

Preliminary Surgical
Assessment for the
Clinical Proficiency
Examination
Candidate Manual of
Administration
2024

Preliminary Surgical Assessment for the Clinical Proficiency Examination

(Designated as PSA)

Introduction to the Candidate PSA Manual of Administration

(Designated Candidate PSA MOA)

Competencies

The Preliminary Surgical Assessment will assess the candidate's ability to:

- Prepare a simulator for a sterile abdominal surgical procedure;
- Prepare himself/herself for a sterile surgical procedure; and
- Perform a ventral midline celiotomy (approximately 10 cm in length) and close the ventral midline celiotomy, subcutaneous tissue and skin on a simulator.

Candidates may find it helpful to review small animal surgery techniques as described in up-to-date standard textbooks such as:

- Fossum TW, et al. *Small Animal Surgery*, 5th ed. (2018) Elsevier.
- Tobias K. *Manual of Small Animal Soft Tissue Surgery*, 1st ed. (2009), Wiley-Blackwell.
- Tobias KM Johnston SA. *Veterinary Surgery: Small Animal*, 2nd ed. (2017), Elsevier Saunders.

Please note that in the case of an appeal, the Fossum textbook will serve as the primary reference textbook.

Master Exit Interview Assessment for PSA (PSA 02)

Skills to be assessed include those involved in:

- a. Patient preparation, including final preparation of surgery site. The final preparation of the surgery site should include the use of sterile surgical gloves or clean examination gloves;
- b. Surgeon preparation;
- c. Surgical technique and aseptic technique while performing a ventral midline celiotomy;
- d. Abdominal wall, subcutaneous tissue, and skin closure.

The PSA consists of ten (10) sections (Skin Preparation, Patient Positioning, Attire & Scrubbing, Gowning/Gloving, Draping, Instrument Handling, Surgical Incision, Abdominal Wall Closure, Subcutaneous and Skin Closure, and Aseptic Technique.)

Should a candidate receive a **Fail** on the PSA Assessment Score Sheet for **three or more** sections, he/she will be allowed to complete the PSA but will receive a failing grade for the PSA.

Also, please pay attention to the following specific areas that result in Failing grade on the PSA

There are 2 types of critical error.

Type 1:

The examiner will immediately provide feedback to correct the error to ensure the safety of the candidate and/or personnel and will ask the candidate to leave the exam. The candidate **will not** be allowed to complete the PSA. This will occur if candidate's behaviour has placed the candidate and/or other personnel in a potentially dangerous situation or where the candidate has disrespected the simulator.

Type 2:

In the second type of critical error, the candidate will be allowed to complete the exam. Examples of these critical errors are:

- inability to maintain aseptic technique

- inadequate abdominal closure
- going over the allotted time for the PSA

A critical error alone results in failure of the PSA regardless of how many sections are successfully completed.

The examiner shall not provide the candidate with any feedback during the examination on these Type 2 critical errors.

Time Fault:

Should a candidate exceed 1.5 hours from initiation of simulator preparation to completion of surgical procedure (placement of final skin suture in the simulator), the candidate will **FAIL** the PSA.

Aseptic technique:

It is imperative that the candidate maintains aseptic technique throughout this examination. If, at any time during the PSA, the candidate accidentally contaminates him/herself or the surgical field, the candidate should immediately notify a technician or an examiner and will be given the opportunity to correct the situation without penalty. If a break in aseptic technique is observed by a technician or examiner and the candidate does not recognize or indicate that contamination has happened, he/she will be informed that he/she has contaminated himself/herself or the surgical field. He/she will be given a warning and then allowed to correct the situation. Candidates who break aseptic technique **three times** without recognizing it themselves and informing the technician or examiner, will be given a **Failing** mark for the PSA; however, he/she will be **allowed to continue** the examination.

The PSA Exit Interview Assessment Form (PSA 02) will not be given to the candidate at this time. This document remains part of the candidate's official

file. The candidate will receive a copy of this document from the NEB office along with the final results.

Set-up Information

1. Simulator Requirements: One suitable canine abdominal wall simulator will be provided.
2. Minimum People Requirements
 - a. One veterinary examiner per 3 candidates and 1 technical assistant per 3 candidates and
 - b. Two examiners must be present if there are 4-6 candidates present

3. Facilities and Equipment

- a. Rooms (or areas) equipped for the preparation of simulators for surgery;
- b. Rooms (or areas) equipped to carry out the required surgical procedures; and
- c. Added to the spay pack will be a Gelpi retractor that may be needed when working with the simulator to aid in visualization of the linea for closure. The examiner will demonstrate the application of the Gelpi retractor in the orientation prior to the exam.
- d. Digital timing device visible from each table to track elapsed examination time.

There will be variation between sites in the type of supplies available for surgery. Candidates will need to have some flexibility in the selection of appropriate material. Candidates may be asked to use either standard gowns or wrap-around gowns.

4. Supplies Provided By The Candidate

- a. Clean laboratory coat, surgical scrubs, clean footwear.

6. General Requirements of the Candidate

Candidates are expected to handle all simulators in a respectful manner as if they were live animals.

The PSA will be scored on a pass/fail basis. A numerical score will not be given. A “pass” equates with the skill level expected of a minimally competent new graduate of a CVMA/AVMA/Council on Education-accredited veterinary school/college.

The examiner will use the PSA assessment sheet (PSA 01) as a checklist to record comments regarding each candidate’s behaviors. The examiner will note both positive and negative behaviors but will not provide the candidate with any feedback during the examination except in the case of a dismissal due to a critical error.

