WCSU Pre-Health Programs
Pre-Vet Pathway

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Background on veterinary school

Veterinary schools in the United States and those located internationally are accredited by the AVMA Council on Education (COE). There are currently 33 accredited veterinary schools in the United States, 5 accredited institutions in Canada, and 18 accredited international veterinary schools. There are also non-accredited veterinary schools. Most of the veterinary schools in the United States are funded by the specific state and thus, there can be differences in the in-state versus out-of-state tuition. Tuition costs are organized on the following site: https://applytovetschool.org/. This information changes from year to year, so make sure that you are consulting up-to-date figures.

Earning a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree takes four years, which includes three years of nonclinical or didactic training and then one year of clinical training. There are several resources available for you to explore how you will fund your degree: https://www.aavmc.org/becoming-a-veterinarian/funding-your-degree/.

Pre-Requisite Coursework

Each veterinary school has their own pre-requisite course requirements, so make sure that you consult each school's website in advance so that you can organize your coursework as appropriate. The table below provides a summary of required courses that you can use as a general framework.

Courses	Veterinary School Pre-requisites
MAT 181 (Calculus I) *MAT 133 or appropriate placement is a pre-req*	Most vet schools
MAT 115/120 (Statistics)	Most vet schools
CHE 110/111 (General Chemistry I and II)	All vet schools
CHE 210/211 (Organic Chemistry I and II)	All vet schools
CHE 421 (Biochemistry)	All vet schools
PHY 120/121 (General Physics I and II – non-calculus based) or PHY 110/111 (General Physics I and II – calculus-based)	All vet schools
BIO 103/104 (General Biology I and II)	All vet schools
Science Electives (e.g., Genetics, Cell Biology, Anatomy and Physiology, and Microbiology)	Depends on the vet school – check with individual institutions
Humanities/Social Sciences Electives (e.g., Psychology and Sociology)	Depends on the vet school – check with individual institutions
English (1 year of college English or equivalent writing intensive courses)	All vet schools

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Note: Students can take classes at community colleges or 2- or 4-year institutions. Most veterinary schools accept AP credits provided they were accepted by the college and appear on a student's official transcript. However, some schools do not accept AP credit for English courses. If you transferred into WCSU and took classes elsewhere, you must include that original institution as a college/university that you attended in the application process so those grades can be part of your application package. All non-US transcripts do require evaluation by the World Educational Services that are then sent to VMCAS (https://www.wes.org/).

The following criteria make up your GPA: pre-requisite coursework, upper-level college courses (300 level or higher), science courses (Science GPA consisting of coursework in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Math), and the "last 45 hours", which includes the most recent 45-60 semester hours of coursework completed. The Veterinary Medical College Application Service (VMCAS) provides students with an explanation as to the various GPA calculations (VMCAS GPA Calculator Explanation).

Graduate Record Examinations (GRE)

Many graduate schools no longer require the GREs for admission, but some still do. Therefore, it is important to check with the schools that you are interested in to determine what is required. Some schools "superscore" which means they take the highest score from each section to generate your overall GRE score. While the GRE might not be required for the programs that you are interested in, they may have added Computer-Based Assessment for Sampling Personal Characteristics (CASPer) testing (see below). As of 2022, only 6 schools required the GRE and for one school the exam was optional.

Experiential Preparation

To be a competitive applicant, you must have experience hours, which can be volunteer or paid positions. As part of the application process, students should detail how such experiences have impacted their career goals and their desire to become a veterinarian. Students must have veterinary hours where they work under the guidance of a licensed veterinarian (DVM), which could take the form of DVM shadowing, volunteering, interning, or through paid clinical exposure. In addition, students should have animal hours which can include animal showing, volunteer work in an animal shelter, or with an animal rescue group. For the Class of 2027, the mean number of animal experiential hours was around 2,500, the mean number of veterinary experiential hours was around 1,800. To round out the application, it is recommended (not required) that students engage in community service and perform research. It is important to check the specific requirements of the schools do which you will apply.

The VMCAS asks that students categorize their experiences as follows: veterinary experience (supervised work with a veterinarian), animal experience (does not require a veterinarian), employment (not related to animal work), extracurricular activities, research (under the guidance of an individual with a MD, PhD, MD/PhD, or DVM), and volunteer activities (not animal related).

