

**National Board of Certification for  
Animal Acupressure & Massage  
National Examination  
(NBCAAM)**

Revised January 2012

## **What Are the Objectives of the National Certification Examination for Animal Acupressure and Massage (NCEAAM)?**

The primary objectives of the NCEAAM are:

- To provide a national examination for students of either animal acupressure or massage.
- To protect the public by ensuring that animal acupressure and massage practitioners demonstrate a specified level of knowledge and skills.
- To assess the professional competency of either acupressure or massage practitioners in terms of their qualifications to enter practice.
- To provide a common standard in the evaluation of candidates that will be comparable from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.
- To contribute to the animal acupressure and massage profession through the development of improved definitions of the relationship between knowledge and professional practice.

**Please note:** Candidates may take any of the Acupressure or Massage National Certification Examinations. If students have the educational background and experience, they are welcome to complete both the acupressure (equine and/or canine) and massage (equine and/or canine) examinations. Each examination is comprised of around 150 questions.

## **How is the National Certification Examination for Animal Acupressure & Massage Constructed?**

The NCEAAM is around a 150-item multiple choice examination prepared through a cooperative effort of the major leading animal massage and acupressure schools and colleges in the United States. Verification of questions was conducted by a team of veterinarians, animal massage therapists and certified animal acupressure and veterinary acupuncture practitioners. This team of individuals and schools is responsible for the annual development and validation of the NCEAAM. The NCEAAM ensures that the testing reflects current practice in the field of animal acupressure and massage.

Questions for the NCEAAM are written by instructors of animal massage and acupressure, massage and animal acupressure practitioners, veterinarians, and veterinary technicians who represent all aspects of the profession, including academicians, practitioners, members of specialty boards, and the national practice associations. Each newly written question is reviewed and validated by at least three experts in the field of animal massage or animal acupressure and veterinary sciences for content relevance, importance, difficulty, and correctness.

Once a question is accepted following this validation process, it is placed into a computerized item-banking system. The questions for potential use on the NCEAAM are selected by the computer in accordance with subject-matter outline. The NCEAAM then reviews the computer-generated test, item by item, making changes and substitutions as necessary. Following this review, the finished examination is prepared by Hocking College who is responsible for test delivery.

## **What does the National Certification Examination for Animal Acupressure & Massage Cover?**

The NCEAAM is administered via an online testing site hosted at Hocking College. The NCEAAM is comprised of around 150 questions. The scoring of the NCEAAM is based on the candidate's responses to the questions derived from the test specifications (Appendix A).

The Animal Massage examination covers five (5) primary areas of responsibility within the scope of practice in animal massage. These areas of responsibility were obtained from a job analysis study completed by NBCAAM and its affiliates.

The Animal Acupressure examination covers six (6) primary areas of responsibility within the scope animal acupressure. These areas of responsibility were obtained from a job analysis study completed by NBCAAM and its affiliates.

The NBCAAM is revised yearly to ensure that the questions reflect current practices and important concepts in animal massage and acupressure techniques and technology.

Thirteen (13) sample questions similar to the NCEAAM are included in Appendix B.

## **Who can sit for the National Animal Acupressure & Massage Examination?**

The minimum standard for sitting for the NBCAAM examination is documented proof of attendance at a school or schools of either animal massage or animal acupressure resulting in an accumulated course of study equaling 200 hours or equivalent.

The 200 hours of education should be broken down as follows: the curriculum contains at least 50 hours of training in anatomy & physiology, kinesiology (for massage) and pathologies; 50 hours of supervised-in class hands-on work, which would include assessment and treatment, benefits of massage/acupressure, and practice guidelines; and the remaining 100 hours would be divided among classes such as business, ethics, behavior, safety, etc. Distance learning is acceptable for any "lecture" class such as anatomy & physiology, business and ethics. However, hands-on classes such as massage techniques, assessment, acupoint and meridian locations must be taught in an in-class supervised setting.

