academic office and program head, for review and comment on accuracy within 45 days of the visit. Program officials will have 14 days following receipt to provide a written response to identify and correct any inaccuracies and/or to provide comment before advancing the report to the ASCoA for action. The Site Review Team Report and input will be an essential part of the accreditation process, but it is the ASCoA that makes the final accreditation decisions.

Selection of the Site Review Team

The ASCoA will make the appointment of the Site Review Team members. All participants will have met the Visiting Team criteria and qualifications and submit an application to serve. The ASCoA will develop and maintain a pool of volunteers from which to select. Criteria for serving as a Site Review Team Member include: a B.S. degree in Animal Science or a related field, a M.S. or Ph.D. in Animal Science or a related field, a minimum of 6 years of professional experience in an Animal Science or related field, and have a commitment and interest in academic training. Early career professionals (< 6 years experience) may be considered for one of the review team member positions. Preference is given to visiting team members who are members of ASAS. Team members appointed to a program review will not have graduated from

or have been a past or present faculty or staff member of the institution being reviewed. Candidate team members must disclose any other potential conflicts of interest with an institution early in the selection process. Current residency of team members is preferred to be outside the program's state. Of the 4 member Site Review Team, at least one visiting team member will be from Industry or Government/Non-Government sectors.

Program Responsibilities During the Site Visit

The Program Head or designee will be responsible for the following in preparation for and during the Site Review Team Visit:

- Have a thorough understanding of the Accreditation Processes, Standards and follow the Guidelines for preparation of the Self Study.
- Inform institutional administrators, program faculty and staff of the application and process
- Accept or challenge for cause the Site Review Team Members assigned by ASCoA in the identified timeframe.
- Submit all required documents electronically by the assigned due dates.
- Work with ASCoA personnel in finalizing schedules, agendas, meetings and other components of the visit.
- Travel, lodging and other Site Review Team expenses will be the responsibility of the Program. Transportation assistance for Review Team members during the visit may be requested for travel to campus, facilities etc. and will be coordinated in advance.
- Facilitate meetings with program faculty, staff and students to maximize participation.
- Facilitate meeting for Review Team with employers of graduates and advisory committee.
- Provide a private conference room for Site Review while on campus.
- Be available throughout visit to answer questions as requested but Program Head will not participate in Review Team meetings and discussions.

Example Site Visit Schedule

A typical site review is 3 days in length. The following is an example schedule and is adjusted to fit the program's and institution's needs.

Day	Activity
Arrival Day – Evening Prior	Team members arrive by late afternoon at the hotel. Team members have Team Meeting at hotel. Discuss agenda, team and individual responsibilities and assignments.
Day 1	7AM – Working Breakfast of final prep and travel to campus 8:30 – Opening meeting – Brief review of process and procedures. Attendees: Institutional Administrators, Department Administration and Personnel 9:30 – Meet with Program Administration – Head, Program Coordinator 10:30 – Meet with program faculty Noon – working lunch with Advisory committee, employers 1:30 – First meeting with small groups (e.g., students, staff, graduate students, producer/industry) 2:30 – Second meeting with small groups 3:30 – Third meeting with small groups 4:30 – Team Meeting 6:30 – Dinner – informal dinner with small group of faculty and administration as desired by program leaders
Day 2	8:30 – Tour Program facilities – farms, labs, classrooms, etc. 10:00 – Meet with program faculty (session 2) Noon – Team meeting working lunch 1:30 – Visit classes, other meetings as needed. May split team to cover 3:00 – Team discussions, draft report preparations 6:30 – Team Dinner – Discuss draft reports and plans for exit meeting
Day 3	6:30 Breakfast and Hotel Checkout 8:00 Exit meeting – Oral report of team findings to Institutional and Department administration 9:30 Exit meeting - Oral report of team finding to Program faculty and staff 11:00 Team departs

Accreditation Fees

Fees

Fees charged for the Accreditation of Animal Science programs are structured to cover the costs of accreditation. ASAS is committed to providing support staff and overhead annually in support of the ASCoA function. An annual budget for the ASCoA will be approved by the ASAS Board of Directors. Annual and application fees of program participants will be reviewed and re-evaluated periodically. Changes to the fee structure will be approved by the ASAS Board of Directors and announced 12 months before implementation. All fees are due and payable when invoiced or application submitted.

