

ACVREP

Academy for Certification of Vision
Rehabilitation & Education Professionals



Orientation and Mobility Specialist Certification Handbook

2011

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Preface

Thank you for your interest in professional certification in Orientation and Mobility (O&M). You have probably completed an O&M program of study or obtained a degree in this area.

This Orientation and Mobility Certification Handbook will provide you with background information regarding the profession of Orientation and Mobility, its code of ethics, scope of practice, body of knowledge and competencies, and information about the certification process and requirements to become an ACVREP Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist® (COMS®).

We are glad that you have decided to pursue professional certification in this field and look forward to assisting you throughout this process.

Section 1 - Introduction

History, Mission, and Purpose

Established in January 2000, ACVREP's mission is to offer professional certification for vision rehabilitation and education professionals in order to improve service delivery to persons with vision impairments. It is committed to quality certification programs that meet rigorous recognized standards. Programs are designed to offer certificates the means to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and professionalism. ACVREP offers certification in three disciplines: Orientation & Mobility, Vision Rehabilitation Therapy, and Low Vision Therapy.

The primary purpose of ACVREP is to assist federal and state governments in improving public health and safety by supporting and promoting quality services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired through standards of excellence for professionals involved in the delivery of vision rehabilitation and education services. This purpose is achieved by:

- Identifying the standards common to employees in the vision rehabilitation and education professions, including the body of knowledge and work experience.
- Identifying the standards across specialized areas of the vision rehabilitation and education professions.
- Supporting employees and employers in using and applying the skill standards for personnel development.
- Creating a forum for key stakeholders in the vision rehabilitation and education profession, including employers, related health professions, education, and government groups.
- Identifying relevant training materials and resources to assist in teaching the vision rehabilitation and education standards.

- Devising and administering written examinations according to standards developed by the corporation.
- Granting recognition upon successful application and completion of the corporation's examinations and certification criteria and maintaining a listing of those persons granted such recognition.
- Establishing programs that promote and support the reliance on the corporation's credentials by the general public and by regulatory bodies.

ACVREP is a private, nonprofit organization and an independent and autonomous legal certification body governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. ACVREP is a member of the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA) and strives to conduct its certification programs according to standards established by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

Confidentiality Statement

In order to maintain the integrity of the certification process, the security of examination content and applicant identity must be maintained. Applicant names, application documents, and test scores are considered confidential. Only ACVREP staff, board members, certification committee members, and consultants shall have access to these documents.

Non-discrimination Statement

ACVREP shall not discriminate among applicants as to age, sex, race, religion, national origin, disability, or marital status.

Section 2 - Scope of Practice

Orientation and mobility instruction is a sequential process in which visually impaired individuals are taught to utilize their remaining senses to determine their position within their environment and to negotiate safe movement from one place to another. The skills involved in this teaching include, but are not limited to:

- Concept development, which includes body image, spatial, temporal, positional, directional, and environmental concepts.
- Motor development, including motor skills needed for balance, posture, and gait, as well as the use of adaptive devices and techniques to assist those with multiple disabilities.
- Sensory development, which includes visual, auditory, vestibular, kinesthetic, tactile, olfactory, and proprioceptive senses, and the interrelationships of these systems.
- Residual vision stimulation and training.
- Human guide technique.
- Upper and lower protective techniques.
- Locating dropped objects.

- Trailing.
- Squaring-off.
- Cane techniques.
- Soliciting/declining assistance.
- Following directions.
- Utilizing landmarks.
- Search patterns.
- Compass directions.
- Route planning.
- Analysis and identification of intersections and traffic patterns.
- The use of traffic control devices.
- Techniques for crossing streets.
- Techniques for travel in indoor environments, outdoor residential, small and large business districts, mall travel, and rural areas.
- Problem solving.
- The use of public transportation.
- Evaluation with sun filters for the reduction of glare.
- Instructional use of low vision devices.

Section 3 – Orientation and Mobility Body of Knowledge

Orientation and mobility graduates must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a multitude of competencies in O&M. These are listed below in the body of knowledge.

1. Know Professional Information

- 1.1 Identify and describe basic laws and regulations that affect O&M services, e.g., IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), Rehabilitation laws, ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), Medicare, etc.
- 1.2 Identify and describe resources for consumers to obtain services, support, and/or information related to visual impairment [e.g., dog guide schools, NAPVI (National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments), NFB (National Federation of the Blind), ACB (American Council of the Blind), Department of Veterans Affairs, BVA (Blinded Veterans Association), etc.].
- 1.3 Identify and describe professional resources pertinent to the O&M profession, e.g., AFB (American Foundation for the Blind), JVIB (Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness), AER (Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired), ACVREP (Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals), etc.
- 1.4 Identify and describe the major historical events and persons responsible for the establishment of the O&M profession as it exists today.

2. Understanding Relevant Medical Information

- 2.1 Describe the anatomy and physiology of the visual system.
- 2.2 Describe common eye conditions/etiologies (macular degeneration, RP, ROP, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, CVI, optic nerve hypoplasia, refractive errors, etc.) of consumers and their implications on visual functioning, and be able to interpret eye reports.
- 2.3 Describe the basic anatomy and physiology of the auditory system and be familiar with the components of audiological reports.
- 2.4 Describe basic procedures necessary to react appropriately to medical situations (e.g., insulin reaction, seizures, etc.) during O&M lessons.

3. Understand and Apply Learning Theories to O&M

- 3.1 Describe basic principles of learning theories and their implications for O&M instruction.

4. Plan and Conduct O&M Assessment

- 4.1 Develop a plan for O&M assessment that includes obtaining and interpreting medical, education, and rehabilitation reports; interviewing the consumer and relevant others; and selecting appropriate assessment tools, materials, activities, and settings.
- 4.2 Assess the consumer's present level of functioning in each of the following areas as related to O&M: vision, senses, orientation and mobility skills, social/emotional issues, concepts/cognition, medical and physical limitations, and personal goals.
- 4.3 Based on the O&M assessment, determine the consumer's O&M needs and/or make recommendations for services, mobility devices and/or systems (e.g., long cane, etc.), and additional assessments.
- 4.4 Describe the roles of related professionals (OT, PT, low vision specialists, rehabilitation specialists, optometrists, teachers, ophthalmologists, etc.) who provide relevant O&M assessment information.
- 4.5 Conduct ongoing assessment to monitor progress, to determine the need for change in instructional strategy or O&M program, and to determine when the skill level is sufficient to graduate or move on.

5. Plan O&M Programs

- 5.1 Describe service delivery models for O&M programs such as itinerant, center-based, and residential.
- 5.2 Develop O&M goals and objectives/benchmarks for individualized programs.

- 5.3 Describe the components and process for the development of early intervention, education, and applicable rehabilitation plans [e.g., IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan), IEP (Individualized Educational Program), IWRP (Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program), etc.].

6. Teach O&M Related Concepts

- 6.1 Describe the relationship of O&M-related concepts (body, environmental, and spatial) to purposeful movement.
- 6.2 Describe the impact of visual impairment on the development of concepts and how consumers develop concepts.
- 6.3 Provide instruction to facilitate the development of O&M-related concepts (e.g., body, environmental, and spatial, etc.).
- 6.4 Teach life skill concepts related to O&M, e.g., money organization, social skills, time management, etc.

7. Teach Orientation Strategies and Skills

- 7.1 Develop orientation skills through the use of environmental features (e.g., sun, sounds, slopes, etc.).
- 7.2 Facilitate optimal development of the consumer's spatial organization skills using strategies such as cognitive mapping and spatial updating.
- 7.3 Assist the consumer in route planning using various approaches such as route shapes, mapping skills, and compass directions.
- 7.4 Teach problem-solving strategies related to establishing and maintaining orientation while traveling, using instructional approaches such as drop offs, re-orientation, planning alternative routes, hypothesis testing, etc.
- 7.5 Familiarize consumer to novel environments using techniques appropriate for persons with various frames of reference (object-to-object, self-to-object).
- 7.6 Compare and contrast approaches for orienting dog guide handler to new environments versus long cane users.

8. Teach Mobility Skills

- 8.1 Know the mechanics of locomotion that affect efficient mobility, e.g., integration of reflexes, muscle tone, coordination, balance, gait patterns, posture, etc.

