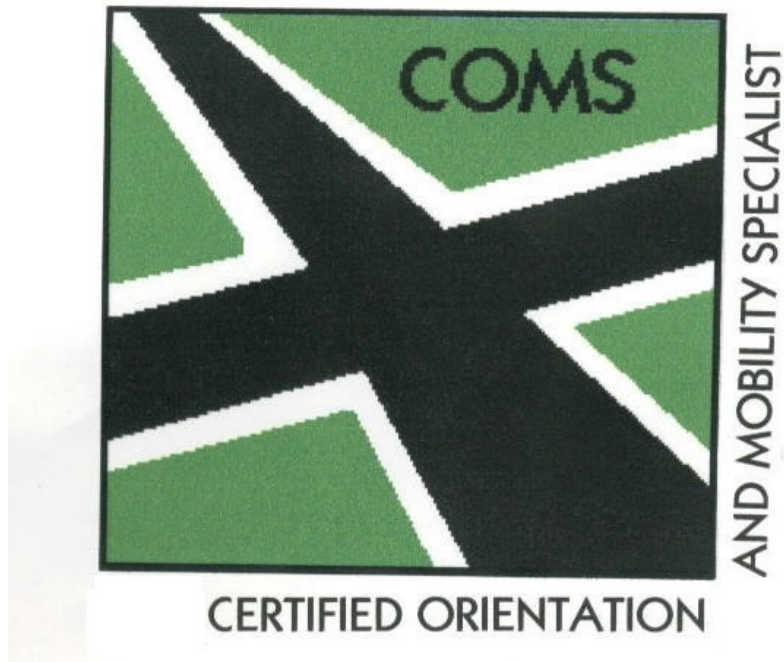


# ACVREP

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Academy for Certification of Vision  
Rehabilitation & Education Professionals



## **Orientation and Mobility Specialist Certification Handbook**

**Revised February 2009**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Preface.....</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>Pages 4-5</b>
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Scope of Practice.....</b>	<b>Pages 5-6</b>
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Orientation and Mobility Body of Knowledge.....</b>	<b>Pages 6-11</b>
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>History of Orientation and Mobility Certification.....</b>	<b>Pages 11-12</b>
<b>Section 5</b>	<b>Code of Ethics for Orientation and Mobility Specialists..</b>	<b>Pages 12-17</b>
<b>Section 6</b>	<b>Criteria for Eligibility.....</b>	<b>Pages 17-20</b>
<b>Section 7</b>	<b>Application Process.....</b>	<b>Pages 20-21</b>
<b>Section 8</b>	<b>University Students Program.....</b>	<b>Pages 21-22</b>
<b>Section 9</b>	<b>Examination Information.....</b>	<b>Pages 22-26</b>
<b>Section 10</b>	<b>Orientation and Mobility Test at a Glance.....</b>	<b>Pages 26-30</b>
<b>Section 11</b>	<b>Recertification in Orientation and Mobility.....</b>	<b>Pages 30-31</b>
<b>Section 12</b>	<b>Reinstatement of Certification.....</b>	<b>Pages 31-32</b>
<b>Section 13</b>	<b>Appeals Process.....</b>	<b>Pages 32-33</b>
<b>Section 14</b>	<b>Disciplinary Procedures and Grounds for Discipline.....</b>	<b>Pages 33-36</b>
<b>Section 15</b>	<b>Use of the Service Mark.....</b>	<b>Page 36</b>
<b>Section 16</b>	<b>Certification and Recertification Record Retention.....</b>	<b>Pages 36-37</b>
<b>Section 17</b>	<b>Fee Information.....</b>	<b>Page 37-38</b>

## **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 examination.

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; and
- 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**

### **Category 1:**

Eligibility to sit for the certifying examination:

- Proof of a minimum of a Bachelor's degree (or foreign equivalent, as verified through an independent credential evaluation company), with an emphasis in Orientation and Mobility (O&M), from an AER approved university or college O&M program at the time the degree or program of study was granted or completed.

**Supporting documentation required: Official transcripts documenting the degree.**

- 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 an onsite COMS.

