

So You're Interested in Veterinary Medicine?

Veterinarians are professionals who diagnose medical problems and care for pets and farm animals. They dress wounds, set broken bones, perform surgery, prescribe and administer medicine, and vaccinate animals against disease. According to the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, the majority of veterinarians in the United States work in private practice. Although there are many other veterinarians who are involved in preventive medicine, laboratory animal medicine, research and development, and teaching. There are also various specializations within veterinary medicine.

Quick Facts

Sample Job Titles	Median Wages (2019-2020)*	Required Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterinarian (Vet) • Emergency Veterinarian • Equine Veterinarian • Veterinary Surgeon • Theriogenologist 	In CA: \$107,880 In Los Angeles Area: \$107,960 <small>*For current wages, visit CareerOneStop.org/salary</small>	Doctorate Degree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctor of Veterinary Medicine

The Path to Veterinary Medicine



The DVM or VMD (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine) program typically takes four years to complete. Graduates of DVM programs must also apply for a license to practice. Each state has its own licensing rules and procedures for practicing. There are 30 accredited colleges of veterinary medicine in the United States.

Choosing an Undergraduate Major

As with most medical fields, there is **no required undergraduate major** to apply to a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program. Additionally, "Pre-Veterinary Medicine" is not a common undergraduate major. You should give careful consideration to your choice of major and select an area of study that interests you. To apply to graduate school, you will need to complete certain prerequisite courses in science and math. Therefore, common undergraduate majors for students interested in veterinary medicine include:

- Animal science, biology, microbiology, molecular biology, genetics, or biochemistry
- Math, physics, or chemistry

How to Prepare for Veterinary Medicine

As an undergraduate pursuing your bachelor's degree, there are several things you can do to prepare for graduate school. You can begin now as a Citrus College student!

- Complete the **prerequisite coursework** for the DVM programs you are interested in. We've included a sample of common prerequisites on the next page of this handout. Prerequisites vary, so be sure to research schools and determine their requirements.
- Maintain a **high GPA**.
- Gain as much **broad and varied exposure to veterinary medicine** as possible. Veterinary programs place great importance on these experiences. Here are some examples:
 - Consider job shadowing with veterinarians (large and small practices)
 - Shadowing or working in a lab setting
 - Working or volunteering on a farm, ranch, zoo, or shelter
- Join a **pre-vet club**, or start one if it doesn't already exist at your college!
- **Connect** with faculty and professionals. Remember that most programs will require multiple letters of recommendation.
- **Study** for the standardized test(s) required for the programs you will be applying to.



Sample Prerequisite Courses

In general, all prerequisite courses should be taken for a letter grade. Some campuses may have policies regarding whether their requirements can be met through lower-division or upper-division coursework (Citrus College does not offer upper-division classes; these are courses that must be taken at a university).

Common Prerequisites	Citrus College Courses
One year of English	ENGL 101 & 103 or 104
One year of Biology	BIOL 124 & 125
One year of Organic Chemistry	CHEM 210/211 & 220/221
One year of Physics	PHYS 201 & 202 or 203 <small>*Some campuses may accept PHYS 111 & 112. Refer to program specific websites for more information.</small>
Additional Coursework	MATH 190 & 191

IMPORTANT: This list is meant to be used as an informational guide. All students must refer to the individual campuses/programs for specific information on prerequisite requirements.

Veterinary School Application Process

- Apply to veterinary medicine graduate programs using the **Veterinary Medical College Application Service (VMCAS)**. The VMCAS is a centralized service which allows applicants to use a single application process to apply to multiple veterinary programs. It is the responsibility of the applicant to find out which schools participate and send individual applications to those that do not participate.
 - Students wishing to go directly into a graduate program after receiving their bachelor's degree will apply to a DVM program in September of their final year of college.
- Most veterinary schools require students to take at least one **standardized test**. The majority of schools require the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Some require the Biology GRE, and others will allow the MCAT to substitute for the GRE. Students should refer to the admission sites for each DVM program for more information.

Resources

Professional Organizations

- The Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (aavmc.org)
- American Veterinary Medical Association (avma.org)

Podcasts

- Vet School Unleashed (vetschoolunleashed.com)
- Voices of Veterinary Medicine ([Apple Podcasts](#))
- SAGE Veterinary Science (sageveterinary.libsyn.com)
- VetGirl Veterinary Continuing Education Podcasts (vetgirlontherun.com)

Visit **CandidCareer** to learn more about this occupation from the perspective of current Veterinarians!

bit.ly/CandidVet

Related Occupations

Not sure if getting a doctoral degree in veterinary medicine is the right fit for you? Here are some related careers with different educational requirements. For more information on these careers or others, visit ONetOnline.org.

Job Title	Median Wages	Required Education	Holland Interest Code
Veterinary Technician	In CA: \$40,020	Associate's Degree	RI
Animal Caregiver	In CA: \$26,320	~HS diploma or equivalent	RC