Fee Schedule

Item	$
Application Fee (due with application submission, April 1)	$5,000
Annual Fee (billed July 1)*	$3,000
***The Annual Fee begins the year accreditation is awarded.**	

Confidentiality of Accreditation Process

All information provided by applicants in the Accreditation process is handled as confidential and for the use of the ASCoA and associated personnel only. No disclosure of the Accreditation materials will be disclosed outside the process without the permission of the institution.

Term of Accreditation

Accreditation of a program is granted upon the action of the ASCoA. It is accredited for a period of 7 years, provided that the program continues to meet all accreditation requirements, including submission of annual reports, notification of substantive changes to the program, and annual fee payments.

Continuing accreditation after the initial period will require a self-evaluation and site visit following the same process as for initial accreditation. Accredited programs will be notified at the beginning of year 5 of their term to begin renewal processes.

Annual Reports

An annual report is required of all accredited programs. This allows the ASCoA to ensure that programs remain in compliance with the standards of accreditation. The annual reports are due on May 15 and will be reviewed at the ASCoA annual meeting. Late reports will be assessed a late fee.

Annual report information

The annual report must contain the following information.

- Substantive changes in the program, which may include but are not limited to:

    - Changes in faculty and/or administration that impacts the program
    - Curricular changes to the program
    - Fiscal changes and impacts
- Enrollment updates
- Updates to graduation numbers and employment of graduates
- Actions taken in response to site visit review

Withdrawal from Accreditation Status

An Institution that has submitted a letter of intent to apply for accreditation or has submitted a completed accreditation application document, may voluntarily withdraw from the accreditation process at any time by submitting a letter of withdrawal from the program head/chair and/or the program Dean to the Animal Science Council on Accreditation. No annual/application fees will be refunded.

Withdrawal from Accreditation Process

An Institution that has an ASAS accredited animal science program or is a candidate for accreditation, may voluntarily withdraw from accreditation at any time by submitting a letter of withdrawal from the program head/chair and/or the program Dean to the Animal Science Council on Accreditation. No annual/application fees will be refunded.

Suspension of Accreditation

Accreditation can be suspended for two reasons.

Administrative suspension

Cause for an administrative suspension is primarily lack of payment or reports required to maintain good standing. Payments and reports that are 60 days past their due dates are delinquent and will be suspended. Because this is an administrative action, this type of suspension is not subject to appeal. A letter from the Council will be sent to the program indicating cause, corrective action, and timeline.

An administratively suspended program will be listed as suspended for up to one year. If corrective action (e.g., submission of delinquent reports or payments) is not taken within the one-year period of suspension, accreditation of the program will be revoked. If corrective action is taken within the one-year period of suspension, the program's accreditation will be restored.

Standards suspension

Cause for a standards suspension is failure to comply with accreditation standards or the parent institution has lost accreditation by its accrediting agency. A suspension because of standards failure is subject to suspension. A letter from the Council will cite specific deficiencies related to specific standards criteria, will list suggested remedies (but others may be appropriate), and will set a date by which the institution is to respond.

A program suspended because of standards failure is allowed 30 days for written notice of appeal (see appeal process below). If the appeal has not been initiated within 30 days, accreditation of the program will be revoked.

In case of suspension, no prepaid fees are refunded.

Appeal Process

Conditions for Accepting Appeals

Appeals may be made only in response to an ASCoA decision of accreditation denied. The grounds to appeal are limited to the following situations:

- Applicants do not agree that the ASCoA followed the published policies and procedures.
- Applicants do not agree that the ASCoA applied the published Accreditation Standards for Animal Science Programs.
- Applicants do not agree that the ASCoA accurately assessed the submitted documentation and evidence that was available at the time of the ASCoA decision.

