

Applying to Vet School FAQ

1. How can I easily access a list of all of the colleges of veterinary medicine and their requirements?

Access the Veterinary Medical College Application Service (VMCAS) website <http://www.aavmc.org>
https://www.aavmc.org/assets/Site_18/files/VMCAS/VMCASprereqchart.pdf

2. How competitive is the applicant pool for veterinary school nationally?

There are only 33 colleges of veterinary medicine in the United States. Over ten thousand applicants vie for the approximately 3300 seats available each year. Admission to these programs is extremely competitive so you should strive to not only meet but exceed the minimum requirements. To get a feel for the competitiveness of the applicant pool, some schools post last year's entering class statistics; reviewing these statistics for the schools you are interested in will help you to have a better understanding of the requirements and selection criteria. <https://www.aavmc.org/becoming-a-veterinarian/what-to-know-before-you-apply/admitted-student-statistics/> In recent years, UMass graduates have attended Tufts University, Cornell University, Pennsylvania State University, the Ohio State University, and many others.

3. Can I apply to Vet Schools outside the United States? Yes, there are AAVMC approved colleges of veterinary medicine outside the United States. In recent years, UMass graduates have attended the University of Dublin in Ireland, Royal University in Great Britain, the University of Prince Edward Island in Canada, University of Edinburgh in Scotland, United Kingdom, Ross University on St. Kitts, and others.

4. What is meant by Licensure Requirements?

Obtaining a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree does not automatically entitle one to the right to practice the profession. Entrance into private clinical practice requires the successful completion of the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination ([NAVLE](#)). These examinations are usually written (taken) during the final year of veterinary college. DVM graduates who wish to obtain a license for private clinical practice must also write and pass the state board examination for the state(s) in which they are seeking to practice.

5. What is VMCAS?

Most veterinary colleges use the [Veterinary Medical College Application Service \(VMCAS\)](#) to make it easier for applicants to apply to veterinary medical colleges. VMCAS, established by the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, is a centralized application service which provides for the collection, processing, verification, and distribution of applicant data to participating colleges. VMCAS is not involved in admission decisions. Admission decisions are the prerogative of each of the colleges of veterinary medicine. VMCAS has an excellent FAQs page.

IMPORTANT - The VMCAS application should be started first before doing anything else. Your VMCAS ID number will be necessary for the following reasons:

- ALL letters of recommendation (*known as eLORs*) MUST be submitted online through the VMCAS service.
- You must have a VMCAS ID number in order to complete most Supplemental Applications.
- You must include your VMCAS identification number in all email communication with Admissions Offices.

IMPORTANT - One of the biggest errors made deals with applicants entering their coursework. Enter all undergraduate/graduate coursework exactly as seen on your transcripts, and use the correct PreReq Code. For example, enter ALL biology courses under the "BS BL - Biology" PreReq Code. Do NOT exclude any coursework (even if a course was repeated). The admissions committees will decide what courses are to be used as prerequisites and which will not. Failure to follow the VMCAS instructions can result in your application being removed from the applicant pool.

6. Does VMCAS have a recommended timeline for the application process?

Yes, you can access the recommended timeline here -

https://www.aavmc.org/assets/Site_18/files/VMCAS/VMCAS%20Quick%20Start%20Guide.pdf

7. Which schools do not use the VMCAS?

Texas A & M University and Texas Tech University (all applicants must be Texas or New Mexico residents); use [Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service \(TMDSAS\)](#), to apply. Murdoch University, Australia; National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico; Seoul National University, Korea; University of Bristol, United Kingdom; University of Calgary, Canada; University of Saskatchewan, Canada; Universite de Montreal, Canada; Utrecht University, Netherlands; VetAgro Sup, France.

8. Is there a VMCAS application fee?

Yes, application fees are calculated based on the number of colleges to which you are applying. VMCAS does not offer fee waivers at this time. Check the VMCAS website http://aavmc.org/Applicant-Responsibilities/Applicant-Responsibilities_Fees.aspx.

