

The Internship & Residency Pathway: Presenting a Competitive Application

Veterinarians have a vast amount of career paths available to them, and pursuing an internship or residency through the VIRMP is a great choice for those wanting to specialize and gain additional experience in a particular area. Because these positions are extremely coveted, it is very important to submit a strong application.

Getting Started

- When applying through the Veterinary Internship and Residency Match Program, be sure to read the instructions thoroughly and follow them *exactly*. You can find the instructions at www.virmp.org. There is a helpful video that will walk you through the process.
- Do not wait until the last minute. Applications are due in December, and you need to give yourself plenty of time to submit a well written personal statement, curriculum vitae, and gather your letters of recommendation, among the other components listed on the VIRMP website.
- Recommendations play a vital role in the selection process. You will need recommendations from professors, preferably board-certified faculty members who are well-respected in their specialty, and others who can speak highly of your abilities. General practice veterinarians and junior faculty may not carry as much weight with the selection committee as those who are board-certified in their field. Give your references *at least* two months' notice. You should also be ready to supply them with your class rank, personal statement, curriculum vitae, and any other documents they may need.
- An email will be sent to your reference's email. Be sure they know references will be completed and submitted electronically, and to check for an email from the VIRMP for further instructions.
- After selecting your desired programs, you will rank them and can only do this *once*.

Curriculum Vitae

- When applying through the VIRMP, you will only submit one CV for all programs.
- Your CV should highlight your undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate (if applicable) experiences, as well as your previous employment.
- There is no page limit. Your CV needs to be detailed but precise and highlight relevant experience that will make you stand out as a candidate. Explore more resources regarding CVs on our website.
- The VIRMP requires your CV to be submitted in PDF Format.

Your Letter of Intent/Personal Statement

- You should *never* submit a letter of intent with grammatical or spelling errors. Read your letter several times, and ask two or three others to read it as well.
- The selection committee wants to know what you expect from an internship and residency program, your future professional goals, and how the program aligns with those goals.
- This is not meant to be a creative essay. It is meant to evaluate your ability to write a well-structured essay that succinctly showcases your abilities and aspirations.
- It is essential to also highlight what relevant skills you will bring to the program and showcase that you know the demands of the program and are prepared and committed to take on this role.
- Your personal statement should be around one page long.
- Remember that there are helpful resources and guides on our website.

Further Recommendations

- Class rank plays an important role. A poor academic record will greatly impact your chance of being matched, and may even exclude you altogether.
- Do well and build relationships during senior clinics. The faculty you work alongside will be great resources when it comes to advice and recommendations.
- Get to know faculty who are in the specialty you wish to pursue. Offer to work with them on a project or ask them to look over your research and offer suggestions.
- “Soft skills” are just as important as the veterinary knowledge. Communication skills and professionalism are key components when working with patients and fellow doctors. You need to demonstrate that you know what it means to be a good colleague and an informed, caring veterinarian.
- Contact people who have already completed a residency or internship. Ask them questions—what is a typical day like as an intern? What types of procedures and cases did you normally see? What can I do to set myself apart in the application process?
- Do not be discouraged if you are not matched! If an internship or residency is something you truly want to pursue, continue to gain experience and knowledge as a veterinarian and try again the following year.

References

http://vet.tufts.edu/ace/resources/internship_application_tips.pdf

www.virmp.org