

Veterinarians are currently in high demand in the U.S. In addition to domestic animal veterinarians, there is an especially great need for large animal veterinarians and veterinarians in the government, national security, public health sectors and in rural areas. More information on careers in veterinary medicine, including salary and job market statistics, is available on the American Veterinary Medical Association's website at www.avma.org. The Career Services Center website also has links to information about careers in veterinary medicine. Search at <http://career.ucsd.edu> under "Health Professions" and "Occupational Information" for more information.

Schools of Veterinary Medicine

The Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.) is granted after successful completion of a four year professional curriculum. There are currently 28 U.S., 4 Canadian and 8 foreign veterinary schools *accredited* by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), and many other *listed* foreign programs. UC Davis and Western University of Health Sciences (WUHS) offer the only two veterinary medical programs in California. Depending on the state in which you wish to practice, graduates of foreign AVMA-*listed* but not accredited schools may need to complete certification through the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG) (<http://www.avma.org/education/ecfvg>) or the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE) sponsored by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (www.aavsb.org). Check the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) or AVMA web sites at www.aavmc.org or www.avma.org for information on schools or certification.

Academic Preparation

You should choose your major based on your academic interests, in a field in which you excel, and to prepare yourself for possible alternate careers. **Check current admission requirements at each school to which you might apply while planning your undergraduate course work.** In addition to school websites, the *Veterinary Medical School Admission Requirements* (VMSAR) lists prerequisites by school and is available for reference in the Career Services Center and online at http://www.aavmc.org/vmcas/college_requirement.htm

Common prerequisites for veterinary medical school include:

Chemistry – one year + one or two quarters of lab

Organic Chemistry – one year + one quarter of lab

Biology – at least one year + one quarter of lab (more courses, including mammalian physiology may be helpful)

Biochemistry – one course

Physics – two or three quarters with labs

English – one year (UCSD college writing programs typically fulfill this requirement)

Humanities/Social science - any 12 quarter units

Statistics - one course

Be aware that the requirements for your major may differ from pre-veterinary requirements. Also, some veterinary colleges (e.g., Western University of Health Sciences) have more extensive requirements, including a full year of physics, economics, computer skills, nutrition, microbiology, public speaking, technical writing, or other courses. Check the VMSAR and school websites for details. Articulation agreements detailing the UCSD courses which meet the prerequisites at the two California veterinary schools can be found in the Career Services Center.

Admission Tests

The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test is the most common standardized test required for admission to vet school. Information bulletins for the GRE are available in the Career Services Center and online at www.gre.org. The GRE General Test measures your verbal, quantitative and analytical writing skills acquired over a long period of time that are not related to any specific field of study. More information and registration, as well as practice materials, are available at www.gre.org. Plan to take the GRE no later than September, one year prior to entry. The test is offered all year long on computer. A few schools may accept either the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) or GRE scores. Check the VMSAR for details on test requirements.

Non-Academic Preparation

Veterinary and animal health experiences are recommended or required for students interested in becoming veterinarians. Experience with different types of animals and settings are suggested, as well as research, if possible.

You should acquire a basic understanding of the profession as a whole. Schools often require a minimum number of hours of animal-related experience (180 at UC Davis, 500 at WUHS), but most admitted candidates had well over the minimum number of hours. For example, students admitted to UC Davis' program in 2006 had an average of 3,550 hours of animal experience (with an average age of 26, many of these successful applicants took time off between undergraduate and professional school). Despite the hours requirement, you are encouraged to place emphasis on the quality of the experience, not just the quantity of hours, and to keep a record of experiences and knowledge gained.

The Application Process

The Veterinary Medical College Application Service (VMCAS) is a centralized process for applying to many of the U.S. veterinary medical colleges. The on-line VMCAS application is available on the AAVMC web site at <http://www.aavmc.org/vmcas/vmcas.htm> beginning each year in June; October 1 is the application deadline for most schools. In addition to the VMCAS application, some schools may require a supplemental, school-specific application. Separate applications must be made to non-VMCAS schools (e.g., Tufts) and to most foreign veterinary schools. For individual schools' application procedures, consult the VMSAR or individual school websites at www.avma.org.

The application process itself consists of multiple factors:

- Your **academic record** including your grades, courses, and academic load, paying close attention to your prerequisite courses,
- Your **GRE scores**,
- A **personal statement** and possible additional essays detailing your preparation and interest in veterinary medicine. Help with writing your application essays is available on the Career Services Center website at <http://career.ucsd.edu/files/personalstmt.pdf>,
- **Letters of recommendation** from instructors and veterinarians familiar with your skills and abilities. For information on getting to know references, and requesting, collecting and storing letters of recommendation, visit <http://career.ucsd.edu/files/guidltr.pdf>.
- Your **animal experience** will be detailed in your personal statement and also listed on your application,
- An **interview** will be offered to applicants whose written applications appear promising. Interview preparation workshops, handouts and a web-based, on-camera tool to help you practice your interviewing skills can be found at <http://career.ucsd.edu/undergraduates/thinking-about-grad-school/application-basics.html#interviewing>.

Admission to veterinary school is very competitive. Review the detailed statistics on admission practices and applicant profiles at http://www.aavmc.org/students_admissions/statistics.htm, in the VMSAR and on schools' websites to determine your likelihood of admission. In addition to UC Davis and WUHS, consider applying to some public or private schools outside of California that accept many (20+) non-resident or non-contract state applicants. A list of these schools can be found in a table in the VMSAR and include Colorado State, Cornell, Illinois, Iowa State, Kansas State, Louisiana State, Michigan State, Minnesota, Mississippi State, Ohio State, Oklahoma State, Pennsylvania, Purdue, Tennessee, Tufts, Tuskegee (mostly underrepresented students) and Wisconsin. Most U.S. veterinary schools give admission priority to residents of their state, second priority to residents of states without veterinary schools, and last priority to highly qualified residents of other states.

Resources in the Career Services Center

You may review the *Veterinary Medical School Admission Requirements*; a binder full of veterinary school admissions information including information on VMCAS; information about individual vet schools; videotapes of admissions representatives and a local veterinarian; and *Opportunities in Veterinary Medicine Careers* in the Career Services Center. GRE information booklets can be picked up in the Center. We also offer application essay and interviewing workshops, an essay critique service and individual advising. Call 858.534.4939 to set up an appointment with a pre-vet advisor.

Cornell produces an excellent pre-vet newsletter at <http://www.vet.cornell.edu/admissions/PreVetNewsletters.cfm> and Washington State University publishes recommendations for pre-vet experience on their website at <http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/prospectiveStudents/>.