



FAQs for Prospective Students

1. What job opportunities are there for students with an animal science degree?

There are many, many employment opportunities available to students that graduate with a B.S. in animal science. Examples of possible careers are listed in an appendix; you can also find a listing of firms that employ animal science graduates and websites to use in searching for jobs.

2. How do I know if veterinary medicine might be the right career for me?

In addition to a sincere concern for animals, a strong aptitude for science, and good people skills, you must have a realistic understanding of the veterinary profession. It is expected that applicants to veterinary schools will have exposure to the veterinary profession through experiences with practicing veterinarians and/or veterinary researchers. Exploring the profession through these experiences is the best way to learn and understand what is involved in the veterinary profession and whether veterinary medicine is the right career for you.

3. Where can I get further information about a career in veterinary medicine?

More information is available from the [American Veterinary Medical Association](#) or the [Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges \(AAVMC\)](#). 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](#).

4. How can I get a tour of the University of Massachusetts Veterinary and Animal Science department?

Tours of VASCI are offered at 10:00 a.m. on the first Friday of the following months: February, March, April, October, November and December. Tours last approximately two hours and will include our laboratory facilities and Hadley Farm. Please contact John Balise jbalise@vasci.umass.edu to arrange for a tour. Contact www.umass.edu/admissions/visits/visit-campus for a university campus tour.

5. Are you open on weekends and holidays?

Open Houses will be held on Saturday,

Although university tours are available on additional weekends and holidays, the Veterinary & Animal Science staff and faculty are not.

Student led Open Houses are conducted at the Hadley Farm at 111 North Maple Street in Hadley (413-549-3253) at 10:00 a.m. on the first Saturday of every month.

6. What is the total number of Animal Science/Pre-Veterinary majors? How many students per year; freshmen, sophomore, junior, senior?

In the 2013-2014 school year there are approximately 400 undergraduate students; each class averages 80-110 students.

7. How many students apply to the Animal Science Department at UMass? How many students get accepted?

Animal Science is an open major, which means that if you are accepted to UMass Amherst, you can declare the Animal Science major. We had approximately 110 freshmen in the Animal Science major in Fall 2014. VASCI also accepts transfer students from other majors and other schools.

8. How many students get accepted to UMass each year?

In 2012 there were 34,326 applicants for a class of 4,600. The undergraduate class (Fall 2012) included 4,600 freshmen, 1,050 transfers, and over 200 Stockbridge students. There are 22,000 undergraduate students at UMass.

<http://www.umass.edu/admissions/facts-and-figures/student-body-and-admissions-statistics>

9. How large are the classes here at UMass? How large are the animal science classes?

Class sizes vary depending on the class. Freshmen, Sophomore and Gen Ed classes are usually large lectures with 24 - 500 students. Upper level courses tend to be much smaller with 6 - 80 students.

Overall the VASCI student/faculty ratio is 15/1.

10. How challenging is the course load of an Animal Science student?

This will depend on how well prepared you are, especially how well you have developed good study skills and habits. To avoid disappointment, it is important that students entering the Veterinary & Animal Sciences Department understand that we offer primarily a **science-based program** that presents the opportunity to gain experience with species relevant to **traditional animal science** programs. It is **not a clinical program** in veterinary medicine and thus does not offer small animal, exotic animal or wildlife experiences, nor is it the appropriate program for those interested in production agriculture. The science-based curriculum is challenging and rigorous. Most Animal Science and Pre-Vet majors find time to be involved with the Animal Science/Pre-Vet Club and the animal management classes. Students also work with veterinarians and in our laboratories and barns. Students can make appointments to meet with their animal science instructors for additional help in understanding the material.

The Learning Resource Center (www.umass.edu/lrc/ or 545-5334) offers peer advising in a comfortable environment to assist with academic challenges. The University Writing Center has tutors who provide free assistance to develop better writing skills.