- 8.2 Identify and describe basic O&M skills, including protective and human guide techniques, and the rationale for teaching these skills.
- 8.3 Determine appropriate mobility device and/or system by considering advantages, disadvantages, and consumer's needs and preferences, including, but not limited to human guide, long cane, dog guide, ETA, functional vision, and AMD.
- 8.4 Identify and describe O&M cane skills, (e.g, cane use with a guide, diagonal technique, two-point touch, etc.) and the rationale for teaching these skills.
- 8.5 Apply appropriate sequence of street crossing instruction, i.e., simple to complex.
- 8.6 Teach consumers to analyze intersections in simple and complex environments.
- 8.7 Identify and describe traffic controls (e.g., uncontrolled, 2-way and 4-way stops, traffic signal systems, roundabouts, yields, etc.) and implications for consumer crossings.
- 8.8 Identify and describe street crossing techniques and when to apply them, such as determining when to begin crossing, alignment, use of pedestrian button, etc.
- 8.9 Teach consumers how to access, plan, and execute simple and complex transportation systems, including buses, rail, and Paratransit.
- 8.10 Teach travel in special environments, including adverse weather conditions, rural areas, airports, malls, stores, gas stations, etc.

9. Teach Use of Senses

- 9.1 Explain principles of vision development as they apply to visual efficiency training.
- 9.2 Teach use of optical and non-optical low vision devices for O&M tasks.
- 9.3 Teach visual skills that optimize O&M performance, e.g., eccentric viewing, scanning, tracking, tracing, etc.
- 9.4 Teach consumer to use tactile information for O&M-related tasks.
- 9.5 Teach consumer to interpret kinesthetic and proprioceptive information to maximize O&M skills during movement/travel, such as using time-distance estimates, making accurate turns, recognizing/using slopes, etc.
- 9.6 Teach auditory skills to maximize effective movement/travel, e.g., use sounds to align/position self, echolocation, Doppler effect, etc.

10. Teach Consumers who have Additional Disabilities

- 10.1 Describe the implications of additional disabilities upon O&M instruction, e.g., physical impairments, cognitive disabilities, multiple disabilities, hearing impairments, traumatic brain injury, etc.
- 10.2 Adapt instructional strategies for consumers with additional disabilities, e.g., physical impairments, cognitive disabilities, multiple disabilities, hearing impairments, traumatic brain injury, etc.

11. Teach Diverse Consumers

- 11.1 Describe the implications of diversity, including age and cultural differences, as they relate to potential adaptations in O&M instruction.
- 11.2 Apply principles of human development and the aging process to O&M instruction.

12. Analyze and Modify Environment

- 12.1 Analyze travel environments to identify and overcome potential barriers to consumer access in home, school, work, or community environments.

13. Know the Psychosocial Implications of Blindness and Visual Impairment

- 13.1 Identify and describe factors to be considered to minimize the psychosocial impact of vision loss upon consumers with congenital or adventitious visual impairments and their families.
- 13.2 Identify strategies to assist consumers during the process of adjustment to visual impairment, including providing resources, informational counseling, etc.

CLINICAL PRACTICE COMPETENCIES

1. **Communication and professional relationships** - Candidate is able to establish and maintain effective communication and professional relationships with students, families, colleagues, and supervisors, including individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
2. **O&M assessment** - Candidate is able to plan and conduct individualized comprehensive O&M assessments, synthesize the findings in a professionally written report, and communicate results with students, families, and members of the individualized intervention/education/rehabilitation team, as appropriate.
3. **Instructional planning** – Candidate is able to plan for individualized O&M instruction through the:
 - review and interpretation of relevant records and reports;
 - selection and preview of potential training areas (e.g., home, school, work, or community);

- design and/or procurement of instructional materials and appropriate devices (with appropriate medical consultation regarding optical devices);
 - provision of accurate information regarding options for mobility systems (e.g., long cane, dog guide, electronic travel devices) to student and family so that students can make informed choices regarding the most appropriate option for a given time;
 - collaboration with student, family, and colleagues to develop appropriate goals and behavioral objectives; and development and sequencing of individual lessons based on student abilities, needs, and goals.
4. **Instruction** - Candidate is able to effectively teach and reinforce the following elements of O&M instruction across a range of environments (such as indoor, residential, and light business):
- Concepts related to independent movement and orientation (such as body, laterality, directionality, spatial, environmental, and time-distance).
 - Mobility techniques, including, but not limited to, basic skills, cane skills, adapted mobility devices, route travel, street crossings, and the use of public and other transportation systems.
 - Orientation skills, including, but not limited to, use of cognitive processes; landmarks; cardinal directions; room, store, and community familiarization; address system; independent information gathering; route planning; and maps.
 - Use of low vision in maintaining safe and independent movement and orientation (such as use of non-optical devices, use of optical devices in conjunction with eye care professionals, use of visual skills, and incorporating vision use with cane or other mobility systems).
 - Use of remaining senses (other than vision) in maintaining safe and independent movement and orientation (such as the use of auditory skills, reflected sound, tactile recognition, proprioceptive, and kinesthetic awareness).
5. **Monitoring and safety** - Candidate is able to effectively monitor orientation and mobility skills, recognize potentially dangerous situations, and intervene as appropriate to ensure student safety.
6. **Facilitating independence** - Candidate is able to facilitate student independence and problem solving ability across a variety of travel situations, in familiar and unfamiliar environments.
7. **Professionalism** - Candidate demonstrates professional conduct consistent with the Code of Ethics for Orientation & Mobility Specialists, finds and accesses appropriate resources, keeps on-time scheduling, and follows and maintains appropriate record keeping and reporting procedures.

Section 4 - History of Orientation and Mobility Certification

Professional certification of O&M specialists has existed for over 30 years. In that time, certification procedures and standards have evolved and changed as the profession has continued to grow.

The first O&M professional certification program was initiated in 1968 by AAWB and included two levels of certification, provisional and permanent, depending upon experience. In an effort to emphasize the need for ongoing professional development by O&M specialists, these levels were changed to Initial Professional and Renewable Professional just over a decade later. O&M specialists were eligible to apply for initial professional certification immediately upon earning a degree (with an emphasis in O&M) from an Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) approved university program. Upon expiration of an initial five-year certification period, those specialists who had demonstrated sufficient professional experience and participation in continuing education and professional development activities were eligible to apply for renewable professional certification that they would then renew every five years. If a person were to let his or her renewable professional certification expire for more than five years, he or she would have to apply for initial professional certification. The professional activities approach to recertification that AER adopted was consistent with standards set by most other professions.

Over the years, a growing number of professionals serving children and adults with visual impairments did so in jobs that required multiple credentials. In recognition of this, the certification standards were revised in 1990 to allow those who already possessed a degree in an O&M-related field (e.g., teacher of the visually impaired, rehabilitation teacher of the blind) to become eligible for AER certification in O&M by completing an O&M core curricula without earning another degree. This opened the door for what came to be known as certification-only options at universities that also offer graduate or undergraduate degree programs with an emphasis in O&M.

In the 1990's, AER responded to a need to separate professional certification responsibilities from those of a professional membership organization. This was done to eliminate any potential conflict of interest in certification that can arise by having a professional membership organization set up, administer, and make standards for certifying their own members. As a result, the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) was formed in 2000. The role of ACVREP is to assume responsibility for professional certification of rehabilitation and education professionals in the area of visual impairment. In establishing ACVREP, the certification programs were also revised to meet nationally recognized standards for voluntary certification organizations as supported by the National Organization for Competency Assurance.

Section 5 - Code of Ethics for Orientation and Mobility Specialists

Preamble

Orientation and mobility specialists recognize the significant role that independent movement plays in the overall growth and functioning of the individual and are dedicated to helping each individual attain the level of independence necessary to reach his or her full potential.

Orientation and mobility specialists gather, develop, and utilize specialized knowledge in accomplishing this with all professions; the possession of specialist knowledge obligates the practitioner to protect the rights of the individuals who must avail themselves of the particular service. To assure the public of our awareness of this obligation, we commit ourselves to this Code of Ethics.

In order to fulfill this obligation, O&M specialists pledge themselves to standards of acceptable behavior in relation to the following five commitments: Commitment to the Student; Commitment to the Community; Commitment to the Profession; Commitment to Colleagues and Other Professionals; and Commitment to Professional Employment Practices.

It is the responsibility of each O&M specialist to adhere to the principles in the Code and encourage colleagues to do the same.