Importantly, experiences from high school and onward can be included in the application, but it is advised to only include the experiences completed by the application deadline.

Letters of Recommendation

Most schools require at least three letters of recommendation and the VMCAS framework allows for up to 6 letters to be submitted. If a student chooses to upload more than 3 letters of recommendation, then the student must make sure that the schools to which they are applying will read more than 3 letters. Through VMCAS, students are not able to select which letters go to which schools.

Most veterinary schools require a letter from at least one veterinarian and some schools want two letters. In addition, some schools might require a letter from a Dean, faculty member, or advisor. Students should ask individuals that are familiar with them and can write a strong letter of support.

Committee letters are not a requirement, but if a student does submit a committee letter, then it only counts as one letter. Students are advised to check with each school to determine if committee letters can be submitted. The Pre-Health Committee is currently comprised of Dr. Kristin Giamanco (Biology), Dr. Helena Prieto (Chemistry), Dr. Russ Selzer (Chemistry), Dr. Joshua Cordeira (Biology), and Dr. Emily Stevens (Health Promotion and Exercise). A committee letter holistically considers an applicant's portfolio including the individual letters of recommendation. Please note that there is a committee letter request form that you must complete in addition to have those writing you letters of recommendation fill out a pre-health evaluation form. Your pre-health professions advisor can provide you with more detailed information and the specific deadlines associated with these forms.

Application Process

Student applicants submit one application to VMCAS which then ensures that all the materials are submitted to the schools. However, there are some schools that do not participate in VMCAS (in the United States the two veterinary schools in Texas do not participate in VMCAS), so again, students are encouraged to consult with the appropriate school websites for individual practices. Some schools in Texas require applicants to use the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service (TMDAS) (https://www.tmdsas.com/index.html).

For VMCAS 2025, you will be charged $234 for the first program you apply to and then $128 for each additional program. Some schools have additional fees that will be paid directly to the institution.

VMCAS is available for applicants to access the site in January. Once open, applicants can input their personal information, grades, experiences, letters of recommendation and work on their essay. In May, the specific veterinary school programs are available in VMCAS, and applicants can submit their applications. The deadline for submission is in September and can vary from one cycle to another, so make sure to check the date for the specific cycle that you are applying for. Individual veterinary schools may have additional supplemental applications that could be included in VMCAS or may be separate from VMCAS. Thus, due dates may vary, and it is recommended that students check with specific websites for the relevant information. Interviews can begin as early as October and some interview processes extend into early spring.

There are four sections of the VMCAS application: personal information (biographical and contact information), academic history (completed coursework and any standardized testing), supporting information (recommendations, experiences, VMCAS essay, and achievements), and

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lastly, program materials (contains school specific questions and additional requirements).

The VMCAS has one central essay question, but as stated above, individual schools may require additional essays. More specifically, the personal statement through VMCAS is a one-page essay (that cannot exceed 3,000 characters) that provides a clear picture of who you are and what drove you to pursue a career in veterinary medicine. There is also an opportunity within the VMCAS framework to provide supplementary information which could include the impact of COVID-19 on your coursework, interruptions in your studies, unique circumstances, or hardships you have faced, or could detail future courses you plan to take.

There is a VMCAS Fee Assistance Program that opens in June, and it covers the initial application fee. This program can be financial-based which requires submission of a 1040 tax form to assess income eligibility or service-based/military in which applicants must complete a form. The Merck Animal Health Diversity Applicant Fee Assistance Program can help applicants have one additional fee waived (see: https://www.aavmc.org/becoming-a-veterinarian/how-to-apply/application-fees/vmcas-fee-reimbursement-program/).

Application Timeline

Below is a timeline so that you can plan accordingly. This example timeline is for a student that would start veterinary school in Fall 2025. Be sure to check the specific deadlines for when you will apply.

