



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Western College of
Veterinary Medicine



DOCTOR OF VETERINARY MEDICINE (DVM) PROGRAM

APPLICANT MANUAL

Application Deadline: December 1 yearly
(for following fall entry)



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I. DOCTOR OF VETERINARY MEDICINE (DVM) PROGRAM

The WCVM's four-year Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program prepares students to meet the needs of animal health care in Western Canada and beyond.

- During the program's first two years, students focus on basic and applied science core courses.
- In their third year, students gain more in-depth information in particular interest areas through elective courses.
- Students gain clinical experience during their final years, completing a series of two- or four-week practical rotations in a range of disciplines and interest areas.

WCVM prepares you FOR THE WORLD

The WCVM provides its students with a comprehensive veterinary education that's internationally recognized for its quality and depth. WCVM graduates have a broad knowledge of the basic pre-clinical sciences and sufficient practical education in clinical veterinary medicine — allowing them to successfully enter practice or advanced educational programs in the specialty fields of veterinary medicine.

WCVM: International Accreditation

The WCVM is fully accredited with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) to operate as a qualified centre for veterinary education and research. Full AVMA accreditation means:

- WCVM students can write the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE) without any restrictions. The NAVLE is a comprehensive test written by all U.S. and Canadian veterinary students in their final year.
- WCVM graduates are eligible to practise in all provinces of Canada, in all American states and in several other countries.

The College is also recognized by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. This means WCVM graduates are eligible for membership in the RCVS, allowing them to practise in the United Kingdom and any country recognizing RCVS membership.

II. REGIONAL NATURE OF THE WCVM

As a regional veterinary college, the WCVM accepts applicants who are residents of the four western provinces and the northern territories. The number of applicants admitted from each western province is determined by an allotment system:

- British Columbia: 20
- Alberta: 20
- Saskatchewan: 20
- Manitoba: 15
- Northern territories (Yukon, Nunavut and Northwest Territories): 1
- Education Equity Program: 2

An interprovincial agreement between the four western provinces and the WCVM outlines definite rules to determine an applicant's province of residence:

- For an applicant residing with his or her parents, the residence of the parents shall determine the residence of the applicant.
- For an applicant not residing with his or her parents, residence is established by the applicant's residing in the province in question for at least one year (12 consecutive months) without attending post-secondary education.

Because the Yukon, Nunavut and Northwest Territories are not formal signatories of the interprovincial funding contract, they apply their own rules for applicants claiming to be residents of these areas.

Residents of foreign countries are not eligible to be considered for admission to the WCVM.

Education Equity Program

The Education Equity Program encourages students of Aboriginal descent to apply to the College. Two seats are available each year for Aboriginal students applying through this program.

The WCVM requires proof of Aboriginal ancestry that must be provided at the time of application.

- To view the list of accepted documents, please see the following website – <http://explore.usask.ca/aboriginal/ancestry/>.

III. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

High school requirements: There are no specific high school requirements for the DVM program. However, there are specific high school prerequisites for the pre-veterinary course requirements at universities. Students should contact the registrar of the institution where they plan to attend for further information about high school prerequisites for pre-veterinary courses.

University requirements: The pre-veterinary course requirements are usually met in a College of Arts and Sciences or a College of Agriculture. The pre-veterinary coursework may be taken at any accredited college or university, but most applicants attend the major universities in their respective provinces. Non-residents of Saskatchewan will not improve their chances of admission by attending the University of Saskatchewan for pre-veterinary coursework.

The pre-veterinary course requirements consist of 60 credits of required and elective courses. One credit represents one lecture hour equivalent per week for one term (or approximately one semester hour of credit):

- | | |
|--|--|
| • 6 credits of Biology | • 3 credits of Organic Chemistry |
| • 6 credits of Chemistry | • 3 credits of Biochemistry |
| • 6 credits of English | • 3 credits of Genetics |
| • 6 credits of Mathematics or Statistics | • 3 credits of Introductory Microbiology |
| • 3 credits of Physics | • 21 credits of elective courses |

There are no "preferred" electives: the choice of electives should be based upon the requirements of the program in which the student is enrolled or the student's general interests. Students are encouraged to select electives that will liberalize or broaden their perspective.