1. Commitment to the Student

- 1.1 The O&M specialist will value the worth and dignity of each individual.
- 1.2 It is the responsibility of the O&M specialist to strive at all times to maintain the highest standards of instruction.
- 1.3 The O&M specialist will take all reasonable precautions to insure the safety of the student from conditions that interfere with learning.
- 1.4 The O&M specialist will respect the confidentiality of all information pertaining to the student. He or she will not divulge confidential information about any student to any individual not authorized by the student to receive such information unless required by law or unless withholding such information would endanger the safety of the student or the public.
- 1.5 Before beginning instruction with the student, the O&M specialist will make every attempt to obtain and evaluate information about the student that is relevant to the O&M instruction.
- 1.6 The O&M specialist will respect the rights of the student and/or parent/guardian to participate in decisions regarding the instructional program.
- 1.7 Decisions regarding continuing or discontinuing instruction will be made with the student and will be based upon evaluation of the student's needs, abilities, and skills. The decisions will be made in the student's best interest, independent of personal or agency convenience.
- 1.8 The O&M specialist will provide sufficient information regarding the various types of

O&M guidance devices and will explore with the student which device will best meet specific needs.

- 1.9 The O&M specialist will seek the support and involvement of the family and/or guardian in promoting the student's instructional goals and in advancing his or her continued success. This will include sharing information with the family that will facilitate the student's welfare and independence, but not communicating information that violates the principles of confidentiality.
- 1.10 The O&M specialist will ask the consent of the student and/or guardian before inviting others to observe a lesson or before arranging to have the student photographed or tape-recorded.
- 1.11 The O&M specialist will make all reports objective and will present only data relevant to the purposes of the evaluation and instruction. When appropriate, the O&M specialist will share this information with the student.
- 1.12 The O&M specialist will endeavor to provide individuals involved with the student sufficient knowledge, instruction, and experiences relative to O&M so as to facilitate the goals of the student.
- 1.13 The O&M specialist will not dispense or supply O&M equipment unless it is in the best interest of the student.
- 1.14 The O&M specialist will not allow consideration of personal comfort or convenience to interfere with the design and implementation of necessary travel lessons.
- 1.15 The O&M specialist will be responsible for services to students who are referred and will provide adequate ongoing supervision when any portion of the service is assigned to interns or student teachers who are enrolled in O&M university programs, with the understanding that each individual will function under strict supervision.

2. Commitment to the Community

- 2.1 The student will not be refused service by the O&M specialist because of age, sex, race, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.
- 2.2 The student shall not be excluded from service because of the severity of his/her disabilities unless it is clearly evident that he cannot benefit from the service. The O&M specialist will attempt to influence decision making which establishes the rights of individuals to receive service.
- 2.3 The O&M specialist will contribute to community education by defining the role or O&M in the community, by describing the nature and delivery of service, and by indicating how the community can be involved in the education and rehabilitation process.

2.4 The O&M specialist will not engage in any public education activity that results in the exploitation of his/her students. Exaggeration, sensationalism, superficiality, and other misleading activities are to be avoided.

3. Commitment to the Profession

3.1 The O&M specialist will seek full responsibility for the exercise of professional judgment related to O&M.

3.2 To the best of his or her ability, the O&M specialist will accept the responsibility, throughout his/her career, to master and contribute to the growing body of specialized knowledge, concepts, and skills that characterize O&M as a profession.

3.3 The O&M specialist will interpret and use the writing and research of others with integrity. In writing, making presentations, or conducting research, the O&M specialist will be familiar with and give recognition to previous work on the topic.

3.4 The O&M specialist will conduct investigations in a manner that takes into consideration the welfare of the subject, and report research in a way as to lessen the possibility that the findings will be misleading.

3.5 The O&M specialist will strive to improve the quality of provided service and promote conditions that attract suitable persons to careers in O&M.

3.6 The O&M specialist will, whenever possible, support and participate in local, state, and national professional organizations.

3.7 The O&M specialist will accept no gratuities or gifts of significance over and above the predetermined salary, fee, and/or expense for professional service.

3.8 The O&M specialist will not engage in commercial activities that result in a conflict of interest between these activities and professional objectives with the student.

3.9 The O&M specialist involved in development or promotion of O&M devices, books or other products, will present such products in a professional and factual way.

3.10 The O&M specialist will report suspected and/or known incompetence, illegal, or unethical behavior in the practice of the profession.

3.11 The O&M specialist will strive to provide fair treatment to all members of the profession and support them when unjustly accused or mistreated.

3.12 Each member of the profession has a personal and professional responsibility for supporting the O&M code of ethics and maintaining effectiveness.

4. Commitment to Colleagues and Other Professionals

- 4.1 The O&M specialist will engage in professional relationships on a mature level and will not become involved in personal disparagement.
- 4.2 The O&M specialist will communicate fully and openly with colleagues in the sharing of specialized knowledge, concepts, and skills.
- 4.3 The O&M specialist will not offer professional services to a person receiving O&M instruction from another O&M specialist, except by agreement with the other specialist or after the other specialist has ended instruction with the student.
- 4.4 When transferring a student, the O&M specialist will not commit a receiving specialist to a prescribed course of action.
- 4.5 The O&M specialist will seek harmonious relations with members of other professions. This will include the discussion and free exchange of ideas regarding the overall welfare of the student and discussion with other professionals regarding the benefits to be obtained from O&M services.
- 4.6 The O&M specialist will not assume responsibilities that are better provided by other professionals who are available to the student.
- 4.7 The O&M specialist will seek to facilitate and enhance a team effort with other professionals. In such situations where team decisions are made, the O&M specialist will contribute information from his or her own particular perspective and will abide by the team decision unless the team decision requires that he or she act in violation of the code of ethics.

5. Commitment to Professional Employment Practices

- 5.1 The O&M specialist will apply for, accept, or offer a position on the basis of professional qualification and will act with integrity in these situations.
- 5.2 The O&M specialist will give prompt notification of any change of availability to the agency or school where s/he has applied.
- 5.3 The O&M specialist will give prompt notification of any change of availability or nature of a position.
- 5.4 The O&M specialist will respond factually when requested to write a letter of recommendation for a colleague seeking a professional position.
- 5.5 The O&M specialist will provide applicants seeking information about a position with an honest description of the assignment, conditions of work, and related matters.

- 5.6 The O&M specialist will abide by the terms of a contract or agreement, whether verbal or written, unless the terms have been falsely represented or substantially changed by the other party.
- 5.7 The O&M specialist will not accept positions where proven principles of O&M practice are compromised or abandoned, unless the position is accepted with the intention of amending or modifying the questionable practices and providing that they do not participate in the behavior which violates the code of ethics.
- 5.8 The O&M specialist will adhere to the policies and regulations of the employer except where he or she is required to violate ethical principles indicated in this code. To avoid possible conflicts, the O&M specialist will acquaint the employer with the contents of this code.
- 5.9 The O&M specialist may provide additional professional service through private contracts, as long as these services remain of the highest quality and do not interfere with the specialist's regular job duties.
- 5.10 The O&M specialist will not accept remuneration for professional instruction from a student who is entitled to such instruction through an agency or school, unless the student, when fully informed of the services available, decided to contract privately with the specialist.
- 5.11 The O&M specialist will establish a fee for private contracting in cooperation with the contracting agency or school that is consistent with the reasonable and customary rate of that particular geographic region.
- 5.12 When providing additional service through private contracts, the O&M specialist will observe the agency or school's policies and procedures concerning outside employment, including the use of facilities.

Section 6 - Criteria for Eligibility

Note: Applicants for ACVREP certification who previously held American Association of Workers for the Blind (AAWB) and/or Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) certification must apply for eligibility under Category 1 and do not have to submit the “Clinical Competency Evaluation Form”. All other ACVREP certification requirements are applicable.

Category 1:

Eligibility to sit for the certifying examination:

For U.S. Candidates

- Proof of a minimum of a Bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college with an emphasis in Orientation and Mobility.

For Non-U.S. Candidates

- Proof of a Bachelor's degree (or equivalent, as verified by an independent credentialing body) or post-secondary diploma from an accredited university or college with an emphasis in Orientation and Mobility.

Supporting documentation required (for U.S. and Non-U.S. candidates): Official transcripts documenting the degree.

For All Candidates

- In conjunction with the university program, successful completion of 350 hours of “discipline specific, supervised practice that includes, but is not limited to, direct service hours, and related phone calls, meetings, observations, report writing, etc.” The practice must be supervised by a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS®).