Procedures

- ***Notice of Appeal.*** The notice of appeal must be submitted in writing by the Dean of the college to the ASCoA Chair and copied to the Accreditation Coordinator within 30 days of receipt of the accreditation denied notification. This document must detail all of the grounds upon which the appeal is based.
- ***Engagement of ASAS Board of Directors.***
    - Upon receipt of the notice of appeal, the ASCoA Chair will forward the notice to the ASAS Board of Directors from which a three person Appeal Committee will be formed within 30 days and will be chaired by a member designated by the ASAS President. Current ASCoA members or persons who were involved in the application review process are not eligible to participate on the appeal committee but previous ASCoA members should be considered if available. If no, experienced and previous ASCoA member is available from the Board of Directors, a former ASCoA member should be selected to serve as a non-voting member of the Appeal Committee to provide insight and knowledge of ASCoA functions, procedures and processes.
        - **Note: The role of the Appeal Committee is to determine if the ASCoA followed the published procedures and reached their decision in a fair manner. Their role is specifically NOT whether they would have reached the same conclusion as the ASCoA.**
    - Once established, the Appeal Committee will have access to all documentation from the accreditation process including application documents, correspondence and responses between the ASCoA, Site review team and institution. The information provided by the institution in the Notice of Appeal will be included in the documentation. The institution has the burden of proof that conditions for an appeal exist. The Notice of Appeal should contain detailed evidence to support the claim. The Institution will be informed in writing once the Appeal

Committee is in place. The Committee will have up to 90 days to render their decision.

  - Appeal Committee will review the case and hold a virtual hearing. At the hearing, the institution and ASCoA are expected to have representatives available to respond to questions seeking clarification of positions and information presented in the documentation being reviewed by the Committee.
  - Following the hearing, the Appeal Committee will have 30 days to present its decision in writing to the ASAS Board of Directors, to the ASCoA and to the institution. This decision will include the facts and reasons resulting in their decision.
- ***Final decision by ASAS Board of Directors.*** The ASAS Board of Directors will have 30 days after receipt of the Appeal Committee decision to make the final decision to either: Uphold the original ASCoA decision of Accreditation denied; or to overturn the decision of the ASCoA of accreditation denied. If the decision is to uphold the ASCoA decision then the ASCoA decision is final and the institution can reapply for accreditation after one year. If the decision is to overturn the ASCoA decision to deny, then a second review will be initiated in accordance with recommendation of the Appeal Committee. The decision of the ASAS Board of Directors is final and may not be appealed. The Institution will be informed in writing of the decision from the ASAS Board of Directors.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Accreditation Standards for Animal Science Programs

Accreditation Standards for Animal Science Programs
American Society of Animal Science Accreditation Committee
Adopted On June 25, 2020

Introduction:
The American Society of Animal Science (ASAS) exists to foster the discovery, sharing and application of scientific knowledge concerning the care and responsible use of animals to enhance animal and human health and well-being. As such, the following five core principles guide the work of the society:

6. Animals are essential to human life and well-being.
7. The care and use of animals are held to the highest standards of integrity and professional ethics.
8. Research and scientific information are communicated in an open, transparent, and dynamic manner.
9. Career development for animal scientists, educators and producers is essential to the viability of the allied and animal industries.
10. Animal science and the production of animal-sourced foods must continually evolve to meet the needs and values of society.

Additional details about the ASAS can be found at www.asas.org. Pursuant to the core principles of the society as defined in the Mission Statement, and particularly core principal 4, the American Society of Animal Science, in furtherance of these principals, accredits educational programs in the United States that lead to a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science.

The objectives of ASAS Accreditation are as follows:

- To improve the overall quality of animal science education through program self-evaluation and peer review by qualified academic and industry professionals
- To foster excellence in animal science educational programs through the periodic revision of standards for accreditation and to apply those standards in evaluation of the educational environment and effectiveness of animal science programs
- To recognize the diversity of animal science programs that in addition to production animal agriculture, may include care of companion animals, preservation of species (e.g. captive exotics) and management of laboratory animals
- Through the accreditation process, to assure students, employers, the public and other organizations that ASAS accredited programs have educational objectives and outcomes consistent with current professional standards for the field of animal science, and have adequate resources to accomplish these objectives

The standards set forth in this document describe the essential elements of a program in animal science to include these seven standards of accreditation:

8. Program mission and objectives
9. Program governance, administration and institutional support

10. Students
11. Program learning outcomes and curriculum
12. Faculty
13. Facilities, equipment and technology
14. Outreach and engagement with industry, public, institution

This accreditation provides latitude for an individual program to fully describe their unique initiatives, applications to educate students in animal science and variation in how their program is implemented and accomplishes their objectives.

ASAS recognizes the need for diversity and encourages an environment that represents and promotes communication and collaboration from representatives of different cultures, experiences and viewpoints. This includes students, faculty and external constituents.