Pre-veterinary requirements: At least two full years of university courses are required to complete the requirements. Most applicants have more than two years of university. However, neither the number of years of pre-professional study nor the degree(s) held are factors in selecting students.

Courses taken as part of vocational programs — such as animal health technician programs — are not usually accepted to meet the College's pre-veterinary course requirements. However, a few courses in some programs may be used if the applicant has completed the vocational program. Each case is considered on its individual merit.

Minimum Requirements for Admission

WCVM faculty members have approved a policy that requires all applicants to have a minimum, cumulative average of 75 per cent to be considered for admission into the veterinary program. All grades are converted to a common scale for comparative purposes and this converted average will be used.

IV. ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Each year, the Western College of Veterinary Medicine admits up to 78 students to its first year class. Since there are usually about 300 applications every year, completion of the pre-veterinary requirements does not guarantee admission to the College.

Selection Criteria

Selection is based upon assessment of a number of factors including:

- mental aptitude
- academic performance
- motivation
- maturity
- experience with animals
- leadership qualities
- social awareness
- deportment, verbal facility and ability to communicate
- an understanding and knowledge of the veterinary profession.

Degrees or diplomas held are not factors in the selection process.

Transcripts and Academic Performance

Mental aptitude and academic performance are evaluated mainly by past performance as evaluated by transcripts of the applicant's academic records, and to a lesser extent, by referees and an interview.

All university work undertaken is considered when evaluating academic performance. The courseload of the applicant is a consideration. Applicants who have not taken a full courseload (i.e. 30 credits for an academic session) could be at a disadvantage when evaluating academic performance.

A common misconception regarding academic performance is that only applicants with "straight A's" have a chance to be admitted to the WCVM. This is untrue even for those provinces for which competition is most keen. This is best illustrated by the fact that in the recent past, the average percentage for those admitted

ranged from 78 to 86 per cent. The average will vary from province to province because of the differences among the provincial applicant pools.

Interviews

Applicants to be interviewed are selected primarily on the basis of academic performance. Extensive animal and veterinary-related experience can not be a substitute for academic performance. The structured interview is designed to assess the applicant's ability to cope with the veterinary program and to evaluate non-academic qualities. Referees' evaluations and overall documentation are also used to assess these non-academic qualities. Applicants attending out-of-province interviews will be charged a \$150 fee.

V. ANIMAL AND VETERINARY EXPERIENCE

Although animal and veterinary experience are not specific requirements, any application will probably be strengthened if the applicant can demonstrate good knowledge of the veterinary profession accompanied by first-hand experience. Applicants without significant animal and veterinary experience are rarely successful in being admitted.

Q. Why is experience with animals important?

Significant animal experience is important because it's assumed that most veterinarians will be working with animals during a significant part of their time. Experiences working with animals not only give applicants some idea as to how well they might enjoy working with animals, but it also gives some indication of their aptitude and compassion.

Q. What do you mean by "significant animal experience"?

"Significant animal experience" goes beyond having a pet. For example, it could include responsibility for the care and husbandry of a food-animal unit or an experimental animal colony.

Q. Why do you encourage experience in veterinary medicine?

The basis for emphasizing veterinary activity has a rationale similar to that for animal experience: the applicant learns about the day-to-day life as a veterinarian. The purpose of the experience is not to learn a basic core of veterinary or animal handling skills. For many, obtaining veterinary experience means spending quality time with a veterinarian, either as an observer or as an employee.

Q. Should I gain experience in one particular area of veterinary medicine?

There is no advantage in having veterinary experience in one given veterinary activity over that of another. For example, experience with a food animal practitioner is not necessarily better than experience in a small animal practice. The main thing is that the applicant's experiences be consistent with their career goals at the time of admission.

