

Information for High School Students

Is veterinary medicine the right path for me?

Students interested in veterinary medicine should have a passion for animals, science, learning and academics. The DVM is a rigorous four-year professional science curriculum that is highly competitive with thousands of college students applying to only 32 veterinary colleges in the country. Each year 162 new veterinary students are admitted to The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

What courses should I take in high school to prepare for a career in Veterinary Medicine?

We recommend college preparatory courses in all major subjects such as mathematics, English, languages, sciences (particularly biology, chemistry, and physics), and social sciences. Take the highest level of courses your high school has to offer in order to best prepare yourself for college.

How can I prepare for a career in Veterinary Medicine?

Prospective students are required to gain documented experience with a veterinarian. Therefore, students should start at an early age shadowing a veterinarian. Many veterinarians will allow prospective veterinary medical students to spend time observing activities in their practice. Through your veterinary experience, you are expected to gain a realistic and appropriate perspective of the responsibility of the veterinary profession. High levels of engagement and initiative, not just observing, are required. Your experience may come from a job or volunteer service. You may acquire experience by working with veterinarians in private practice, farms, ranches, animal shelters, zoos, aquaria, laboratories, etc. Try to work with a variety of animal species (large and small animals, food animals, equine, and research) and gain unique experiences. Track the hours of experience you gain and consider keeping a journal of the learning that you acquire through these experiences. Keeping a journal will be beneficial when you apply to veterinary school, as you will need to articulate your animal experiences.

Involvement in extracurricular activities will also help you prepare for a career in Veterinary Medicine. Such activities may include school clubs, band, athletics, boy scouts, girl scouts and any other organized activity that encourages the development of leadership skills, teamwork, confidence and interpersonal skills.

When can I enter veterinary college?

You must first enter a four-year undergraduate college program and complete the required prerequisite courses before applying to veterinary school. The required prerequisite courses are located on our website at www.vet.ohio-state.edu.

How do I choose an undergraduate college?

Choosing a college is an important personal decision. Attend a college that provides a challenging curriculum in an environment where you will succeed academically. A “good fit” will most likely result in good academic success. Consider schools that offer strong science programs and majors that interest you. Use college guides and apply to the colleges that best suit you with regards to location, size, and academic demand. The more competitive college will most likely offer you the kind of challenges that will prepare you for a career in veterinary medicine.



Is it acceptable to attend a community/junior college?

Taking courses at a community college is acceptable as long as the courses are determined by Professional Admission to be equivalent to our required courses. However, how the admission committee views courses taken at a community college is a bit different. We look at the entire program of study to determine if an applicant shows they are capable of managing the very rigorous curriculum of veterinary school. In general, community college courses are not as rigorous as similar courses at a four-year institution, but this is not always the case. If you take only the upper division coursework at a community college that does not enhance our confidence that you are capable of handling the very challenging and rigorous curriculum of veterinary school.

What should I choose as an undergraduate major?

Your choice of a major will depend on your vocational interest and your alternate career plans. Choose a major that you will enjoy, but one that will allow you to complete the pre-professional courses required for veterinary school. Please keep in mind “Pre-vet” is not a major; it is a track that can be chosen within a major. Since most pre-veterinary students are interested in the biological sciences and working with animals, they tend to major in basic sciences (zoology, biology, chemistry, biochemistry, microbiology) or in sciences applied to working with animals (e.g. wildlife biology, animal sciences).

Although a bachelor’s degree is not a prerequisite for admission, prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to pursue a bachelor’s degree in an area of interest. This will prepare students for an alternative career in the event they are not offered admission into veterinary school.

What college courses are required?

Go to our website at vet.ohio-state.edu for required courses. If you pursue your studies at another educational institution, it is your responsibility to verify their courses are equivalent to Ohio State’s required pre-professional courses. Contact a professional school admissions counselor in Ohio State’s Office of Graduate and Professional Admissions at (614) 292-9444.

Do you accept Advanced Placement (AP) credit to fulfill the prerequisite courses?

We will accept AP credit for courses; however, the courses must be listed on official transcripts from the college or university you attended.

How does The Ohio State University evaluate DVM applicants?

Applicants are evaluated on academic profiles and certain other non-cognitive factors including motivation, character, communication and interpersonal skills, personality, leadership ability, animal exposure, knowledge of the profession, commitment to a career in veterinary medicine, potential to be an outstanding veterinary professional, and ability to discuss current issues or events in the field. If you possess some distinctive abilities, experiences or accomplishments, they may help you to stand out from others with equal academic qualification.

May I visit The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine?

We are happy to provide tours of our Veterinary Medical College and academic buildings for individuals or groups of students interested in pursuing a career in veterinary medicine. If interested in scheduling a tour, or a tour and advising appointment, please complete the following form: vet.osu.edu/osu-cvm-tour-request-form.

Who should I contact for additional questions about the College of Veterinary Medicine at The Ohio State University?

If you have questions, comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact The Ohio State University Office of Veterinary Medicine Student Affairs at (614) 292-2257 or email us at DVMprospective@osu.edu.