For those candidates wanting to take more than one of the NBCAAM examinations, a maximum of 50 hours is allowed for cross-certification (for example, a maximum of 50 hours of canine massage study can be applied towards the required 200 hours for canine acupressure), but none of the hours for cross-certification applies towards the hands-on requirement. All hands-on hours must be specific for the test to be taken.

Massage or acupressure training for humans may count for a maximum of 50 hours of the required 200 hour total. Such human training is required to be topic specific, that is massage or acupressure techniques, Anatomy & Physiology, meridian theory or acupoint energetics, for example. The remaining 150 hours of massage or acupressure training or equivalent, must be animal related.

International candidates may sit for the NCEAAM.

Along with submission of your application you are required to submit verification of school attendance and/or the equivalent of other training or experience. Applications are subject to audit for verification of educational experience.

For the Massage Examination the following general areas of study are required:

- Massage Theory & Application
- Anatomy & Physiology
- Massage Assessment Techniques
- Pathology
- Behavior, Handling, & Safety
- First Aid
- Professional Practice, Business & Ethics

For the Acupressure Examination the following general areas of study are required:

- Acupressure Theory & Application
- Acupressure Assessment Techniques
- Landmark/Surface Anatomy
- Pathology
- Behavior, Handling & Safety
- First Aid
- Professional Practice & Ethics

### **How is the National Animal Acupressure & Massage Examination Administered?**

The NBCAAM examination is administered at learning center sites throughout the country, at a Veterinarian's office, or at Hocking College, Nelsonville, OH. Students will locate a proctoring center in their area and arrange for a 'proctored' examination. Please note that many colleges, libraries, and tutoring centers offer proctoring services. A regional listing of proctoring sites is offered in Appendix C. Students may also contact Hocking College to complete their exam at this location. Students are required to submit an application to NBCAAM and once approved, their proctoring service will then receive a password and user ID for their use in connecting to the online examination. Around a five (5) hour time period is allowed during which the exam is to be completed, with each individual section having a time limit. Because the NBCAAM is not designed to test speed of performance, this time allotment is more than sufficient to allow most candidates to complete the test. Exceptions to this procedure would be made for emergency situations (illness, power outages, etc.).

### **When is the NBCAAM Examination administered?**

The National Certification Examination for Animal Acupressure & Massage is administered throughout the country at learning centers, at Veterinarian offices, and at Hocking College. Candidates are required to locate a learning center of their choice and schedule a 'proctored' examination time. The date and time are arranged at the convenience of the applicant and the proctoring center.

### **How is the NBCAAM Examination Scored?**

All questions that appear on the NCEAAM are retained for scoring purposes. The choices selected by candidates for each of the questions are computer-checked against the official answer key. The questions are randomly selected from a pool of over 500 massage and acupressure questions. Each item is scored individually and contributes to the candidate's total score. Candidates are encouraged to answer each NCEAAM item.

Each of the sections of the exam are weighted and candidates must score a 75% or above on each section to receive a passing score.

Candidates will receive their scores within three (3) weeks.

### **How Can Candidates Prepare to Take the Examination?**

Candidates may wish to review the major areas to be tested. Study guides with a list of reference books are available on this website. Past examinations are not distributed for reasons of test security. Thirteen (13) Sample Questions are presented in Appendix B for the Animal Acupressure Examination and the Animal Massage Examination.

### **How Can Candidates Retake the Examination?**

If a candidate does not pass the examination the first time, a 1 month waiting period must be observed prior to retaking the NCEAAM. If a candidate fails only one (1) or two (2) of the sections, the candidate has the option to only retake the sections failed. An examination fee of \$40 will be charged to retake one (1) section and a fee of \$80 will be charged to retake (2) sections of the examination. If a candidate fails three (3) or more sections, the full examination must be taken. An examination fee of \$100 will be charged for retaking the full examination. A maximum of 4 attempts are allowed and the same proctoring requirements apply for each attempt.

