

Certification Examination

CVCS

Certified Veterinary
Compounding Specialist



CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK

Recognition, Value, Expertise...

It is what certification is all about!

ABOUT CERTIFICATION

Competency-based certification allows pharmacists to demonstrate validated, practice-relevant knowledge in a defined specialty. Through CPS certification, candidates attest to professional accountability, lifelong learning, and safe, effective practice.

The Certification Commission for the Council on Pharmacy Standards (CC-CPS) is the independent body that designs, governs, and maintains CPS certification and recertification programs. CC-CPS operates at arm's length from CPS education and operations, with formal conflict-of-interest controls, documented firewalls, and term limits to preserve independence.

CC-CPS follows recognized best-practice frameworks, including ISO/IEC 17024, the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA/APA/NCME), and guidance from ICE and NCCA.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Eligibility Criteria	3
Resources for Exam Candidates	4
Fees	5-6
Steps to Register for Computer Testing	7
Application Checklist	8
Administrative Policies	9 - 11
General Policies	12 - 14
Exam Content Outline	15
About CPS	20

CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK ELIGIBILITY
CRITERIA

All eligibility criteria must be met at the time of application

CURRENT LICENSURE

Candidates must hold a Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) or Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy (B.S. Pharm.) degree from a program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE). Graduates of programs outside of the U.S. must hold a degree deemed equivalent and/or possess a Foreign Pharmacy Graduate Examination Committee® (FPGEC) Certificate.

PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

Current/active unrestricted licensure as a pharmacist is required. An "unrestricted" license is not currently subject to any limitations, probation, or disciplinary action.

- **U.S. Licensed Pharmacists:** Must possess an active, unrestricted license to practice pharmacy in at least one U.S. state or territory.
- **International Pharmacists:** Must hold an active and unrestricted license in their country of practice. A certified English translation must be provided if the original license is not in English.

Candidates will need to upload their license or a printout of the verification that includes their name, license number, licensing state or country, and the date the license expires.

SPECIALTY QUALIFICATION

To ensure candidates have foundational knowledge in the specialty, one of the following two pathways must be met:

1. **Standard Pathway:** Completion of one year (12 months) of experience comprised of at least 2000 hours of practice time as a licensed pharmacist in one of the above exam specialties must be documented. **This is not an either/or requirement – both time and hours must be met.**
2. **Certificate Pathway:** The specialty experience requirement is met for candidates who hold an active certificate of completion from a nationally recognized provider in a related subject matter. This includes, but is not limited to, the completion of a relevant PGY residency, fellowship, certificate/training program, or a relevant graduate degree. Recognized providers include:
 - American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP)
 - American Pharmacists Association (APhA)
 - American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP)
 - American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP)

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

RESOURCES

CPS Exam Candidates

Use the [Study Guides & Preview Tests](#) page as the **official and most current source** for all exam materials.

Use the Study Guides & Preview Tests page as the official and most current source for all exam materials.

How to find your materials

1. Visit pharmacystandards.org/study-guides.
2. Search by certification name or acronym (e.g., CPOM).
3. Open the items under your credential:
 - **Outline** – Exam content outline & competencies
 - **Guide** – Candidate Guide with policies, sample items, and study tips
 - **Case Study** – Scenario-based practice
 - **Preview** – Short preview quiz
 - **Practice Exam** – Practice test with scoring



Before you register

- Read your Candidate Guide and Testing Guide (remote proctoring rules, ID requirements, system check, reschedule/cancel windows).
- Confirm your name on the account **matches your government ID**.
- Run the **system check** on the device and network you will use on test day.

Need help?

See FAQs or Contact Us from the Study Guides page.

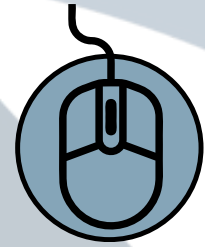
CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

Group Fee Payments

CPS will accept group payments for certification exams from institutions. Details are on the CPS website.

FEES

All fees are
non-refundable



\$395
TOTAL EXAM FEE

Application + Examination
Includes a **non-refundable**
\$50 application fee.

Examination Fees

- The total exam fee is \$395 (= \$50 Application + \$345 Examination).
- The \$50 application fee is non-refundable.
- If you are found ineligible, CPS refunds the \$345 examination portion automatically.
- After you schedule an appointment, reschedule/cancel windows and fees apply (see Administrative Policies, pp. 9–11).
- Payments are online only by Visa, Mastercard, or American Express (U.S. dollars).
- If paid by a third party (e.g., employer), any permitted refund is issued to that payer.
- Applications are not accepted by mail, phone, or fax.

