FAQs

(_For Students and Employers Purchasing on Their Behalf_**)**

GENERAL PROGRAM QUESTIONS

What is a Veterinary Assistant?

Veterinary Assistants (VAs) are essential members of the veterinary medical team. This entry-level role supports veterinarians and credentialed technicians by assisting with procedures, providing animal care, and helping keep the clinic running smoothly. IVAP prepares both new and current assistants to advance their skills and earn the Approved Veterinary Assistant (AVA) designation.

Who is the IVAP program for?

- New veterinary assistants looking for foundational training
- Experienced assistants seeking formal credentialing and skill validation
- Employers wanting to upskill staff and build consistent clinic protocols

Why should I take this program if I'm already a VA?

Even with years of experience, IVAP provides structured training aligned with NAVTA standards. It ensures consistency, fills in knowledge gaps, and strengthens clinical confidence. Completing the program can elevate your role, help you qualify for advancement, and enhance the level of care you provide.

What will I learn in IVAP? IVAP includes 9 modules covering:

- Veterinary roles, communication, ethics, history taking

- Animal behavior, restraint, pharmacology, vaccines, nutrition
- Emergency care, nursing, lab procedures, imaging, surgery
- Compassion fatigue, pet insurance, career readiness
- Fear Free Certification included

See full module list at the end of this FAQ.

How long is the program? IVAP is a 150-hour self-paced program:

- 50 hours of online coursework
- 100 hours of hands-on externship
  Students have 1 year (365 days) to complete the program.

Do I need to work at a hospital to enroll? No. If you are not currently employed at a veterinary practice, IGNITE will help place you with an externship site. Complete the externship request form: https://ask.ignitevet.com/student-externship

Can I fast-track the course? Yes, but we recommend consistent weekly study for better retention. Estimated weekly time: 2–3 hours.

COSTS & MATERIALS

Program Cost: $999
Includes: online access, instructor support, student community, virtual meetups, and Fear Free Certification access.

Textbook Requirement: *Textbook for the Veterinary Assistant, 2nd Edition* (Burns & Renda-Francis, Wiley)

- NAVTA-approved Textbook; improves exam pass rates and aligns with Ignite's IVAP lessons
- Print: ~**$70–80** (paid separately)
- Purchase via (other options available): Amazon, Wiley, VitalSource

Why this textbook?

This is the only NAVTA-approved textbook for veterinary assistant programs. Unlike other programs, IVAP integrates textbook readings into each module to ensure alignment with learning objectives and improve exam readiness.

Workbook/Worksheets:

Worksheets are embedded within the course modules. These replace traditional workbooks and serve as graded, practical tools to apply and assess knowledge.

NAVTA Exam Details

- **Exam Fee: ~$100** (paid separately)
  - [AVA EXAM Registration](#)

NAVTA / AVA EXAM

What is the AVA?

AVA = Approved Veterinary Assistant designation issued by NAVTA upon passing their exam.

Can I register for the NAVTA exam before finishing IVAP?

No. You must complete all modules and receive your IVAP certificate first. Then IGNITE will submit your graduation status to NAVTA. Once confirmed, you'll receive a registration code.

How do I register for the NAVTA exam?

- IGNITE submits your completion to NAVTA
- You'll receive a personal registration code
- You must register within **30 days** of receiving the code
- You'll have **1 year** from registration to pass the exam
- Learn more: NAVTA Exam Info

What if I miss the 30-day window?

Per NAVTA policy, students who do not register within 30 days lose eligibility and must retake an approved program. Extensions are rare and not guaranteed.

How many exam attempts are allowed?

Students have **2 attempts** to pass the AVA exam. Further attempts may require re-enrollment.

Is the exam fee included?

No. The ~$100 exam fee is paid directly to NAVTA upon registration.

Is there a prep course for the AVA exam?

No official prep course exists, but IVAP includes summaries and integrated textbook content to fully prepare students.

After I pass the exam, do I have to renew?

Yes. VetMedTeam facilitates the renewal process. Any renewal questions should be directed to VetMedTeam: ava-exam@vetmedteam.com

VetMedTeam emails courtesy reminders to all AVAs as their expiration date nears. Please ensure your VetMedTeam member profile is current with an active email address.

To renew your AVA designation, you must complete at least **10 hours of Veterinary Continuing Education.**

NAVTA does not permit extensions beyond the final expiration date. Individuals wishing to renew after the expiration date will be required to pay an increased fee and may be required to retake the AVA examination.

Learn more: NAVTA AVA Page

TIME COMMITMENT & STRUCTURE

How long does the program take?

Estimated time: **2–3 hours per week** to graduate in **5 months.** Students have up to **1 year** (365 days) to complete the program.

What are the course components?

- 50 hours of online coursework (Must be completed prior to externship)
  - Must complete through module 5 before starting externship (halfway through program) to start half of the externship hours.
- 100 hours of practical externship experience (must complete & graduate before you can register for the exam)
- Worksheets, checklists, and a final exam

Do I need to be working in a hospital to enroll?

No. If you're not already in a clinic, IGNITE will help secure a suitable externship site near you.

EXTERNSHIP

How does the externship work?

- 100 hours of hands-on work with unfamiliar animals
- You must complete the 5th module first, and then, if you wish, you can begin up to 25 hours of your externship before graduation.
- Submit completed Essential Skills Checklists signed by your Mentor
- Externship hours can be split between sites if needed

Who qualifies as a Mentor?