The Commonwealth Honors College (www.honors.umass.edu/curriculum-overview) offers a tightly knit community for students seeking more academic rigor in their field of study. All VASCI students who meet the eligibility requirements can join Commonwealth Honors College, which offers a rewarding opportunity to meet students who share the same intellectual enthusiasm, work more closely with professors, and pursue independent research as part of a Capstone Experience.

11. How should I prepare myself in high school for the pre-vet option?

Take as many science and math courses as your school allows. These can include biology, chemistry, physics, physiology, algebra, trigonometry and calculus. In addition, take courses that provide **writing experience and** at least three years of one foreign language. If you have the option to take college credit courses at your high school, it will give you greater flexibility in course selection during your college pre-veterinary medicine program. In general, the better the academic background a student has, the better prepared the student is for classes at UMass. You should meet all the admission requirements in the undergraduate catalog of the University of Massachusetts. In addition, obtaining experience working for a veterinarian is an excellent way to determine if veterinary medicine is an appropriate career choice. Veterinary medical schools require this type of work experience prior to application. Other positions working with animals may also enhance your veterinary school application.

12. When do I get my first animal hands-on experience at UMass?

Animal Science majors are required to take Introduction to Animal Science their first (fall) semester. This class has a required lab that includes experience working with various animal species. The first lab students will attend takes place at Hadley Farm (transportation is provided) and involves learning proper methods of restraining and haltering sheep. Student can also choose to enroll in the Dairy Calf, Dorset Sheep, Boer Goat, Belted Galloway or Poultry Management classes where they will work directly with the animals.

13. How do I get to the barn for barn chores for the Animal Science 101 and 103 classes?

UMass provides a shuttle van that leaves the center of campus (Paige Lab) at 6:40 a.m. and returns to campus at 9 a.m.

14. The UMass campus seems so large and intimidating; will I be okay here at UMass?

Current students and alumni say that once you are here you will find that the campus does not seem large and intimidating at all. Animal Science students get to know each other well and enjoy the camaraderie of the major. Accepted students are required to come for an orientation session in June or July. During Summer New Students Orientation (NSO) students get to know the campus, meet other students, consult with academic advisors, register for classes, and make housing requests. While you meet lots of faculty and staff during orientation, you spend most of your time with NSO student counselors. These students are part of a very select group of peers who dedicate their summer to welcoming the newest class to UMass Amherst. They are your mentors and leaders during orientation. They introduce you to the basic academic requirements and tell you about life at UMass Amherst: housing options; clubs and organizations; intramurals; jobs; where to get the best pizza; and everything else about life on campus and around Amherst.

15. How much time will I have between classes to get to the next class?

Don't worry; you will always have sufficient time to get from one class to the next. The amount of time you have will vary depending on your individual schedule each semester. When planning your schedule and registering for classes, you can check the location for each class and plan accordingly.

16. Will I always get the classes that I need, when I need them?

While we cannot guarantee that you will always get the classes you need when you would like them, the majority of Animal Science majors have no trouble arranging their schedules each semester. As you progress through the semesters you will get priority for registering for classes. In your senior year you should have no problem getting the classes you need. All Animal Science majors are required to meet with their academic advisor prior to registering for classes. Academic advisors assist students in making the best choices and will assist students with special requests/needs for specific classes.

17. Is there an Animal Science Faculty Mentoring Program?

Yes, before students enter our program they meet with faculty advisors who introduce the students to the program, assist the students with registration for their first semester's courses and assign students to an academic advisor. The Department of Veterinary & Animal Science requires students to meet with their advisor during each of the fall and spring pre-registration periods. Faculty advisors remove the students' academic advising hold at that time which permits students to register for courses. Our Department encourages students to meet with their faculty advisor and seek advice in selecting a career option as well as meeting Veterinary & Animal Sciences and University requirements. The faculty may be particularly useful in providing guidance in the selection of an area of emphasis and appropriate courses consistent with the student's career goals.

