Veterinary Medicine (DVM)

Career Description

- Veterinarians play a vital role in the healthcare of pets, livestock, zoo animals, and laboratory animals. They also protect humans against diseases carried by animals and research human and animal health problems.
- Veterinarians take health histories of animals, perform and interpret tests, diagnose problems, prescribe medications, develop treatment plans, and perform surgeries. They specialize their care in a number of areas including large, small, and exotic animal care.
- Areas in need of more veterinarians include food animal safety and laboratory animal health.
- Having a love for animals is important in veterinary medicine, as well as being able to work with people, but veterinarians must also have a deep interest in science.
- Many veterinarians are also involved in homeland security issues to help prevent bioterrorist attacks and to protect our populations following one.

Becoming a Veterinarian

- Veterinary programs are competitive as there are relatively few programs in the country. Competitive applicants are well-rounded students with leadership skills, research, and volunteer and shadowing experience.
- Significant animal experience is generally expected including time supervised by a veterinarian in both small and large animal settings and time spent in other contact with animals.
- After completing a bachelor’s degree (which is preferred at most schools), students who have been accepted into a veterinary school program then complete 4 years of veterinary school. This may be followed by a residency if a specialization is the goal.

Preparation

- Significant animal experience is expected including time supervised by a veterinarian in both small and large animal settings and time spent in other contact with animals. Keep a log of your time and experiences.
- Participate in undergraduate research.
- Prerequisite courses vary slightly between programs.
- All required courses should have a minimum grade of C.
- A Careers in Veterinary Medicine course should be taken if available. Purdue undergraduate students should plan on taking this course.
- Veterinary programs appreciate rigor in undergraduate coursework. They expect to see you taking difficult courses.

Common Prerequisite Courses (pre-reqs determined by each vet school but similar to this list)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Purdue Equivalents (specific courses may vary by major)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology with labs</td>
<td>BIOL 11000-11100 or BIOL 13100 &amp; BIOL 23100 &amp; 23200 (lab)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Microbiology with lab</td>
<td>BIOL 22100 or BIOL 43800 &amp; 43900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genetics (lab req. at some schools)</td>
<td>BIOL 24100 or AGRY 32000</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Chemistry with labs</td>
<td>CHM 11500-11600 or CHM 12500-12600 or CHM 12300-12400 or CHM 12901 (CHM 11500 credit exam recommended along with CHM 12901)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organic Chemistry with labs</td>
<td>CHM 25500-25600 or CHM 26100-26200 or MCM 20400-20500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biochemistry (no lab required)</td>
<td>BCHM 30700 or BCHM 56100 or CHM 33300 or CHM 33900 or 53300 or MCM 20800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physics with labs</td>
<td>PHYS 22000-22100 or PHYS 23300-23400 or PHYS 17200 &amp; 27200 or PHYS 17200 &amp; 24100 (plus additional lab) or PHYS 21800 &amp; 21900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>STAT 30100 or STAT 50300 (some schools may accept PSY 20100 or SOC 38200)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>COM 11400 or COM 21200 or COM 21400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</td>
<td>Courses from Foreign Language, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Composition</td>
<td>ENGL 10600 or ENGL 10800 and upper level writing or literature</td>
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<td>Careers in Vet Med</td>
<td>VM 10200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required at Some Programs</td>
<td>Algebra, Calculus, Animal Science, Animal Nutrition (ANSC 22100), Zoology, Psychology, Technical Writing</td>
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Student Organization: Pre-Veterinary Medical Association (Pre-Vet Club)
Applying

- The primary application is made through an online service called VMCAS the Veterinary Medical College Application Service sponsored by the AAVMC (the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges).
- Schools in Texas use a separate application, TMDSAS (Texas Medical and Dental School Application Service).
- Take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) aptitude test for some schools (not required at Purdue).
- Competitive applicants have:
  - Strong academic performance including a grade point average of 3.5 or better
  - Leadership, teamwork, and communication skills
  - Undergraduate research experience
  - Volunteer and shadowing/observation experiences
  - Strong positive letters of recommendation (mostly from faculty and veterinarians)
- Early application is key. Although VMCAS has an absolute deadline, problems can occur ahead of this. Plan to apply by early August before your senior year (assuming a 4-year graduation timeline).

Researching Programs

- Information on individual programs can be found in the VMSAR, the Veterinary Medical Schools Admission Requirements book from the AAVMC, which is published by Purdue University Press
  [http://www.thepress.purdue.edu/titles/format/9781557537423](http://www.thepress.purdue.edu/titles/format/9781557537423)

Fee Assistance

- [VMCAS Fee Reimbursement Program](http://www.aavmc.org/applicant-responsibilities/fees.aspx)
- [GRE Fee Reduction Program](https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about/fees/reductions/)

Employment Outlook

- The Bureau of Labor Statistics anticipates a growth of 19% in veterinary jobs through 2026.
- The median salary for veterinarians in 2017 was $90,420.

Programs in the Region

- Purdue University School of Veterinary Medicine West Lafayette, IN [http://www.vet.purdue.edu/education](http://www.vet.purdue.edu/education)
- University of Illinois Urbana, IL [http://vetmed.illinois.edu/](http://vetmed.illinois.edu/)

More Information

- [Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges](http://www.aavmc.org)
- [VMCAS](http://www.aavmc.org/students-applicants-and-advisors/veterinary-medical-college-application-service.aspx)
- [TMDSAS (for applications to Texas A&M)](http://www.utsystem.edu/tmdsas)

Other Careers to Consider

- Physician
- Public Health (including veterinary public health)
- Veterinary Nurse (Veterinary Technology)
- Optometry
- Dentistry
- Chiropractic Medicine