Supporting documentation required:

1. Clinical Competency Evaluation Form completed and signed by the COMS practice supervisor (see **Appendix A** in the COMS Eligibility Application).

Please note: Applicants completing multiple internships in order to meet the minimum hour or competency requirements must submit a Clinical Competency Evaluation Form for all internships completed, signed by the COMS practice supervisor(s).

2. If the COMS practice supervisor is offsite, the “COMS Off-Site Supervision Contract” must also be completed, signed by the off-site COMS supervisor, the on site O&M supervisor, and COMS applicant, and approved by the ACVREP office prior to the practice taking place (see **Appendix D** in the COMS Eligibility Application).
- Sign the Statement of Endorsement agreeing to uphold high ethical and professional standards and the Statement of Integrity (see COMS Eligibility Application).

Eligibility for ACVREP COMS® certification:

1. Pass the ACVREP Orientation and Mobility Certification Examination demonstrating knowledge of O&M principles and applications.
2. Certification is issued upon completion of all requirements.

Category 2:

Eligibility to sit for the certifying examination:

For U.S. Candidates

- Proof of a minimum of a Bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college in any field of study and proof of completion of an Orientation and Mobility certification preparation program from an accredited university or college that meets the following 13 core domain areas (also see Section 3 – O&M Body of Knowledge):

1. Know Professional Information
2. Understanding Relevant Medical Information
3. Understand and Apply Learning Theories to O&M
4. Plan and Conduct O&M Assessment
5. Plan O&M Programs
6. Teach O&M Related Concepts
7. Teach Orientation Strategies and Skills
8. Teach Mobility Skills
9. Teach Use of Senses
10. Teach Consumers who have Additional Disabilities
11. Teach Diverse Consumers
12. Analyze and Modify Environment
13. Know the Psychosocial Implications of Blindness and Visual Impairment

For Non-U.S. Candidates

- Proof of a minimum of a Bachelor's degree (or equivalent, as verified by an independent credentialing body) or post-secondary diploma from an accredited university or college in any field of study and proof of completion of an Orientation and Mobility certification preparation program from an accredited university or college that meets the following 13 core domain areas (also see Section 3 – O&M Body of Knowledge):

1. Know Professional Information
2. Understanding Relevant Medical Information
3. Understand and Apply Learning Theories to O&M
4. Plan and Conduct O&M Assessment
5. Plan O&M Programs
6. Teach O&M Related Concepts
7. Teach Orientation Strategies and Skills
8. Teach Mobility Skills
9. Teach Use of Senses
10. Teach Consumers who have Additional Disabilities
11. Teach Diverse Consumers
12. Analyze and Modify Environment
13. Know the Psychosocial Implications of Blindness and Visual Impairment

Supporting documentation required (for U.S. and Non-U.S. Candidates):

1. Official transcripts documenting degree and the completion of the certification preparation program of study in Orientation and Mobility.
2. Completion of the O&M Core Domain Area Chart (see **Appendix B** in the COMS Eligibility Application), demonstrating where each core domain has been met in their coursework (include course numbers and titles); and course catalogue descriptions or course syllabi.

Please note: The applicant may meet a maximum of two of the 13 core domain areas through alternative learning activities (e.g., continuing education courses).

3. O&M Alternative Learning Approval Form (see **Appendix C** in the COMS Eligibility Application). The applicant needs to complete this form and submit it with the eligibility application.

For All Candidates

- In conjunction with the university program, successful completion of 350 hours of “discipline specific, supervised practice that includes, but is not limited to, direct service hours, and related phone calls, meetings, observations, report writing, etc.” The practice must be supervised by a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS®).

Supporting documentation required:

1. Clinical Competency Evaluation Form completed and signed by the COMS practice supervisor (see **Appendix A** in the COMS Eligibility Application).

Please note: Applicants completing multiple internships in order to meet the minimum hour or competency requirements must submit a Clinical Competency Evaluation Form for all internships completed, signed by the COMS practice supervisor(s).

2. If the COMS practice supervisor is offsite, the “COMS Off-Site Supervision Contract” must also be completed, signed by the off-site COMS supervisor, the on site O&M supervisor, and COMS applicant, and approved by the ACVREP office prior to the practice taking place (see **Appendix D** in the COMS Eligibility Application).
- Sign the Statement of Endorsement agreeing to uphold high ethical and professional standards and the Statement of Integrity (see COMS Eligibility Application).

Eligibility for ACVREP COMS® certification:

1. Pass the COMS Specialist certification exam demonstrating knowledge of O&M principles and applications.
2. Certification is issued upon completion of all requirements.

Section 7 - Application Process

1. Download the COMS Eligibility Application from the ACVREP website at www.acvrep.org. Applicants for certification may also request the COMS Eligibility Application from the ACVREP office, 3333 N. Campbell Ave., Suite 2, Tucson, AZ, 85719 or call 520.887.6816 (ext. 222).
2. When the application is completed, it should be mailed back to the ACVREP office with the appropriate fee.
3. The initial application process has four steps:
 - A) Complete the COMS Eligibility Application and required forms. Once the forms are completed, mail the application with required documentation and payment to the ACVREP office. ACVREP staff will review the application to assess your eligibility to sit for the certification exam. If necessary, ACVREP staff will consult with the COMS Certification Committee in the determination of applicant eligibility.
 - B) Once you are found eligible to sit for the ACVREP Orientation and Mobility Certification Examination, your status classification will be modified from “applicant” to “candidate.” Upon achieving “candidate” status, ACVREP will provide you with the Examination Registration Form. The Examination Registration Form provides directions on how to create your “test taker account” within ACVREP’s online testing portal. As a candidate, you may at this time create your “test taker account.” However, you will not be able to schedule the exam (location, date, or time) until ACVREP has provided you with a voucher number to complete the process. This unique voucher number is valid for only one (1) administration of the certification exam.

The Examination Registration Form must be completed and returned to ACVREP with payment. Once the completed Examination Registration Form and payment are received by ACVREP, a voucher number will be provided to you via e-mail. You will utilize the voucher number provided by ACVREP to complete the online exam scheduling process. It is expected by ACVREP that you will not share information regarding the exam registration/scheduling process (i.e. registration website address, login information, passwords, or voucher numbers) with any other individual. If you are found to have shared such information, you may face disciplinary action jeopardizing your eligibility to sit for the certification exam and/or to obtain ACVREP certification.

Please note: Applicants are required to submit the Examination Registration Form within one (1) year after submitting their eligibility application. For example, if an applicant submits an eligibility application on June 1st, s/he will need to submit an Examination Registration Form, with payment of the exam fee, prior to June 1st of the following year. If the candidate does not submit the Examination Registration Form within the one (1) year timeframe, s/he must reapply for eligibility.

- C) Take the certification exam at a KRYTERION High-stake Secure Testing (HOST) location. There are hundreds of locations available to you for your convenience. Upon completion of the certification exam, you will receive the results of your exam immediately. ACVREP is notified of your exam results within one (1) business day.

Please note: A rescheduling fee will be charged if an exam is canceled by a candidate after the acceptable cancellation deadline as specified by ACVREP and/or its testing contractor.

- D) Upon successful completion of the certification exam, ACVREP will provide you the Application for Certification via e-mail within five (5) business days. You must then complete and submit this application to the ACVREP office with payment.
4. It is the responsibility of the ACVREP staff to check each application packet to see that it is complete. If it is not complete, the applicant will be notified via email and/or phone and requested to provide the required information to complete the application packet.
5. Upon the completion of all requirements, certification will be issued within five (5) business days via U.S. Postal Service ground mail. Based on the following initial grant date time-frames, the applicable expiration dates for initial ACVREP certificates are:
- January 1 through March 31 (March 31 Expiration Date)
- April 1 through June 30 (June 30 Expiration Date)
- July 1 through September 30 (September 30 Expiration Date)
- October 1 through December 31 (December 31 Expiration Date)
6. Certification will be issued for a five (5) year term. Once certification is issued, your status will be modified from “candidate” to “certificant.”

Section 8 – University Students Program

In an attempt to encourage students to apply for certification prior to exiting the university/college setting, students may take any of ACVREP’s apply for eligibility to take any of ACVREP’s certification examinations prior to the completion of the required 350 hour supervised internship and/or graduation from the university/college program.