It is explicitly not a goal of this program to assess the overall institution in detail but instead relies upon the opinions of other accrediting bodies appropriate for such a task. To be eligible for this accreditation process the institution must have appropriate state, or federal legislation for its function and be accredited by its regional commission on accreditation.

This document defines the Accreditation Standards of Animal Science programs. These accreditation standards will be periodically reviewed by the Animal Science Council on Accreditation (ASCoA)

Standard 1: Program Mission and Objectives

Program Mission and Objectives

The program to be accredited must have a clearly defined mission that is supported by goals and objectives that promote understanding the program's purpose and values and providing standards by which progress may be measured:

- The mission statement shall address the reason for the program's existence and its contribution to its constituency.
- The program shall present a set of goals which support the mission and which, if attained, constitute progress toward accomplishing the mission.
- Each of the program's goals shall be supported by criteria that describe how the goals are achieved.
- The program shall be able to provide measurable objective metrics that demonstrate progress toward achieving the mission, goals and objectives.

Planning and Assessment Processes

Relevant and dynamic animal science programs must change and adapt over time. The program to be accredited must be able to articulate a process and demonstrate historical application (when appropriate) by which its mission and objectives can be, and have been, modified and updated. The following considerations should be evident in each revision:

- Identification of the constituencies and the needs of the constituencies that the program seeks to serve are compatible with the parent institution
- Demonstration of a process of obtaining feedback from the constituencies and how that information is utilized for continuous feedback and improvement of the program
- Description of the need to develop professionals in the field of animal science which equips them to meet with technical, social, environmental, cultural, economic and other needs of the constituency they serve
- Development of and support for standards of professional and ethical behavior for all individuals in the field of animal science
- Recognition of the diversity in use of animals for the benefit of society requires a multi-disciplinary approach to promote human and animal well-being

Program Disclosure

Transparency is essential for accredited programs to be successful and maintain relevancy. Accredited programs must maintain an active and ongoing effort to publish to the program's constituencies its mission, goals and objectives and accreditation status. Therefore, an accredited program must provide evidence of disclosure through promotional literature and media and include the following:

- Mission statement, goals and objectives
- Educational experiences offered to students
- Description of responsibility and biographical information for all faculty
- Description of facilities available for student use
- Accreditation status

- Student achievement

This information should be readily available and accurate in an easy to understand form. This information should also be easily accessible from the program's website.

In addition, access to the following demonstrates transparency, but disclosure through promotional material is not a requirement for accreditation. This type of information should be available from the parent institution, or upon request:

- Costs and opportunities for financial aid for undergraduate and graduate degree programs
- Student performance both prior to and following graduation

Standard 2: Program Governance, Administration and Institutional Support

This accreditation program is for a bachelor of science degree in Animal Science. The program seeking accreditation shall have the authority and resources to achieve its mission, goals, and objectives. Each animal science program shall be recognized as a discrete professional program with the resources, institutional support, and authority to enable achievement of the stated program mission, goals and objectives. The institution must provide support and leadership for the successful delivery of a high quality animal science program. This includes human and financial resources and support and use of institutional services.

Program Administration

The program must be administered by a person(s) recognized by and with equivalent title and authority as programs within comparable units in the institution. This will usually be the Department Head/Chair and/or departmental coordinator of academic programs. Evidence must be provided of sufficient administrative staff support for the efficient clerical needs to maintain and provide an environment in which program goals and student outcomes can be attained. **Teaching must be a highly recognized and supported priority for the unit**. Additional administrative requirements include:

- The program exists as a discrete and identifiable program within the institution.
- Student numbers within an Animal Science program must be appropriate to achieve requirements of the program's mission. Student enrollment must not exceed resource capacity monetarily or in faculty and support staff numbers. Appropriate faculty/staff-student ratio must be maintained for academic quality and student safety.
- The program administrator holds a faculty appointment in the program.
- The program administrator exercises effective leadership of and management functions for the program.
    - Where the program administrator is not the primary administrator for the academic unit, as in an animal science program within a multidisciplinary department or school, the animal science leader must have the authority to significantly influence the management of resources, including budget, faculty review, tenure and promotion outcomes, and the direction of the animal science program.

