



The University of Edinburgh

Careers Service

Graduate Entry to Veterinary Medicine

Some will have always wanted to be a vet while others have developed an interest during undergraduate study, which leads to studying veterinary medicine as a second degree. However you come to the decision, there is a lot to think about and prepare before you apply, for example:

- The learning styles on courses will vary, so it is important to consider which suits you best.
- In addition to meeting the academic criteria you will also have to consider whether you have relevant and sufficient work experience.
- Funding is a major consideration which can take some time to research and arrange.
- Application deadlines are early in the academic year so you will need to be prepared.

Courses

There are 7 institutions who offer a veterinary medicine qualification accredited by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS):

- Royal Veterinary College (RVC), University of London
- University of Bristol
- University of Cambridge
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Glasgow
- University of Liverpool
- University of Nottingham

Two of the institutions' veterinary schools (Edinburgh and RVC) offer an accelerated graduate route alongside the normal undergraduate degree. Bristol run a system of exemptions taking into account what you have previously studied. You need to initiate the process by looking at the units of the first two years of the course (available on the school's website) then requesting exemption from these units backed up with evidence. Those who are granted exemptions have their tuition fees reduced accordingly. Cambridge have 4-8 places annually reserved for 'affiliated' students (those with a relevant academic background) who have their third year omitted so that the course is completed in 5 years rather than 6. All institutions require graduates to have an upper second Honours degree and for accelerated courses your first degree should be in a related subject such as animal or biological sciences.

For more detailed information on courses you should contact the veterinary schools directly.

Funding

As this will be a second degree, graduates will need to fund their study themselves. The fees for veterinary medicine courses can be very high and you will also have your living expenses to consider. In addition, it may be necessary to buy specialist equipment. It is also worth bearing in mind that vet students have shorter holidays and heavy workloads during term, which can make part-time and vacation work difficult or impossible.

The British Veterinary Association (BVA) has produced a guide on funding a course in veterinary medicine as a second degree which you can access via their website, www.bva.co.uk.

Graduate applicants fund their studies in a variety of ways:

- Some people will already have the funds themselves or have them supplied by family.
- **Scottish-domiciled students** can apply to SAAS for a student loan to cover living costs and for supplementary grants in every year of your course if you are studying for an accelerated degree. SAAS do not contribute to fees or a fee loan. Further information is available on the SAAS website www.saas.gov.uk.
- **Other UK students** may be eligible for means-tested maintenance loan. There is more information at www.gov.uk under *Student Finance*.
- **Bank loans**. The Career Development Loan is used by some students and you can find out more information at www.gov.uk/career-development-loans.
- **Sponsorship** can be a means to raising funds. With sponsorship you will need to be very proactive and speculatively approach organisations such as pharmaceutical, agricultural companies and individuals.
- **Charitable trusts** are a good source of funding. It would be unlikely that a trust could cover all of your fees but could contribute something, either to course fees, materials or living costs. You would also need to use another source to make up the remaining funding. Directories of charitable trusts are available for reference in the Careers Service (and in public libraries).

Contact the school to find out about any specialist funding that might be available for veterinary students. Most courses will expect you to substantiate how you intend to pay for the course and will want a deposit before the start of the course.

Application

To apply to veterinary schools you will need to apply through UCAS (www.ucas.com), even if you are applying for a place on an accelerated graduate programme. You can apply to a maximum of 4 veterinary schools. The deadline for applications is early (usually mid-October) so you will need to be prepared. You are likely to be required to attend an interview.

Ensure that you involve your referee in the process well in advance so that they are able to provide you with a well-informed reference.

The full process can take about 6 months, from your initial application in October to a firm decision, possibly not made until March the following year.

The Careers Service is able to provide you with feedback on the draft of your application and can arrange a practice interview.

Entry tests

The **BMAT** is a supplementary science aptitude test to help inform the selection process. The BMAT is designed to test the data handling and reasoning skills of candidates, and the ability to structure thoughts in extended writing exercises. As with the UCAS application the registration deadline and test date is early in the academic year. **Testing only takes place once a year.** For details of your nearest BMAT testing centre, key dates and sample questions visit the BMAT website, <http://www.admissionstests.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/adt/bmat>.

Currently the **University of Cambridge** and **Royal Veterinary College, University of London** require all veterinary medicine applicants to sit the BMAT.

Work experience

You will be expected to have completed prior relevant work experience. It also helps if you can offer experience in a range of areas e.g. in a practice, with dairy and lambing, in stables, abattoirs, zoos, kennels, veterinary laboratories etc. This shows course organisers that you are aware of what you are letting yourself in for and demonstrates your commitment. Although the more experience you have the better, you should not let this be at the detriment to your academic studies and other responsibilities. Selectors will also be interested to hear about your involvement in other areas, such as student societies, sport, music, volunteering and part-time/vacation work.

You should describe your practical experience in the appropriate section of the UCAS form. Most selectors will only take into account work experience that you have completed rather than work you plan to do. A conditional offer could include that evidence of relevant experience is required for entry.

Some schools ask that you send them a log of your work experience directly. This includes your specific veterinary experience and other experience with animals and enables you to go into more detail than possible on your UCAS application.

Further information

- Read *Getting into Veterinary School* available for reference in both Careers Service offices.
- Use the resources referred to on our website www.ed.ac.uk/careers/occupations > *Environment and energy* > *Vetinary and animal care*
- If you need to discuss your options, book an appointment with one of our Careers Consultants via MyCareerHub.

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