To take advantage of this opportunity, the student needs to complete the following steps:

1. The student must first complete and submit the COMS Eligibility Application and the appropriate application fee. Although students can submit the Eligibility Application and take the certification exam prior to completing their internship and/or graduating from their program, they will not be able to apply to the ACVREP Board of Directors for certification

until they submit all of the documents required in the eligibility application. Regardless of the category under which they apply, official transcripts documenting at least a Bachelor's degree or foreign equivalency (or post-secondary diploma for non-U.S. Candidates) and a completed Clinical Competency Evaluation Form(s) are standard requirements.

2. Once the student is declared eligible to sit for the exam, ACVREP will provide the Examination Registration Form to the student via e-mail. The Examination Registration Form provides directions on how to create the student's "test taker account" within ACVREP's online testing portal. The student may at this time create her/his "test taker account." However, the student will not be able to schedule the exam (location, date, or time) until ACVREP has provided the student with a voucher number to complete the process. This unique voucher number is valid for only one (1) administration of the certification exam.

The Examination Registration Form must be completed and returned to ACVREP with payment. Once the completed Examination Registration Form and payment are received by ACVREP, a voucher number will be provided to the student via e-mail. The student will utilize the voucher number provided by ACVREP to complete the online exam scheduling process. It is expected by ACVREP that the student will not share information regarding the online exam registration/scheduling process (i.e. registration website address, login information, passwords, or voucher numbers) with any other person. If the student is found to have shared such information, the student may face disciplinary action jeopardizing the student's eligibility to sit for the certification examination and/or to obtain certification.

Please note: Applicants are required to submit the Examination Registration Form within one (1) year after submitting their eligibility application. For example, if an applicant submits an eligibility application on June 1st, s/he will need to submit an Exam Registration Form, with the exam fee, prior to June 1st of the following year. If the student does not submit the Exam Registration Form within the one (1) year timeframe, s/he must reapply for eligibility.

3. The student will take the examination at a KRYTERION High-stake Secure Testing (HOST) location. There are hundreds of locations available to you for your convenience. Upon completion of the certification exam, the student will receive the results of the exam immediately. ACVREP is notified of the student's exam results within one (1) business day.

Please note: A rescheduling fee will be charged if an exam is canceled by a candidate after the acceptable cancellation deadline as specified by ACVREP and/or its testing contractor.

Once the student passes the exam, the student may then apply for certification. However, as noted above, the student must meet all requirements in order for certification to be issued. Required documents include official transcripts documenting at least a Bachelor's degree (or foreign equivalency) and a Clinical Competency Evaluation Form. Depending on the category under which one may apply, a completed Core Domain Area Chart and related course descriptions/syllabi may also be required.

Section 9 - Provision for Off-Site Supervision of O&M Students

Direct on-site supervision by an ACVREP Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist® (COMS®) of the 350 hours of practice in O&M is the preferred means of supervision. However, circumstances may exist where providing such supervision would be difficult or unrealistic for an O&M student or cohort of students (hereafter referred to as “applicant(s)”. University personnel preparation programs may apply for an exemption to the on-site COMS supervision requirement for applicant(s) who face similar hardships. The request for this exemption must be facilitated through the “Off-Site Supervision Contract” documented (Please see appendix D in the COMS Eligibility Application) to be completed by the identified Off-Site COMS® Supervisor, the on-site O&M supervisor, a representative of the university personnel preparation program, and the applicant. In completing the “Off-Site Supervision Contract”, please:

1. Describe, in detail, the hardship that makes the possibility of on-site COMS supervision difficult or unrealistic for the applicant(s). Describe efforts that have been made to secure on-site supervision by a COMS and why those efforts have not been successful. For example, the difficulty might arise from a lack of available individuals who hold the COMS certification in the geographical area or country that the student would normally have the internship.
2. For each applicant, identify the COMS Off-site Supervisor. The off-site COMS must:
 - Be responsible for the monitoring of the program and the supervising of the local O&M supervisor regarding this internship.
 - Be in regular contact with the on-site supervisor, the intern, and university personnel. At least one on-site visit is required.
 - Review in a timely manner all written material generated and required of and by the on-site supervisor and the applicant.
 - Sign the ACVREP COMS Off-Site Supervision Contract (please see ACVREP COMS Eligibility Application).
 - Complete (with the O&M On-Site Supervisor) and sign the ACVREP O&M Clinical Competency Evaluation Form at the end of the 350 hour internship.
3. For each applicant, identify the local O&M supervisor providing the on-site supervision and describe his or her qualifications on the “Off-Site Supervision Contract” document, ensuring that all the criteria listed below are met. The local O&M supervisor must:
 - Hold a level of education that the university has ascertained as sufficient to serve in this capacity. ACVREP recommends a minimum of a Bachelor’s degree (or foreign equivalent or post-secondary diploma if educated outside the U.S.), with an emphasis in Orientation and Mobility (O&M), from an accredited university or college. If the training of the local O&M supervisor were not university based, describe the training.
 - Be active in the field by having provided at least 100 hours of direct instruction in Orientation and Mobility in the past twelve months.

- Have the equivalent of three (3) years of full time direct service provision in Orientation and Mobility as evidenced by a signed statement from the individual’s employer. Please attach letter to the “Off-Site Supervision Contract”.
- Sign the ACVREP COMS Off-Site Supervision Contract (please see ACVREP COMS Eligibility Application).
- Complete (with the COMS Off-Site Supervisor) and sign the ACVREP O&M Clinical Competency Evaluation Form at the end of the 350 hour internship.

4. The applicant must:

- Be responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the internship as specified by the university program.
- Sign the ACVREP COMS Off-Site Supervision Contract (please see ACVREP COMS Eligibility Application).
- Sign the ACVREP O&M Clinical Competency Evaluation Form at the end of the 350 hour internship.

If the COMS internship supervisor is offsite, an “Off-Site Supervision Contract” must be completed and signed by the COMS off-site supervisor, O&M on-site supervisor, and the applicant prior to the practice taking place. ACVREP must review and approve the Off-Site Supervisor Contract in advance of initiating the offsite COMS supervised internship.

Section 10 - Examination Information

Examination Administration

Responsibilities of the ACVREP Office

- An Examination Registration Form will be sent to applicants upon approval of their eligibility application via e-mail. The Exam Registration Form will provide candidates directions on how to create their “test taker account” online.
- The ACVREP Examination Registration Form must be completed and sent, with the examination fee, to the ACVREP office.
- ACVREP will provide the candidate with a voucher number that will be utilized by the candidate to complete the online exam scheduling process.
- ACVREP will work with the testing contractor and coordinate any reasonable testing accommodations required for the candidate during the administration of the exam.
Please Note: In the coordination of testing accommodations, ACVREP may require up to 30 calendar days notice from the candidate requesting said accommodations prior to the desired exam administration date. This time period allows ACVREP the opportunity to consult with our testing contractor to facilitate appropriate accommodations during the administration of the exam.

Responsibilities of the Testing Contractor/Testing Center

- Arrange for a suitable facility in which to conduct the ACVREP certification examination. The site should easily accommodate adequate seating and spacing of candidates, and be accessible in accordance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Make qualified proctors available for the administration of the certification exam.
- Verify the identity of the candidate using photo ID (e.g. driver's license or passport) and relate relevant administration information (i.e. administered exam, and time allotted to take the exam).
- Assist with any technical questions or needs that the test taker might have during the registration of scheduling process.
- Assist with any technical questions or needs that the test taker might have on site.
- Insure that the integrity of ACVREP's certification examinations is not compromised.
- If a proctor suspects an examinee of cheating on the examination, s/he must document such behavior in writing at the time, noting the exact time and behavior, and soliciting the written statement of the other proctor, if there is one, as a witness to the behavior. The proctor must terminate the administration of the examination, and may also take any evidence of cheating (notes, etc.). The proctor's suspicions are sufficient to terminate that administration of the examination. The examinee may file an appeal with ACVREP to retake the examination at a later date.
- Work with ACVREP to facilitate reasonable testing accommodations for individual test takers.
- The proctor cannot answer any questions about the examination(s). If an examinee has a question about the examination or his/her score, requests must be made in writing to the ACVREP office.
- Inform ACVREP of any exam conditions that were so adverse that the examinees should be able to take the exam at another time.
- Follow all policies and procedures established by ACVREP and the testing contractor.

