“Veterinarians care for the health of animals and work to improve public health. They diagnose, treat, and research medical conditions and diseases of pets, livestock, and other animals. Veterinarians treat the injuries and illnesses of pets and other animals with a variety of medical equipment, including surgical tools and x-ray and ultrasound machines. They provide treatment for animals that is similar to the services a physician provides to treat humans.” (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016-17 Edition*, Veterinarians, on the Internet at [http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/veterinarians.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/veterinarians.htm) (visited October 03, 2016).

Prospective veterinarians must graduate with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M. or V.M.D.) degree from a four-year program at an accredited college of veterinary medicine and must obtain a license to practice. There are 28 colleges in 26 states that meet accreditation standards set by the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). The pre-requisites for admission vary. Although many of these veterinary medical colleges do not require a bachelor’s degree for entrance, most students admitted will have completed a bachelor’s degree. Applicants without a bachelor’s degree face a difficult task gaining admittance.

**Sample Pre-Veterinary Medicine Four-Year Academic Plan; Assumes Application after Year 3**

(NOTE: This is just a sample plan. Many students apply after Year 4 or even later!)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 1</strong></td>
<td>ENG 112 College Composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIO 201 Biology I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHM 205 College Chemistry I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;/Genl Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 2</strong></td>
<td>BIO 302 Genetics&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHM 305 Organic Chemistry I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistics course&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;/Genl Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 3</strong></td>
<td>BIO 315 Cell Biology&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PHS 205/235 Physics I&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHM 467 Biochemistry I&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHM 470 Biochemistry Laboratory&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ENG 300 Advanced Composition&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

May, June, July after year 3: Take Graduate Record Examination General Test (GRE)<sup>g</sup>

Summer after year 3: Apply for admission to veterinary medical school by **September 1**, or plan for activities for “gap year”.

**Year 4**

| Major/Minor | Major/Minor |
| Electives | Electives |
| Any remaining degree requirements | |

<sup>a</sup> Pre-Vet is a program, not a major. A student should choose to major in a field he/she is passionate about and in which he/she will excel. The health professions requirements are also the foundation courses for a major in Biology, Biochemistry, or Chemistry.

<sup>b</sup> Veterinary medical schools no longer require calculus, but many science majors do, and by including these courses you demonstrate your academic strength, improving your chances for admission at veterinary medical schools. Statistics is recommended or required by an increasing number of schools.
While veterinary medicine is a discipline based in the biological sciences, where animals are the “patients”, communication skills and an understanding of human motivation and behavior are also extremely important. Prospective vet students are encouraged to take courses in psychology, sociology, public speaking, and the humanities to better interact with animals’ owners, as well as with coworkers. These courses may also satisfy the General Education Program. You may also consider the Pre-Professional Health Minor.

Veterinary medical schools may not require advanced biology courses, but in the past Brockport students who have completed the equivalent of BIO 315 and BIO 302 have fared much better than those with only BIO 201 and BIO 202. Nearly all schools now require at least one semester of biochemistry. Post-organic biochemistry (CHM 467) is also required at some schools, but BIO 310 may be sufficient. And on its list of prerequisites, Cornell states, “Biochemistry, half year required; full year preferred”. Some veterinary medical schools do not require biochemistry laboratory, and/or microbiology. Check with the schools where you hope to gain admission.

Veterinary medical schools do not require calculus-based physics (PHS 235/240), and algebra-based physics (PHS 205/210) meets the requirement. However, taking calculus I and II and calculus-based physics demonstrates strong quantitative ability and the willingness to take the most rigorous courses. Also, some majors (chemistry, biochemistry, and physics) do require calculus-based physics.

Most veterinary medical schools require 6 credits of writing courses; another writing intensive course may satisfy this requirement, but courses with codes other than ENG may not be accepted.

The GRE general test is the test veterinary medical schools use in part as the basis for admission decisions. This test does not attempt to document your knowledge base, so the time when you take it is flexible.

Notes: Some veterinary medicine schools may have slightly different prerequisites--see the Association of American Veterinary Medical College descriptor page (aavmc.org/College-Specific-Requirements/College-Specific-Requirements_College-Specifications.aspx) website and web sites of individual schools for more information.

Veterinary medical school admission committees may not recognize AP, CLEP, community college credits or study abroad credits as fulfilling these science and mathematics admissions requirements. Check the websites of the schools you hope to enter.

Academic Guidelines: GPA and GRE

Competition for places in veterinary medical school is keen, and admissions committees are able to choose from among many talented students. For example, the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine has no minimum GPA or GRE score, but the class that entered in 2018 had a median GPA of 3.7 and median GRE scores of 159 Verbal (83rd %ile) and 158 Quantitative (70th %ile). The median GPA and GRE scores for students entering all veterinary medical schools is slightly lower. (Note that the median means that half the students in that class had GPA’s and GRE scores above, and half had scores below these, not that these are minimum scores! But students whose academic records fall significantly below the averages are less likely to be accepted to veterinary medical school.) Each school provides detailed information about admission to their program on the Association of American Veterinary Medical College descriptor page (aavmc.org/College-Specific-Requirements/College-Specific-Requirements_College-Specifications.aspx) website. Students are encouraged to research this information early in their academic career so that they make sure that they are taking the courses required for admission at their preferred schools. Also explore whether your target veterinary medical schools have restrictions on candidates who are not residents of the state where the school is located.