9. What is the VMCAS application deadline?

The VMCAS deadline for 2024 is September 16th at 11:59pm. It is recommended that you submit by August 15, 2024. Please remember, acceptance into any of the professional DVM programs across the country is very difficult, as there are hundreds of applicants being received for a much smaller number of available seats in the upcoming classes. The first step to the application process is submitting all material in a timely fashion; exceptions to the given deadlines will not be considered. The 2024 VMCAS Application Cycle Will Open on January 23, 2024. You should start an account as soon as possible. The first date that you can select which veterinary medical schools to apply to through VMCAS is May 9, 2024.

10. What materials do I need to complete my VMCAS application?

You must have the following to complete your VMCAS application:

- A completed VMCAS Web application

- Fee payment

- Personal Statement/Essay

- Three completed VMCAS evaluations (eLoRs)

- Transcripts - Veterinary schools require all college transcripts to be sent DIRECTLY from ALL the colleges you have attended.

- Standardized test scores – note: some schools require the CASPer, most schools no longer require the GRE see lists in question #25

11. What is a supplemental application?

Many schools require a supplemental application that is specifically designed by the school to gather additional information about the applicants. Check the websites of the schools you are planning to apply to, to see if the school requires a supplemental application.

12. What is the supplemental application deadline and where do I send it?

The deadline for the supplemental application varies by school; be sure to check the colleges you are applying to for this deadline. The schools you are applying to will provide a specific address to be used; most use a specific electronic form.

13. Is there a supplemental application fee?

Yes, check the websites of the schools you are applying to. (Do not send your supplemental fees to VMCAS.)

14. What should I include in my personal statement/essay?

Your personal statement is a one-page essay not to exceed 3,000 characters.

- Be clear, concise, and grammatically correct (longer is not better, grammar does matter).

- Consider using a defining moment that helped steer you toward a career in veterinary medicine as the focal point of your essay.
- Indicate how events in your life have made you a unique individual – what makes you different from the other applicants?
- Use specific examples to emphasize your background with respect to the non-academic criteria: motivation/self-determination, maturity, work habits, decision making/problem-solving skills, integrity, empathy, community service, leadership, and communication skills.
- Ask someone (preferably an advisor or instructor) to review and edit your personal statement.

15. How important are letters of recommendation?

Letters of recommendation are very important in the admissions process. They convey your knowledge of the veterinary profession, the depth and level of your commitment to the field, and the qualities of character that you have shown to the person you choose as your recommender/evaluator.

You will want to email your well-annotated resume with your request for a supportive letter of recommendation by the end of the spring semester to your selected recommenders/evaluators, so that, if they agree, you'll be able to enter the recommenders' information in VMCAS. You should waive the right of access to the letters. VMCAS then sends the request and a link to the VMCAS portal to your recommenders. You can tell your recommenders the date when you are submitting your application; however, your recommenders have until the September 16, 2024 deadline to upload their recommendation. It is counterproductive to remind them about your alternative deadline. It is helpful to send an email closer to the deadline bringing your attached resume to the top of their inbox, sending your personal statement, asking if they need anything else, and thanking them effusively for the very large favor that they are doing for you.

16. Who should my recommenders/evaluators be?

Most schools require that at least one Letter of Recommendation (LOR) be completed by a veterinarian. The remaining LORs can be completed by veterinarians, researchers, professors, employers, or other individuals who can attest to the candidate's qualities evaluated on the LOR form. The key is not "who" the recommenders is, but how well the recommenders knows the candidate with regard to the qualities assessed on the LOR form. Recommenders are asked to include examples when addressing the following in their letters: ability to communicate, interpersonal skills, intelligence, self-confidence, goal achievement, willingness to accept responsibility, work ethic, leadership, energy level, competitiveness, imagination, flexibility, profession, direction and career plans after obtaining the DVM degree.

17. Do I send (or have my recommenders send) Letters of Recommendation (LOR) directly to the colleges I am applying to?

No. eLORs should be submitted electronically to VMCAS. Do not send any LORs directly to the schools to which you are applying unless the school does not participate in the VMCAS.

18. Can I have more than three recommenders/evaluators?

This varies by school, many schools prefer only three LORs and only from those evaluators listed on the VMCAS application. Up to six letters of recommendation will be accepted by VMCAS in the eLOR section. Be aware that every evaluation submitted will be sent to each college you designate.