**Supporting documentation required: Submit an "ACVREP Clinical Competency Evaluation Form for Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialists (COMS)" completed by the on-site COMS supervisor. Please note: For applicants completing more than**

**one internship, to meet the minimum hour or competency requirements, please submit “ACVREP Clinical Competency Evaluation Forms for Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialists (COMS)” for each internship, as completed by the on-site COMS supervisors.**

- Sign a written statement agreeing to uphold high ethical and professional standards.

Eligibility for O&M certification:

- Pass the O&M written exam demonstrating knowledge of O&M principles and applications.
- Approval by the ACVREP Board of Directors.

Category 2:

Eligibility to sit for the certifying examination:

- Proof of a minimum of a Bachelor’s degree (or foreign equivalent, as verified through an independent credential evaluation company), with an emphasis in O&M, from a university or college program of study in O&M that meets the following thirteen (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: Official transcripts documenting the degree; completion of the “O&M Core Domain Area Chart”, demonstrating where each core domain has been met in the applicant’s coursework (include course numbers and titles); and course catalog 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).

**Supporting documentation required: “ACVREP Alternative Learning Approval Form.” The applicant needs to complete this form and submit it with his/her eligibility application.**

- 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 an onsite COMS.

**Supporting documentation required: Submit an “ACVREP Clinical Competency Evaluation Form for Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialists (COMS)” completed by the on-site COMS supervisor. Please note: For applicants completing more than one internship, to meet the minimum hour or competency requirements, please submit “ACVREP Clinical Competency Evaluation Forms for Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialists (COMS)” for each internship, as completed by the on-site COMS supervisors.**

- Sign a written statement agreeing to uphold high ethical and professional standards.

Eligibility for O&M certification:

- Pass the O&M written exam demonstrating knowledge of O&M principles and applications.
- Approval by the ACVREP Board of Directors.

Category 3:

Eligibility to sit for the certifying examination:

- Proof of a minimum of a Bachelor’s degree (or foreign equivalent, as verified through an independent credential evaluation company) in any field of study and proof of completion of an orientation and mobility certification preparation program from a university or college that meets the following thirteen (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: Official transcripts documenting the degree and showing completion of the orientation and mobility certification preparation program; completion of the “*O&M Core Domain Area Chart*”, 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).

**Supporting documentation required: “*ACVREP Alternative Learning Approval Form.*” The applicant needs to complete this form and submit it with his/her eligibility application.**

- 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 an onsite COMS.

**Supporting documentation required: Submit an “*ACVREP Clinical Competency Evaluation Form for Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialists (COMS)*” completed by the on-site COMS supervisor. *Please note: For applicants completing more than one internship, to meet the minimum hour or competency requirements, please submit “ACVREP Clinical Competency Evaluation Forms for Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialists (COMS)” for each internship, as completed by the on-site COMS supervisors.***

- Sign a written statement agreeing to uphold high ethical and professional standards.

Eligibility for O&M certification:

- Pass the O&M written exam demonstrating knowledge of O&M principles and applications.
- Approval by the ACVREP Board of Directors.

### **Section 7 - Application Process**

1. All applicants for certification should request the application forms from the ACVREP office, 3333 N. Campbell Ave., Suite 11, Tucson, AZ, 85719, or download these forms from the ACVREP website at [www.acvrep.org](http://www.acvrep.org).
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:

- (1) Complete the Orientation and Mobility Specialist Eligibility Application and required forms. ACVREP staff will review your application to assess whether or not you are eligible to sit for the certification examination.
  - (2) If you are found eligible to sit for the examination, the Examination Registration Form will be sent to you. Please note: Applicants are required to proceed to the exam phase within one 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 \$250.00 exam fee, prior to June 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year. The implementation date for this new procedure is January 1, 2008.
  - (3) Take the examination at one of the accepted testing sites. You may choose to take the examination at one of the sites listed on ACVREP's website or arrange to take the examination at a testing or assessment center in your local community. Please note: A \$25.00 rescheduling fee will be charged if an exam is canceled by an applicant and isn't rescheduled within 15 days. For example, if an exam is scheduled for June 1st and the applicant decides to cancel it (regardless of the reason), the exam would need to be rescheduled by June 16th in order for the applicant to avoid the \$25.00 rescheduling fee. The implementation date for this new procedure is January 1, 2008.
  - (4) Upon successful completion of the certification examination, the Certification Application Request Form for certification approval will be mailed to you. You must then complete and submit this application to the ACVREP office.
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 and requested to provide the required information to complete the application packet.
  5. Certification applications will be due to the ACVREP office by the first of March, June, September, and December.
  6. Applications will be reviewed and a written report of requests for certification will be submitted to the ACVREP Board of Directors for approval by March 10th, June 10th, September 10th, and December 10th.
  7. 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.
  8. Certification will be issued for five years.