Note: If an applicant is determined ineligible, CPS refunds the \$345 examination portion. The \$50 application fee is non-refundable.

Other Non-refundable Payment Related Fees

Incomplete Application Fee



All incomplete applications are subject to a non-refundable \$30 reprocessing fee upon the submission of proper documentation. See page 9 for more information.

License Verification



If licensure information is requested requiring an additional submission, the candidate will have two weeks to provide the license with all the correct information and pay the non-refundable \$30 reprocessing fee. If this is not provided within the two weeks, the application will be marked ineligible. Ineligible applicants will receive a refund minus the \$50.00 non-refundable application fee. There are no refunds or withdrawals for applications using a bulk code.

Credit Card Chargeback



Assessed only if a credit-card dispute is resolved in CPS's favor. Future registrations may be blocked until balances are cleared.

CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK

FEES

All fees are
non-refundable

Other Exam Related Fees

Reschedule
(date/time) — \$50

Allowed **≥ 48 hours** before your appointment via your CPS account. Changes inside 48 hours are not permitted; the **no-show** policy applies.

Exam Change —
\$125

Administrative change to switch to a different exam (before an appointment is scheduled). May require re-review of eligibility.

Withdrawal — \$165



Cancel your exam before scheduling or **≥ 7** days before your appointment to withdraw. CPS refunds the examination portion (\$345) minus \$165. Within 7 days, or after a no-show, the examination portion is forfeited. See Administrative Policies (pp. 9–11) for full timelines.

Retest — \$395



Retest candidates must pay the full application (\$50) and examination (\$345) fees and must observe a 45-day wait before reapplying.
See Retest Policy (p. 9).

Computer exam candidates can change their scheduled testing date to a **\$50 non-refundable fee**.

Candidates may do this from within their CPS account.

Refer to CPS Testing Guide for details.

Refunds

Ineligible Computer Testing Applicants will receive a refund of the \$345 examination portion (the **\$50 application fee is non-refundable**) minus any outstanding charges.

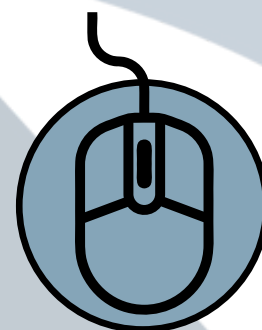
No refunds

will be issued for the following circumstances:

- Candidates who are not successful in achieving certification.
- No-shows or candidates who fail to test.
- Candidates who are unable to schedule within the eligibility period and do not withdraw per policy.
- Once an exam session has started.

CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK

STEPS TO REGISTER

HOW TO REGISTER FOR A CPS EXAM
(REMOTE, COMPUTER-BASED)STEP
1**Confirm eligibility**

Review the **Eligibility Criteria** for your credential (link to section).

STEP
2**Submit your application**

Submit your application online at the CPS website **PharmacyStandards.org**. Applications can only be submitted online. You cannot submit an application by mail, telephone or fax. Payment must be made online by credit card. Individual or group payments can be made.

STEP
3**Prepare your documents**

To get prepared to complete the application - *see the application checklist on the next page*. It is a handy listing of all the information you will need to supply.

STEP
4**Email confirmation of your registration**

After completing and submitting the application, you will receive an email confirmation within 30 minutes. **This will be the ONLY confirmation notice you will receive for your application. If you do not receive it, please make sure the email in your profile is accurate and check your email folders.**

STEP
5**Application approval procedure**

The application will be reviewed to determine qualification to take the examination. This process can take up to two weeks, depending on the volume of applications received at the time of submission. If the application is incomplete, *see page 10* to learn how to resubmit the application and what fees will need to be paid.

STEP
6**Notification of eligibility to take the exam**

If approved, an Eligibility Letter will be emailed and posted in your CPS account with instructions to schedule your exam.

Before scheduling:

- Run the system check on the device/network you will use.
- If you need accommodations, submit your request before booking.
- Ensure your account name matches your government ID.

Eligibility period: You must schedule and test within your 365-day eligibility period (see your letter).

CPS is not responsible for lost or misdirected email. **Please make sure the email in your profile is accurate and check your account 5-7 days after you have registered** to ensure your application was complete and additional information is not needed. If you do not receive your examination eligibility letter within 2 weeks of your examination application submission confirmation, use the "Contact Us" link on **PharmacyStandards.org** and select "Application I already submitted" from the drop down menu, to inform CPS.

CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK

APPLICATION CHECK LIST

Before filing your application look over the below checklist and gather the information needed to complete it.