Institutional Support
The parent institution must provide adequate funding and other institutional support to allow the program to attract and retain highly qualified and diverse faculty, staff, and administrators. It must provide opportunities for faculty and staff professional development. It must also support the student-learning environment to ensure the quality and continuity of the program.

Program Support

- Funding is available to assist faculty and other instructional personnel with continued professional development.
- Funding is adequate for student support.
- Adequate faculty and staff support personnel are available to accomplish the program's mission and goals and to ensure program delivery, student recruitment, program assessment, and overall continuous improvement.
- Funding is available to cover expenses associated with facilities and staff to house and maintain animals used in the teaching program and/or costs associated with accessing and using animals maintained and owned by off-campus entities.
- Funding is available to cover ongoing costs associated with maintaining and upgrading infrastructure, equipment and appropriate technology on farms and in laboratories to provide real world insight to production and care of animals.

Supporting Programs

- The parent institution must provide strong, well-staffed student support programs. Courses and support programs must be readily accessible for the program's students. The institution must have adequate library facilities and holdings, electronic access to information, and related services.
- The parent institution, in collaboration with the program unit, must provide a physical environment that is adequate in size, safe, healthful, and conducive to learning. Outdoor laboratories and farms must be available.

Standard 3: Students

Students are the reason for an accreditation program and a program's commitment to student development and success must be well documented throughout the accreditation process. From recruitment through degree attainment, student knowledge and competency in disciplinary concepts, technical skills, leadership, communication and problem solving should be progressively advancing and documented.

Student Recruitment, Admissions, Transfers, and Retention

- Recruitment and admissions policies for the program must be well defined.
- The program must have a recruiting program in place.
- The program must show evidence of an effective retention program with policies that aid in retaining students enrolled in the major.

- Articulation agreements that impact the program must be provided.
- Institutional and program processes for the acceptance of transfer credits must be provided.

Teaching

- The program is responsible for delivering current, high academic quality content within this science-based, animal-oriented discipline. (See Standard 5 for description of faculty standards.)
- Faculty are to be evaluated on a scheduled basis to ensure quality teaching.
- The program is required to provide opportunities for experiential learning within the animal science field.

Advising

- Advising of students within an accredited Animal Science program must provide academic, career and professional development advising opportunities. Processes and personnel providing the advisement of students must be defined and identified.
- The program must document the support services provided to meet the needs and career goals of the student population.

Student Extracurricular/Experiential Experiences (Student Life)

- Extracurricular programs should be offered to provide opportunities for animal-oriented experiential ("hands-on") learning.
- Co-curricular activities, e.g. clubs, teams, should be offered to provide guided learning and leadership opportunities.

Standard 4: Program Learning Outcomes and Curriculum

An accredited Animal Sciences Program is responsible for fulfilling the departmental, college, and institutional missions and purposes in educating enrolled students. The program administration works systematically and effectively to plan and develop, implement, evaluate and access, improve, and assure academic excellence in quality and integrity of their program. It is essential that an accredited Animal Science program is successfully positioned to train the next generation of professional animal scientists. The program learning outcomes and curriculum to accomplish this are defined below.

Program Learning Outcomes:

To assess the learning of students in accredited Animal Science programs, seven Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) are required. These PLOs are based on performance indicators to be developed by individual programs to assess student learning and development and assess levels of skills and knowledge. These outcomes define the knowledge, skills, and competencies a student should possess upon completion of an Animal Science program and which will prepare them to pursue careers in the animal science industries.

Criteria for student learning outcomes are each defined by one or more learning or skill levels of: understanding, applying, evaluating, implementing, identifying, integrating, communicating, and engaging. Student attainment of these outcomes are measured and assessed during the accreditation process using direct and indirect processes. These can include but are not limited to: examination of student works (artifacts), exams, interviews and other information provided by the program.

Program Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge of animal science disciplines: nutrition, reproduction, physiology, breeding, genetics, meat science, animal health, food safety, animal behavior and animal well-being for the improvement of animal production practices, products and services. This will require a curriculum with a strong foundation in mathematics and science including chemistry and biology.
2. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate and communicate the application of innovative technology and scientific knowledge and how it can benefit animal science and society.
3. Demonstrate the ability to implement diverse animal production systems to sustain economic and environmental resources in a socially responsible manner. This requires the ability to analyze and interpret data.
4. Demonstrate critical thinking to identify, evaluate and communicate global and contemporary issues impacting animal science and production animal agriculture.
5. Communicate the contributions of animals, animal products and animal services to society across multifaceted mediums.
6. Understand how laws and regulatory issues guide the professional and ethical use of animals in society.
7. Engage in experiential learning or hands-on experience in the animal sciences that promotes lifelong learning.