### **Section 8 – University Students Program**

In an attempt to encourage university/college students to apply for certification before they exit the university/college setting, students can now take any of ACVREP's exams (Low Vision Therapy, Orientation and Mobility, Vision Rehabilitation Therapy) prior to completing their 350-

hour internship and/or graduating from their university program. To take advantage of this opportunity, the student needs to complete the following steps:

1. The student must first complete and submit an eligibility application and the appropriate application fee. Although students can submit the eligibility application and take the 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) and a completed Clinical Competency Evaluation Form(s) are standard requirements.
2. Once the student submits an eligibility application, the ACVREP office will send him/her an Exam Registration Form. The student can then arrange to take the exam at one of the sites listed on the ACVREP website (see the "Exam Information" page), at the university's testing center or at a testing center within his/her local community. If the student would prefer that the ACVREP office schedule an exam at a time convenient to him/her, ACVREP staff will do this on his/her behalf. Whether the student or the ACVREP office schedules the exam, the Exam Registration Form must be submitted to the ACVREP office at least three weeks prior to the exam date. If the student takes the exam with at least two other students, ACVREP will cover any testing center and/or proctor fees. However, if there are less than three students, they would be responsible for picking up any testing center and/or proctor fees. Once the exams are scored, the student will receive a letter informing him/her as to whether s/he passed or failed the exam. If a student fails the exam, s/he can retake it as many times as needed until s/he passes it.
3. Once the student passes the exam, s/he can then apply to the ACVREP Board of Directors for certification. However, as noted above, the student must submit all of the required documents before s/he can submit his/her certification application. 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.

**Approved May 2, 2005 by the Executive Committee on behalf of the ACVREP Board of Directors.**

## **Section 9 - Examination Information**

### **Examination Administration**

#### **Responsibilities of the ACVREP Office**

- An Examination Registration Form will be sent to applicants upon approval of their eligibility application.
- In conjunction with universities, colleges, and other recognized testing sites, ACVREP will arrange the dates and times for the administration of its certification examinations. These

locations, dates, and times will be posted on the ACVREP website for a period of at least three months. ACVREP arranged testing dates have a registration closing date of three weeks prior to the scheduled examination date. On the closing date, if there are not at least three registered candidates, the testing site will be contacted and the examination date cancelled. Notification will be sent to any candidate who has registered for the cancelled examination date.

- Individuals may make special arrangements with an acceptable local testing center to proctor the examination. Acceptable testing centers can be located at [www.ncta-testing.org](http://www.ncta-testing.org). The examinee will pay the testing center fee directly to the testing center. The ACVREP Examination Registration Form must be completed and sent, with the examination fee, to the ACVREP office at least three weeks prior to the date of the examination. ACVREP will contact the testing center to assure acceptable standards and to arrange for the examination to be express mailed to the testing center.
- ACVREP will prepare the examination packet and send it by express mail to the testing site. The packet will include: 1) an envelope listing the examinee's name, ID number, examination location, date, and category of examination, 2) the Nondisclosure Statement form, 3) a copy of the pertinent examination, 4) an answer sheet, and 5) the Exam Evaluation Form. A postage paid return mailing form will be included for use by the testing site administrator to mail all paperwork back to ACVREP.
- ACVREP will correspond with the examinees to confirm the date, time, and location of the examination site, along with local contact information.
- ACVREP will send written notice to all examinees, as to whether they passed or failed the examination, within four weeks of their taking it.

#### Responsibilities of the Examination Proctor at the Testing Center

- Arrange for a suitable facility in which to conduct the ACVREP examination. Such a 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).
- Hire the appropriate number of assistant proctors. The person(s) hired as assistant proctor(s) should be professionals from a discipline other than vision rehabilitation and education so as to insure impartiality and objectivity in the examination content.
- Sign for and acknowledge the count of the sealed ACVREP examination packets and keep them under lock and key until the day of the examination.
- Do not copy or allow others to copy or otherwise duplicate the examination or any portion of it for any purpose.
- Insure that the integrity of the ACVREP examination is never compromised.

