Pre-Veterinary Medicine

The College of Veterinary Medicine offers the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.) as its only degree in one of the senior health professions at Ohio State. Like other major health professions, veterinary medicine has its own system of education, licensure, organization, and ethics. The D.V.M. degree prepares graduates to diagnose, treat, and prevent animal diseases. As well as promote public health, conserve animal resources, and promote the bond between humans and animals. Veterinarians serve to advance medical knowledge through research, serve as a valuable resource for the biomedical community, and provide both general and specialized care to animal patients and their owners.

Preparing for Veterinary Medicine at Ohio State

Contrary to popular belief, there is no one “best” major at Ohio State in which to prepare for the College of Veterinary Medicine. Students generally select a course of study that is related to the life sciences, such as biology, zoology, or animal science, but there really are no limits as long as the necessary prerequisite course work is integrated into the undergraduate major.

Although a bachelor’s degree is not required for admission to the College of Veterinary Medicine, students pursue an undergraduate major when they start as a freshman and work on their 3-4 years of prerequisites for admission to the program. The majority of applicants to veterinary medicine are completing an undergraduate degree the year they apply for admission to the professional program.

Admission to the College of Veterinary Medicine is competitive, and is based on completion of required prerequisite course work, the student’s cumulative point-hour ratio, references, a minimum of 80 work/volunteer hours with a veterinarian, an interview, and test scores from the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) or Graduate Record Examination (GRE).

The program places a high priority on Ohio residency, and non-Ohio residents typically have a cumulative point-hour ratio of 3.4 or above in college course work in order to be competitive for veterinary medicine. Residents from West Virginia are considered with Ohio residents due to educational contracts the College of Veterinary Medicine has with this state.

A strong science foundation, as well as elective courses in the social sciences and humanities, makes up the prerequisite curriculum at Ohio State, which includes:
- Mathematics 150
- Biochemistry 511
- Physics 111, 112
- Microbiology 520 and 521 (General Microbiology with labs), or 509
- Humanities and social sciences (sociology, history, economics, literature, etc.) (20 credit hours)
- Electives (10 credit hours)

All but one of the above courses must be completed by the end of the autumn quarter in which the candidate applies to the College of Veterinary Medicine.

The College of Veterinary Medicine encourages students early on in their undergraduate education to explore the profession on their own—be it through work/volunteer experience with a veterinary practice or conducting informational interviews with people in the profession. Not only will this experience help to confirm that veterinary medicine is the right career “fit,” but, as the time for application gets closer, it will also provide students with the contacts needed for references.

Lastly, pre-veterinary medicine students are encouraged to be a part of the pre-veterinary medicine club. The club is student run with a veterinary medicine faculty adviser. The club sponsors a variety of activities to help students become more aware of and knowledgeable about the veterinary profession. Speakers at monthly meetings might include a faculty member sharing his or her research about a particular aspect of veterinary medicine or a veterinarian from the community. Involvement in community service activities, as well as social functions, also helps pre-veterinary students to get to know one another outside the academic setting. These activities are coordinated by the club.

Co-Curricular Opportunities

Ohio State offers many opportunities for students to learn and grow outside of the classroom. These range from cooperative education (co-op) and internships to study abroad programs to student organizations. Co-ops and internships place students in professional environments while they are Ohio State students. Ohio State offers more than 100 study abroad programs in 40 countries around the world. In addition, there are hundreds of student organizations on campus to meet the interests of a diverse student population.

These experiences enable students to gain valuable work experience, learn about cultures, and take on leadership roles before they enter the workforce. All of these experiences enhance learning and may provide an advantage in the job market.
Honors & Scholars Programs
Ohio State offers the Honors & Scholars programs to create an environment of intellectual support and stimulation within a close-knit community of high-ability undergraduate students. Through these programs, students have access to smaller classes, undergraduate research opportunities, close working relationships with faculty, priority scheduling, and unique housing options.

Honors & Scholars programs represent great opportunities to be part of a smaller community within a large university. Good candidates for these programs are invited to apply upon admission to the university. For more information about these opportunities, refer to the Honors & Scholars web site at honors-scholars.osu.edu.

Career Prospects in Veterinary Medicine
There are a wide number of career opportunities available to veterinarians today. About 70 percent of D.V.M.s are in some form of private practice. In private practice, veterinarians work directly with the owner of an animal patient to diagnose and treat ill animals, as well as to prevent illness in healthy animals. Practicing veterinarians may be in a general (mixed animal) practice or they may limit their practice to a particular animal species. Other veterinarians in private practice have sought additional education and attained specialty board certification (e.g., Veterinary Internal Medicine, Veterinary Radiology or Veterinary Pathology).

For those who desire public service, there are many veterinarians serving as public health officers for the U.S. Government, the World Health Organization, and every state in the U.S., as well as for many other organizations.

Additionally, veterinarians are actively engaged in teaching, research, regulatory veterinary medicine, military service, and other aspects of the profession. In short, the profession opens many doors to its members.

Salaries for starting Ohio State graduates averaged $50,000 in 2006. The range was from a low of $25,000 for those continuing in graduate school to a high in excess of $75,000. The national mean salary for all veterinarians in the United States in 2006 was approximately $79,000.

Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Curriculum
The veterinary medicine curriculum is a four-year curriculum, with the first two years spent primarily in didactic work and the last two years spent primarily in clinical experiences. During the first year, the student will average 20 credit hours per quarter and take topographic anatomy, microscopic anatomy, epidemiology, cell biology, ethics, comparative biology of disease, pharmacology, neurobiology, and endocrinology. During the second year, the student will concentrate on organ systems in health and disease. The courses will teach the cardiovascular, respiratory, hemic-lymphatic, reproductive, endocrine, gastrointestinal, urinary, integumentary, and musculoskeletal systems. Students will also learn anesthesiology, laboratory animal medicine, and ophthalmology, and receive an introduction to surgery. Students will take an average of 22 credit hours per quarter.

The third and fourth years comprise one continuous experience, as there is no summer break between these years. Students will start with two quarters of electives combined with required surgical experiences. Following these two quarters, the students will have a one-calendar-year clinical clerkship in the veterinary teaching hospital. Finally, the student will have an elective quarter to round out their clinical experiences prior to graduation.

More About Veterinary Medicine
- An Ohio State veterinarian is in the Astronaut program at NASA and has been in space three times.
- An Ohio State veterinary researcher developed the first successful vaccine against Feline Leukemia Virus.
- Mark Francis, Ohio State College of Veterinary Medicine’s first graduate, founded Texas A&M’s College of Veterinary Medicine.

Revised July 2007. All information is subject to change without notice. For the most up-to-date information on veterinary medicine, please visit www.vet.ohio-state.edu.

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