

Health Professions Info Sheet

What you need to know about
becoming a

Veterinarian (DVM or VMD)

Veterinarians are the primary healthcare providers for pets, livestock, zoo, sporting and laboratory animals. Some veterinarians also work in research, protecting humans from diseases carried by animals and food. Veterinarians working with food animals may be involved in food safety and monitoring animals for communicable diseases. Most veterinarians diagnose health problems, administer vaccinations, perform surgeries, and educate people how to care for their animals. They are trained to use a variety of diagnostic equipment, including radiographic and ultrasound machines.

Where do they work?

Veterinarians work in a variety of settings. Most veterinarians work in private practice with household pets but they can also be found dealing with animal issues surrounding:

- Research
- Food safety
- Food animals, like pigs, cows, and other livestock
- Food security
- Large animals

Pre-Health Advising

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Veterinary students complete four years of medical school to become licensed to practice medicine. Veterinarians who wish to become board certified complete a three to four year residency program in one of the 39 recognized specialties. Students are encouraged to pursue an externship opportunity after graduation to have hands-on experience before entering their practice. Courses such as immunology, anatomy and immunology are typical in a DO program. These courses and rotations prepare students for their residencies as well as the state licensing exams and national boards.

Education

Entrance to veterinary schools is very competitive. Academic requirements include:

Biology

General Chemistry

Organic Chemistry

Physics

English

Math

Microbiology

Biochemistry

Genetics

Social/Behavioral Sciences

Accepted Student Profile

Veterinary medical school programs have many applicants and are very competitive. Applicants should have:

- High GPA
- Leadership experience
- Excellent entrance exam scores (GRE)
- Hands-on patient experience
- Shadowed a practicing veterinarian
- Participated in research

Application

Veterinary schools use a centralized application service to apply for admissions. Official transcripts and recommendation must be submitted through the Veterinary Medical College Application Service (VMCAS).

Veterinary schools typically require students to take the GRE (Graduate Records Examination). The majority of school will only require the verbal and quantitative, but some do request a Biology subtest. Some school will accept MCAT scores. Check with each school to be certain what entrance exams need to be taken.

Web Resources

Veterinary Medical College Application Service: <http://www.aavmc.org/vmcas/vmcas.htm>

Association of American Veterinary Colleges: <http://www.aavmc.org/index.html>

American Veterinary Association: <http://www.avma.org/>

GRE: <http://www.ets.org/gre/>