The NAVLE

WHAT?
The North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (the NAVLE) is a requirement for all students who wish to practice anywhere in North America. It’s a multiple choice assessment of 360 clinically relevant questions, over 6 hours.

WHO?
The NAVLE is open to any UK vet student or graduate, with most choosing to take it in their final year or shortly after they graduate.

It is worth noting here that the UK vet schools are not all currently accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and as a result applying to sit the NAVLE is different for students/graduates of different universities.

The AVMA accredited UK vet schools (as of May 2016) are:
- Dublin
- Edinburgh
- Glasgow
- RVC

An up-to-date list of accredited vet schools is available [here](#):

For students/graduates of Bristol, Cambridge, Nottingham, Liverpool or Surrey vet schools, you will need to pass some tests and complete some paperwork before you are able to submit a successful application to sit the NAVLE.

There are also two routes you can take if your vet school isn’t AVMA accredited, links to the websites for both are available below.

- **Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates**
  This run by the AVMA and requires you to be a final year student or a graduate. It serves to assess your English language skills, clinical science knowledge and your clinical skills.

- **Programme for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE)**,
  Again this is a four-step process including a science exam and a clinical proficiency assessment. However, it’s worth noting the PAVE exams cost $1,500, plus an application fee of $375 and not every state assessment centre for the NAVLE accepts the PAVE yet (it currently stands at 43 jurisdictions).

WHEN?
The NAVLE offers two different sessions a year when you can take the exams:
- Late November/Early December (4 weeks)
- April (2 weeks)

It’s definitely worth having a think about when your busiest times of year are and when your finals are going to be so that you don’t overdo it on the workload.

**TOP TIP:** Book your exam slot early to have first pick - this will maximise your revision time and minimise your stress!

The National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (NBVME) offer the opportunity to take the NAVLE either in the United States, or at various exam centres worldwide, including the option to sit the exam at approved test centres in the UK (facilitated by Prometric), so there’s no requirement to head out to America just for one exam! (However, taking the test outside of the USA costs an additional $290).
HOW?
You’ll need to do the following to register to sit the NAVLE:

1. Request a letter of good standing from your vet school
   This may take a while as it usually needs to be signed by the dean or head of your vet school and include your student number and to be addressed to the correct NBVME department so make sure you give your vet school all the information they need to write the letter for you so that they can get it write first term for you.

2. Register with your state of choice
   The letter from your vet school will be sent to the state you want to take the NAVLE through, each state will have slightly different cut off dates, and may have additional exams to take. But once you’ve passed the NAVLE you can transfer your results to another state if you want to work somewhere else.

3. Complete your NVMBE registration and pay the registration fee.
   In 2016 this was $605, plus an additional $290 dollars to take the exam in the UK/abroad

4. Pick your exam date and registration centre
   The sooner you book the more choice of your test date you can have, potentially buying yourself a precious extra few days of revision!

5. Prepare for the exams!
   See below!

Preparation
The NAVLE is a pretty big exam to prepare for, it’s 360 questions in six hours so it’s a good idea to lay out a good revision plan for the couple of months before the exam in advance and set yourself realistic target goals.
Also, if you can talk to your year group and see if anybody else is taking the NAVLE in the same exam block as you and do some study sessions together to discuss cases and DDX.

There are two market leaders at the moment in terms of online training courses and practice exam providers; VetPrep and Zuku Review. Whilst these aren't written or run by the NBVME the questions are widely accepted as similar in format and content to the types of things the NAVLE will assess, and with VetPrep having run for over 10 years they must be at least a bit helpful!

VetPrep offers daily free practice questions, plus the option to register for a revision license ($50) that gives you full access to a bank of over 2,000 practice questions with worked answers, full practice exam papers and power lectures to help you with revision.

The NBVME also offer a package of 5, official, NAVLE practice papers you can use to help with that revision in the last month or so, at $50/paper.

If you can get the opportunity, then it could be worth applying to undertake a couple of weeks of EMS in the USA so that you can see and work on conditions that are more prevalent in specific states, especially the one you’ll be applying to take the exam for. This may just give you that winning edge when you have questions about DDX and native vectors of diseases, although it’s worth checking with your EMS team what your vet school will and won’t accept as EMS placement.

CAN YOU RETAKE THE NAVLE?
Yes, if things, unfortunately, don’t go well in your first sitting of the NAVLE you are allowed to retake the exam up to five times, it is also recommended that boards do not let you sit the exam at any point in time which is five years after your first attempt. It’s also worth noting that you will be required to pay the fees each time you sit the exam.
MORE INFORMATION:
National Board of Veterinary Medicine Examiners (America) NAVLE webpage

NBVME NAVLE Checklist

Vet Prep

Zuku Review

Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates

PAVE

JAVS “NAVLE Study Tips from a survivor” Article; with thanks to Marissa Silva (UCD)