

OV71 The Approved Veterinary Supervisor - Blood Sampling role

July 2025

1. Qualifications for the Approved Veterinary Supervisor - Blood Sampling (AVS-BS) role:
 - the AVS-BS must be an authorised Official Veterinarian (OV) and hold the Official Controls Qualification (Veterinary) - Essential Skills (OCQ(V) - ES)
 - depending on the purpose of the blood sampling being carried out by the ABS, it may be necessary for the AVS-BS to be appointed as an inspector by the Agency under the relevant disease-specific legislation before they are able to supervise the ABS for that purpose. It is the responsibility of the AVS-BS to ensure that they are appointed as an inspector where appropriate and have confirmation of that appointment from the Agency before supervising an ABS
2. These same qualifications also apply to the deputy AVS-BS role.
3. The AVS has accountability for Approved Blood Samplers (ABSs) under their supervision. The AVS-BS must ensure that the ABS meets the requirements for the role. The AVS-BS is responsible for the following requirements:
 - to ensure eligibility of the ABS for enrolment, the ABS:
 - is at least 18 years of age
 - has at least GCSEs or equivalent in English and Mathematics and either a third GCSE in a Science or Food Production subject**or**
 - has three years of experience working in a Government regulatory role
 - has had identification and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) security checks completed with satisfactory outcomes prior to commencing any activities on behalf of government
 - has had at least six months livestock experience
 - to ensure the ABS is aware of and understands their responsibility regarding Conflicts of Interest when carrying out activities on behalf of Government and in particular blood sampling.
 - to provide Health and Safety (H&S) training and ensuring that the ABS understands their responsibilities for H&S on-farm and in particular whilst carrying out blood sampling of cattle.
 - training of the ABS once conditional authorisation to blood sample cattle has been granted.
 - direct supervision of the ABS whilst carrying out blood sampling of cattle during the period of conditional authorisation i.e. whilst training.

- confirmation that the ABS has met the training requirements for the numbers of cattle blood sampled (type of cattle and number of farms), once minimum numbers are met.
- to conduct the practical assessment of the ABS. This cannot be delegated to the deputy AVS-BS, other than in exceptional circumstances and in agreement with APHA.
- continued supervision of the ABS once full authorisation has been granted. This does not require routine AVS-BS presence on-farm.
- support for the ABS at all times including but not limited to:
 - guidance and if necessary, attendance where the ABS reports a H&S issue or incident
 - attendance in the event of challenge by the owner/keeper, for example on blood sampling technique, animal handling
 - attendance to examine any cattle for which the ABS reports suspicion of disease or referral to APHA if appropriate
 - guidance and if necessary, attendance where the ABS reports animal welfare concerns
 - attendance in the event the ABS reports suspicion of fraudulent activities
- the number of ABSs under the supervision of any single AVS-BS is capped at only one ABS in training per AVS-BS at any time and no more than two ABSs at any given time. At any time an AVS-BS can therefore have:
 - one ABS in training plus one authorised ABS or
 - two authorised ABSs
 - the AVS-BS can also act as a deputy for other ABSs simultaneously.
- an ABS may be required to move to another participating practice during the training period to meet the requirements for numbers of cattle blood sampled. A temporary additional AVS-BS or deputy may need to be nominated for this purpose and that AVS-BS may already be supervising other ABSs.
- the primary AVS-BS must nominate a deputy AVS-BS who will be responsible for the ABS in their absence. The primary AVS-BS will remain accountable for the ABS, but the deputy AVS-BS will be responsible when the role is delegated to them in periods of absence. The AVS-BS must ensure that the deputy AVS-BS is aware of their responsibilities in this role. A second deputy may be nominated for each ABS.
- a list of AVS-BSs and deputies is held by APHA for monitoring and audit purposes. Performance of veterinary supervisors will be monitored and audits targeted where required.

Note: The qualifications and requirements for an AVS-BS also apply to the deputy AVS-BS role.

- if the AVS-BS or deputy identifies any risks that compromise the ability of the ABS to perform the role or that compromise disease control, appropriate action must be taken and APHA notified without delay. This includes any conflicts of interest that are identified.



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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.