A credentialed technician or veterinarian who can oversee your clinical experience, answer hospital-specific questions, and verify your skill proficiency.

What if I don't have a hospital? IGNITE will assist with placement. Submit your request: https://ask.ignitevet.com/IVAP-student-externship-mentor-form

What if I already have a hospital in mind for my externship?

Great! Please let IGNITE know by submitting your information using the externship request form. We'll confirm that the site and mentor meet all requirements and ensure you receive the support you need: **https://ask.ignitevet.com/IVAP-student-externship-mentor-form**

SUPPORT & COMMUNITY

Who is Dr. Jim?

Jim Hurrell, DVM, is the Program Director and lead instructor for IVAP. A graduate of Michigan State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Jim has over 40 years of experience in veterinary education and has served as a program director at four AVMA-accredited vet tech programs. He's taught online for 25+ years and was the first AVTE liaison on the AAVMC Board. Dr. Jim supports students via email and virtual meetups. He will also be reviewing all assignments and providing detailed feedback. Expect speedy turnaround on communication within 24 hours, and assignment grading and feedback within 72 hours.

Students can contact him directly at: IVAPinstructor@ignitevet.com

How do I get support during the program?

- Attend virtual office hours with Dr. Jim
- Ask questions in the student community
- Use the IGNITE chat bubble for tech or account help

Who else can I contact?

- General questions: IVAPhelp@ignitevet.com
- Academic or program-specific: IVAPinstructor@ignitevet.com

MENTORS

What is a Mentor and What Does it Entail?

As a mentor, you are primarily responsible for the designated activities on the students' essential skills checklists and supervision of practical demonstration videos. IGNITE® will handle the rest! Don't hesitate to allow your student to observe and practice more items than are on their skills checklists.

How Much Time Is Involved in Being a Mentor?

The time commitment for a Mentor at an externship site is 100 clinical hours. 25 clinical hours must be completed during the Mid-Program Externship, and the balance by the end of the program. This is equal to 12.5 work days.

How Does The IGNITE® Veterinary Assistant Program (IVAP) Work?

Each IVAP module has an essential skills checklist, which includes items that the student must accurately demonstrate to you to sign off on student competency. The essential skills checklist is a significant component of learning. Students should download or print their checklists before starting the online modules and complete them during their externship. IVAP students are also required to become Fear Free certified, which is included as a part of our program.

When Will the Student Be Able To Take Their Approved Veterinary Assistant (AVA) Exam?

Once the student completes all online learning, assignment submissions, and externship requirements and becomes Fear Free Certified, our team will acknowledge their completion of the program. IGNITE will then email the student within one week with a code needed to apply for the exam at https://www.vetmedteam.com/class.aspx?ci=925. The student must pass all IVAP requirements prior to applying for the AVA exam.

How Does My Student Maintain Their Designation?

The student must renew the AVA designation every two years by completing 10 credit hours of continuing education.

What Are The Benefits for My Practice?

While a student is at their externship, a mentor should treat this as a long-term working interview. Your student may want a job during or after their schooling! If the student is already an employee of your practice, you can be confident that this person has a strong foundation, the knowledge, and the commitment to be optimized in their role.

FOR EMPLOYERS

Why enroll my team in IVAP?

- Increases team consistency and clinical readiness
- Reduces training time and boosts retention
- Enhances client satisfaction and compliance
- Prepares team members for advancement into credentialed roles

How much time is required from mentors?
Approx. 2 hours per student per module. Group mentoring is encouraged for efficiency.

What's different about IVAP?

- NAVTA-approved with the only integrated official textbook
- Flexible online access + built-in externship assistance
- Nationally recognized Fear Free Certification
- High-engagement content and real-time instructor access
- Independent Advisory Board with credentialed professionals guiding curriculum

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Advisory Board Members:

- Dr. Bob Murtaugh, DVM, MS, DACVIM, DACVECC, FCCM – Dean, Rocky Vista University
- Teresa Stefan, LVT, FVTE – Director, PIMA Medical Institute
- Dr. Lori Renda-Francis, LVT, BS, MS, PhD – Professor, Appalachian State University
- Two Approved Veterinary Assistants (AVAs) to be announced

Why is this a benefit?
All of our advisory board members are non-IGNITE and meet multiple times a year to ensure IVAP is relevant to the current industry standards.

Fear Free Certification: Included in your IVAP enrollment upon completion of the program. One-year access provided upon program completion.

Job Placement Help: While not formal, IGNITE shares job leads through its network with graduates.

FULL MODULE LIST

Module 1: Office & Hospital Procedures
Module 2: Client Communication & Ethics
Module 3: Animal Behavior & Restraint
Module 4: Pharmacy & Pharmacology
Module 5: Exam Room Procedures
Module 6: Small Animal Nursing
Module 7: Lab Procedures & Imaging
Module 8: Surgical Assisting
Module 9: Career Readiness & Practical Demonstration

Final Exam Module: Timed comprehensive exam + externship hour verification

Fear Free Module: After graduation - Fear Free course & certification upload

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CONTACT US

IVAPhelp@ignitevet.com – General assistance

IVAPinstructor@ignitevet.com – Academic/instructor questions