Of course, the WCVM admissions committee recognizes that applicants' career goals within the profession may change over the course of their education. During the admissions process, there are no "preferred" career choices: applicants with an interest in one type of practice are not given preferential treatment over those with interests in other areas.

Q. How much animal and veterinary experience should I have?

The amount of animal and veterinary experience will vary from one applicant to another, because some individuals are more perceptive than others and some experiences might be more useful than others. For example, a student might gain more experience as an employee at a veterinary clinic versus being an observer at a veterinary practice.

Gaining a range of insights is the prime reason for emphasizing experience. Some applicants will be able to obtain these insights after minimal exposure, while other applicants may need more time and exposure.

Q. Is it better to try and gain a variety of experiences?

A variety of experiences is also an asset, so long as experience in different areas is not so superficial as to be meaningless. Breadth of veterinary experience gives an applicant a better overall view of what the profession has to offer.

From an admissions point of view, the major benefit of animal and veterinary experience is to help ensure that applicants "know what they are getting into." However, the WCVM admissions committee may also consider an applicant's efforts to gain experience as an indication of his or her motivation to become a veterinarian.

VI. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applications must be submitted online before **December 1** – www.wcvm.com/apply_online.

In addition to submitting a completed application, applicants must arrange for the following:

- **Official transcripts of their university records:** All applicants must arrange to have registrars forward two official transcripts to the WCVM Admissions Office. One set of official transcripts should be sent at the time of application, and the second should be sent in as soon as final marks are available in the spring. However, those currently enrolled in university should delay the submission of their first transcript until final marks from the first semester are available.

University of Saskatchewan transcripts will be accessed directly (not required from registrar).

- **Nomination of two referees to support their WCVM application:** Space is provided on the application form to nominate referees to support the application. One referee must be a veterinarian and the other must be an individual who has an animal-related or agricultural background. Referees will be contacted directly and asked to complete the reference form online.

When the application and supporting documents have been received and evaluated, the WCVM Admissions Office will contact the applicants who will be interviewed to inform them of the time and place of the interview.

Final selections for admission are made after interviewing is completed. The process is usually completed **before July 1**.

VII. FEES AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Fees

- **Pre-veterinary studies at the U of S:** Please visit <http://students.usask.ca/current/paying/tuition.php> for more information about tuition, fees, payment of fees, cancellations and refunds, and course changes.
- **WCVM studies:** Please visit www.wcvm.com/undergrad_students/tuition_and_fee_schedule.php for a detailed breakdown of tuition, fees, and estimated expenses associated with the DVM program.

Special Expenditures

- Each student who is registered for the first year of veterinary medicine must purchase a laptop computer.
- Instruments will be required for anatomy dissection and clinical work. Departments that are involved in instructing these courses will advise students on preferred types or models.

Financial Assistance

The WCVM does not administer financial assistance programs. For information about financial assistance while attending WCVM, prospective students should contact the student financial aids branches of their respective provincial Departments of Education.

- Government of British Columbia: Visit Student Aid B.C.
<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/>
- Government of Alberta: Visit Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS)
<http://alis.alberta.ca/ec/fo/funding-post-sec.html>
- Government of Saskatchewan: Visit Student Loans
<http://www.aeei.gov.sk.ca/student-loans>
- Government of Manitoba: Visit Manitoba Student Aid
http://www.gov.mb.ca/educate/sfa/pages/sfaFrontDoor_en.html

College awards are available for qualified students who are enrolled at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine.

- Visit Scholarships and Bursaries for more information.
http://www.usask.ca/wcvm/undergrad_students/scholarships/index.php
- Visit Money Matters on the University of Saskatchewan site.
<http://explore.usask.ca/moneymatters/>

VIII. COUNSELLING

General counselling may be received by contacting the WCVM Admissions Office. For information regarding specific pre-veterinary courses at institutions other than the University of Saskatchewan, prospective applicants should contact the pre-veterinary advisers at their respective universities.

** To ensure that no applicant receives special consideration, the WCVM Admissions Office does not provide counselling for current applicants while the admissions process is in progress (from the time an application is filed until about July 1).*