The proctor should:

- Direct examinees to the restroom before the exam begins, if needed.
- Verify the identification of each person who arrives for the examination by checking the list provided by the ACVREP office against a valid photo ID, such as a driver's license or passport. Any person who arrives who is not on the ACVREP office list will not be allowed to sit for the examination.

- Direct each arriving examinee to sign in on the ACVREP Examination Roster direct him/her to a secure place where his/her possessions may be stored, and allow him/her to settle himself/herself in the room.
- Announce that once the examination begins, no one will be allowed to leave the room. When an examinee leaves the room, the examination must be handed to the proctor and the examinee may not re-enter the room. There are no exceptions to this policy. If an examinee leaves the room because of illness or some other reason prior to finishing the examination, he or she may re-apply at a later time to retake the examination.
- Please remain in the room during the administration of the examination.
- Start the examination upon the arrival of all the registered examinees, or 30 minutes past the designated time, whichever comes first. Persons arriving later than 30 minutes after the designated time will not be allowed to sit for the examination. The proctor may, at his/her discretion, allow latecomers who have had unavoidable emergencies to take the examination after all of the other examinees have finished.
- Present each examinee with the appropriate examination envelope and signal the examination to start. **Four hours will be allowed for the Orientation and Mobility exam.** Accommodation arrangements for a longer test time must be made with the ACVREP office.
- 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 take the examination of the offending examinee, and may also take any evidence of cheating (notes, etc.). The proctor's suspicions are sufficient to cease that examinee's examination. The examinee may file an appeal to retake the examination at a later date.
- 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.
- Please inform ACVREP of any exam conditions that were so adverse that the examinees should be able to take the exam at another time.
- Please ensure that once the examination is completed, the examinee returns the examination envelope with the examination booklet, exam answer sheet, signed Nondisclosure Statement, and Exam Evaluation Form to you.
- Direct each examinee to sign out on the ACVREP Examination Roster.
- Place all of the examination envelope(s) and the ACVREP Examination Roster in a FedEx Envelope or Pak and, using the enclosed FedEx form, send it to ACVREP at 3333 N. Campbell Ave., Suite 11, Tucson, AZ, 85719.

### Responsibilities of the Examinee

- Prior to the exam, ACVREP recommends that examinees check with the ACVREP office to assure that their names appear on the list, which will be sent to the proctor within a week of the examination date.
- 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.
- Bring and show appropriate photo identification.
- Maintain quiet examination conditions during the test session.

- Complete the examination before leaving the room. If the examinee leaves the room, he or she will not be allowed to reenter and must not petition the proctor to be allowed to do so.
- 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).
- An examinee may take only one examination per session, but may arrange for multiple sessions on the same day.
- After completing the exam, return the examination envelope with the examination booklet, exam answer sheet, signed Nondisclosure Statement, and Exam Evaluation Form to the proctor.

### **Exam Evaluation Form**

To provide an opportunity for examinees to give immediate feedback, examinees will be given an Exam Evaluation Form to complete immediately following the exam. Examinees must submit the form to the testing center proctor prior to leaving the exam room. These forms will be given to the respective ACVREP certification committee (Low Vision Therapy Committee, O&M Committee, Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Committee) for review and action, if needed.

### **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. Examinees are allowed to bring nothing except writing implements to the testing situation. All possessions will be secured by the proctor away from where individuals are taking the examination. No cell phones, electronic devices, etc. will be allowed in the exam room. The room must be kept completely quiet.

### **Examination Retakes**

Applicants who do not achieve a passing score may retake the examination by submitting another Examination Registration Form and paying the examination fee. Applicants who are unsuccessful in achieving a passing score can retake the examination as many times as desired.

### **Examination Scores**

Upon completion and scoring of the examination, ACVREP will send the examinee a letter stating whether s/he passed or failed the examination. For examinees who have failed the Orientation and Mobility Specialist examination or Low Vision Therapist examination, a summary report across domains will be shared with them. For the Vision Rehabilitation Therapist exam, a copy of the examination score and cut score will be released only upon written request by an examinee. No other release of individual scores will be made. The ACVREP office will not provide any information regarding whether the examinee passed or failed the examination and/or his/her score over the telephone.