Curriculum

Curriculum requirements are expected to be met in concert with an institution's general education, college and program specific requirements. The curricula of accredited animal science programs may take different approaches in meeting the standards of accreditation.

- **Animal Science Specific Curriculum:** The Animal Science specific curriculum must include courses that upon successful completion will accomplish all of the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) defined in the preceding section. Specific courses to accomplish the PLOs are not defined, rather the curriculum in its entirety will be assessed against the PLOs. Programs will differ in how PLOs are met. Specific courses may be required to meet a set of PLO, while in other cases, that content may be part of a more comprehensive course. Courses required to meet specific PLOs may be taught within the home academic unit or may be provided by other units.

Program specific courses must develop increasingly in-depth understanding and abilities related to advanced concepts in the animal sciences. Courses that contribute to meeting each PLO must be identified.

The curriculum must provide diversity in course delivery experiences and conduct and include lectures, laboratories, discussions and experiences of application to the field.

- **General Education Curriculum:** General education subject areas are often provided outside the animal science unit. These courses must meet the institution's requirements while preparing the student for success in the animal science program. All programs must include mathematics, chemistry, biological sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Communication skills, oral and written, must be developed throughout the curriculum. Technological competency is required. Students must develop and demonstrate proficiency in digital efficiency.

A curriculum map identifying PLO with specific course offerings is required.

Syllabi
Current syllabi must be provided for all courses contributing to meeting the PLO's. Syllabi must include: educational objectives, subject matter and course content, assignments and evaluation methods.

Student Learning Evaluation and Assessment:
Periodic evaluation and assessment of the program's curriculum must be documented and the process for improving effectiveness and responding to changes in the industry must be provided. A program must use and document the process of course and curriculum assessment and evaluation in meeting PLOs and student success in achieving the PLOs. The evaluation and assessment should include: effectiveness of instructional methodologies, incorporation of current technologies, attainment of technical expertise of subject matter, student timelines to graduation and graduate entry into professional positions. External industry stakeholder input must be part of the curriculum evaluation and assessment process. Student input into the process is also required and alumni input is encouraged.

Standard 5: Faculty

Faculty are the core of the program and as such must be recognized, valued and supported by the institution. Teaching faculty are responsible for delivering high-quality instruction with current and evolving content. Collectively, faculty must possess appropriate professional credentials, possess disciplinary diversity and be sufficient in number to deliver the breadth and depth of subject matter defined in the Program Learning Outcomes. Teaching loads and scholarly contributions of faculty should be consistent with institutional requirements and standards and opportunities for professional development of instructional faculty are required.

Credentials:
The number of faculty required to deliver a successful program will vary among institutions and program size. All programs are required to meet the following:

- Sufficient instructional personnel with appropriate teaching loads must be identified to deliver the required core curriculum.
- Greater than 50% of the faculty teaching in the program must have PhDs in Animal Science related disciplines.
- The Animal Science Department (or program administration for Animal Science)of the institution must be the home department for 75% or more of the faculty teaching in the program. Faculty teaching in courses contributing to the PLOs for whom the Animal Science department is not their primary department must be appropriately credentialed by the department or institution to teach the assigned course(s). The program administration's credentialing process must be defined.
- The primary instructor of upper division core courses (Jr and Sr level) must be taught by faculty with PhDs in animal science related disciplines or appropriately credentialed by program administration as above.
- Lower division (Fr and Soph level) and elective courses may be taught by appropriately credentialed instructional personnel with MS degrees in Animal Science or related areas when documented expertise and knowledge are approved by program administration. In instances where the primary instructor's highest degree in Animal Science related disciplines is a BS degree, PhD faculty oversight and program administration approval is required.

Disciplinary Diversity:
Disciplinary diversity of professional credentials of the teaching faculty is essential to address breadth and depth of the program offered. The faculty roster must include documentation that disciplinary training and expertise within faculty exists for all Program Learning Outcome discipline areas.

