

ACVO CAER Exams through OFA



ACVO CAER Exams

What is the ACVO's CAER exam and what is the relationship with the OFA?

The ACVO CAER canine eye screening examinations aim to collect, evaluate, and provide information to breeders about canine eye diseases. This information helps breeders make informed breeding decisions which should result in healthier dogs. Only board-certified veterinary ophthalmologists (ACVO Diplomates), credentialed through the American Board of Veterinary Ophthalmology (ABVO), are authorized to provide ACVO CAER screening exams to breeders.

The ACVO collaborates with the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) to administer the examination program. Together with the ACVO Genetics Committee, they publish annual breeding recommendations in the 'ACVO Blue Book'.

What is involved in an ACVO CAER eye exam?

A form is either provided by the ophthalmologist or it may be filled out in the OFA online system prior to an appointment with an ophthalmologist. The exam must be performed by a board-certified veterinary ophthalmologist. Each dog is given a complete ophthalmic exam but diagnostic testing such as intraocular pressures are not often performed unless requested. Each dog is dilated for the exam; dilation could last up to 6-8 hours after the exam. Forms for OFA certification are submitted to OFA by the Breeder after the exam is completed.

What happens to a dog who passes their ACVO CAER eye exam?

A specific OFA number will be assigned to each dog, and the Breeder will be emailed a certificate. Puppy purchasers, other breeders or any interested parties will be able to look up the Breeder's dog on the OFA website and verify they have passed their eye exam (only passing results will automatically go to the OFA website for the public to view). The eye exam is good for one year. Annual examination is recommended since many inherited ocular diseases, such as cataracts, can show up later in life.

What happens if a dog fails an ACVO CAER exam?

The OFA will email the Breeder a report that indicates the reason the dog has not passed. Breeding will not be recommended if a dog does not pass the exam, as they could pass on undesirable traits to future offspring.

Who decides if a dog passes or fails the exam?

If a dog has both normal boxes checked, you can expect it will pass. Veterinary ophthalmologists will not check the "normal" boxes if something is seen upon examination; this *does not necessarily mean* that the exam will not pass. If a lesion (disease or abnormality of any kind) is noted, then this is indicated on the form by the ophthalmologist. Some of these conditions (example: distichiasis, or extra eyelashes) typically pass with "breeder option" meaning an abnormality is noted and may even be inherited but minor; but a dog will still pass the exam and can be bred at the Breeder's discretion. If a disease is more serious (such as most cataracts), then a member of the ACVO Genetics Committee will review the form and indicate whether the disease/disorder will pass. The Genetics Committee is composed of board certified veterinary ophthalmologists (DACVO - Diplomates of the College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists) whose goal is to promote healthy breeding practices to keep our dogs healthy!

Please feel free to contact the OFA directly at ofa@offa.org or 573-442-0418 if you have further questions about the process.