☐**PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

You have complete contact details (name as it appears on your government ID, address, phone, email). Your CPS profile email is current and monitored.

☐**ELIGIBILITY:**

You reviewed the eligibility requirements and meet one pathway (Standard or Certificate/Training)

☐**LICENSURE:**

You have your pharmacist license or primary-source verification showing name, license number, jurisdiction, type, and expiration date ready to upload. If not in English, include a certified English translation. Non-US grads include FPGEC® Certification (as applicable). Your license name matches your government ID or you have legal name-change proof.

☐**EMPLOYMENT:**

You know your current employer contact info (address, phone, email) and have 5-year work history (titles, dates, specialty area, supervisor/contact). Include gaps/unemployment where applicable.

☐**SPECIALTY QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS:**

You have documentation for your pathway:

- Standard: summary of qualifying duties and estimated 2,000 hours/12 months within the stated window (verifiable).
- Certificate/Training: certificate of completion (or PGY/residency/fellowship/degree) plus syllabus/competency summary.

☐**APPLICATION AGREEMENT:**

You will check the agreement box to e-sign the statements below. Applications cannot be submitted without consent.

I have read and agree to abide by CPS policies in the Candidate Guide and Testing Guide, including fees, reschedule/withdrawal timelines, and conduct rules. I understand and consent to remote proctoring, including room scan, screen share, and audio/video recording for security and audit. I certify the information provided is true and complete; I understand that false or misleading statements may result in denial, invalidation, or revocation. I understand my application is subject to audit and authorize CPS to contact employers, licensing boards, and education providers to verify information. I acknowledge the \$50 application fee is non-refundable and that other refunds are governed by the published policy.

CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Incomplete Application Processing

An application is **incomplete** if any of the following apply:

- Missing or incorrect information.
- Licensure proof missing required data (name, license number, jurisdiction, type, expiration date) or is not in English without a certified translation.
- Payment not authorized or reversed (declined card, return, or chargeback).
- Any issue that prevents CPS from determining eligibility.

Process:

Incomplete applications are returned with instructions to upload the missing items and pay a **non-refundable \$30 reprocessing fee**. All filing deadlines continue to apply. If the resubmission does not fully resolve deficiencies, the application is declared ineligible (the **\$50 application fee is not refundable**).

Retest Policy

Candidates who wish to retake a CPS exam must submit a **new application**, meet the then-current eligibility criteria, and pay the **full application (\$50) and examination (\$345) fees**. CPS does not limit lifetime attempts, but the maximum number of attempts in a calendar year is **three (3)**. Each retest uses a different form of the exam.

Mandatory waiting period

- A **45-day wait is required from the date/time of the last attempt before submitting a retest application or scheduling a new appointment**.
- The wait applies to all delivery modes of testing and all exam forms.
- Applications submitted before the 45-day mark are **not accepted**. If submitted in error, the **application fee remains non-refundable**.

Interruption / invalid attempt rules

- If an exam session experiences **candidate-side** failure (device, internet, environment, refusal of proctoring/ID), the attempt is **invalid** and a retest after 45 days is required; fees follow the **No-Refunds** policy.
- If CPS or the test vendor causes the outage, CPS will provide a no-cost reschedule of the same attempt (no 45-day wait) or, if the attempt cannot be restored, a retest after 45 days without additional fees beyond the original exam fee.

Result notice

- The 45-day date is shown on the candidate's **results/attempt notice** and in the CPS account.

All timelines and fees are governed by the most current online policy at pharmacystandards.org; online versions supersede print.

All policies and procedures are subject to change without notice

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Changes & Withdrawals

Reschedule (date/time) — \$50 non-refundable

For the same exam, you may change your appointment ≥ 48 hours before the start time via your CPS account.

- Must remain within your 365-day eligibility period.
- Limit: 1 reschedule per registration (additional changes require a withdrawal + new registration).
- No changes allowed < 48 hours before the appointment or on exam day.
- See Fees for no-show rules.

Exam or Eligibility-Window Change — \$125 non-refundable

Use this to switch to a different CPS exam or to adjust your eligibility period (no appointment scheduled yet).

- Re-establish eligibility for the new exam; CPS may request additional documentation.
- Any approved change uses the original 365-day period (no reset).
- Request must be submitted ≥ 30 days before the end of your eligibility period.
- Limit: 1 exam/window change per registration.
- No refunds of original fees or the change fee.

Rescheduling (same exam): \$50 | Exam change: \$125

All candidates requesting a change

MUST:

- Submit the change request within one calendar year from the first date of their original assigned eligibility period.
- Cancel their exam date (if they have one scheduled), before submitting a change. Scheduled exams may also be canceled using the "Schedule" link in your account.
- Use the CPS website online Change Request Form.
- Submit a non-refundable fee of \$125 with the Change Request Form.