### **Are Examination Fees Refundable?**

If you have paid to take the exam for the first time, only a portion of the \$145 is refundable. Of the full exam fee, \$95 covers the exam costs and \$50 covers the administrative costs. Only the exam costs of \$95 are refundable, the \$50 administrative costs are non-refundable.

If you have paid to retake the exam, the fee is non-refundable in order to cover the administrative costs.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Test Specifications**

#### **List of Animal Acupressure Practitioner Practice Domains**

<b>Domains</b>	<b># of Questions</b>
<b>1. Assessment</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>2. Organ Systems</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>3. Acupoint Energetics &amp; Location</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4. Landmark Anatomy</b>	<b>15</b>

<b>5. Acupressure Pathology</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>6. Acupressure Technique, Practice/Ethics &amp; Safety</b>	<b>15</b>

### **List of Animal Massage Practitioner Practice Domains**

<b>Domains</b>	<b># of Questions</b>
<b>1. Anatomy &amp; Physiology</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>2. Kinesiology</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>3. Animal Pathology</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>4. Massage Theory &amp; Practice</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>5. Safety Behavior Business, Ethics, First Aid</b>	<b>15</b>

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Sample Questions - National Animal Acupressure and Massage Examinations**

#### **Acupressure:**

Following are thirteen objective multiple-choice questions similar to those that may appear on the actual Animal Acupressure National Examination:

1. Lung is considered the “Master of the Pulse.”
  - a. True
  - b. False
2. Which organ system is responsible for the animal’s physiological development?
  - a. Heart
  - b. Liver
  - c. Kidney
  - d. Lung
3. The Kidney is responsible for grasping and holding Chi from the:
  - a. Heart

- b. Liver
  - c. Kidney
  - d. Lung
4. Knowing right from wrong is ascribed to which organ:
- a. Bladder
  - b. Small Intestine
  - c. Large Intestine
  - d. Pericardium
5. When selecting a location for an acupressure session, it is best to have:
- a. Water, familiar open space and absolute quiet
  - b. Comfortable, familiar surroundings, and no other animals
  - c. Comfortable, safe surroundings and low distraction
  - d. Always have a companion animal and familiar surroundings
6. While working with the animal during a session, you must be sure the animal is comfortable even if you are not.
- a. True
  - b. False
7. In preparing for an acupressure session, it is good to:
- a. Breathe, talk to yourself, and do Chi exercises
  - b. Focus your healing intent and breathe
  - c. Balance your own body energy while looking at the animal
  - d. Feel your own energy and extend it to the animal
8. How and why would you introduce yourself to the animal?
- a. Offer treats and pet the animal to gain trust
  - b. Be very quiet so as to not offend the animal and wait to get a response
  - c. Verbally address and touch the animal to build rapport
  - d. Verbally or nonverbally acknowledge the animal to gain trust
9. The Four Examinations includes:
- a. Observation, Questions/Inquiry, Listening, and Smelling
  - b. Inquiry/Questions, History, Physical, and Listening/Smelling
  - c. Visual observation, Physical palpation, Hearing, and Inquiry
  - d. Questions/Inquiry, Physical palpation, Listening/Smelling, Observation
10. The first phase of the Four Examinations is:
- a. Inquiry/ Questioning
  - b. Visual Observation
  - c. General Hearing
  - d. Physical palpation
11. The Four Examinations are an assessment tool based on:
- a. Technical expertise
  - b. Ancient understandings
  - c. Training and keen senses
  - d. None of the above
12. The carpus is proximal to the elbow.
- a. True
  - b. False
13. GB 40 is located on the \_\_\_\_\_ aspect of the hind leg.
- a. Dorsal

- b. Medial
- c. Lateral
- d. Inside

Acupressure Answer Key: 1. A, 2. C, 3. D, 4. B, 5. C 6. B, 7. B, 8. D, 9. B, 10. B, 11. C, 12. B, 13. C

