

# 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> The [Prerequisites Chart](#) for Veterinary Colleges (found on the VASCI website under undergraduate>pre-vet major) indicates the requirements for 28 U.S. schools and 13 foreign schools. The chart includes hyper-links to the requirement list found on each school's website. The [Veterinary College requirements](#) for admission (found on the VASCI website under undergraduate>pre-vet major) lists the prerequisite courses. Additional information can be found in a book published by the AAVMC titled *Veterinary Medical School Admission requirements in the United States and Canada (VMSAR)*. To order this book, visit the [AAVMC website](#) (<http://www.aavmc.org>).

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

There are only 28 colleges of veterinary medicine in the United States. Several thousand applicants vie for the approximately 2500 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. In recent years, UMass graduates have attended Tufts University, Cornell University, Pennsylvania State University, Ohio State University, Iowa State University and 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 Ross University on the island of St. Kitts, St. George's University on the island of Grenada, University of Prince Edward Island in Canada, University of Edinburgh in Scotland, United Kingdom 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. Which schools do not use the VMCAS?**

Tufts (Grafton, Massachusetts): <http://www.tufts.edu/vet/dvm/application.html>

Tuskegee (Tuskegee, Alabama): [http://www.onemedicine.tuskegee.edu/Online\\_Admission.htm](http://www.onemedicine.tuskegee.edu/Online_Admission.htm)

Texas A & M University (College Station, Texas): [Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service \(TMDSAS\)](#)

#### **7. 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](http://aavmc.org/Applicant-Responsibilities/Applicant-Responsibilities_Fees.aspx).

#### **8. What is the VMCAS application deadline?**

The VMCAS deadline is October 1 (or the following Monday if October 1 falls on a weekend). 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.

#### **9. 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
- Three completed VMCAS evaluations (eLors)
- Transcripts
- Standardized test scores

#### **10. 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.

#### **11. 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.

#### **12. 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.)

#### **13. When do I take the GRE's?**

Check [www.ets.org/gre](http://www.ets.org/gre) for information and to register for an appointment to take the exam.

You should only take the GREs when you are prepared for them. Most Veterinary Medical Schools require that applicants take the GRE before applying. If you are planning to apply to vet school in September of your senior year you should first take the GRE during the winter or spring semester of your junior year. Because

all prior scores are sent to the institutions to which you are applying, never take the GRE as practice. There are many practice/preparatory websites and books.

The GRE® revised General Test is given year-round at computer-based test centers in locations around the world. Appointments are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. Check the website for Computer-Based Testing Center List, locating your nearest ETS Test Center in the United States is as easy as entering your zip code and clicking the 'Find Test Centers' button. A map showing the Center(s) closest to you will be displayed. You can take the GRE revised General Test (computer-based and paper-based) only once every 30 days, and no more than five times within any continuous rolling 12-month period. This applies even if you canceled your scores on a test taken previously. Make your appointment well in advance. There are two sessions, one at 8AM and one at 12:30PM. On Test Day arrive 30 minutes early to complete any paperwork; if you arrive late, you may not be admitted and will not be refunded. The fee for the GRE is \$160 in the US and US Territories, \$90 in all other locations. Remember to bring the specific required identification with you to the test center. The GRE General Test will take 3 hours and 45 minutes to complete, plus time for breaks and reading instructions. There are six sections to the GRE: one Analytical Writing section with two 30 minute tasks (This section is always the first a test-taker receives.), two Verbal Reasoning sections (30 minutes each), Two Quantitative Reasoning sections (35 minutes each), one unscored section, typically a Verbal Reasoning or Quantitative Reasoning section, that may appear at any point in the computer-based GRE revised General Test, an identified research section that is not scored may also be included in the computer-based GRE revised General Test. A question not answered is scored as a wrong answer. Unofficial scores appear on the computer screen following your test. Official scores are mailed to you and the institutions you choose 10 days to two weeks afterward. You can view your scores online at My GRE approximately 10–15 days after your test date.

#### **14. How do I request that my standardized test scores be sent to the VMCAS colleges?**

When you take any standardized test required for admission, you will be asked to designate where you wish to have the scores sent. Please request that all test scores be sent directly to the veterinary colleges. If applying to multiple colleges, request that your scores be sent by the earliest deadline date set by the college(s). Be sure you have the correct school/institutional code and department code for each veterinary school. Codes for veterinary schools are different than the code for the graduate and undergraduate school at each university.

#### **15. If I don't do as well on the GRE as I would like, may I re-take the exam?**

Yes, you can take the GRE again. When the GRE has been taken more than once, some vet schools will consider only the highest score from a single test date; other vet schools consider all scores. **However, veterinary schools consider trends, so your application is more competitive with two good GRE scores than with one poor and one good GRE score.**

#### **16. Can I send a copy of my GRE scores to the schools where I am applying?**

Official scores must be sent directly from ETS to schools to which you are applying. Be sure you have the correct school/institutional code and department code for each veterinary school you are applying to. Codes for veterinary schools are different than the code for the graduate and undergraduate school at each university.

#### **17. Can I take the VCAT or MCAT instead of the GRE?**

This varies by school. Most schools do not accept any substitutions for the general GRE exam, however.

#### **18. 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 October 1 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.

**19. 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 once again after you complete the fall courses.

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

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

**21. 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.

**22. 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.

**23. 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.

**24. 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 evaluator.

**25. Who should my evaluators be?**

Most schools require that at least one Letter of Recommendation 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 evaluator is, but how well the evaluator knows the candidate with regard to the qualities assessed on the LOR form. Evaluators 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.

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

No. LORs 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.

**27. Can I have more than three 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. For example, if you send VMCAS six evaluations and you are applying to six schools, all six schools will receive copies of all six evaluations.

**28. What should I include in my personal statement?**

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

**29. 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 can't 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>).

**30. 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.

**31. Do vet schools offer housing?**

**32. When does the academic year start?**

This varies by school. In 2014 the University of Mississippi held orientation June 26 and June 27, 2014 and classes started June 30. Oregon State University held orientation September 24-26, 2014 and classes started

September 29. Most schools started in August. You should be sure to check each school's academic calendar to be aware of start and holiday dates and breaks. A list for 2014 is attached to this document.

### **33. 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.

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.

### **34. 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.

### **35. 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/>

### **36. 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 <http://www.aavmc.org/Students-Applicants-and-Advisors/Funding-Education.aspx>

The two websites listed below provide good information.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/pub?key=0AuDAmocjP-XddEZfZ096NkxsmkdKVMjsUHZ3MmRqUFE&output=html>

<http://www.vinfoundation.org/AppUtil/document/default.aspx?pid=0&catid=&objectid=21833&objectypeid=10&redirectFromMiscDefault=1>

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

Yes, most schools expect this.

**38. 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.

**39. 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.

**40. 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.

**41. Do I need to submit a new application the next 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.).

**42. What is Problem-Based Learning?**

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional modality 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 Sophomore year.

**43. 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.

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.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/>