

PRE-VETERINARY MEDICINE

JMU Pre-Professional Health Programs



GENERAL INFORMATION

What do veterinarians do? Fifty years ago this question would have been easy to answer as the James Herriot books attest: maintain healthy and productive commercial food animals and livestock, secure the public health of humans and commercial animals, and treat injury and disease in livestock, and sport and companion animals. Today, however, the breadth of veterinary medicine encompasses much more. The majority of veterinarians (DVM) are still in private small, large, or mixed animal clinical practice, but county, state, and federal governments, universities, private industry, zoos, wildlife organizations, racetracks, and circuses are also some of the diverse settings in which modern veterinarians work.

CHOOSING A MAJOR

Most pre-veterinary students obtain a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) or Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree while completing the requirements for admission to veterinary school. **Veterinary schools do not require or prefer a particular undergraduate major.** Admissions committees welcome students whose intellectual curiosity leads them to a wide variety of disciplines. Medical schools recognize the importance of a strong foundation in the natural sciences – biology, chemistry, and physics – and mathematics. Applicants must complete course requirements and demonstrate proficiency in the sciences as evidenced by the science GPA and the scores on the required standardized test (GRE or MCAT).

PREREQUISITES

It is not possible to make course requirement generalizations that apply to all 28 U.S. veterinary schools. In planning your academic program, you should be aware of your individual needs and wishes, but view your preparation from three perspectives: (1) major requirements, (2) graduation requirements, and (3) veterinary school requirements. Virtually every veterinary school requires the equivalent of one year of college level work in each of the following subjects: general biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, general physics, English, and mathematics. You are encouraged to consult the *Veterinary Medical School Admission Requirements (VMSAR)*, and visit the website of the Association for American Veterinary Medical Colleges (www.aavmc.org). Most schools require a balance of social science, humanities, and writing classes. Some require special courses such as animal science or nutrition that may not be available at JMU. By planning to apply to a limited number of schools with similar requirements, a student can carefully plan a list of courses to meet each school's requirements.

General requirements for admission to veterinary medical school can be met at JMU with the following coursework:

BIO 114 Organisms (4 credit hours)	CHEM 131/132 General Chemistry I & II (8 credit hours; including laboratory (131L-132L))
BIO 214 Cell and Molecular Biology (4 credit hours)	CHEM 241/242 Organic Chemistry I & II (8 credit hours; including laboratory 242L)
BIO 224 Genetics and Development (4 credit hours)	CHEM 361 Biochemistry (3 credit hours)
BIO 370 Animal Physiology (4 credit hours)	PHYS 140/150 College Physics I & II (8 credit hours; including laboratory 140L-150L)
BIO 380 General Microbiology (4 credit hours)	
MATH 220 Elementary Statistics (3 credit hours)	
MATH 231/232 Calculus with Functions (8 credit hours)	

ACADEMIC RECORD

Your undergraduate transcript is the single most important indicator to admissions committees of your ability to handle the rigor of veterinary school coursework. Most schools list GPA, especially GPA in required and recent courses, as comprising from 30-50% of their evaluation criteria.

PREPARATION TIMELINE

At the time you plan your program, you may want to take additional courses that would prepare you for an alternative career or make you a more broadly educated professional. Most veterinary schools require a minimum of 60 credit hours for admission, but most applicants are strongly advised to plan on completing a baccalaureate degree before going to veterinary school. Course sequences are generally established with two objectives in mind: (1) completion of all courses that will help you prepare for the GRE/MCAT by spring semester of your third year (or the year you will be applying), and (2) completion of your degree within one year following your application to veterinary school. If you plan to attend vet school following graduation, application is usually made during the summer following the third year. You should consult the *VMSAR* for school specific information.

REQUIRED STANDARDIZED TESTS

Most veterinary medical colleges require one or both of the following standardized tests: the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). You should consult the *VMSAR* for school-specific requirements.

EXPERIENCE and EVALUATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

All schools of veterinary medicine require evaluations and many require letters from veterinarians regarding their association with the applicant in work-related experience. Successful applicants often have several years of experience working with veterinarians or in animal-related research and volunteer work. The working relationships established with professional veterinarians and other animal care workers usually provide the basis for the most effective letters of recommendation. Consult school-specific information to be sure of the individual program requirements.

JMU ADVISORY RESOURCES

The Institute for Innovation in Health and Human Services (IIHHS) and its staff of dedicated coordinators function to assist pre-professional students in their health career endeavors and help them realize their aspirations by providing the specific information, advice and assistance that is unique to the health professions and critical to their success.

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The JMU Pre-Veterinary Society is a student organization for students interested in veterinary medicine as a career. The JMU Virginia Epsilon Chapter of Alpha Epsilon Delta (Health Pre-professional Honor Society) also welcomes students to their meetings and encourages students to become members.

Note: Students planning professional health careers should discuss these goals with their pre-professional health program and undergraduate major advisors. It is important to begin this planning process when students' studies are initiated; it is imperative that students plan career options. The admissions requirement information presented above should be used only as a guide when planning students' pre-professional health curriculum. It is important that students do not interpret these guidelines as definitive statements regarding the admission requirements or policies of the individual schools and colleges of professional health. Each institution specifies its own requirements and procedures. It is essential that students become familiar with these requirements and make appropriate course selections in consultation with their pre-professional health and academic advisors. Absolute admission requirements are limited to provide necessary flexibility in the undergraduate program. The course requirements for most professional health programs are similar and usually specify minimum credit in biology, chemistry and physics. Schools of professional health recognize the desirability of students having a variety of interests and diverse backgrounds. Applicants are urged to obtain a broad cultural background in such fields as literature, social science, psychology and the fine arts.

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