January 2024
- Consult with your pre-health advisor as you get ready to apply and survey the Veterinary Medical School Admission Requirements (VMSAR) website (https://applytovetschool.org/) so that you can gather all relevant information
- Make sure that you are on track to finish your pre-requisite coursework
- Continue to gain the necessary experiences to be considered a competitive applicant
- The VMCAS application cycle opens January 23rd (*Note*: The specific date varies from year to year)

February – March 2024
- Evaluate who you want to write letters of recommendation on your behalf
- Consult with these individuals as early as you can and provide them with all the necessary information that they need to write you a strong letter of recommendation (e.g., your VMCAS essay, any supplemental information, information about your experiences outside of the classroom)

April – May 2024
- Prepare for and take the GRE (if you need to take it or decide to take it)
- Make sure that you inquire about any additional testing that might be required (e.g., CASPer)
- In May, specific vet programs become available on VMCAS. This allows you to complete any institution-specific supplemental questions or materials. While you can submit these forms at this time, it might be advantageous to wait and finish any experiences (e.g.,

veterinary, research, or volunteer)

June – August 2024
- Continue to complete required experiences (veterinary, animal, research, and any others you desire or are needed for your application)
- Take any standardized tests, if you have not already
- Submit your VMCAS application early (mid-August) as this will allow for any errors to be corrected in advance of the deadline

Admissions Process

   In terms of the admissions process there are two types of criteria that are evaluated: academic and nonacademic. For academic criteria, this includes one's overall GPA, science GPA, the last 45-hour GPA, and any standardized test scores (e.g., GRE) if required. Nonacademic criteria encompass experiences (veterinary, animal, employment, research, honors, awards received, and community service), letters of recommendation, essays, any required situational judgment tests (i.e., CASPer), and interviews.

   The interview process can take many different shapes including panel or traditional, multiple mini-interview, and behavioral interview. The panel interview involves a group of people (often the faculty from the institution) that could ask students to clarify and expound upon portions of their application. The multiple mini-interview entails a series of timed and scripted scenarios that require a response from the candidate. Lastly, the behavioral interview assesses how applicants would react to a variety of different circumstances.

   Many schools are requiring students to take the CASPer test instead of engaging in standard interviews. The CASPer test is an online judgment exam in which applicants are faced with hypothetical situations and asked what they would do in response. There are 12 sections, and it takes applicants 60 to 90 minutes to complete. A sample test can be accessed at: https://acuityinsights.app/.

Admissions Statistics

   The American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges collected data on all admitted students that entered veterinary school in 2022 and will graduate in 2026. In addition, they also provide information as to the number of students that are admitted to each school based on their place of residence (see: https://www.aavmc.org/becoming-a-veterinarian/what-to-know-before-you-apply/admitted-student-statistics/).

   The mean overall GPA of accepted students was 3.6 while the mean science GPA was 3.5. The average quantitative score on the GRE was 53, while the average written score on the GRE was 57, and the average verbal score was 64.

Veterinary Medicine Career Paths

   According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the job market for veterinarians is projected to grow 16% between 2019 and 2029. Practicing veterinarians can work in the following realms:

- Private practice

- Corporate veterinary medicine
- Federal government (USDA, NIH, CDC, and FDA)
- The U.S. Army Corps and U.S. Air Force
- Research
- Teaching
- Food supply medicine
- Global veterinary medicine
- Public health
- Public policy
- Shelter medicine

Helpful websites

https://applytovetschool.org/ – This website contains the 2024 edition for the application cycle 2025. You will find information about the various veterinary medical colleges in terms of their requirements for admissions. There are also some details about cost of such programs

https://vetschoolbound.org/ – This resource provides details about the cost of veterinary school, what your chances of being accepted are, and includes information about various programs

https://www.aavmc.org/becoming-a-veterinarian/how-to-apply/ – This AAVMC website has details about the application process that will be helpful as you prepare your materials, this includes an applicant guide

https://vmcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login – Here you can access the VMCAS application portal

https://help.liaisonedu.com/VMCAS_Applicant_Help_Center – If you encounter any issues while preparing your application, you can access this help center

https://time2track.com/vmcas – Allows applicants to organize and track experiences for their application to veterinary school and includes the pertinent details required for VMCAS

https://acuityinsights.app/ – Acuity Insights details what the CASPer test is and there is information on how to register for that testing option