18. Is there an Animal Science Peer Mentoring Program?

Yes, freshmen and transfer students can request to be paired with an upper class peer mentor. The group holds bi-weekly meetings during which peer mentors provide help with studying and developing study skills, information about classes and scheduling, information about the animal management groups and information about campus life. There is also an Animal Science/Pre-Vet Club that meets bi-weekly and invites speakers to share information related to careers in the field of animal and veterinary sciences.

19. Do you know the accepted students' average SAT scores?

This varies from year to year. For the Class of 2016 scores were: Middle SAT: Critical Reading 520-620 /Math 540-640; and the Mean GPA was 3.66 on 4.00 scale

20. Will I be required to take placement tests?

UMass Amherst offers placement tests in Math, Writing, and Foreign Language. To learn more about the tests and how to take them, visit www.umass.edu/newstudent/academics/placementtests. Some placement tests need to be completed online before you come to your orientation session. Your advisor will use your scores to place you in the appropriate courses for the fall.

21. What about my AP high school classes?

VASCI requires that all Biology 151, 152 and 153 be taken here at UMass. If you were successful in AP Biology you will receive credit towards graduation and you should find that you are very well prepared for Biology 151, 152 and 153 here at UMass. Advanced Placement (AP) and graduation credits will be awarded by most departments to students who obtain scores of 4 or 5 on the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) Advanced Placement Tests; scores of 3 are given credit on a more limited basis. Candidates seeking advanced placement and graduation credit in foreign languages may also take the SAT II language tests.

AP and other college credits may apply to graduation requirements, but they do not count toward your residence requirements (up to 75 transfer credits can apply to graduation requirements; 45 residence credits must be earned through UMass Amherst; 54 credits if graduating with honors).

IB (International Baccalaureate) credit will be awarded to those students who score a 4-7 on the higher level IB exams. Official scores should be sent to the Admissions Office.

22. Why can't I come into the University as a Pre-Vet student from the start of my time at UMass?

The Pre-Veterinary major is designed to provide pre-professional training to students planning to continue their education in Veterinary, Graduate or Medical school or who are contemplating joining the teaching profession. All incoming freshmen enter the program as Animal Science majors and must qualify to enter into the Pre-Veterinary major. Eligible students must achieve and maintain a grade of B- (2.7) or better in select Animal Science courses. Students may enter the Pre-Veterinary major at any time after these requirements are met by completing and submitting the Animal Science to Pre-vet form.

23. How many students get accepted to vet school each year?

Veterinary Medical School acceptance is very competitive as there are a limited number of available seats/slots. There are 30 vet schools in the U.S. with approximately 2600 entering seats/slots available each year. Some of our students also choose to attend vet school in other countries. The number of students from UMass accepted to vet schools varies from year to year depending on how many UMass students choose to apply, how many students apply overall, how many and which schools students apply to. Also, the average age of students accepted to vet schools is 24-25; many students work in the field for several years or obtain Master's or Ph.D. degrees before applying to vet school.

For the Class of 2014, twenty-two out of 67 or 33 % of VASCI students graduating applied and were accepted into veterinary medical school (16) or graduate school (6).

For the Class of 2013, eighteen out of 83 or 21.7% of VASCI students graduating applied and were accepted into veterinary medical school or graduate school.

For the Class of 2012, nineteen out of 91 or 21% of students graduating applied and were accepted into veterinary medical school or graduate school.

24. Does UMass have a vet school?

No. The only veterinary school in New England is at Tufts University in Grafton, Massachusetts. The Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine offers undergraduates enrolled at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst an opportunity to apply to the DVM program in March of their sophomore year. Read more about this below.