19. What is an "official" transcript? When and where do I send it?

An "official" transcript is one that is received in a sealed envelope sent directly from a college or university Registrar's office to the applicant or the admissions office of the school to which you are applying. If received by the applicant, this transcript should be left in the original sealed envelope and sent with all other supporting documents to the admissions office of the school to which you are applying. One official transcript of academic records from **ALL** colleges and universities attended must be provided by September 15 of the year applying and evidence given that all course requirements will be completed by the following July 15 prior to fall entry into a DVM program.

20. Should I gather up all my college transcripts and send them to the admissions offices in one envelope?

No, Veterinary schools require all college transcripts to be sent DIRECTLY from ALL the colleges you have attended.

21. Should I wait to send my transcript to my selected VMCAS college(s) until after the Fall term if I attended that same college in the past?

NO. If you attended a college in the past and are also taking courses this fall at the same institution, you must order a copy of the transcript before the deadline and then once again after you complete the fall courses.

22. What if the transcripts from my current school contain the grades from my previous schools?

Even if grades from one college or university are reported on a later transcript, you should request that an official transcript from every university you attended be sent to each school to which you are applying.

23. If I took courses in high school but they were through a college, should I have that transcript sent?

Yes, you will have a transcript with that college and the admissions offices will need the official transcript from that college (not the high school transcript). Even if this was for one or two courses the admissions offices will require the official college transcript.

24. Do I need to list classes that I took overseas?

If you took classes as part of an education abroad program, you should not list the international institution on your institution list. In this case, your education abroad courses will appear on your U.S. institutional transcript as regular credit. If you mistakenly list your education abroad institution in Institution List, VMCAS colleges may stop processing your application to wait for a separate transcript report from that institution.

If you took classes overseas that were not part of an education abroad program, the VMCAS colleges require a foreign transcript evaluation report for each foreign institution attended. Use one of the transcript evaluation services listed on the VMCAS FAQs page. Some schools may have slightly different policies on this; we strongly encourage you to contact the veterinary schools for more information. If you fail to submit a required international evaluation report, VMCAS colleges may stop processing your application and your file will be incomplete.

25. Do I have to participate in an interview to be accepted?

This varies by school. You should prepare for interviews by reading American Veterinary Medical Association discussions on current veterinary medical controversies and be prepared to offer informed thoughtful ideas regarding these controversies. Investigate the job opportunities and starting pay for D.V.M.s. Research the veterinary school so that you are prepared with questions about their program, financial aid, etc. Make sure you know your own application inside and out—it looks very bad if you cannot tell your interviewer about your own record and experiences. Some Vet schools are starting to use MMI - Multiple Mini Interviews. These are usually short (6 minutes) one on one interviews. Students move from interviewer to interviewer, before each interview students are given a scenario to read over, during the interview the student is asked questions about the scenario, interviewers assign scores based on students' answers. Check out what other interviewees have written about their experience (e.g. feedback on Tufts at <http://www.studentdoctor.net/schools/school/tufts-vet/survey/33>).

26. What tests do I need to take?

Test Requirement Summary (as of February 2024)

GRE Graduate Record Exam <https://www.ets.org/gre.html>

Oklahoma State, Tuskegee, Ross (recommended), Illinois- Urbana (optional)

CASPer – Situational Judgment Test <https://takealtus.com/casper/>

Auburn, Florida (if invited to interview), Guelph (Canada), Iowa State, Kansas State, Lincoln, Long Island, Massey (New Zealand), Melbourne (Australia), Montreal (Canada), Oklahoma, Queensland (Australia), Texas A & M, Texas Tech

27. How can I improve my chances of admission?

The admissions committees and counselors will be looking for students who: are academically curious, competent (especially in science course work), are sincerely motivated, have developed time and stress management skills, are community minded and have demonstrated leadership abilities, are effective communicators, have excellent interpersonal communication skills, have demonstrated teamwork ability and who have realistically evaluated their plans for financing their education since demands of the professional curriculum usually preclude part-time employment during school sessions. Students who are interested in veterinary medicine should pursue experience with employment (paid and volunteer), research, clubs and other activities that expose them to the profession and to different species of animals. A variety of veterinary and animal experience is highly recommended.

28. Do vet schools offer housing?

Most vet schools do not offer housing but will provide you with a list of suggestions. Some will provide you with a method for contacting potential students to share housing with.