### **Massage:**

Following are thirteen objective multiple-choice questions similar to those that may appear on the actual Animal Massage National Examination:

1. The large lymphoid organ that stores blood is the
  - a. kidney
  - b. liver
  - c. pancreas
  - d. spleen
2. What are the effects of the parasympathetic nervous system on the heart?
  - a. decreased heart rate and decreased force of contractions
  - b. decreased heart rate and increased force of contractions
  - c. increased heart rate and decreased force of contractions
  - d. increased heart rate and increased force of contractions
3. Which of the following is not one of the main functions of the digestive system?
  - a. absorption
  - b. digestion
  - c. mastication
  - d. secretion
4. What action occurs when the splenius muscles are contracting bilaterally?
  - a. the head and neck are elevated
  - b. the carpus is extended
  - c. the neck is flexed
  - d. the head and neck are lowered
5. What is the function of the intercostal muscles?
  - a. associated with digestion
  - b. associated with breathing
  - c. is to raise the thorax
  - d. assists in flexion of the spine
6. Adduction of the front limb is accomplished by which muscle(s)?
  - a. trapezius
  - b. triceps brachii
  - c. rectus abdominis
  - d. pectorals
7. Complete the following statement, “the bicep femoris...”
  - a. is a muscle of the lateral thigh
  - b. extends the hip and hock
  - c. adducts the femur
  - d. a and b
8. Which of the following is not a physiological benefit of massage?

- a. improves joint flexibility
  - b. improves proprioception
  - c. increases blood pressure
  - d. relieves muscle tension
9. Massage benefits for the muscular system include...
- a. drains stagnant lymph nodes
  - b. stimulates muscles
  - c. decreases flexibility
  - d. decreases elimination of metabolic wastes
10. Strokes for a relaxing massage should be...
- a. slow and soothing
  - b. deep and active
  - c. invigorating to refresh the tired animal
  - d. complicated to impress the guardian
11. Massage does NOT provide positive physiological effects for...
- a. the circulatory system
  - b. the nervous system
  - c. the skeletal system
  - d. none of the above
12. A massage therapist should NEVER...
- a. massage an animal exhibiting shock or fever
  - b. massage directly over an open wound or skin infection
  - c. make a diagnosis of the animal's medical condition
  - d. all of the above

Massage Answer Key: 1. D, 2. A, 3. D, 4. A, 5. B, 6. D, 7. D, 8. C, 9. B, 10. A, 11. D, 12. D

## APPENDIX C

### Proctoring Sites

Please click on the link below to view a listing of suggested proctors by state. Please contact the site of your choice to obtain their testing procedures.

Centers for Assessment and Testing: [List of Suggested Proctors by State](http://www.ncta-testing.org/cctc/find.php)  
(<http://www.ncta-testing.org/cctc/find.php>)

If the list provided by NBCAAM does not provide you with a proctoring site in your area, it is suggested that you contact a community college close to you. Quite often, community colleges offer proctoring services for their communities at large. Contact the general administrative office of the community college and they will put you in touch with the school's proctoring service. A typical fee range for a proctoring site is \$25 - \$50.

### Veterinarian Exam Proctor

It is also possible to use a veterinarian as an examination proctor. To do this, you need to identify a veterinarian who will agree to serve as an examination proctor. The examination proctor may not be related to you in any way.

The role of the veterinarian examination proctor is to receive the online examination user ID and password (sent by the Hocking College office directly to the veterinarian), provide a DSL or cable enabled computer and a quiet and monitored space for the exam to be taken. It is your responsibility to set up the date to take the exam with the veterinarian proctor as detailed in the 'Application Procedures' tab on the NBCAAM website. Veterinarian exam proctors will make sure practitioners taking the exam do not have access to notes or any learning materials during the exam. The veterinarian proctor will be also hold the practitioner to the exam time limit.