25. Does UMass have an early acceptance with any veterinary schools?

Yes, the Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine located in Grafton, Massachusetts offers undergraduates enrolled at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst an opportunity to apply to the DVM program in March of their sophomore year. A limited number of students are admitted, and upon acceptance, are

guaranteed a space in Tufts veterinary school class after they graduate, if they maintain a minimum 3.4 GPA and take the required prerequisite classes. To be eligible to apply, candidates for this program must be sophomores and must have completed a full year each of introductory biology and chemistry. SAT scores will be evaluated in the place of GRE scores. Freshmen contemplating application to the Early Acceptance Program are encouraged to speak with a pre-veterinary advisor about accruing veterinary medical related experiences. If the applicant is not accepted, the applicant can make an appointment with a Tufts admission counselor in the summer to review his/her application, in order to strengthen it for the next round of veterinary medical school applications. Further information regarding this program can be viewed at the Tufts website <http://www.tufts.edu/vet/academic/earlyacceptance.html>.

26. Does UMass offer a vet tech program?

No, UMass does not offer a program leading to certification as a veterinary technician. However, you can become a certified veterinary technician in Massachusetts with a BS-Animal Science or BS-Pre-Veterinary Science, a passing score of 75 or higher on the Veterinary Technician National Exam- VTNE (you can take this online through Alaska), and one continuous year of full-time employment (minimum 35 hours per week; minimum 1500 hours) as a veterinary technician. Alternatively, you can attend a 2-3 year AVMA accredited veterinary technology program and pass the Veterinary Technician National Exam with a score of 75 or higher. In many cases veterinarians are seeking employees that have broad-based animal backgrounds with knowledge in animal management, physiology, nutrition, and health and disease. Our Animal Science program offers students the opportunities to get this broad-based animal background.

27. Are internships available?

Yes, students are encouraged to participate in internships, practica and independent study. Students may find internship possibilities on their own; seek help from advisors, other faculty and the Campus Career Network located at 511 Goodell. Some planning and coordination is required to set up a successful internship. Students may also pursue the Life Sciences Internship Challenge through the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (www.masslifesciences.com). The Life Sciences Internship Challenge is a workforce development program focused on enhancing the talent pipeline for life sciences companies in Massachusetts. Students have participated in internships at the New England Aquarium and the Dakin Animal Shelter as well as working with veterinarians, on farms and in laboratories.

28. I am interested in research. How do I find a lab to work in?

We recommend that you access the VASCI website www.vasci.umass.edu and review the research being done by each of our primary investigators, choose a topic that interests you and then make an appointment with the primary investigator to discuss the possibility of working in the primary investigator's lab.

29. Will UMass help me find a job when I am ready to graduate?

Yes, Mary Ellen Lisenon (meliseno@acad.umass.edu) is the career contact for VASCI majors, and will help you with resumes, interviewing, internships, and your plans post-UMass. The Career Services Center is located at 512 Goodell; 545-2224. Students should create and maintain an ongoing list of their activities including internships and jobs during their college career. One of the requirements of the required Junior Writing Course is that you develop your resume. VASCI offers a one credit seminar titled Careers in Animal Science. This seminar series features presentations by agricultural and animal science professionals in the fields of Animal Health, Animal Nutrition, Genetics, Biotechnology and others. Topics will include resume preparation, interview skills, internship opportunities and web-based employment search guides.

30. How do I apply for financial aid?

You must fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The UMass code for the FAFSA is 002221. See Financial Aid Services (<http://www.umass.edu/umfa/>) for more detailed information.

31. How can I get a part-time job while I am a student?

The Student Employment Office (<http://www.umass.edu/umfa/seo/>) posts job listings for both on- and off-campus employment, including work-study opportunities.

32. Are there scholarships for Animal Science majors?

Yes, the Department of Veterinary & Animal Sciences offers the following scholarships: Alvord Dairy Scholarship; Borton Scholarship; Brooks, Upton, Drew Scholarship; Colby Scholarship; Foley Scholarship; Pirog Scholarship; Nilsson Scholarship and Rice Scholarship. For more information access www.vasci.umass.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-forms/scholarship-application-form

In addition, the College of Natural Sciences offers more than 100 scholarships for students majoring in CNS disciplines. Please see the CNS Scholarships page at www.cns.umass.edu/students/scholarship-program for information about the individual awards and how to apply.

