



Frequently Asked Questions regarding Vet School Application

1. How do I know veterinary medicine is the right career for me?

The best way to know for sure is to gain exposure to the profession through experiences with practicing veterinarians and/or veterinary researchers. In addition to a sincere concern for animals, an aptitude for science, and good people skills, veterinary school applicants must have a realistic understanding of the veterinary profession. Exploring the profession by shadowing or working for a veterinarian 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.

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

More information is available from the [American Veterinary Medical Association](http://www.avma.org) or the [Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges \(AAVMC\)](http://www.aavmc.org).

3. 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 30 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](#) (found on the VASCI website under undergraduate>pre-vet major) for admission 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). (<http://www.aavmc.org>)

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

There are only 30 colleges of veterinary medicine in the United States. Several thousand applicants vie for the approximately 3000 seats available each year. Admission to these programs is extremely competitive so you should strive to 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.

5. 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 University of Edinburgh in Scotland, Ross University on the island of St. Kitts, St. George's University on the island of Grenada, Atlantic Veterinary College at the University of Prince Edward Island in Canada, and others.

6. Is a Bachelor's degree required for admission?

Most veterinary colleges do not require that a Bachelor's degree be completed for admissions although most accepted applicants have a Bachelor's degree or an advanced degree (Master's or Ph.D.) A very few outstanding applicants (1-2 percent) are accepted (to some schools) having completed only the pre-veterinary requirements.

7. 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), and 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.

8. Must I complete all required courses before I can apply?

All schools allow candidates to apply before completing all required courses (you should be submitting your applications in September of your senior year). An applicant who is admitted without evidence of completion of all requirements will receive a provisional admission. Evidence of satisfactory completion of requirements must be received (at most schools) by July 15 prior to the fall of matriculating in the DVM program.

9. How can I be sure that the courses I take will fulfill the pre-veterinary requirements?

The University of Massachusetts Pre-Veterinary Science major curriculum is designed to meet the requirements of most veterinary schools. However, after selection of the school(s) you wish to attend, it is recommended that you consult each school's catalog or website for specific requirements to ensure that you are meeting all the requirements. If there is a prerequisite listed that UMass does not appear to offer, it is recommended that you check with your academic advisor.

10. Is there an advantage in taking more science courses than the minimum prerequisites? The first two years of study in veterinary medicine consist of challenging science course work. Students will find it beneficial to have had as much science course work in their undergraduate studies as possible, especially biological sciences.

11. What electives should I take?

Suggested electives include: anatomy, physiology, cell biology, microbiology, biochemistry, genetics, nutrition, immunology, epidemiology, histology, embryology, parasitology, virology, animal reproduction, animal husbandry, toxicology, parasitology, mycology, endocrinology, entomology, bacteriology, zoology, neuroanatomy or neurophysiology. Courses, practica, independent studies, and internships that provide specific veterinary practice, animal experience and research experiences are highly recommended. In addition many schools recommend business, computer science, statistics, and communications courses.

Professional veterinary curriculum is extremely demanding, it is highly recommended that prospective students enroll in challenging undergraduate courses that go beyond the pre- professional requirements; useful courses include comparative anatomy, embryology, and physiology. Superior performance in these kinds of courses will not only enhance the academic image of the applicant, but will also help build a solid base for more detailed courses in the professional veterinary curriculum.

Methods of observation and collection of data, evaluation, deduction, and interpretation of findings are extremely important. The analysis and organization of a set of observations into its simple components and synthesis of many fragments of data into a working hypothesis on which a plan of action can be based are critical. The student should keep these objectives in mind throughout pre-professional training. Courses that might be helpful in this area include physics, psychology, and other sciences. Independent study research projects are ideally suited to honing these skills.

A high degree of skill in the use of spoken and written language should be developed to communicate a story effectively and accurately, to record facts systematically for the use of others, and to transmit

instructions precisely. Proficiency in accurate, rapid, interpretive reading should also be mastered. Courses that might be helpful in this area include English literature and composition, and foreign languages. The study of foreign languages enhances appreciation of the exact meaning of words and the use of subtle differences in shading.

12. In evaluating my grades, will the fact that I took a heavy course load (honors, non- required challenging courses, etc.) or worked while attending classes be considered? Yes, Admissions Committees understand

that there are differences in the way academic

histories are established. They will evaluate the quality of each applicant's academic program as well as grades earned in college courses. Credit load, work load and rigor of curriculum will be considered.

Conversely, those who have a pattern of incompletes or withdrawals from difficult courses, who regularly took low credit loads (without concurrently working), or who minimally fulfill requirements, will be acknowledged as having a lower quality of academic program.

13. Is there a minimum GPA or GRE requirement?

This varies by school. Some schools do set minimum GPA and GRE scores, check the websites. All admissions committees consider the "whole package" (i.e. GPA, GRE scores, animal and pre- veterinary experience, extra-curricular involvement, community service, etc.) Some schools focus on the last 45 semester hours completed because typically, the last 45 hours are composed of upper division courses. Some schools have a formula which is usually outlined in their admissions information. The following is one example:

50% – Academic History and Experience – Prerequisite GPA, GRE, undergraduate institution selectivity, academic load, number of withdrawals, research participation, teaching assistant positions, strength of academic references (if any), and academic flags/concerns.

