

OV70 Requirements for the Approved Blood Sampler qualification

July 2025

1. Minimum age qualification at initial application is 18 years.
2. Completion of satisfactory identification and basic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) security checks before enrolment on the training. Candidates need to await the results of their DBS checks before commencing training and this needs to be considered by the employer when recruiting potential candidates. The employer is required to confirm Approved Blood Sampler (ABS) eligibility before the training commences and the Approved Veterinary Supervisor - Blood Sampling (AVS-BS) is responsible for confirming this prior to conditional authorisation being granted.
3. Minimum academic requirement is either:
 - three GCSEs or equivalent qualifications in Mathematics, English and in a Science subject or Food Production
 - or
 - three years performance in a Government regulatory role e.g. Local Authority (LA) Inspector or Environmental Health Officer (EHO)
4. A minimum of six months previous livestock handling experience is required.
5. A Conflict of Interest declaration must be completed at enrolment onto ABS training.
6. The Official Controls Qualification (Animal Health Paraprofessional) - Approved Blood Sampler (OCQ(AHP) - ABS) qualification must be gained before authorisation is granted to carry out any blood sampling of cattle.
7. The theory training must be completed with an examination invigilated by a Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MRCVS), a Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) or an online invigilator appointed by the training provider.
8. Conditional authorisation to blood sample cattle under supervision for a maximum of six months is granted by APHA following successful completion of the online course, examination and the confirmation of an AVS-BS and deputy on the training record.
9. An AVS-BS must be nominated who must be an MRCVS with a current OCQ(V) - ES (Essential Skills) qualification. One AVS-BS can supervise a maximum of two ABSs, but only one of whom can be in training at any time. A deputy AVS-BS must also be nominated with the option for a second. The AVS-BS is also able to act as a deputy for other ABSs.

10. The AVS-BS is required to confirm an understanding of their role and responsibilities as detailed on the training record. The AVS-BS must accept responsibility and declare that they are supervising no more than the maximum permitted number of ABSs. An option for additional supervisors is included for each candidate, to cover the possibility that the candidate may need to move to another area to complete the requirements.
11. Candidates are required to blood sample a minimum of 100 cattle on at least three different holdings, including both beef and dairy cattle, under the direct and continuous supervision of an AVS-BS. A minimum of 95 blood samples must be collected from the coccygeal vein and a minimum of 5 blood samples collected from the jugular vein of cattle. However, the sampling of additional animals may be required before the AVS-BS considers the individual competent to blood sample both the coccygeal and jugular sites.
12. Whilst training, candidates need to be under constant direct supervision, i.e. physical presence of the AVS-BS on farm whilst blood sampling, with no exceptions.
13. An AVS-BS is required to sign off on the training requirement for the numbers of cattle blood sampled once minimum numbers are met.
14. A practical assessment is conducted by the AVS-BS once the ABS is considered competent by the AVS-BS and the minimum number of cattle have been blood sampled.
15. At the practical assessment, the ABS must blood sample at least 30 cattle, with a minimum of 25 coccygeal and 5 jugular samples.
16. If the practical assessment is passed, full authorisation to blood sample cattle is issued by APHA. Candidates are not permitted to carry out blood sampling alone until confirmation of authorisation is received.
17. If the candidate does not pass the assessment, the AVS-BS will need to take over the blood sampling. APHA will decide on further action required which will depend on the reasons for failure.
18. The AVS-BS must complete an on-farm assessment of the blood sampling of at least 20 cattle between four and six months after the ABS's full authorisation is granted. Failure to add the record of a successful audit to the training record will result in automatic suspension or expiry of the authorisation if not completed.
19. Revalidation of the OCQ(AHP) - ABS (theory only) is required:
 - four years from the date of successful completion of the OCQ(AHP) - ABS theory training exam
 - thereafter every four years.



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APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.