

THE FIELD

Veterinary technology offers a rewarding and challenging career for dedicated and compassionate individuals who are committed to helping animals, their owners, and improving animal health through excellent veterinary care. What brings most people to the study of veterinary technology is a love of animals. What makes them stay and pursue a career is the need and passion to help them even in the most difficult circumstances. Because of this commitment, veterinary technologists have much to offer to the veterinary field in the care and management of animals. By assuming many of the nursing duties and care of the patients, veterinary technologists enable veterinarians to concentrate on their patient caseloads and expand the range and quality of services provided. They are the nurses of the veterinary medical profession.

Among areas of study in the four-year program are biology, chemistry, anatomy and physiology, pathophysiology of diseases, animal nutrition, clinical nursing skills of all species, surgery and anesthesia, diagnostic imaging, veterinary parasitology, veterinary pharmacology, veterinary management, and clinical internships to reinforce clinical skills through practical experiences.

Students graduating from the bachelor's degree program will be prepared for a career as a veterinary technologist working in veterinary clinics or hospitals, assisting in biomedical research or continuing on to graduate school. Hands-on experiences along with diverse internship opportunities will prepare students to graduate into a field in which employment is projected to grow by 19 percent nationally by 2028, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

There is no minor available in veterinary technology.

THE MAJOR

The veterinary technology degree at UMass Amherst is fully accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association and meets all program requirements to fulfill accreditation standards. Veterinary technology students are required to complete knowledge-based requirements and perform essential skills on animals for the completion of their degree. Students who graduate from our accredited veterinary technology program are then able to take the Veterinary Technician National Exam (VTNE), which is required by most states for technicians to be credentialed.

In the first two years of the four-year degree program, students will complete their introductory course work on the UMass Amherst campus, which includes small animal and large animal clinical nursing, biology, math and writing, animal welfare, anatomy and physiology, microbiology, and veterinary clinical lab techniques, along with General Education course requirements. In their junior year, students move to the Mount Ida Campus of UMass Amherst in Newton, Mass. During junior and senior years, students complete their upper-level skill requirements in courses such as veterinary diagnostic imaging, veterinary pharmacology, small animal anesthesia and surgery, veterinary parasitology, pharmacology, veterinary management, and laboratory animal medicine and management.

The program is offered by the Department of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, which has a strong commitment to veterinary and biomedical research and to veterinary and animal science undergraduate and graduate education. It is housed in modern research facilities and makes wide use of university-owned farms with working herds of sheep, goats, cattle, and horses available for teaching and research. The Mount Ida Campus of UMass Amherst has a state-of-the-art building dedicated exclusively to the veterinary technology program, which includes lecture and clinical classrooms, surgical suites, and spacious small-animal housing, along with a dedicated and knowledgeable faculty with many years of experience in the veterinary profession.

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

Admission to the veterinary technology major is contingent upon acceptance into UMass Amherst and the Department of Veterinary and Animal Sciences. Success in the veterinary technology major requires strong math skills, requires passing grades in Introductory Biology and General Chemistry, and requires completion of program-specific courses.

Articulation agreements with Massachusetts Community Colleges allow for transfer students with an associate of science degree in veterinary technology to complete their bachelor of science in veterinary technology at UMass Amherst. Students transferring into the veterinary technology program will have transcripts reviewed by the program director and will receive individual advising for course enrollment.

INTERNSHIPS IN VETERINARY PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Students are required to complete 480 hours of practical experience through internships in veterinary practice, clinical research sites, or other veterinary experiences. The internship experience builds proficiency of acquired skills and allows exploration of career opportunities. The veterinary technology program boasts a large network of internships including veterinary hospitals such as Cummings Veterinary Medical Center at Tufts University, wildlife centers, research institutes, zoos, and clinical pathology labs.

STUDY ABROAD

Majors are encouraged to study abroad if it supports their academic and career goals. Students can choose to take courses to meet their General Education requirement or science courses that fulfill their major requirements. Students should contact the International Programs Office (413-545-2710, umass.edu/ipo) and work closely with their academic advisor to choose the appropriate courses and for pre-approval.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Veterinary technologists are trained to work under the supervision of a veterinarian and perform many tasks in a variety of settings, including veterinary clinics, veterinary hospitals, zoological institutions, and aquariums, and oversee animal care and manage medical research. Veterinary technologists with a bachelor of science are prepared for roles as managers and supervisors and are prepared for graduate school or advanced study in pursuit of veterinary technician specialties.

COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES

The College of Natural Sciences unites the life, environmental, computational, and physical sciences on campus. Students take advantage of a range of inquiry-based classroom and laboratory experiences, hands-on undergraduate research opportunities, multidisciplinary and cross-departmental education and research initiatives, and a variety of science student organizations. In addition, they are encouraged to develop strong written and oral communication skills, as well as leadership and problem-solving abilities.

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For more information on the major of veterinary technology, contact Dr. Amy Rubin (ajrubin@umass.edu).