Not permitted

- Changes on exam day or after the appointment start time.
- Switching exams after check-in begins.
- Only CPS pharmacy credentials may be selected.

To change examination category:

- Eligibility must be re-established for the new exam category, and additional documentation and fees may be required.
- The time to consider eligibility for the new category will count toward the original assigned computer testing window.
- ***Examinees must take the exam for which they have been determined eligible. No changes will be permitted on examination day.*** If a candidate knowingly or unknowingly takes an examination other than they were found eligible to take, the examination will not be scored. No refunds will be allowed, and all fee policies will apply if the candidate reapplies for an examination.
- Candidates must submit their request at least 30 days prior to the end of their 365-day eligibility period.

CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Withdrawal Policy - Computer Testing

- Only the applicant/candidate may request a withdrawal.
- When you may withdraw:
 - Before scheduling an appointment, or
 - ≥ 7 days before your scheduled appointment time (withdrawal cancels the appointment).
- Refund: CPS refunds the examination portion (\$345) minus a \$165 withdrawal fee $\rightarrow$ \$180. The \$50 application fee is not refundable. Any outstanding charges are deducted from the refund.
- Requests < 7 days before the appointment or after a no-show are not eligible for any refund.

Withdrawal Policy - Bulk Purchase Voucher

Withdrawals are not allowed after eligibility is determined. Refunds are governed by the bulk purchase agreement; CPS does not issue refunds for redeemed codes. (Institutions manage reassignment within their terms.)

Substitution Policy

Candidate substitutions are not allowed. The name on the registration must match the government ID presented on test day. Name changes require legal documentation before scheduling.

Score Cancellation

CPS may cancel scores and/or invalidate an attempt for irregularities (e.g., identity mismatch, prohibited items, coaching, tampering, exam content disclosure, policy violations) with or without proof of intent. Fees are not refunded. CPS may impose waiting periods or bar future testing per policy.

Auditing Applications

Applications are subject to audit. Candidates must provide requested documentation (e.g., licensure, employment verification, training certificates) within 14 days. Failure to respond or verify may result in denial or revocation. By submitting an application, you authorize CPS to contact employers, licensing boards, and education providers for verification.

All policies and procedures are subject to change without notice

CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK**Test Disclosure**

CPS does not release live test questions, answer keys, or full forms. Using, sharing, soliciting, or possessing exam content—before or after testing—is a security violation and may result in score invalidation, revocation, and suspension of testing privileges.

GENERAL POLICIES

How Exams are Scored

CPS exams are **criterion-referenced**: your outcome is compared to a predefined performance standard, **not** to other candidates. The passing standard is set through periodic **standard-setting studies** (e.g., Angoff/Bookmark) conducted with subject-matter experts and approved by the CPS Board.

CPS uses **item response theory (IRT)** and **test equating** to place different forms of the exam on a common scale. Because some forms may be slightly harder or easier, equating ensures fairness—candidates meeting the standard on any form receive the **same pass/fail decision**.

Score reports provide:

- Your **overall result** (Pass/Fail).
- **Content-area diagnostics** to guide study. These diagnostics are **not percent correct** and are **not comparable** across candidates or attempts. Labels indicate performance **relative to the standard** (e.g., **Below Target / Near Target / At Target / Above Target**).

The passing standard may be reviewed periodically to reflect current practice and blueprint updates.

Retention of Computer Answer Strings

CPS retains computer answer strings and operational testing data for a minimum of 3 years and may retain longer for quality assurance and legal/regulatory purposes. Identity verification media (e.g., audio/video from remote proctoring) are retained per the CPS Privacy & Data Retention Policy.

All policies and procedures are subject to change without notice

CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK**Designation
Authorization**

Certification is a non-transferable, revocable, limited, non-exclusive license to use the certification designation, subject to compliance with the policies and procedures, as may be revised from time to time.

Any use or display of CPS certification marks and/or logos without the prior written permission of the CPS is prohibited. Any candidate or certificant who manufacturers, modifies, reproduces, distributes or uses a fraudulent or otherwise unauthorized CPS certificate, CPS designation or other credential may be subject to disciplinary action, including denial or revocation of eligibility or certification. Any individual who engages in such behavior also may be subject to legal action.