Responsibilities of the Examinee

- Notify ACVREP of any reasonable accommodations for the administration of the exam via the Examination Registration Form. Documentation by physician is required to serve as evidence for the need of testing accommodations.
- Register and schedule your exam.
- Arrive at the examination site at least 15 minutes before the designated time. Persons requiring accommodations should arrive earlier to assure the appropriate use of the accommodation(s).
- Bring and show appropriate identification, including photo ID.
- Maintain quiet examination conditions during the test session.
- Complete the examination before leaving.
- Refrain from requesting information about the examination from the proctor.
- Refrain from any behavior that could be interpreted as cheating (e.g., speaking with other examinees, consulting notes).

- Follow all policies and procedures established by ACVREP and the testing contractor.

Examinee Feedback

ACVREP will provide an opportunity for examinees to give immediate feedback regarding the certification examination following the administration of the exam. The feedback received will be provided to the respective ACVREP certification committee (CLVT, COMS, and CVRT) for review and action, if necessary.

Examination Site

The examination site shall be accessible according to the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). Examination sites shall be rooms with enough space to allow at least 2 ½ to 3 feet between examinees. All possessions will be secured by the proctor away from where individuals are taking the examination. No cell phones, electronic devices (e.g. recording/transmitting/storage devices), etc. will be allowed in the exam room. The room must be kept completely quiet.

Examination Retakes

Candidates who do not achieve a passing score may retake the examination by submitting the appropriate Examination Registration (Retake) Form provided by ACVREP. The Exam Registration Fee includes up to two (2) administrations of the certification exam. Upon verification of a non-passing result, ACVREP will provide the candidate with the appropriate Examination Registration (Retake) Form via e-mail to the candidate that must be completed and returned to ACVREP. The candidate will not have to create a new “test taker account” on the online portal, as the test taker account is still valid. Once the Examination Registration (Retake) Form is received by ACVREP, a new voucher number will be issued to the candidate via e-mail that will be utilized by the candidate to schedule the retake of the exam.

Examination Results

Upon completion and scoring of the examination, you will receive your results immediately. If the candidate achieves a passing score, then ACVREP will provide the candidate with the Certification Application via e-mail.

Reasonable Accommodations

When completing the Examination Registration Form, the examinee will make known his/her need for a reasonable accommodation, provide documentation supporting the need for accommodation by physician, and indicate what type of accommodation is needed for the administration of the examination. Based on the documentation provided, ACVREP will approve the use of requested accommodation and will work with the testing contractor to secure the appropriate resources and/or implement the necessary actions to facilitate a reasonable accommodation(s) for those examinees.

Accommodations will be provided according to the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). In the coordination of testing accommodations, ACVREP may require up to 30 calendar days notice from the candidate requesting said accommodations prior to the desired exam administration date. This time period allows ACVREP the opportunity to consult with our testing contractor to facilitate appropriate accommodations during the administration of the exam.

Section 11 – Orientation and Mobility Test At A Glance

Test Name: Orientation and Mobility Certification Examination
 Time: Up to four (4) hours is allowed
 Number of Questions: 200
 Format: Multiple-choice questions
 Forms: Two (A and B)

O&M Core Domain Area	Number of Questions	Percentage of examination
1 Know Professional Information	8	4%
2 Understanding Relevant Medical Information	17	8.5%
3 Understand and Apply Learning Theories to O&M	5	2.5%
4 Plan and Conduct O&M Assessment	23	11.5%
5 Plan O&M Programs	12	6%
6 Teach O&M Related Concepts	17	8.5%
7 Teach Orientation Strategies and Skills	24	12%
8 Teach Mobility Skills	40	20%
9 Teach Use of Senses	20	10%
10 Teach Consumers who have Additional Disabilities	12	6%
11 Teach Diverse Consumers	7	3.5%
12 Analyze and Modify Environment	7	3.5%
13 Know the Psychosocial Implications of Blindness and Visual Impairment	8	4%

About this Test

The O&M test is designed to assess entry-level O&M knowledge of prospective O&M specialists. The 200 multiple-choice questions focus on knowledge of basic facts and principles of the discipline of O&M and on the application of that knowledge in working with individuals who are blind and visually impaired. The 13 core domain areas listed above (1 through 13) are the O&M domains that were used in the construction of the test. The questions relate to preschool, school-aged, and adult individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

Topics Covered

The 13 core domain areas included in the examination are listed above. Representative descriptions of each domain covered are provided below.

1. Know Professional Information: Identify and describe basic laws and regulations that affect O&M services, resources for consumers to obtain services, support, and/or information related to visual impairment, professional resources pertinent to the O&M profession, and the major historical events and persons responsible for the establishment of the O&M profession as it exists today.

2. Understanding Relevant Medical Information: Describe the anatomy and physiology of the visual system, including common eye conditions/etiologies of consumers and their implications on visual functioning. Interpret eye reports. Describe the basic anatomy and physiology of the auditory system and be familiar with the components of audiological reports. Describe basic procedures necessary to react appropriately to medical situations (e.g., insulin reaction, seizures, etc.) during O&M lessons.

3. Understand and Apply Learning Theories to O&M: Describe basic principles of learning theories and their implications for O&M instruction.

4. Plan and Conduct O&M Assessment: Develop a plan for O&M assessment that includes obtaining and interpreting medical, education, and rehabilitation reports; interviewing the consumer and relevant others; and selecting appropriate assessment tools, materials, activities, and settings. Assess the consumer's present level of functioning in each of the following areas as related to O&M: vision, senses, orientation and mobility skills, social/emotional issues, concepts/cognition, medical and physical limitations, and personal goals. Based on the O&M assessment, determine the consumer's O&M needs and/or make recommendations for services, mobility devices and/or systems, and additional assessments. Describe the roles of related professionals (OT, PT, low vision specialists, rehab specialists, optometrists, teachers, ophthalmologists, etc.) who provide relevant O&M assessment information. Conduct ongoing assessment to monitor progress, to determine the need for change in instructional strategy or O&M program, and to determine when the skill level is sufficient to graduate or move on.

5. Plan O&M Programs: Describe service delivery models for O&M programs such as itinerant, center-based, and residential. Develop O&M goals and objectives/benchmarks for individualized programs. Describe the components and process for the development of early

intervention, education, and applicable rehabilitation plans [e.g., IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan), IEP (Individualized Educational Program), IWRP (Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program), etc.].

6. Teach O&M Related Concepts: Describe the relationship of O&M-related concepts to purposeful movement, and describe the impact of visual impairment on the development of concepts and how consumers develop concepts. Provide instruction to facilitate the development of O&M-related concepts. Teach life skill concepts related to O&M, e.g., money organization, social skills, time management, etc.

7. Teach Orientation Strategies and Skills: Develop orientation skills through the use of environmental features (e.g., sun, sounds, slopes, etc.). Facilitate optimal development of the consumer's spatial organization skills using strategies such as cognitive mapping and spatial updating. Assist the consumer in route planning using various approaches such as route shapes, mapping skills, and compass directions. Teach problem-solving strategies related to establishing and maintaining orientation while traveling. Familiarize consumer to novel environments using techniques appropriate for persons with various frames of reference. Compare and contrast approaches for orienting dog guide handler to new environments versus long cane users.

8. Teach Mobility Skills: Know the mechanics of locomotion that affect efficient mobility, e.g., integration of reflexes, muscle tone, coordination, balance, gait patterns, posture, etc. Identify and describe basic O&M skills, including protective and human guide techniques, and the rationale for teaching these skills. Determine appropriate mobility device and/or system by considering advantages, disadvantages, and consumer's needs and preferences, including, but not limited to human guide, long cane, dog guide, ETA, functional vision, and AMD. Identify and describe O&M cane skills and the rationale for teaching these skills. Apply appropriate sequence of street crossing instruction. Teach consumers to analyze intersections in simple and complex environments. Identify and describe traffic controls and implications for consumer crossings and street crossing techniques. Teach consumers how to access, plan, and execute simple and complex transportation systems, including buses, rail, and Paratransit. Teach travel in special environments, including adverse weather conditions, rural areas, airports, malls, stores, and gas stations.

9. Teach Use of Senses: Explain principles of vision development as they apply to visual efficiency training. Teach use of optical and non-optical low vision devices for O&M tasks, and visual skills that optimize O&M performance. Teach consumer to use tactile information for O&M-related tasks, and to interpret kinesthetic and proprioceptive information to maximize O&M skills during movement/travel. Teach auditory skills to maximize effective movement/travel.