33. How do I go about getting into horse-back riding lessons?

The Equestrian/horse-back riding program at UMass is managed by the Stockbridge School of Agriculture. Students must contact Cassie Uricchio curicchio@umass.edu or Stockbridge School at (413) 545-2222 to arrange for horse-back riding lessons.

34. What is the ratio of male to female animal science students?

The current ratio is approximately 90% female and 10% male.

35. When can I study abroad?

Students who think they might like to study abroad should start planning from the beginning. The best time to arrange for a study abroad experience is during the Spring semester of your Junior year. We highly recommend that students concentrate on taking all their science classes before the semester abroad and save their Gen Ed classes to take at the foreign university. Students are also advised to seek internships abroad. The International Programs Office (www.IPO.umass.edu) helps students make all the necessary arrangements for studying abroad.

36. Is it possible to take courses at the other colleges in the area?

Any student who is in good academic standing, is at least a second-semester freshman and is taking at least one 3-credit course at UMass may take up to three courses, but no more than two at any one institution, without additional cost, beyond normal laboratory or instructional fees, at Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, or Smith College. A free bus system is available for this purpose.

Course catalogs, literature, procedural information, advice and information on the Five College Program, and Five College Student Interchange forms are available from the Five College Interchange Office at http://ualc.umass.edu/five_college_interchange/

37. How available and convenient is public transportation?

Public transportation is very available, convenient and affordable. There are regular busses that transport students to various campus locations, to local communities, to train stations, to Boston and New York. The following websites provide additional information about transportation.

UMass transit system_ - www.umass.edu/transit

Pioneer Valley Regional Transportation System - www.pvta.com

all regional transportation systems_ - www.matransit.com

bus - www.peterpanbus.com - service from campus

www.megabus.com - service from Hampshire Mall - PVTA service to Hampshire Mall 3.3 miles

train_ - www.amtrak.com

airports_ - www.bradleyairport.com - Windsor Locks, CT - 47.5 miles

www.massport.com/logan - Boston, MA - 97 miles

www.flymanchester.com - Manchester, NH - 106 miles

www.pvdairport.com - Providence/Warwick, Rhode Island - 98 miles

38. What is there to do in the Amherst area?

In a story featured on MSN.com in 2009, Katherine L. Cohen, founder and CEO of two college counseling firms, ranked Amherst number one college town! (<http://www.umass.edu/umhome/feature-story/article/36.html>) There are many opportunities for: cultural events, the area has 10 museums as well as art, craft, and food fairs, great entertainment, part-time employment, organizations to be involved with, a great variety of restaurants and outdoor exploration opportunities (hiking trails, bike path, state parks). The following websites provide additional information about the area.

<http://www.amherstma.gov/>

<http://www.cinemark.com>

<http://amherstarea.com/>

<http://www.mountainfarmshadley.com>

amherstcinema.org/

www.northamptonma.gov/

<http://www.hadleyma.org>

www.visitnorthampton.net/

<http://hadleyma.com>

www.noho.com/

<http://www.hampshiremall.com>

www.explorenorthampton.com/

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/central.htm> - provides information on the 10 state parks within 15 miles of Amherst.

