

VETERINARY MEDICINE (D.V.M.)

ACADEMIC AND CAREER INFORMATION

NATURE OF THE WORK, EARNINGS, AND OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK

Veterinarians help animals and people live longer, healthier lives and serve society by preventing and treating animal diseases, improving the quality of the environment ensuring the safety of food, controlling diseases transmitted from animals, and advancing medical knowledge. Prospective veterinarians must have good manual dexterity, an affinity for animals and the ability to get along with animal owners. Additionally, they should be able to quickly make decisions in emergencies. In 2014, there were 102,583 veterinarians practicing in the United States. The majority of veterinarians are in private practice, although significant numbers are involved in preventive medicine, regulatory veterinary medicine, military veterinary medicine, laboratory animal medicine, research and development in industry, and teaching and research in a variety of basic science and clinical disciplines (AVMA, 2015).

U.S. veterinary colleges/schools graduate an average of 3,000 students annually. Employment of veterinarians is expected to grow 12 percent from 2012 to 2022, about as fast as the average occupation. In 2012, the median annual earnings of veterinarians in practice was \$84,460. There is a geographic shortage of veterinarians in some mostly rural areas that varies by state.

VETERINARY MEDICINE

There are 30 medical colleges/schools accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association in the U.S., 5 in Canada and 13 in other countries. Prospective veterinarians must graduate from a 4-year program at an accredited college of veterinary medicine and obtain a license to practice, which is controlled by each state or province.

Veterinary graduates who plan to work with specific types of animals or specialize in a clinical area, such as pathology, surgery, radiology, or laboratory animal medicine, usually complete a 1-year internship. Interns receive a small salary but usually find that their internship experience leads to a higher beginning salary, relative to other starting veterinarians. Veterinarians who seek board certification in a specialty must also complete a 2- to 3-year residency program that provides intensive training in specialties, such as Internal Medicine, Oncology, Radiology, Surgery, Dermatology, Anesthesiology, Neurology, Cardiology, Ophthalmology, and Exotic Small Animal Medicine.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Most veterinary medical colleges will only consider applicants who have met a minimum grade point average (GPA). Those who receive offers of admission usually have a **GPA of 3.56 or better**. Any major is appropriate as long as applicants take the required prerequisite courses. The prerequisites for admission vary by veterinary medical college. It is not necessary that a student complete a program specifically labeled "pre-veterinary" or "pre-vet." It is, however, necessary for applicants to complete all prerequisite requirements before enrolling in one of the 30 U.S. or 5 Canadian veterinary medical colleges/schools.

Standardized test requirements also vary at each school. Applicants must submit test scores from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE-general and/or subject tests) or the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT), depending on the preference of each college.

CLINICAL EXPOSURE

Veterinary medical colleges weigh heavily a candidate's veterinary and animal experience in admissions decisions. Formal experience, such as work with veterinarians or scientists in clinics, agribusiness, research, or in some area of health science, is particularly advantageous. Less formal experience, such as working with animals on a farm or ranch or at a stable or animal shelter, is also helpful. Students must demonstrate ambition and an eagerness to work with animals. Many schools require experience in more than one type of animal setting.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

CSULB courses which fulfill admission requirements for [Western University of Health Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine](#):

Students maintain responsibility for verifying course selection with individual programs.

Coursework	CSULB Courses
One year of Organic Chemistry with lab	Chemistry 220A & 220B + 320 L (Chem. & Biochem. majors) OR 220A w/ 223A & 220B w/ 223B
One or more courses in Biochemistry	Chemistry 441A OR 441B OR 448
Upper Division Biological & Life Sciences all with Lab	Biology 304, 313, 316, 324, 332, 340 w/ 340L, 342 w/ 342L, 345 w/ 345L, 350, 353, 355 w/ 355L, 411, 421, 423, 425, 430 (no lab), 444 (no lab), 453, 448 (Cannot double-count)
One course in Statistics	Biology 260 ORSTAT 108, OR HDEV 250
One course in Microbiology	Biology 311
Genetics or Molecular Biology	Biology 370 OR 340
One course in Physiology	Biology 342 OR 345
One year General Physics with Labs	Physics 100A & 100B
One Year English Composition	English 100, 101,102, 300
Humanities	Art, Foreign Language, Political Science, History etc.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Veterinary Medical College Application Service \(VMCAS\)](#)
- [Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges \(AAVMC\)](#)
 - [AAVMC: Pre Vet Student Resources](#)

See your HPAO advisor for more information on Veterinary Medicine, the application process, and a list of upcoming workshops and events.