Non-Academic Guidelines

Although academic accomplishment is important, vet schools place a high priority on other aspects of your experiences, as documented in your application. (For example, for the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, 50% of the evaluation is based on GPA and GRE score, but the remaining 50% is on non-academic factors: http://aavmc.org/additional-pages/cornell.aspx.) In particular, most veterinary medical colleges place heavy consideration on a candidate’s veterinary and animal experience. Formal experience, such as work with veterinarians or scientists in clinics, agribusiness, research or some area of health science, is important, as is less formal experience such as working with animals on a farm, ranch, stable or animal shelter. For the 2018 entering class, the average number of hours of experience in both veterinary settings and animal settings was well over 1000 hours (http://www.aavmc.org/about-aavmc/public-data.aspx). Students must demonstrate ambition and an eagerness to work
with animals. The admissions committee is often looking for a student to have experience in multiple settings (both small animal and large animal, for example).

Additional important non-academic factors include good character, excellent interpersonal skills, a deep commitment to animal health care, evidence of leadership potential, and service to others. Here are some possibilities.

- Participate in organizations that serve others.
- Participate in leadership opportunities, such as serving as a peer mentor; becoming a leader in a Brockport student club; or through participation in Brockport’s Leadership Development Program.
- Consider exploring research opportunities with science faculty members. Credit for research can be arranged for BIO 424 or CHM 399, for example. Research experience as an undergraduate is a plus, but do it only if you are interested. Having this experience is not a deal maker—although many successful applicants have participated in a research project.

Diversity in Veterinary Medicine
Factors that contribute to diversity and that are considered in admissions committee evaluations include, but are not limited to, life experiences, work experience, professional goals, geographical background (rural, urban or suburban), cultural background and disadvantaged status. Weight will be given to qualified applicants who possess characteristics that are underrepresented in the profession and who would contribute to the overall diversity of the class.

The Application Process
In addition to satisfying pre-veterinary course requirements, applicants must submit test scores from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Several schools accept scores for either the GRE or the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT). All applicants must apply through the Veterinary Medical College Application Service (VMCAS). VMCAS (www.vmcas.org) is the central collection, processing, and distribution service for applications to the veterinary medical colleges. The system opens in June and has a hard deadline for application and letter submission in mid-September that must be met, in order to be considered for admission in the following year. It is to your advantage to submit your application as early as possible in the application cycle. Most of the participating VMCAS colleges also require a supplemental application, which is increasingly being embedded in the VMCAS system. Each school has its own policy on the handling of supplemental material; make sure that you have read each school’s descriptor page and visited each school’s website.

Letters of Evaluation/Recommendation
Persons chosen to submit letters of recommendation should be very familiar with the applicant and be able to speak to the applicant’s personal characteristics and attributes. Do not choose an evaluator solely on the basis of their job or position. Suggested evaluators are veterinarians, advisors, professors and employers, although others are also acceptable. Evaluations should support the applicant’s experiences and should confirm their commitment, maturity, work ethic, leadership and communication skills with examples. Information about the non-academic character of a student would be most useful as academic information is already in the application. Students should develop these contacts early in their college careers and keep their references informed about their academic progress and experiences.

Unlike the Medical and Dental Medicine schools, schools of Veterinary Medicine do not value the committee interview/committee letter process. Thus, letters of evaluation should be submitted directly to the VMCAS system.

Interviews
Many veterinary medical schools require personal, on-campus interviews, although some, such as Cornell, do not. The schools will contact selected candidates to arrange interviews. Interviews vary by school; applicants should check with the schools to which they have applied for the interview timeline. The interview is an important part of the selection process, and candidates should prepare well for the interview.

Because schools of Veterinary Medicine do not value the committee interview/committee letter process, you may not have had a chance for a “dry run”. The Pre-Professional Health Advisory committee is happy to do a mock interview and to coach you on your interview performance. Practice interviews are also available through the Career Services in Rakov Center.

Personal Conduct
The VMCAS application asks applicants whether they have been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, as well as whether they have been subject to administrative action while attending college. The applicant has the opportunity to
describe what was learned through the experience. According to the VMCAS instructions, “As with most professional schools, veterinary schools understand that many individuals learn from the past and emerge stronger as a result. If, however, you fail to provide accurate information when answering this question, schools to which you have applied may reject your application.” The lesson from this is that you must disclose everything: the consequence of not disclosing is greater than the consequence of disclosing! That said, students should make careful decisions throughout their undergraduate years, since incidents of drug and/or alcohol use or possession, academic dishonesty, and others, can have negative consequences for a veterinary medical school application. Your postings on the web (e.g. Facebook) may also be checked.

Websites
- Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges: www.aavmc.org
- American Veterinary Medical Association: www.avma.org
- Veterinary Medical College Application Service: www.vmcas.org
- Pre-Professional Health website: www.brockport.edu/premed/
- Pre-Professional Health group on Blackboard for current students. Contact Dr. Logan at mlogan@brockport.edu to be added to the group. Include your goal of veterinary medicine in your email, so that you are placed in the correct subgroup.

Co-Directors, Pre-Professional Health Program at Brockport: mlogan@brockport.edu and lcook@brockport.edu

9/2018 (MEL)