GENERAL POLICIES

ADA and Nondiscrimination Policies

CPS does not discriminate on the basis of **age, sex, pregnancy, race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military/veteran status, or genetic information.**

Testing accommodations. CPS provides **reasonable accommodations** consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for qualified candidates. Requests must be **submitted with the application and before scheduling** an appointment, using the CPS Accommodation Request Form (see **pharmacystandards.org/accommodations**). Documentation must be **current** and signed by a qualified clinician describing the functional limitations and recommended accommodations. CPS will acknowledge requests within **5 business days** and issue a determination within **15 business days** of receiving complete documentation. Information is **confidential** and used only for accommodation determinations. Denials may be **appealed** per the Appeals Procedure below.

Appeals Procedure

Candidates may appeal eligibility determinations, accommodation decisions, exam administration irregularities, or policy applications. Appeals must be **submitted in writing within 60 days** of the decision or event and should include relevant facts and supporting documents. CPS will acknowledge receipt within **5 business days** and render a written decision within **30 days** (or notify if additional time is required). Appeals are reviewed by the **CPS Policy Review Committee**, independent of the original decision maker, and may be escalated to the **Board of Directors**. CPS does **not** release exam content or answer keys; score verification involves **administrative/technical re-scoring only**.

Revocation

Certification may be denied, suspended, or revoked for: falsification or misrepresentation; **exam security violations** (cheating, proxy testing, item disclosure); misuse of CPS names, logos, or marks; failure to meet or maintain eligibility/recertification requirements; **loss or restriction of the license to practice pharmacy**; nonpayment of required fees; or other material policy violations.

Prior to action, CPS will provide **written notice** of the allegations and an opportunity to **respond**. A written decision (which may include sanctions and eligibility to reapply after a specified period) will be issued and may be **appealed** under this policy.

All policies and procedures are subject to change without notice

CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK

For further details, visit the CPS website PharmacyStandards.org and download the recertification catalog for a full description of the recertification process. Click on **Renew your Certification** on the home page.

GENERAL POLICIES

Renew Your Certification

CPS requires **recertification every three (3) years** to verify ongoing competence in each credential's core knowledge areas.

Recertification Steps

Earn the required credit using either:

1. Continuing Education (CE) that fits your topics, or
2. Approved professional activities (e.g., teaching, publications, precepting, quality-improvement/projects, committee work).
3. Finish within 3 years, upload documentation, and keep records for audit.

Lapse & Reinstatement

If requirements are **not met by the deadline**, the credential **expires**. Expired credentials may be regained only through **re-examination**, subject to the then-current eligibility criteria. CE completed **after** expiration cannot be applied retroactively.

Audits & Recordkeeping

CPS randomly audits recertification applications. If selected, you must provide CE certificates and short activity descriptions within the requested timeframe. Maintain CE documentation **throughout the cycle and until approval**.

Verification of Your Credential

CPS provides **third-party verification** of active credentials on request.

- **When available:** After official results post to your CPS account and your digital certificate is issued.
- **What is verified:** Credential name and ID (if applicable), **status** (active/expired), **original certification date**, and **current expiration date**.
- **How to request:** From the CPS website (see pharmacystandards.org/verification), select **Request a Verification**, enter the recipient's email, and submit payment.
- **Fee & delivery:** **\$30 per request**. Verifications are sent by email to the designated party.
- **Notes:** CPS cannot verify until certification is achieved. Ensure your name and profile information are accurate before submitting a request.

All policies and procedures are subject to change without notice

CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK

EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

How to Study

CPS does not provide review courses or study materials for the examination. CPS views the examinations as an evaluative process. Eligibility criteria have been established to identify minimum levels of preparation for the examinations. CPS believes your practice experience is your best preparation. Candidates can review detailed test outlines and suggested resources in the Candidate Guides.

Domain 1: Foundational Veterinary Pharmacology & Regulatory Compliance (15%)**Task 1: Evaluate species-specific pharmacological factors impacting drug therapy.**

Differentiate the anatomy and physiology of common companion, exotic, and food-producing animal species.

Analyze pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic variability between species (e.g., absorption, metabolism, receptor sensitivity).

Assess species-specific drug toxicities and contraindications to prevent adverse events.

Apply principles of allometric scaling for dose calculation and adjustment across species.

Evaluate how an animal's age, breed, and concurrent disease states influence drug selection and disposition.

Task 2: Apply federal and state regulations governing veterinary pharmacy.

Interpret FDA Compliance Policy Guides (CPGs) and AMDUCA for extra-label drug use.

Differentiate legal requirements for compounding from FDA-approved drugs versus bulk drug substances.

Assess the validity of a Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR).

Ensure compliance with state-specific board of pharmacy rules for veterinary prescribing.

