



Professional School Prep: Veterinary School

What is Veterinary School?

Veterinary school is a four-year doctorate-level program, in which students learn the science of medicine and specifically animal care. After completing a bachelor's degree and program prerequisites from a regionally accredited college or university, students can enter veterinary school. After completing their programs students may pursue post-doc internships or began to practice.

What should I know about Veterinary Medicine?

Students who attend a veterinary college will have a very similar experience to students at a medical college. They will gain an in depth knowledge of cores sciences, and go on to learn specifics about veterinary medicine, earning a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine or Veterinary Medical Doctorate at the end of their program. Veterinarians work in a variety of fields including: private practice, emergency medicine, animal dentistry, animal dermatology, herd health, and more.

Related Fields

Medicine	Animal Behavior
Zoology	Conservation Biology
Ecology	Taxonomy
Aquatic and Fishery Sciences	Marine Biology

Where can I study Veterinary Medicine?

In Washington state, there is only one veterinary school located which is at Washington State University. Nationally, there are only 28 programs that currently offer programs in veterinary medicine. This is significant in reference to the competitive nature of such programs, the 2007 pool of vet-applicants had approximately 5,750 applicants for 2,650 seats, with only a 46% acceptance rate.

How do I get started?

When considering veterinary school, ask: Is this the only profession I could ever see myself doing? Am I willing to go into substantial debt in order to pursue this dream? Am I willing to give up a significant portion of my social life (eg. birthdays, holidays, parties, weddings) for the rest of my life? While answering these questions, students pursuing veterinary school can remember the acronym "S-T-A-R-T":

Shadow

Shadowing is the act of working with and observing a current veterinarian practicing in a clinical setting. Often this can occur in a private practice, animal hospital, or possibly a zoo. Shadowing is a huge part of becoming a well-rounded and competitive applicant. One of the main purposes of shadowing is to help you, the student, become more aware of what it means to be a veterinarian. Students will often work with veterinarians in a variety of settings and specialties in order to gain a better sense of the profession. Shadowing opportunities are out there but they can be hard to find, often students may find the most success with contacting their own veterinarian or through programs run through pre health clubs/organizations.

Talk

Talk to someone! Being a student interested in going to veterinary school means that a large part of your time should be spent learning as much about the opportunities available to you that may help develop you as a student as possible. Working with your adviser, instructors, and classmates can all be incredibly helpful in helping connect you with the resources you will need. A large part of being a veterinarian is surprisingly communication; your patients can't speak, so being able to gather information from multiple sources, and from those who can speak for them is crucial. Therefore, get started utilizing your information gathering skills early by consulting with friends, attending campus info sessions, and being involved in our pre health community here at BC.

Academics

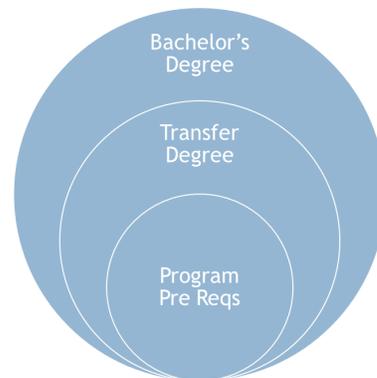
Applying to a veterinary school sometimes requires a bachelor's degree, but always requires you have completed all of the required prerequisites. **Please note that every school has a different set of prerequisites**, but for WSU here in Washington State:

- ◆ One year of General Chemistry
- ◆ One quarter of Calculus, College Algebra, or Pre-calculus
- ◆ One year of Biology
- ◆ One year of Organic Chemistry
- ◆ One year of Physics
- ◆ Genetics
- ◆ Biochemistry
- ◆ Statistics

* prerequisites are subject to differ vastly depending on desired veterinary school.

In addition to the above prerequisite courses, there are two major things to note if you are a student pursuing your bachelor's degree:

1. Most universities do not offer a degree in "Pre-Vet" (but some do like WSU).
2. There is no particular major that "looks good" to a veterinary school. You can major in whatever you would like and still be a competitive applicant. However, most students try and fit the majority if not all of their pre veterinary requirements within their initial bachelor's degree. Furthermore, exposure to advance biology and animal physiology courses can be helpful prior to entering.



Research

This does not mean academic research (although undergraduate research is and always can be a great experience for any student), this refers to research regarding the veterinary school(s) to which you wish to apply. Remember, there are only 28 programs nation wide, which means as a prospective student attention detail and intent behind which schools you wish to attend is critical. In addition to each school having slightly different prerequisites, the focus and style of teaching by each school will be unique. Therefore, it is important that you have a clear vision of the type of education you will want in both your undergraduate and Veterinary school experience. To get this vision or background information, try attending school information sessions early, making connections with the veterinarians you shadow, and by exploring university and veterinary school websites.

Test

All students wishing to apply to a Veterinary School will need to take an admissions tests first. It is important that prior to completing this test, you research which test is accepted by your intended school. Some schools require students take the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT), while others prefer the Graduate Records Exam (GRE) specifically with a specialty test in Biology. Which test your school requires can be found on school websites under admissions.

What should I do now?

Students interested in getting started with the road toward veterinary school can use a variety of resources here on campus. The Docs and Dents Club here on campus is an excellent resource, for networking with other pre health students. In addition to that, students could benefit greatly from exploring the American Veterinary Medicine Associations website. Lastly you may consider meeting with an adviser, you can do so by calling 425 564 2212 or stopping by our office to schedule an appointment.

Step Three: Make a Plan

This is an unofficial guide only. It is the student's responsibility to research and communicate with all community college and university programs to which he/she intends to apply to establish prerequisites and admission requirements, as they vary and are subject to change without notice.

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