10. Teach Consumers who have Additional Disabilities: Describe the implications of additional disabilities upon O&M instruction, (e.g., physical impairments, cognitive disabilities, multiple disabilities, hearing impairments, traumatic brain injury), and adapt instructional strategies for consumers with additional disabilities.

11. Teach Diverse Consumers: Describe the implications of diversity, including age and cultural differences, as they relate to potential adaptations in O&M instruction. Apply principles of human development and the aging process to O&M instruction.

12. Analyze and Modify Environment: Analyze travel environments to identify and overcome potential barriers to consumer access in home, school, work, or community environments.

13. Know the Psychosocial Implications of Blindness and Visual Impairment: Identify and describe factors to be considered to minimize the psychosocial impact of vision loss upon consumers with congenital or adventitious visual impairments and their families. Identify strategies to assist consumers during the process of adjustment to visual impairment.

Sample Test Questions

AER has an O&M Study Guide available for purchase. This guide provides some sample questions that illustrate the types of questions in the exam. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. To purchase this guide, please contact AER at 1-877-492-2708 or 703-671-4500.

Orientation & Mobility Specialist Examination References

The following contains a list of resources that may be consulted in preparation for taking the O&M certification exam. These resources do not take the place of a high quality university preparation program and individuals may find additional resources to be helpful.

Resources

Blasch, B. B., Weiner, W. R., & Welsh, R. L. (Eds.). (1997). *Foundations of orientation and mobility, 2nd edition*. New York: AFB Press.

Corn, A. L., & Koenig, A. J. (Eds.). (1996). *Foundations of low vision*. New York: AFB Press.

Fazzi, D. L., & Petersmeyer, B. A. (2001). *Imagining the possibilities: Creative instruction in orientation and mobility for persons who are visually impaired*. New York: AFB Press.

Hill, E. W., & Ponder, P. (1976). *Orientation and mobility techniques: A guide for the practitioner*. New York: AFB Press.

Holbrook, M. C., & Koenig, A. J. (Eds.). (2000). *Foundations of education, 2nd edition, Volume 1: History and theory of teaching children and youths with visual impairments*. New York: AFB Press.

Jacobson, W. H. (1993). *The art and science of teaching orientation and mobility*. New York: AFB Press.

Section 12 - Recertification in Orientation and Mobility

1. Recertification is required every five years. The ACVREP office will send each certificant a Recertification Application Form six months prior to his/her recertification expiration date. A second notice will be sent to the certificant if the ACVREP office does not hear from him/her three months prior to his/her recertification expiration date.
2. The certificant must complete the Recertification Application Form and submit it to the ACVREP office with the appropriate recertification fee and supporting documentation of the 100 points required for recertification.
3. Applicants for recertification must earn 100 points to renew their certification at the end of the five-year cycle. **They must submit a minimum of 25 points from Category One – Continuing Education.** They may also submit all 100 points from Category One. For the remaining categories (Professional Experience, Publications and Presentations, and Professional Service), applicants are allowed a maximum of 50 points for each of these categories. Please refer to ACVREP’s Recertification Policy for additional information.
4. Early applications for recertification may be accepted and reviewed only within one quarter prior to the recertification expiration date. However, early applications for recertification will be issued the expiration date of the quarter in which the application was initially approved.
5. It is the responsibility of the ACVREP staff to check each application form to see that it is complete. If it is not complete, the applicant will be notified and requested to provide the required information to complete the form.
6. Recertification applications will be due into the ACVREP office by the first of March, June, September, and December.
7. Recertification applications will be reviewed and a written report of requests for recertification will be submitted to the ACVREP Board of Directors for approval by March 10th, June 10th, September 10th, and December 10th.
8. Upon the majority approval by the ACVREP Board of Directors, certificates will be issued with the respective expiration dates of March 31st, June 30th, September 30th, and December 31st.
9. Recertification will be issued for five years.

Please note: A fee will be charged for any certificant requesting that his/her recertification application be processed, reviewed, and approved outside of the normal application process. For more information about “Expedited Review” and “Late” fees, please see the “Fee Schedule” located on pages 36-37 of this document.

Section 13 - Reinstatement of Certification

Candidates initially granted certification but who have not made application for recertification and, thus, technically have allowed their certification to lapse, may be reinstated within one calendar year following the recertification date if they meet the recertification requirements and pay the recertification late fee and any annual fees owed.

If a candidate has allowed his/her certification to lapse or has been determined to be ineligible for recertification for longer than one year, the candidate will have to meet the current certification eligibility requirements, including passing the certification examination. The candidate must submit the necessary forms and fees, including the payment of late annual fees owed during the period of certification, as appropriate.

Please notify the ACVREP office of any change in your mailing address and/or e-mail address. ACVREP will make every reasonable effort to send recertification information to current designation holders by regular mail six months prior to the recertification date. However, it is the certificant's responsibility to make application for recertification by the recertification due date. Because of the possibility of postal delays, ACVREP urges applicants for recertification to send their application to the ACVREP office well in advance of the recertification date on their current certificate. ACVREP asks that certificants pay particular attention to their recertification date. If the recertification application is received 30-postmarked days after the recertification due date, the certificant will have to pay a late fee.

Refer to the ACVREP website at www.acvrep.org for a current Directory of Certificants.

Section 14 - Appeals Process

A. Introduction

Eligibility criteria for certification/recertification is established by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) Board of Directors based upon the recommendations of the Certification Committees (CC) of the disciplines of Low Vision Therapy (LVT), Orientation and Mobility (O&M), and Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT).

Unsuccessful candidates will receive a written denial of certification. A process of appeal upon written submission is available to any denied candidate who feels that the eligibility criteria have been inaccurately, inconsistently, or unfairly applied.

The process of appeal does NOT permit:

- Additional time to acquire education, employment experience or supervision required for certification.
- Additional time to submit the documentation required for certification.
- Presentation of additional documentation.

B. Levels of Appeal

The appeal process provides for two levels of appeal. The first is to the Certification Committee and the second is to the Board of Directors. This structure assures:

- A review of the relevant facts.
- A second, independent evaluation of the materials presented.
- Fair and consistent application of eligibility criteria.

C. The Appeal Process

1. *First Level of Appeal*

The appellant must send to the President of ACVREP a written request for appeal, by certified mail postmarked within 30 days of official receipt of the letter of denial. The request for appeal must include in a single packet a signed statement of the grounds for appeal and all relevant documentation in support thereof. Only documentation included with the first appeal request will be considered at either level of appeal.

The President will forward the request for appeal to the Chair and members of the appropriate Certification Committee (CC). The decision will be made by majority vote of the CC and the Chair of the CC will forward written notice of the decision to the ACVREP President. The President will inform the Board of Directors of the decision and the specific reasons therefore and will inform the appellant to the same effect by certified mail within 30 days of receipt by the President of the request for appeal.

If the CC upholds denial of certification, the appellant has the right to petition for a second level of appeal.

2. *The Second Level of Appeal*

The appellant must send to the President of ACVREP a written request for a second level appeal, by certified mail postmarked within 30 days of receipt of the decision on first appeal. The request for a second level of appeal must set forth specific objections to the determinations made by the CC in rendering its decision in the first appeal. No additional documentation may be included.

The President will forward the appellant's written request and all documentation accompanying the request for the first level of appeal to the Chair of the Board of Directors. The Chair of the Board will appoint an Ad-hoc Committee comprised of at least three members of the Board to review the second level request and all documentation accompanying the first level appeal. None of the Ad-hoc Committee members may have been part of the CC that rendered the decision on first appeal.

The Ad-hoc Committee will report its decision to the Board and the Chair of the Board will inform the President in writing of the decision. The Chair of the Board will inform the appellant

of the decision by certified mail within 60 days of the official receipt by the President of the request for a second level appeal.

D. Related Items

ACVREP is not responsible for any costs incurred by the appellant throughout the appeal process.

If the appeal concerns an examination related issue, the appellant is precluded from retesting until the appeal is heard and a final decision has been rendered.

ACVREP will permanently retain all records and reports related to each appeal.

Section 15 - Disciplinary Procedures and Grounds for Discipline

Disciplinary procedures are established to provide a fair and impartial determination regarding alleged misconduct by ACVREP certificants and to uphold the Code of Ethics establishing required standards of conduct for all ACVREP certificants.

