

# EXPLORING: VETERINARY MEDICINE

## Overview

Veterinarians care for the health of animals. They diagnose, treat, or research medical conditions and diseases of pets, livestock, and animals in zoos, racetracks, and laboratories.

## Typical Duties:

- ▶ Examine animals to diagnose their health problems
- ▶ Treat and dress wounds
- ▶ Perform surgery on animals
- ▶ Test for and vaccinate against diseases
- ▶ Operate medical equipment such as x-ray machines
- ▶ Advise animal owners about general care, medical conditions, and treatments
- ▶ Prescribe medication
- ▶ Euthanize animals

The 2021, the median salary was \$100,370 and employment is expected to grow 19% by 2031.

Veterinarians in private clinical practices treat the injuries and illnesses of pets and farm animals with a variety of medical equipment, including surgical tools and x-ray machines. They provide treatment for animals that is similar to what a doctor would do to treat humans.

The following are common types of veterinarians:

- ▶ Companion animal veterinarians
- ▶ Equine veterinarians
- ▶ Food animal veterinarians
- ▶ Food safety and inspection veterinarians
- ▶ Research veterinarians: Investigate basic and applied problems concerning food-producing animals, companion or pet animals, laboratory animals, captive animals, wildlife, and various aquatic species, to determine causes of disease and to develop methods for their prevention and control. This research is sponsored by many organizations and supports many individuals in academic, corporate, and private settings.

## Education Programs

Veterinarians must complete a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M. or V.M.D.) degree at an accredited college of veterinary medicine. There are currently 33 colleges with accredited programs in the US, 5 in Canada and 16 abroad. A veterinary medicine program generally takes 4 years to complete and includes classroom, laboratory, and clinical components. Specialties require additional schooling after DVM. The American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges provides a free directory of all accredited programs, called [VMSAR](#).

## Admission Requirements: Knowledge & Strategies

Work with your faculty advisor to plan for prerequisite requirements. Begin early and consult each institution's individual website for specific requirements! NOTE: Some schools may require additional coursework so be sure to check each program individually to ensure your courses fit requirements!

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## Typical Prerequisites Include:

- ▶ Two semesters of Biology with lab
- ▶ Two semesters of General Chemistry with lab
- ▶ Two semesters of Organic Chemistry with lab
- ▶ Biochemistry
- ▶ Two semesters of Physics with lab
- ▶ Mathematics/Statistics
- ▶ Other requirements can include Humanities, Genetics, Microbiology, English, and Public Speaking

## Prepare for and take required exams:

- Check with schools of interest regarding whether the GRE/MCAT is required or preferred. Not every veterinary medicine program will require a standardized test. Some are starting to require situational judgement exams, such as CASPer.
- If required, it is recommended that you take either test at least one year before you want to go to vet school. Most of those who take the GRE or MCAT do so after their third year of college.

## Admissions is based on holistic review, involving factors beyond test scores and GPA:

- ▶ Veterinary experience and/or animal experience (some schools require a minimum number of hours in these categories)
- ▶ Research experience
- ▶ Leadership and involvement
- ▶ Employment (non-animal related)

## Additional Tips

- Build relationships: create a strong network of pre-health advisors, faculty, peers and professionals. Remember, such connections can open up opportunities for you and letters of recommendation will be required to apply. Some schools specifically ask for science faculty or veterinarians to write letters for candidates.
- Plan financially: there is a cost associated with taking the GRE/MCAT and applying to schools
- When you submit an application, remember you will do so through a centralized application form: Veterinary Medical College Application Service ([VMCAS](#))

*NOTE: Applicants who are Texas residents wishing to apply to veterinary schools in Texas will use the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service ([TMDSAS](#)).*

## Want more information?

Schedule an appointment through [Handshake](#) to meet with a career coach, learn more and create plans to meet your goals!