## Reasonable Accommodations

Persons with documented impairments or disabilities should be tested under conditions that will minimize the effect of the impairments or disabilities on their performance. Special test administrations should be as comparable as possible to a standard administration. When special arrangements require that examinees must sit in separate rooms, they should be tested under the same level of examination security and with the same dignity and safety as other examinees.

In general, those testing accommodations that individuals use to compensate for their disabilities, and that have become accepted practice for individuals in their college/university program, should be seriously considered as the most appropriate accommodation for testing.

To accommodate the individual needs of the examinee with a disability, ACVREP's examinations are available in large print (18-point bold type) or braille, or on audiotape or by providing a reader (for those examinees who are not able to read print copy). The reader will be a person who is familiar with the language of the examination and is able to read the test with the appropriate pronunciation of all terms. The reader will be instructed to read the examination answers without inflection so that the answer that the reader believes to be correct will not be revealed.

Examinees who are disabled might need to be tested in a separate room with a reader/scribe and given extra time to finish the test. When completing the Examination Registration Form, the examinee will make known his/her need for a reasonable accommodation and what type of accommodation is needed. The proctor will secure readers for those examinees who need them. Extra time will be provided prior to the examination so that each reader and examinee can practice the procedure.

Accommodations will be provided according to the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG).

**Revisions approved March 19, 2005**

### **Section 10 – 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	<b>Know Professional Information</b>	8	4%
2	<b>Understanding Relevant Medical Information</b>	17	8.5%

3	<b>Understand and Apply Learning Theories to O&amp;M</b>	5	2.5%
4	<b>Plan and Conduct O&amp;M Assessment</b>	23	11.5%
5	<b>Plan O&amp;M Programs</b>	12	6%
6	<b>Teach O&amp;M Related Concepts</b>	17	8.5%
7	<b>Teach Orientation Strategies and Skills</b>	24	12%
8	<b>Teach Mobility Skills</b>	40	20%
9	<b>Teach Use of Senses</b>	20	10%
10	<b>Teach Consumers who have Additional Disabilities</b>	12	6%
11	<b>Teach Diverse Consumers</b>	7	3.5%
12	<b>Analyze and Modify Environment</b>	7	3.5%
13	<b>Know the Psychosocial Implications of Blindness and Visual Impairment</b>	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, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 11 - 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 \$50.00 fee will be charged for any certificant requesting that his/her recertification application be processed outside of the normal application process. For example, if a certificant's recertification expiration date is June 30, 2007, s/he would typically need to submit his/her recertification application by June 1<sup>st</sup> in order for staff to submit applications to the board for review and approval by June 10<sup>th</sup>. If the certificant's application comes in after the report has gone to the board and s/he can't or doesn't want to wait for the board to review and approve his/her application in the next cycle, which would be in September, then s/he would be charged \$50.00 to expedite his/her application (to have the board review and approve it prior to September). The implementation date for this new procedure was July 1, 2007.

## **Section 12 - 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 <http://www.acvrep.org> for a current Directory of Certificants.

## **Section 13 - 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 (LV), Orientation and Mobility (O&M), and Rehabilitation Teaching (RT).

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 14 - 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 or, in the alternative, may request that the Committee's legal counsel do so. 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 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.

Revisions to policy approved March 19, 2005

### **Section 15 - 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 16 - 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 certificants 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 17 - Fee Information**

**All fees are listed in USD.**

LVT Eligibility Application Fee:	<b>\$105.00</b>
Certification Examination Fee:	<b>\$250.00</b> [up to two administrations]
Certification Fee (5-year term):	<b>\$100.00</b>
Expedited Board Approval of Certification Fee:	<b>\$50.00</b>
Recertification Application Fee:	<b>\$200.00</b>
Recertification Fee (5-year term):	<b>\$100.00</b>

**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, the Certification Examination Fee and/or the Expedited Board Approval of Certification Fee.

Likewise, individuals who recertify in multiple disciplines (CLVT, COMS, and/or CVRT) will be given a 50% discount on the Recertification Fee for each additional certificate after paying the full Recertification Fee for the first certificate. The Recertification 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:	<b>\$20.00</b>
Certification Handbook:	<b>\$15.00</b> (plus <b>\$2.50</b> for shipping and handling)
Certification Logo Pin:	<b>\$10.00</b>

**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.