Analyze emerging regulatory issues, including telepharmacy and remote prescribing for animal patients.

Task 3: Manage controlled substances in strict compliance with DEA and state regulations.

Implement procedures for ordering, receiving, storing, securing, and dispensing controlled substances.

Maintain accurate and perpetual inventories, reconciling records in accordance with federal and state law.

Verify the legitimacy of controlled substance prescriptions for animal patients, including all required elements.

Develop protocols for the proper disposal and reverse distribution of controlled substances.

Ensure all record-keeping for controlled substance compounding is complete and readily retrievable for inspection.

Task 4: Implement USP and other professional standards for veterinary compounding.

Apply the principles of USP General Chapters <795>, <797>, and <800> to veterinary-specific scenarios.

Develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) that align with current professional guidelines.

Establish facility design and engineering controls appropriate for the type of compounding performed.

Implement personnel training and competency assessment programs for all compounding staff.

Ensure all documentation, including Master Formulation and Compounding Records, meets or exceeds professional standards.

Task 5: Critique veterinary drug information resources to support evidence-based practice.

Access and interpret information from primary, secondary, and tertiary veterinary literature (e.g., Plumb's, journals).

CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK

EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

Evaluate the quality of evidence for the safety, efficacy, and stability of compounded preparations.

Differentiate between established therapeutic uses and anecdotal reports for specific formulations.

Serve as a drug information expert for the veterinary healthcare team.

Stay current with new drug approvals, guideline changes, and emerging research in veterinary pharmacy.

Domain 2: Veterinary Formulation Design & Component Selection (15%)**Task 1: Select appropriate APIs and excipients based on biopharmaceutical and species-specific principles.**

Evaluate the physicochemical properties (e.g., solubility, pKa) of APIs to guide formulation development.

Interpret Certificates of Analysis (C of A) to ensure the quality and purity of bulk substances.

Choose excipients that enhance solubility, stability, or palatability while avoiding species-specific toxicities.

Select appropriate preservative systems based on the dosage form and potential for microbial growth.

Ensure all selected components are from reputable sources and meet USP-NF or equivalent quality standards.

Task 2: Design non-sterile formulations to optimize palatability and owner adherence.

Develop formulations for oral liquids, powders, and capsules tailored to animal size and needs.

Design flavored, soft chewable treats considering species-specific taste preferences (e.g., savory for cats, sweet for dogs).

Formulate oral pastes and transdermal gels to provide alternative administration routes for difficult-to-medicate animals.

Select appropriate suspending and emulsifying agents to ensure content uniformity in liquid preparations.

Choose dosage forms that are likely to improve owner adherence to the treatment plan.

Task 3: Formulate sterile and specialized preparations ensuring patient safety and product stability.

Design injectable formulations with appropriate pH, tonicity, and sterility for various routes of administration.

Develop sterile ophthalmic, otic, and inhalation preparations that are non-irritating and properly preserved.

Calculate osmolality and perform necessary adjustments for parenteral and ophthalmic preparations.

Select appropriate sterilization methods (e.g., filtration, autoclaving) based on drug and container stability.

Evaluate the potential for pyrogens and particulates, implementing procedures to minimize their presence.

Task 4: Design formulations for food-producing animals, ensuring residue avoidance and regulatory compliance.

Select APIs and excipients that are approved or have established tolerance levels in food-producing species.

Utilize resources like the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank (FARAD) to establish appropriate withdrawal intervals (WDIs).

Formulate preparations to be stable under farm or field conditions.

Avoid components that could interfere with residue testing or are prohibited for extra-label use.

Maintain detailed records to ensure traceability and compliance with food safety regulations.

Domain 3: Compounding Procedures & Quality Control (25%)**Task 1: Execute non-sterile compounding procedures using appropriate techniques and equipment.**

Apply techniques such as comminution, geometric dilution, and levigation to ensure homogenous mixtures.

Operate, calibrate, and maintain compounding equipment such as electronic balances, ointment mills, and capsule machines.

CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK

EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

Utilize appropriate methods for preparing various dosage forms like suspensions, emulsions, and soft chews.

Package finished preparations in containers that maintain stability and protect from degradation.

Document all steps of the compounding process accurately on the compounding record.

Task 2: Apply aseptic techniques for preparing sterile preparations in compliance with USP <797>.

Perform proper hand hygiene, garbing, and aseptic technique within primary engineering controls.

Manipulate sterile components and devices without introducing microbial contamination.

Conduct media-fill and gloved fingertip sampling tests to validate aseptic proficiency.

Implement cleaning and disinfecting procedures for the cleanroom suite and sterile compounding areas.