29. When does the academic year start?

This varies by school. You should be sure to check each school's academic calendar to be aware of start dates and holiday dates and breaks.

30. What is meant by residency and reserved seats?

Enrollment in the colleges of veterinary medicine is limited. Most schools give priority consideration (a high percentage of their seats) to qualified applicants who are residents of the state where the school is located. Most schools also charge a lower tuition to residents. Some schools also contract seats with other states or participate in a contract program which can increase your odds of being accepted and paying a lower tuition. Two of the contract programs are WICHE and SREB and are described below.

Some schools allow you to establish residency, which is critical if you are trying to keep tuition costs down as an out of state applicant, and there is a big in-state/out-of-state differential. They are: North Carolina State University, Ohio State University, UC Davis, University of Illinois, University of Minnesota, University of Missouri, and Washington State University.

For a cost comparison tool: <https://www.aavmc.org/becoming-a-veterinarian/funding-your-degree/cost-comparison-tool/>

You are a WICHE (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education) applicant if you are a resident of Arizona, Hawaii, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Utah, or Wyoming AND if you have applied for and/or received notice from the certifying office in your state that you are a duly certified applicant for the Professional Student Exchange Program. For further information, contact your WICHE State Certifying Office whose contact information is listed at <http://www.wiche.edu/SEP/PSEP/cert-off.asp>. Additional information about WICHE's "cooperative admissions procedure" for veterinary medicine is located at <http://www.wiche.edu/sep/psep/vetmed.asp>.

States offering RCP programs for residents include: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia. The Regional Contract Program (RCP) <http://home.sreb.org> is a tuition-savings program offered by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) especially for students in the health professions. It enables qualified students to pursue a first-professional health degree at selected out-of-state institutions, yet pay in-state tuition and fees at public institutions, and reduced tuition at private institutions. SREB is the fiscal agent for the program and handles administrative duties for participating states.

31. Can I change my residency after I have been admitted to a Vet School?

This varies by school. Be sure to check the schools you are interested in carefully, if they do allow you to change your residency, you may be able to save a significant amount on the tuition you pay.

32. Can Advanced Placement (AP) courses be used to fulfill prerequisites?

Some AP courses can be used to fulfill prerequisites, depending on individual colleges' policies. The applicant's undergraduate institution must list the AP course as its equivalent course on its transcript indicating the number of credits granted. Please note that AP courses are not considered when calculating grade point averages. UMass course equivalencies and required AP test scores are listed at the following link: <http://www.umass.edu/newstudent/academics/apcredit/>

33. How much does it cost to attend veterinary school?

This varies by school. It is recommended that you check each school's tuition, fees and scholarship opportunities carefully and consider the cost of housing, transportation, etc. Most schools have different rates for residents or students from states that have contract agreements with the school. The VMCAS website has a good list of suggestions for loans and scholarship opportunities <https://www.aavmc.org/becoming-a-veterinarian/funding-your-degree/cost-comparison-tool/> <https://www.aavmc.org/additional-pages/funding-a-veterinary-medical-education.aspx>

The three websites listed below provide good information.

<https://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/loans/top-scholarships-veterinary-school/>

<https://howigotintoveterinaryschool.com/veterinary-school-scholarships/>

<https://www.studentloanplanner.com/how-to-pay-for-vet-school/>

34. How much do first year veterinarians earn?

The AVMA publishes new starting salary figures every year, in general, the highest starting salaries are in the small animal specialist field. The lowest are in the equine specialist field. The salary for residents is lower than that for vets in clinical practice, but residencies are necessary to enter the higher paid specialties.

35. Should I apply for financial aid before I know if I have been accepted?

Yes. Learn more at <https://www.aavmc.org/becoming-a-veterinarian/funding-your-degree/>

36. Is it advisable to work while in the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program?

It is recommended that you do not work while you are a student as veterinary programs have a very rigorous veterinary medicine curriculum.

37. Can I reapply if I don't get accepted to vet school?

Yes. If you are not successful with your application, it is recommended that you request an appointment for an evaluation of your application materials with an Admissions Office/Counselor. If you are a reapplicant, you will need to request new letters of recommendations for each application cycle to which you apply.