ACVREP expects that complainants and certificants will attempt to resolve issues between them amenable to resolution, prior to requesting that ACVREP commence a disciplinary procedure.

To the extent permitted by law, confidentiality shall be maintained by all parties throughout the disciplinary procedure.

Grounds for Discipline

Misconduct by an ACVREP certificant, including the following acts or omissions, constitutes grounds for discipline, whether or not the misconduct occurred in the course of a client/student relationship.

- Any act or omission that violates the provisions of the ACVREP Certifications' Code of Ethics.
- Any act or omission that violates criminal law which results in a conviction.
- Failure to respond to the allegations as requested by the Chair of the Disciplinary Review Committee. A failure to respond shall be deemed to occur if the certificant has failed to provide updated, current contact information to the ACVREP office and thus the complaint can not be delivered to the certificant and/or if the certificant fails to respond within 30 days to a request in the "Missing Persons" section of the ACVREP newsletter.
- Obstruction of the Disciplinary Review Committee's performance of its duties.
- Any false or misleading statements made to ACVREP.

Complaint

Upon receipt of a written complaint, the President shall forward to the complainant a copy of the appropriate Code of Ethics with a request that the complainant identify the specific Code provisions alleged to have been violated by the certificant or any act that is a violation of criminal law which results in a conviction, and provide to ACVREP evidence supporting each allegation. The complainant should use the ACVREP Complaint Form and Affidavit which can be obtained from the ACVREP office or “Download” page on ACVREP’s website.

The President shall forward the complainant’s written complaint, response, and accompanying evidence to the Chair of the Disciplinary Review Committee for review. The Chair shall determine whether there is probable cause that a Code of Ethics violation has occurred or that there has been a violation of criminal law that resulted in a conviction. Should the Chair determine that there is no probable cause to believe the Code has been violated, the complainant shall be so informed and the file shall be closed. Upon determination by the Chair that there is probable cause to believe the Code has been violated, the Chair shall forward all information received from the complainant to legal counsel for independent review and advice.

If the advice of legal counsel is that no probable cause exists to believe a Code of Ethics violation has occurred, or that there has not been a violation of criminal law resulting in a conviction, the Chair shall close the file and so inform the complainant of the rationale therefore. If legal counsel concurs in the Chair’s determination that there is probable cause to believe a Code violation has occurred or that there has been a violation of criminal law resulting in a conviction, the Chair will assume the responsibility for proceeding with an investigation.

Investigation

The Chair shall inform the ACVREP certificant under investigation in writing of the allegations and the supporting evidence, and describe the steps to be taken in proceeding with the investigation. The certificant will have twenty (20) working days within which to file a written response. The certificant will be notified by certified mail, return receipt requested, or its equivalent, at certificant’s most current address on file.

Upon receipt of a response from the certificant, the Chair shall forward the response to the complainant and to legal counsel. The complainant shall be requested to advise the Chair of his/her willingness to participate in a hearing on the complaint, in order to allow the certificant to face and question the complainant. If the complainant is unwilling to participate in the hearing, the Chair shall close the file, unless the DRC by a majority vote finds that the investigation and hearing should proceed. If no response is received from the certificant within twenty (20) working days, a formal complaint will be issued and the case scheduled for a hearing.

Hearing

The hearing shall be held by the Disciplinary Review Committee, either via a teleconference call or face-to-face meeting, with the Chair conducting the proceedings as a nonvoting committee member. The complainant shall present the evidence supporting the allegations against the

certificant. Admissibility of evidence is within the sole discretion of the Chair. The certificant, who has the right to participate in the hearing (in person or via a teleconference call), may respond and provide evidence in defense against the complainant's allegations and may be represented by counsel. The voting members of the committee, exclusive of the Chair, shall determine whether a Code violation has occurred and make its findings and determination based upon a majority vote of those members eligible to vote.

Please note: If a face-to-face hearing is requested by the complainant and/or certificant, they will be responsible for covering all of their expenses related to attending the hearing, including expenses for their legal counsel.

Appeal and Final Decision

In cases where the hearing leads to formal disciplinary action, the certificant may appeal the Disciplinary Review Committee's decision to the full ACVREP Board of Directors by written notice to the ACVREP office within 20 working days via certified mail or its equivalent. The Chair of the committee shall then submit the committee's findings and determination, along with the case file, to the full board which shall render a final decision as to the Code violations committed by the certificant and the disciplinary action to be taken. Unless requested by the board, no additional information may be introduced by the committee or certificant during the appeal process. The board's decision shall be final, with notification provided to the certificant, via certified mail or its equivalent, within 45 working days from the date the ACVREP office received the certificant's letter of appeal, unless the board has requested additional information during the appeal process or the board has decided to render a final decision at its next scheduled board meeting. In the event the board decides to render a decision at its next meeting, notice will be sent to all interested parties.

Forms of Discipline

The Board may impose any of the forms of discipline set forth below. All disciplinary actions, with the exception of private written censure, shall be publicly disseminated.

- Private written censure
- Public letter of admonition
- Suspension of certification and the right to use the ACVREP certification marks for a specified period of time, not to exceed five years
- Permanent termination of certification and of the right to use the ACVREP certification marks

Reinstatement

Reinstatement of suspended certification shall occur at the end of the period of suspension, upon the terms and conditions provided by the ACVREP Board of Directors.

Section 16 - Use of the Service Mark

The service marks “Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist” and “COMS” are registered with the United States Patent and Trademark Office and owned by ACVREP. These marks identify and distinguish the services of the ACVREP Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist® (COMS®) from services provided by others. The ACVREP COMS has the exclusive right to use these marks in connection with the service of orientation and mobility.

Section 17 - Certification and Recertification Record Retention

<u>Certificant Files</u>	<u>Retention Period</u>
Active	Permanently
Disciplined	Permanently
Denied certification or recertification	10 years
Lapsed	10 years
Revoked	Permanently
Deceased	1 year
Historical list of names of certificant for each year	Permanently

Certification Application Forms

Sample forms	Permanently
Completed applications	5 years
Incomplete applications	3 years
Candidates found to be ineligible	10 years
Candidates otherwise not granted certification	10 years
Candidates granted certification	Permanently

Section 18 - Fee Information

All fees are listed in USD.

Eligibility Application Fee:	\$105.00
Certification Examination Fee: [Proctor Fee Included]	\$375.00 [up to two administrations]
Certification Fee (5-year term):	\$100.00
Expedited Board Approval of Certification Fee:	\$50.00
Recertification Fee: [Recertification Application Fee (\$200.00) and Recertification Term Fee (\$100.00)]	\$300.00 Total

Multiple Certification Discount:

Individuals applying for ACVREP Certification in multiple disciplines (CLVT, COMS, and/or CVRT) will be given a 50% discount on the Certification Fee for each additional certificate after paying the full Certification Fee for the first certificate. The Certification Fee for each additional certificate is **\$50.00**. This discount does not apply to the Eligibility Application Fee and/or the Certification Examination Fee.

Likewise, individuals who recertify in multiple disciplines (CLVT, COMS, and/or CVRT) will be given a 50% discount on the Recertification Term Fee (\$100.00) for each additional certificate after paying the full Recertification Fee for the first certificate. The Recertification Term Fee for each additional certificate is **\$50.00**. This discount does not apply to the Certification Examination Fee (if taken for the purposes of recertification), the Recertification Application Fee and/or the Expedited Board Approval of Certification Fee.

Late Fees:

A late fee of **\$50.00** will be charged if the recertification application is not submitted within 30 (postmarked) days of the recertification expiration date.

Miscellaneous Fees:

- Certificate replacement fee: **\$20.00**
- Certification Handbook: **\$15.00** (plus **\$2.50** for shipping and handling)
- Certification Logo Pin: **\$10.00**

Non-sufficient funds (NSF) policy

A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for any check returned due to NSF. Fees must then be paid by money order or cashier check. All fees must be paid in full before any further ACVREP service will be rendered.

Refund policy

The following fees and charges are non-refundable: Eligibility Application fee, Certification Examination fee, Recertification Application fee, late fee, certificate replacement fee, handbook charge, and logo pin charge. A \$50.00 administration cost will be retained for refunds of certification and recertification fees when requested prior to the approval of the application. ACVREP requires that all such requests for these refunds be submitted in writing.