Ensure the proper staging and introduction of materials into the controlled environment.

Task 3: Manage hazardous drugs throughout the compounding lifecycle according to USP <800>.

Identify hazardous drugs (HDs) using the NIOSH list and perform an assessment of risk for the veterinary practice.

Implement procedures for the safe receipt, storage, compounding, and transport of HDs.

Utilize appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and closed-system transfer devices (CSTDs).

Establish protocols for deactivating, decontaminating, cleaning, and disinfecting HD handling areas.

Manage HD spills and waste disposal in accordance with environmental and safety regulations.

Task 4: Implement a comprehensive quality management system, including facility and environmental monitoring.

Develop and maintain a written quality assurance (QA) plan that includes SOPs, training, and documentation.

Perform final verification of preparations for accuracy, labeling, and physical characteristics.

Conduct routine equipment calibration, performance validation, and preventative maintenance.

Implement an environmental monitoring program, including air and surface sampling, in compliance with USP standards.

Establish a process for investigating, documenting, and resolving compounding errors, deviations, or complaints.

Task 5: Integrate technology to enhance compounding safety, quality, and efficiency.

Utilize compounding software for calculations, workflow management, and maintaining digital logs.

Implement barcode scanning to verify ingredients and prevent errors during the compounding process.

Evaluate and properly use automated compounding devices for mixing, filling, or packaging.

Maintain secure and redundant digital records for prescriptions, compounding activities, and quality control data.

Leverage technology for inventory management and tracking of chemicals, including lot numbers and expiration dates.

Domain 4: Patient & Caregiver Counseling, Safety, and Pharmacovigilance (20%)**Task 1: Counsel caregivers on the safe and effective administration of compounded medications.**

Provide clear, step-by-step instructions and demonstrations on how to measure and administer the medication.

Educate on proper storage, handling (especially for HDs), and disposal procedures.

Discuss potential adverse effects, signs of toxicity, and actions to take if they occur.

Address common barriers to adherence, such as palatability or a difficult-to-medicate animal.

Verify caregiver understanding through teach-back methods or asking clarifying questions.

**CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK**

EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

Task 2: Manage communication-related risks by documenting informed consent and mitigating liability.

Communicate the rationale for using a compounded medication versus an FDA-approved product.

Explain the potential risks and benefits associated with the specific compounded formulation.

Document conversations with clients regarding risks, benefits, and administration instructions.

Develop and utilize consent forms for high-risk preparations or complex cases.

Implement strategies to manage professional liability associated with compounded medications.

Task 3: Collaborate with the veterinary healthcare team to optimize therapeutic outcomes and safety.

Function as a drug therapy expert, providing formulation recommendations to veterinarians.

Communicate effectively to clarify prescription orders and discuss potential therapeutic alternatives.

Provide evidence-based information on stability, compatibility, and potential drug interactions.

Participate in case discussions to help solve complex therapeutic challenges.

Proactively follow up with veterinary clinics to assess patient outcomes and formulation performance.

Task 4: Manage adverse drug events through appropriate pharmacovigilance channels.

Recognize and document suspected adverse drug events (ADEs) reported by caregivers or veterinarians.

Report ADEs for animal patients to the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) using Form FDA 1932a.

Investigate quality-related complaints that may be linked to an ADE (e.g., suspected sub-potency or contamination).

Utilize veterinary pharmacovigilance networks (e.g., VET-LIRN) for surveillance and reporting.

Communicate findings and recommendations to the prescribing veterinarian to prevent future occurrences.

Task 5: Generate compliant and informative labeling for dispensed preparations.

Create prescription labels that meet all federal and state requirements for veterinary compounds.

Clearly state the patient's name and species, owner's name, active ingredients, strength, and quantity.

Include the assigned beyond-use date and specific storage instructions.

Apply appropriate auxiliary labels (e.g., "Shake Well," "Refrigerate," "Hazardous Drug").

Ensure the label explicitly states "Compounded Preparation" or similar required language.

Domain 5: Veterinary Clinical Application & Therapeutics (15%)**Task 1: Develop multimodal pain management and palliative care plans using compounded medications.**

Compound oral suspensions or transdermal preparations of opioids, NSAIDs, or gabapentinoids.

Formulate combination therapies (e.g., creams, gels) to target different pain pathways simultaneously.

Design patient-controlled analgesia (PCA) or continuous rate infusion (CRI) solutions for hospitalized patients.

Develop palatable formulations to facilitate long-term administration for chronic pain (e.g., arthritis).

Formulate medications to manage symptoms in hospice and palliative care, such as appetite stimulants or antiemetics.

