

Syracuse University

College of Arts & Sciences

Advising and Career Services

Veterinary Medicine

Veterinary Medicine as a Career

Veterinary medicine is a diverse career path where individuals can apply their passion for scientific study and animal welfare by preventing disease and providing care to sick and injured animals in a variety of settings. Veterinarians work with pets, livestock and wildlife often in a private practice, however opportunities in public health, animal disease control, and food safety are also available.

Veterinary Medicine School

There are currently 28 US veterinary medical schools represented by the association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) as well as various other accredited international schools. Graduates are awarded a **Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM or VMD)** degree and are eligible for licensing upon successful completion of the North American Veterinary Licensing Exam (NAVLE) and other state requirements. The veterinary medical school curriculum is typically divided into the pre-clinical and clinical phases. The first three years are generally structured so that the student progresses from classroom and laboratory education in the basic sciences to clinical applications. The fourth year includes clinical rotations, clerkships and internships.

The Pre-Vet Curriculum

Academic Prerequisites

It is important to note that prerequisites vary by school. Below are some of the more common courses. It is recommended that you consult with a health professions counselor to discuss specific prerequisites.

General Biology and Labs (BIO 121, 123/124)

Genetics (BIO 326)

Microbiology (BIO 409)

Biochemistry (BCM 475)

General Chemistry and Labs (CHE 106/107, 116/117)

Organic Chemistry and Labs (CHE 275/276, 325,326)

Physics and Labs (PHY 101, 102 or PHY 211/221, 212/222)

Calculus (MAT 285, 286 or 295, 296)

Statistics (MAT 221)

Expository Writing (WRT 105, 205)

Additionally Recommended courses

Cell Biology (BIO 327)
Immunology (BIO 447)
Anatomy/Physiology (BIO 216, 217 or 316,317)
Psychology (PSY 205)
Ethics and Bioethics (PHI 191, PHI 593, 594)
Public Health (HTW 221)
Public Speaking (CRS 325)
Animal Nutrition/Animal Science

Notes:

- Students majoring in Biology, Biochemistry or Biotechnology may substitute upper division biology requirements for BIO 123/124. Check individual schools' requirements.
- PHY 101 and 102 is sufficient, however PHY 211 and 212 may be required by individual majors
- Although calculus is not specifically required by all schools it is recommended. MAT 285 and 286 is sufficient for most students however the more rigorous sequence MAT 295 and 296 may also be a major requirement. Statistics is also often a required prerequisite.
- Some programs require either a course in Animal Nutrition or Animal Science.

Non-academic Prerequisites

Animal Experience (large and small)
Veterinary Shadowing
Research
Community and Public Service
Letters of Recommendation
Leadership
Interviewing Skills

Entrance Exam and Application

Graduate Record Exam (GRE)

While not all programs require an admissions exam, most require the GRE and in some cases the MCAT may be accepted in lieu of the GRE. Students should plan to take the GRE early enough to have scores available for their application.

Veterinary Medical College Application Service (VMCAS)

VMCAS typically opens the first week of June and application deadlines generally occur in October. Applying early is strongly recommended in order to avoid any unexpected delays and to give adequate time to complete supplemental applications.

Additional Resources

[American Veterinary Medical Association \(AVMA\)](#)

[Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges \(AAVMC\)](#)