25% – Pre-Veterinary Experience and Preparation – Amount of legitimate pre-veterinary experience, amount of legitimate animal experience, strength of veterinary and animal related references, relationship between references and veterinary/animal experiences.

25% – Overall Professionalism and Readiness to Matriculate – Overall professionalism of the application, strength of written communication skills, extracurricular experiences, community involvement, international experiences, awards and recognitions, non-veterinary or animal related employment experiences.

14. Must I have worked for a veterinarian?

In choosing applicants, Admissions Committees look for those who have gained an understanding of animals and of the veterinary profession through participation in such activities as: 4H, Medical Explorer Scouts, and through paid or volunteer work on farms or ranches, in kennels, animal shelters, laboratories, zoos, aquariums, and/or veterinary clinics. If you are lacking practical experience in working with animals or in the veterinary medical field, it would be to your advantage to acquire the experience as soon as possible. Upon application to veterinary school, a reference from a veterinarian is required by most schools and highly recommended by others. Applicants should become acquainted with a veterinarian who would be able to evaluate motivation toward and understanding of the profession. Most applicants have worked (either for pay or as a volunteer) with a veterinarian in order to gain a realistic perspective of professional veterinary service. You should list all such work experiences on the application even if the work was done voluntarily or for course credit. Keep in mind that veterinarians work in many different settings. Exposure to non-practice careers is also helpful.

15. How much pre-vet experience should I have before I apply?

This varies by school. Many schools do recommend a minimum number of hours of experience working with veterinarians, preferably in a practice setting. Veterinary medical colleges prefer applicants with an open mind about animal species since their mission is to teach the material that you will be tested on the Veterinary Licensing Exam in your fourth year of veterinary school. Thus, it is a mistake to have two or three out of your three veterinary experiences centered on small animals or horses, even if you think that's what you will specialize in as a veterinarian. Conversely, if you are interested in a veterinary specialty (e.g. zoo

medicine), make sure you gain experience in that area. It is recommended that you diversify your experience by seeking experiences in three of the following four areas: a) Large animal, b) Small animal, c) Wildlife/conservation, d) Laboratory research. Each experience should be at least 200 hours. These experiences can be pursued during the school year or in the summer; it might be easier to find an opening in a veterinary clinic near your home rather than near Amherst, where you'll be competing with all the other pre-vet students. Summer experiences may also be more exotic (i.e. internship at an aquarium). These experiences are required so that the veterinary colleges are assured that you have a comprehensive grasp of the veterinary medical profession and so that you can cultivate contacts who will write superlative letters of recommendation for you.

Document your experiences so that you can fill in details on your applications years later. All types of experience should be included in your application and curriculum vitae (CV) or resume, including, but not limited to: paid experience, volunteering, shadowing, etc. The type of experience, level of responsibility, and what the experience taught you about the veterinary profession are all considered in the evaluation. To count toward veterinary experience, you must be under the direct supervision of a veterinarian. If you are not under the supervision of a veterinarian, the experience is considered animal experience.

16. Why should I participate in extracurricular activities?

Since almost all animals treated by veterinarians have human owners with whom the veterinarian has to communicate effectively, the profession seeks new members who are not only interested in animals, but who also enjoy contact with people. Involvement outside the classroom in activities such as clubs or in service organizations gives evidence of social skills and enjoyment of social contact with other people, leadership ability, motivation and energy and a desire to serve the community.

17. How long will I be attending veterinary medical college?

Most veterinary schools require four years of study and practice.

18. 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.

19. What is VMCAS?

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.

20. Are there schools who do not use the VMCAS?

Yes, the University of Missouri if you are a Missouri resident and Texas A & M University (College Station, Texas) which uses the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service (TMDSAS)

21. 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.

22. What is the VMCAS application deadline?

The VMCAS deadline is September 15. 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.

23. 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

24. 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.

25. 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.

26. 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.)

27. When do I take the GRE's?

Check www.ets.org/gre for information, the list of testing centers and to register for an appointment to take the exam. The *GRE*[®] General Test is given year-round at more than 1000 computer-based test centers in more than 160 countries around the world. Appointments are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. You can take the test once every 21 days, up to five times within any continuous rolling 12-month period (365 days). The fee (effective July 1, 2016) is \$205.00. The GRE General Test measures your verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking and analytical writing skills; skills that have been developed over a long period of time and are not related to a specific field of study but are important for all. 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 General Test, an identified research section that is not scored may also be included in the computer-based GRE General Test.

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. You should not take the GRE as practice. There are many practice/preparatory websites and books. Your official scores will be available in your ETS Account and sent to your score recipients approximately 10–15 days after your test date.

28. 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.**

29. 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.

30. 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 the 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.