Teaching Load, Scholarly Activity and Faculty Development,

- Teaching loads of faculty must be appropriate and in concert with institutional norms and account for other expectations (research, extension, service) of the faculty. Documentation of faculty teaching loads is required.
- Evidence of scholarly activity of all faculty teaching in the program is required.
- Evidence of and support from the institution for continuing education and professional development must be available to and used by faculty.
- Evidence of faculty engagement with industry is required.

Standard 6: Facilities, Equipment, and Technology

The program shall provide faculty, students, and staff access to facilities, equipment, libraries, and other resources necessary for supporting and achieving the program's mission and learning objectives.

Animal Facilities and Access

The program shall provide animals and appropriate animal facilities and laboratories as an integral part of the curriculum. These facilities must be safe, adequate in size and conducive to learning the required outcomes. The institution or private entities may own these facilities. Continuous-use facilities not owned by the institution should have instructional use agreements. Requirements include:

- Students must have sufficient access to animals and animal facilities and be trained in safe handling techniques that provide safety for handlers and the animals. The facilities must be sufficient to support the program learning outcomes.
- Institutionally owned facilities must meet Ag Guide recommendations (https://aaalac.org/about/Ag_Guide_3rd_ed.pdf) or the institution's Animal Care and Use committee requirements and be adequately maintained.
- Accommodations must be made when appropriate for students with disabilities at facilities that support program learning outcomes or alternatives be provided.

Technical Equipment and Information Systems

The program shall provide information systems and technical equipment needed to achieve its mission and objectives to students, faculty, and other instructional and administrative personnel. Requirements include:

- Students must have sufficient access to the Internet at livestock and laboratory facilities, relevant technical equipment, and computer equipment and software.
- The frequency of equipment and software maintenance, updating, and replacement must be sufficient.
- The hours of use of information systems and equipment are sufficient to serve faculty and students.

Libraries

The program shall provide library collections and other resources sufficient to support its mission and educational objectives and include:

- Collections adequate to support the program
- Courses integrate library's collection and on-line resources.
- Library hours of operation and online access convenient and adequate to serve the needs of faculty, staff, and students.

Office and Laboratory Facilities

The program shall provide designated, code-compliant, adequately maintained spaces to serve the requirements of the faculty, staff, and students to support program learning outcomes.

- Faculty, staff, and administration are provided with appropriate office space.
- Students are provided with adequate labs for hands-on learning in support of program learning outcomes.
- Facilities are adequately maintained and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and applicable building and fire codes.

Standard 7. Outreach and Engagement with Industry, Public and Institution

Accredited programs must be relevant to serving the interests of the public including stakeholders in industry and alumni and be consistent with institutional goals, objectives and policies. To accomplish outreach and engagement, the program must be supported appropriately by the institution including the availability of cross-discipline learning and discovery. The program must document the ability to be responsive to changes occurring in the world around it by creating opportunities for students, staff and faculty to engage in the diverse industries associated with animal science.

Industry

Programs must engage with industry stakeholders across multiple levels including Administration, Faculty, and Students to ensure that they remain relevant to the industries that they serve.

- Administration.
  Administrators (Department Head/Chair) of the program should have a forum that engages members of industry across a spectrum of businesses. This forum should review high level programming and provide inputs on the relevance of program outcomes to industry needs. There should be evidence of program evolution based on feedback from this forum.
- Faculty.
  Teaching faculty must understand the connection of curricular content to underlying industry and scientific trends.
- Students
  Students should be expected to complete experiential learning in an appropriate segment of industry. For example this could be work experience, internship, volunteer work, and research projects.

Public

- Programs should have in place opportunities to educate the public in the basics of animal science as an essential element of the educational process.
- Programs should be transparent to the public and invite public comment in areas of public interest and provide opportunities for the public to experience animal science programming on issues important to the public (e.g. open houses, seminars)
- All programs involving live animals must have the appropriate animal care oversight.

Institutional

- Programs should be engaged with the institution as part of the overall education program providing fundamental education in the non-animal science disciplines providing for a complete educational experience consistent with a 4-year degree.
- Programs should show evidence of cross department learning and discovery that advances Animal Science.
- Programs should have institution wide opportunities that engage students from within and outside of animal science to discuss multidisciplinary issues that are impactful to society.

- Alumni engagement is an important source of resources and insight for an animal science program. Programs should access institutional alumni organizations connected to the program for feedback and insight.