Task 2: Design compounded therapies for common chronic conditions in small companion animals.

Formulate accurately dosed oral suspensions of cardiac medications for small patients (e.g., pimobendan, benazepril).

Develop transdermal preparations for drugs like methimazole for hyperthyroid cats.

Compound therapies for managing endocrine disorders like Cushing's disease (trilostane) or diabetes.

**CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK**

EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

Formulate anxiolytics and antidepressants (e.g., fluoxetine) into palatable dosage forms for behavioral conditions.

Design anticonvulsant therapies (e.g., phenobarbital, potassium bromide) for managing seizure disorders.

Task 3: Formulate specialized treatments for equine, exotic, and oncology patients.

Compound large-volume oral pastes or powders for equine patients (e.g., pergolide, omeprazole).

Calculate and prepare micro-doses of medications for exotic species (e.g., reptiles, birds, pocket pets).

Compound chemotherapeutic agents, ensuring precise dosing and adherence to hazardous drug handling protocols.

Develop supportive care medications (e.g., antiemetics, pain medications) for cancer patients.

Select appropriate flavoring and dosage forms for species with unique dietary habits and physiological constraints.

Task 4: Assess clinical scenarios to determine the appropriateness of compounding.

Evaluate if an FDA-approved, commercially available product could be used instead of a compounded preparation.

Analyze a patient case to identify clinical red flags or contraindications for a requested compound.

Assess signs of treatment failure and provide recommendations for formulation or dose adjustments.

Differentiate between a legitimate therapeutic need and a request for an irrational drug combination.

Determine when to decline to compound a prescription due to safety, stability, or regulatory concerns.

Domain 6: Professionalism, Ethics, & Practice Management (10%)

Task 1: Analyze ethical and legal dilemmas in veterinary compounding.

Evaluate the ethical principles guiding extra-label drug use and compounding decisions.

Manage conflicts of interest that may arise in the pharmacist-veterinarian-client relationship.

Assess the legality and ethics of compounding "office use" preparations under current regulations.

Determine the professional responsibility to ensure informed consent from the client.

Navigate situations where a requested compound may not be in the best interest of the animal patient.

Task 2: Manage practice operations for efficiency and safety.

Design a physical pharmacy layout that promotes a safe and efficient workflow.

Develop a system for prioritizing prescription orders based on urgency and complexity.

Implement effective training, competency assessment, and credentialing programs for all staff.

Optimize inventory control systems for APIs, excipients, and supplies to ensure quality and availability.

Manage the financial aspects of a compounding service, including pricing, billing, and communicating costs.

Task 3: Foster effective interprofessional collaboration and communication.

Build collaborative working relationships with veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and clinic staff.

Adapt communication styles to effectively interact with clients from diverse backgrounds.

Practice active listening to fully understand the needs of both the prescriber and the caregiver.

Provide feedback and receive input in a professional and constructive manner.

Communicate effectively with regulatory agencies (e.g., Board of Pharmacy, FDA) during inspections or inquiries.

**CANDIDATE
HANDBOOK**

ABOUT CPS

The Council on Pharmacy Standards (CPS) develops and administers professional certification programs for pharmacists. CPS awards credentials to qualified candidates who meet eligibility requirements and successfully pass the appropriate examination. Our programs validate advanced competence in contemporary practice areas, helping candidates demonstrate specialized expertise and employers verify it.

CPS certifications span pharmacy law and compliance, sterile and non-sterile compounding, immunization and public health, point-of-care testing, medication safety and quality, controlled substances stewardship, pharmacogenomics, telepharmacy, veterinary compounding, specialty pharmacy, and pharmacy informatics.

CPS PHILOSOPHY OF CERTIFICATION

Certification is a voluntary, rigorous evaluation that allows pharmacists to demonstrate advanced knowledge and be recognized for the expertise they possess. CPS certification and subspecialty examinations are designed to assess specialty knowledge and its application in contemporary pharmacy practice.

CPS credentials do not confer licensing authority or independent practice rights. Licensure and the ability to practice are governed by state boards of pharmacy and other applicable regulators. While some employers or jurisdictions may reference certification within their qualifications, CPS does not set licensure policy and cannot require recognition of its credentials. Practice and educational standards inform CPS examinations; however, the development of such standards rests with professional organizations, regulators, and the education community.

CPS encourages candidates to verify how certification relates to state licensure requirements, institutional policies, the standards of relevant professional organizations, and local employer expectations. For specific guidance, candidates should consult state boards of pharmacy, colleges and schools of pharmacy, professional associations, and prospective or current employers.