

Pre-Veterinary Program



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Explore Pre-Veterinary Studies at UWM

UWM offers all of the prerequisite coursework necessary for competitive application to schools of veterinary medicine. There are only 30 veterinary schools in the United States – the application process is extremely competitive so it is important that students interested in this career path begin careful planning of their academic career during the freshman year. Requirements vary significantly from one veterinary school to another, making early planning in consultation with a pre-vet advisor all the more vital. Some veterinary schools will accept highly-qualified students who have completed only three years of college and the necessary science and math prerequisites.

Hands-on experience is essential for students interested in veterinary school whether through volunteer opportunities or paid work at a veterinary clinic, research lab, hospital, zoo, farm, or other animal care setting. Diversity of experience (e.g. large animal, small animal, exotics, etc.) is particularly valued. Applicants to veterinary school also should have demonstrated leadership skills through extracurricular activities during college, jobs, or other opportunities.

Majors for Pre-Vet Students

It is important to note that “pre-vet” is not a major. The science and math prerequisites needed to apply to veterinary school are extensive, and consequently many students do major in a natural science such as chemistry, biochemistry or biology. However, veterinary schools are interested in well-rounded students

regardless of major, as long as the necessary scientific preparation is completed.

Excellent communication skills are valued when working with animal owners or explaining research findings; students are encouraged to take public speaking and courses with an emphasis on writing and presentation.

Regardless of the major, students will be counseled on the required science courses needed for application to veterinary school, and those courses will be integrated into the student’s undergraduate program of studies.

Advising

Students who identify themselves as pre-vet will be assigned to a dedicated advisor. Our pre-vet advisor has many years of experience in this specific type of advising and understands the long-term planning required to become a competitive applicant for veterinary school.

Because many science courses have prerequisites and follow a very structured order, it is important that students plan their course schedule very carefully in consultation with their advisor. Getting off track as early as freshman year can delay graduation.

After Undergraduate Studies

To practice veterinary medicine, four years of veterinary school is required beyond undergraduate studies. Students pursuing board certification in a speciality can expect three to five years of additional education and training beyond the four years of veterinary school. Completion of veterinary school leads to the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree.



Quick Fact: Veterinary school applicants take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) during the junior year of college. In lieu of the GRE, some veterinary schools will accept the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), the test that medical school applicants take.

Career Outlook

Veterinarians provide preventative and diagnostic care for all types of animals; research treatments, medications, and diseases; and work in product development for corporations. They may work with domestic pets, livestock, zoo animals, working animals, and laboratory animals.

The field frequently works at the intersection of human and animal medicine. As human travel, animal trade, and worldwide food distribution channels all increase, new diseases and ways for diseases to spread have emerged. While many veterinarians pursue a traditional career working with domesticated pets, this exciting line of work, which can include jobs with government agencies such as Homeland Security or the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), is growing rapidly for veterinarians.

Veterinary specialties also are a booming field. Pet owners have become more willing to invest in advanced medical treatment leading to vet specialists in oncology, dermatology, ophthalmology, orthopedics, and more.

Employment of veterinarians is expected to grow 9 percent from 2014 to 2024, a little faster than the average for all occupations, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Job opportunities are particularly good in government and in farm animal care.

The median annual wage of veterinarians in 2015 was \$88,490. The average pay was slightly higher for veterinarians employed by the federal government in research and food safety-related jobs.

Veterinarians often work long hours, including nights and weekends. Emergencies may require an immediate response outside of normal working

hours. Twenty-five percent of veterinarians in 2010 reported that they regularly worked more than 50 hours per week. In addition, depending on the nature of the work, the job can be emotionally challenging at times.

UWM Advantages

Students in the pre-vet program at UWM have several unique opportunities to enhance their preparation for veterinary school outside of the classroom:

» **Milwaukee County Zoo Internship Program:** The limited number of openings in this program makes this internship particularly prestigious but also very competitive. The work is demanding, and there is a significant time commitment on the part of the student.

» **Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR):** The OUR program provides access to research experiences for undergraduates. Students work directly with faculty members and graduate students in their chosen field of study.

» **Center for Volunteerism and Student Leadership:** The Center helps match interested students with opportunities on campus or in the community. It also offers leadership development courses and training to provide students with the philosophical background and tangible skills to make a difference as active citizens during college and after graduation.

Suggested Pre-Veterinary Courses

8 credits of Biology (Bio Sci 150 and 152)
3 credits of Genetics (Bio Sci 325)
2 semesters of General Chemistry (Chem 102, 104)
3 credits of Organic Chemistry (Chem 341 or 343/345)
3 credits Biochemistry (Chem 501)
6 credits English (English 101, 102)
3 credits Statistics (Mth Stat 215 or other)
8 credits Physics (Physics 120, 122; it is strongly recommended that students take Physics 120 with the 121 lab and Physics 122 with the 123 lab.)

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