Should a candidate fail 3 of the 10 sections, he/she will be allowed to complete the PSA but will fail the PSA.

A candidate that performs a critical error during the PSA will fail the exam but will be allowed to complete the exam unless the candidate committed a critical error that placed her/himself or an examiner in danger or disrespects the simulator. Other examples of critical errors are inability to maintain aseptic technique, inadequate abdominal closure and going over the allotted time for the PSA. A critical error alone results in failure of the PSA regardless of how many sections are successfully completed.

Overview of the PSA

The candidate will perform a ventral midline celiotomy and then close the abdomen on a canine abdominal wall simulator. A technical assistant will be available to provide materials but must be instructed by the candidate in all actions to be performed. Although this is a simulator, candidates **MUST** understand that this surgical procedure is being carried out utilizing strict aseptic technique (as if it were a live animal and a survival surgery). Any breaks in aseptic technique will be documented and may have negative consequences. **Candidates must remember that they are being evaluated on aseptic surgical technique and surgery skills.**

The candidate should position the simulator on the table and prepare the simulator for surgery. The simulator should then be transferred to the surgery

table and secured appropriately. The candidate should then prepare himself/herself to perform aseptic surgery. The candidate (surgeon) will then perform a ventral midline celiotomy and abdominal closure. As the candidate progresses through the surgery, there are **two points** at which the candidate must ask the examiner to check the simulator before continuing with the procedure. First, candidates must inform the examiner when he/she is ready to start the abdominal wall closure and must state the size and type of suture material he/she will use for this closure. Secondly, candidates must announce to the examiner when he/she has completed the abdominal wall closure and must wait for the examiner to check the closure before continuing on with closure of the subcutaneous tissue and the skin. If a candidate must wait for the examiner at either of these two stages, the time spent waiting will not count against the candidate's total allowed time for this examination.

As noted previously, the candidate must pass 8 of the 10 sections to pass the examination.

It is critical to ensure that secure square knots are tied for any suture pattern used. For simple interrupted sutures, a minimum of 4 throws (one square knot followed by 2 additional throws) are required. For a simple continuous pattern, a minimum of 6 throws (one square knot followed by an additional 4 throws) are required for the start of the suture pattern and 7 throws (one square knot followed by an additional 5 throws) for the end of the suture pattern. Candidates are expected to close the skin using a simple interrupted pattern.

Candidates will have 1.5 hours to complete this section from initiation of simulator preparation to placement of the final skin suture.

OTHER EXAMINER COMMENTS ON CANDIDATE'S PERFORMANCE OF SIMULATOR PREPARATION SKILLS:

PSA 01 continued on next page

(PSA 01) PSA Assessment Score Sheet

Candidate Name/ID:

Date/Session/Site:

MASTER PSA ASSESSMENT SHEET (PAGE 2; cont'd)

Surgeon Preparation—Candidates will be assessed on their ability to prepare themselves for an aseptic surgery:

Comments

DRAPING – Check any comments below, assign overall score in columns to right

Pass

Fail

(PSA 01) PSA Assessment Score Sheet

Candidate Name/ID:

Date/Session/Site:

MASTER PSA ASSESSMENT SHEET (PAGE 3)

Midline celiotomy and closure—Candidates will be assessed on the following skills:

Comments

SURGICAL INCISION – Check any comments below, assign overall score in columns to right

Pass

Fail

(PSA 01) PSA Assessment Score Sheet

CANDIDATE NAME/ID:

DATE/SESSION/SITE:

MASTER PSA ASSESSMENT SHEET (PAGE 3; cont'd)

**MIDLINE CELIOTOMY AND CLOSURE—CANDIDATES
WILL BE ASSESSED ON THE FOLLOWING SKILLS:**

Comments

ABDOMINAL WALL CLOSURE – Check any comments
below, assign overall score in columns to right

Pass

Fail

<p>(PSA 01) PSA Assessment Score Sheet Score Sheet Candidate Name/ID: Date/Session/Site: MASTER PSA ASSESSMENT SHEET (PAGE 4)</p>	
<p>Midline celiotomy and closure —Candidate assessed on following skills (continued):</p>	<p>Comments</p>
<p>CREATES SECURE SUBCUTANEOUS AND SKIN CLOSURE – Check any comments below, assign overall score in columns to right</p>	<div style="text-align: right;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail </div>
<p>EXAMINER COMMENTS ON CANDIDATE’S PERFORMANCE OF ABOVE MIDLINE CELIOTOMY AND CLOSURE SKILLS:</p>	

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(PSA 01) PSA Assessment Score Sheet

Candidate Name/ID:

Date/Session/Site:

MASTER PSA ASSESSMENT SHEET (PAGE 4; cont'd)

Midline celiotomy and closure —Candidate assessed on following skills (continued):	Comments
<p>ASEPSIS - Check any comments below, assign overall score in columns to right</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail</p>

	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail
OVERALL SURGICAL EFFICIENCY - Check any comments below, assign overall score in columns to right <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Candidate Fails Exam
EXAMINER COMMENTS ON CANDIDATE'S PERFORMANCE OF ABOVE MIDLINE CELIOTOMY AND CLOSURE SKILLS:	
FINAL PSA SCORE (PASS OR FAIL)	
Primary examiner's name/signature:	

Secondary examiner's (or observer's) name/signature (required only if fatal flaw observed):