31. 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.

32. 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.

33. Who should my 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 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.

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

No. Letters of recommendation 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.

35. 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.

36. 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.

37. 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>).

38. 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.

39. 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.

40. 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.

41. 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.

42. 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.

43. 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.

44. 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.

45. When does the academic year start?

This varies by school. In 2016 the University of Mississippi held orientation June 26 and June 27, 2016 and classes started June 30. The University of Minnesota held orientation August 31 – September 2, 2016 and classes started September 6, 2016. Oregon State University held orientation September 16-20, 2016 and classes started September 21. All other schools started in August. You should be sure to check each school's academic calendar to be aware of start dates and holiday dates and breaks. A list of orientation and start dates for 2016 is attached to this document.

46. 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.

47. 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.

48. 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/>

49. 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](http://www.aavmc.org/Students-Applicants-and-Advisors/Funding-Education.aspx)

The following website has current information comparing veterinary school costs.

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

You can also access these sites: <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>

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

Yes, most schools expect this.

51. 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.

52. 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.

53. 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.

54. 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.).

55. 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.

56. 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://www.ets.org/gre>

<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/student-services/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/>

Suggested Timeline for Applying to Veterinary Medical Colleges as a University of Massachusetts student

High school and Freshman year

- Participate in a veterinary medical related experience in a small or large animal practice, with a wildlife conservation organization or in laboratory research.
- Investigate Veterinary colleges and career choices on the AAVMC website and the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Sophomore year

- Participate in a different veterinary medical related experience in small or large animal practice, with a wildlife conservation organization or in laboratory research.
- Investigate Veterinary college programs. Make sure you will have all necessary prerequisite classes for the veterinary colleges you are considering applying to.
- *January*: Decide whether you will apply to the early admissions program at Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine. Work on the application during the January break. Ask evaluators if they would be willing to write a supportive evaluation and letter for you, as described below for a senior.
- *March*: Early admissions deadline for Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine. If you don't get in, schedule an appointment with an admissions counselor from March-August to go over your application with you.

Junior year

- Participate in a different veterinary medical related experience in small or large animal practice, with a wildlife conservation organization or in laboratory research.
- Decide which Veterinary colleges to apply to.
- *Fall*: Start preparation for the Graduate Record Exam (GRE)
- *Winter*: look at the VMCAS site and start to familiarize yourself with it. This will be useful to start gathering all the details the application requires.
- *Spring to summer*: Take the GRE one to two times. Check allowable frequency of test taking on GRE website-- minimum spacing could be no more frequent than once every 21 days. Check the individual vet schools' GRE deadline requirements on the VMCAS website to make sure that you will start taking the GRE early enough. When you take the GRE, arrange for your scores to be sent directly to the vet schools to which you are applying.
- ***Mid May between Junior and Senior year: VMCAS site opens. Start working on your application now!*** Filling out the information will take a considerable amount of time.

- Write the first draft of your personal statement and other essays. Plan to show these to multiple people and go through at least six drafts.
- Request official transcripts from all universities that you have attended and request that transcripts be sent to VMCAS. Prepare and send supplemental applications to veterinary colleges that require them. Two US schools (Texas A&M and University of Missouri for residents) use their own application process, if you apply to one of these schools, ask your evaluators to submit their evaluations and letters through the Texas A&M and the University of Missouri websites in addition to the VMCAS.
- *May-July*: Contact your evaluators to ask them to write a strong letter of recommendation for you. Supply them with an unofficial transcript and a resume that makes all the points you want to appear in the evaluation letter. You can register up to six evaluators on VMCAS; a minimum of three evaluators is required. Follow up with your evaluators as to whether they have received an email from VMCAS or schools with their own applications giving them access to the evaluation website. Let them know the deadline-- VMCAS won't mail your application without three evaluations.

Senior year

- *August-September*: VMCAS applications are due September 15. Try to finish and submit your VMCAS application by the end of August to avoid last-minute issues. Remind your evaluators of the deadline by sending them an email thanking them for completing the evaluation and letter by that date.
- October-Spring*: Prepare for interviews. If you are not successful this round, make an appointment to talk to a veterinary medical school admissions counselor in a school to which you have applied about the weaknesses in your application and consider what you should do to remedy them, whether you should change which veterinary medical colleges you apply to in the following fall, or whether you should implement "Plan B" and pursue a different career path. Many people who do not gain admittance immediately after college will eventually do so.

Veterinary School Advisory Committee

Members of this committee advise students on how to gain pre-veterinary medical related experiences and recommendation letters, how to fulfill prerequisites for veterinary school admission, how to assemble their portfolio for veterinary school admission, how to choose which schools to apply to, how to write a successful essay, and how to interview. Members of the committee maintain contacts with admissions officers at veterinary medical schools, promote ties between UMass Amherst and veterinary medical schools and host speakers from veterinary medical schools. Students are encouraged to speak to any pre-veterinary school admissions advisory committee member about the assembly of their veterinary school application as early as possible in their academic career.