38. Do I need to submit a new application each year I wish to apply?

Yes. Applications are not carried over from year to year, so if you are unsuccessful and wish to be reconsidered for admission in a different year, you must submit a completely new VMCAS application, supplemental application, as well as all new supporting materials (such as GRE scores, transcripts, evaluations, etc.).

39. What if my name has changed?

Notify VMCAS and the admissions offices at the colleges to which you are applying of all names under which documents (transcripts, GRE scores, letters of recommendation) may be received. Be sure to list all former names in the appropriate area of the application. If you are hyphenating your last name, make sure that is clear.

40. What is Problem-Based Learning?

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional method in which small groups of students work through clinical, case-based "problems" with the aid of a faculty facilitator. The purpose of these exercises is to help students develop clinical reasoning and problem-solving skills, e.g. to "think like veterinary practitioners." You should consider whether this style of learning is appropriate for you and check the curriculum of each

school you are interested in. Western University in Pomona, California is based on this model. Colorado State University offers an elective PBL in the Spring of the Sophomore year.

41. What are disadvantaged circumstances?

Some schools offer special consideration to applicants who can claim economic, educational, or cultural/environmental disadvantage. Disadvantage can vary greatly among individuals. Consideration may be given based on the following. Economic factors include: a demonstrated history of low income of applicant and family unit prior to college entrance and pre-veterinary education; level of financial support provided by applicant to the family unit prior to and during pre-veterinary education; if applicant has a major financial responsibility to a household; and history of financial aid. Educational factors include: inadequate early education because of frequent change of schools during elementary and secondary education; unusual number of hours of employment or necessitated other time commitments for supporting self or family unit during high school and pre-veterinary education; lack of exposure to academic role models and of participation in sound educational programs. Cultural/environmental factors include: born to immigrant parents; reared in an ethnic minority culture; reared in a family with English as a second language; experienced cultural stress as a result of transition from a predominantly ethnic minority community to an academic environment; reared in an economically depressed area; reared by someone other than parents; reared in an environment lacking exposure to opportunities offered by higher education; reared in an environment of abuse such as alcohol, drugs, child abuse, and other physical abuse. Be sure to check with the schools you are interested in if you think you have been significantly disadvantaged.

42. Should I apply to a brand-new vet school?

There are 12 potential new veterinary medical schools, some of whom may be admitting a 2025 class. However, gaining veterinary medical school accreditation by the AVMA COE is a lengthy process. The first step is to seek multiple site visits and a letter of reasonable assurance from the AVMA Council on Education, which is needed to start the admissions process for their first student class. Veterinary medical schools then operate under provisional accreditation or probationary accreditation on their way to full accreditation. As of December 2023, only The Universidad de Ana G. Méndez in Puerto Rico has received a letter of reasonable assurance.

The proposed schools are: Ana G. Méndez University (Puerto Rico); Arkansas State University; Chamberlain University (Georgia); Clemson University (South Carolina); Lincoln Memorial University-Orange Park (Florida); Lyon College (Arkansas); Rowan University (New Jersey); Utah State University; University of Maryland Eastern Shore; Rocky Vista College (potential campuses in Colorado, Utah or Montana); and Murray State University (Kentucky).

<https://www.avma.org/education/center-for-veterinary-accreditation/accredited-veterinary-colleges>

<https://www.avma.org/news/proliferation-newly-proposed-veterinary-colleges>

Sources: Frequently asked questions and admissions requirements and information for all U.S. veterinary schools and selected schools outside the U.S. were used in compiling this document

<http://www.aavmc.org>

<http://vetmed.iastate.edu/academics/prospective-students/admissions/frequently-asked-questions>

<http://cvm.msu.edu/student-information/dvm-program-admissions/frequently-asked-questions>

<http://csu-cvmb.colostate.edu/dvm-program/>

<http://www.vet.cornell.edu/education/>

<http://education.vetmed.ufl.edu/admissions/>

http://www.cvm.msstate.edu/academics/faq_about_admission.html

<http://www.cvm.ncsu.edu/studentservices/admissions-faq.html>

<http://vet.osu.edu/education/professional-dvm-program-admissions>

<http://www.cvm.missouri.edu/prep-undergrad.htm>

<http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/prospectivestudents/Faq.aspx>

<http://prospective.westernu.edu/veterinary/faqs-17/>

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