VASCI Prospective Student Frequently Asked Questions - INDEX

AAVMC - Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges... 2

Amherst area ... 36, 37, 38

AP credits ... 3, 21

Career Information ... 1, 2, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, appendix

Class sizes ... 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15

Challenging curriculum ... 10, 15

Courses at other colleges ... 21, 34, 36

Credit overload ... 35

Financial aid ... 30, 31, 32

Hands-on animal experience ... 16

High School ... 3, 19, 20, 21

Honors program ... 10

Horseback riding lessons ... 39

Internships ... 1, 27

Jobs ... 27, 28, 29, 31

Mentoring ... 12, 13

Number of students ... 6, 7, 8, 9, 23, 33

Placement tests ... 20

Pre-Vet ... 1, 2, 10, 14, 23, 24, 25

Research/lab ... 27

SAT ... 19

Scholarships ... 30

Study abroad ... 34

Time between classes ... 17, 18, 37

Tours ... 4, 5

Transportation ... 16, 37

Tufts – Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine ... 25

Veterinary Medical School ... 2, 23, 24, 25

Veterinary Technician/Technologist ... 22

Careers in Animal Science

- 4-H Agent
- Agri-Business Manager
- Agricultural Attaché
- Agricultural Insurance Specialist
- Agricultural Finance Specialist
- Agricultural Journalist
- Agricultural Policy Analyst
- Agricultural Real Estate Specialist
- Animal Behaviorist
- Animal Care Specialist
- Animal Economist
- Animal Health Products Salesperson
- Animal Nutritionist/ Nutrition Specialist
- Animal Sales
- Animal Welfare Specialist
- Aquaculturalist
- Artificial Insemination Technician
- Biotechnologist
- Boarding/Training Facility Manager
- Breed Analyst
- Breed Association Sales/Promotion
- Cell Culture Specialist
- Chemist
- Communication , Media, Marketing, Public Relations Broadcaster, Writer, Specialist
- Companion Animal Breeder
- Companion Animal Store Manager
- Companion Animal Therapy Specialist
- Consultant
- Dairy Unit Herdsman/Manager
- Dog Trainer
- Dog Trainer to assist persons with disabilities
- Embryo Transfer Technician
- Equine Farm Manager
- Equine Breeder/Trainer/Groomer
- Equitation Instructor
- Equine Rehabilitator
- Equine Supply Sales & Distribution
- Equipment Dealer
- Equipment Engineer
- Equipment Sales Representative
- Extension Educator/Specialist
- Facilities Engineer
- Farm Building Salesman
- Farm/Cooperative Manager
- Farm News/Magazine Journalist
- Farm Supply Representative
- Feed Broker
- Feed Inspector
- Feed Plant Manager
- Feed Processing Engineer
- Feed/grain Merchandizer/Consultant
- Feed Science Technologist
- Fertilizer Sales Representative
- Food Processing Manager
- Food Product Development/Researcher
- Forage Specialist
- Government Administrator
- Herd Manager
- International Trade Specialist
- Kennel Manager
- Laboratory Animal Technician/Manager
- Land Use Planner
- Livestock Buyer
- Livestock Equipment Salesperson
- Livestock Feedlot Operator
- Livestock Production Manager
- Meat Packing/Processing Specialist
- Meat/Milk/Feed Testing Service
- Microinjectionist
- Pest Control Specialist
- Pet Shop Owner/Manager/Technician
- Pharmaceutical Sales/Service
- Poultry Scientist
- Poultry Unit Manager
- Public Relations Specialist
- Quality Assurance Specialist
- Ranch Manager
- Research Farm Manager
- Research Specialist/Technician
- Rescue League Animal Caregiver
- Rescue League Adoption Counselor
- SPCA Personnel
- Statistician
- Tack Shop Owner/Manager/Technician
- Teacher
- Technical Sales/ Services Representative
- Therapeutic Animal Trainer/Instructor
- USDA Meat Inspection/Grading Services
- Veterinary
Assistant/Technician/Technologist
- Veterinary Supply
- Water Quality Engineer
- Zoo Animal Specialist
- Zookeeper

With additional training, you can also be:

**Animal Physiologist
Biochemist
College Professor
Geneticist
Immunologist**

**Molecular Biologist
Nutritionist
Parasitologist
Reproductive Physiologist
Research Director**

**Toxicologist
USDA Inspector
Veterinarian
Virologist
Zoologist/Biologist**

