VETERINARY SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Applicants usually have grades of "B" or better, especially in the sciences. Most colleges give preference to candidates with animal or veterinary related experience. The number of qualified applicants who are admitted to veterinary colleges nationwide varies from year to year, but the average acceptance rate is approximately 43%.

ADMISSIONS AND APPLICATIONS

To be considered for admission to a college of veterinary medicine, a student must first complete undergraduate pre-veterinary medical coursework, which usually includes three to four years of college study, with specific course requirements. **Each college of veterinary medicine establishes its own pre-veterinary requirements.** Typical requirements include basic language and communication skills, social sciences, humanities, mathematics, chemistry, and the biological and physical sciences. For requirements for specific colleges, visit http://www.aavmc.org/vmcas/College_Requirements.htm

There are currently 28 veterinary medical schools in the United States (two in California), and 14 veterinary schools located in Canada, Australia, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Scotland, and the United Kingdom. Many schools may restrict acceptance to residents of their own state, or to citizens of their country. Be sure to check the Veterinary Medical School Admissions Requirements (VMSAR) catalog (http://www.aavmc.org/vmcas/VMSAR_publications.htm), regarding the admissions and residency requirements for all veterinary schools.

The Veterinary Medical Colleges Application Service (VMCAS) is a centralized application service, which provides for the collection, processing, verification and distribution of applicant data to the participating colleges for their use in the applicant selection process. In addition to taking the required exams, you will need to contact each veterinary medical school you want to attend to find out if they participate in VMCAS (http://www.aavmc.org/vmcas/documents/AAVMC_VMCASfactsheet2011_000.pdf).

For the current VMCAS application, visit http://www.aavmc.org/vmcas/vmcas.htm.

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Most veterinary medical colleges require one or more standardized tests: the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), Veterinary College Admission Test (VCAT), or Graduate Record Examinations (GRE). Check with your schools of interest to find out which standardized exam is required. A few Vet schools accept the MCAT, but most want the GRE.

The VCAT is usually offered in October and November (twice per year). Apply online at https://portal.vmcas.org/

Areas of Testing on the VCAT

- Fifty biology questions
- Fifty chemistry (inorganic and organic) questions
- Forty reading comprehension questions
- Forty quantitative questions
- Fifty verbal questions

Testing Fees and Important Dates for the VCAT

You will need to read the Candidate Information booklet carefully to determine the exact fees and dates as they may change without notice.

The testing fee for the VCAT is currently between $50 and $65. To avoid the late application fee, you will need to have your application in by the deadline published, usually five weeks prior to the examination date.

The VCAT is offered twice a year, usually in October and November. Students can apply online at **www.vmcas.org**.

(Retrieved August 11, 2010, from http://www.gradview.com/articles/tests/vcat.html)

PREPARATION COURSEWORK

*It is important to remember that different schools may require different coursework and strongly recommend other coursework. It is important to look at each school individually to find out the specific requirements.

- One year of **BIOLOGY** with lab
  - Taking the Life Sciences series 1-4 can satisfy this. This will prepare you for the Biology section of the VCAT. Many schools recommend extra upper division life science courses in addition to this basic requirement.
- Two years of **CHEMISTRY** (through Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry)
  - The 14 series (through 14D) or the 20/30 series (through 30C) and Biochemistry 153A & 153L can satisfy this requirement. As you will notice, the 20/30 series is actually the equivalent of two and a half years, this is due to the curriculum of each series taught at a different pace. Many schools include a separate requirement for or a strong recommendation to take biochemistry. The chemistry coursework will prepare you for the Chemisry section of the VCAT.
- One year of **PHYSICS**
  - Taking the Physics series 6ABC or 6AH, BH, CH or 1ABC, 4AL, 4BL can satisfy this. One year with labs is generally required which is included in any of the series. Trigonometry-based physics can also satisfy this requirement, but UCLA only offers calculus-based courses and these are required for the various science majors.
- One year of **MATH**
  - Taking Math 3ABC or Math 31AB, 32A can satisfy this. This is your preparation for calculus-based physics. Several schools require one year of college level math. For other schools, this requirement is strongly recommended, especially as preparation for physics. One year of math can include statistics (see below) and computer programming classes (PIC 10A, 10B, 10C). These courses will prepare you for the Quantitative Ability section of the VCAT.

- One quarter of **STATISTICS**
  - Stats 10, M11, M12, 13, Biostatistics or Biomath, Psychology 100A*. One quarter of statistics is required for some schools including UCLA, and strongly recommended for others. *Check with individual schools for acceptability of classes offered outside of the Statistics department. These courses will prepare you for the Quantitative Ability section of the VCAT.

The following course work is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED OR REQUIRED** for most schools:

- Other **Biology**
  - Physiology (Phy Sci 166), microbiology (MIMG 101/101L or some schools will also accept MIMG 102/102L), genetics (LS4 or MCD Bio CM156),

embryology (MCD Bio 138), and cellular biology (any upper division cell biology class will work for most schools) are all recommended. Check with individual department counselors for availability of upper division courses.

- One year of **ENGLISH**
  - One year of college level literature and composition. Writing I and Writing II courses, select general education literature courses, and any upper division English literature or English Composition courses will satisfy this requirement. Literature courses without a "W" designation offered in departments outside of English (Comparative Literature, Spanish, French, German, and all other language departments) will NOT count toward the year of English requirement. These courses will prepare you for the Verbal Ability and Reading Comprehension sections of the VCAT. A list of additional English courses that will satisfy this requirement can be found at http://career.ucla.edu/gradschool/health/englishreq.asp
- Knowledge and cultural competency of at least one **FOREIGN LANGUAGE**
  - This need not have been taken at the college level. If your future plans include working in California or the southwestern states, Spanish is highly valued and somewhat expected.
- **HUMANITIES** and **SOCIAL SCIENCE** courses
  - The non-science GPA is an important component to your overall academic record, and liberal arts education. Courses in the following can enhance your communication skills and overall understanding of the world: Anthropology, Communication Studies, Economics, any ethnic studies area (e.g. Women's Studies, LGBT Studies, Afro-American Studies, Chicana/Chicano Studies, Near Eastern Studies), Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, and Speech to name a few. It is important to look at individual school sites to find if they recommend any courses in particular.
- **COMPUTER SKILLS** are highly recommended
  - Many programs have incorporated computers and electronic media into their curriculum. It is not necessary to take computer courses if you feel you have sufficient knowledge. Several programs are strongly recommending that students own a computer. Other programs have indicated that they will soon have to purchase a computer as part of the requirements of their program.

UCLA IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR COURSEWORK BEING ACCEPTED BY RECIPIENT SCHOOLS.

***In addition to satisfying pre-veterinary course and testing requirements, veterinary medical colleges weigh heavily a candidate's veterinary and animal experience. Formal experience, such as work with veterinarians or scientists in clinics, agribusiness, research or some other area of health science is particularly advantageous. Less formal experience, such as working with animals on a farm or ranch or at a stable or animal shelter, is also helpful.

USEFUL WEBSITES

UCLA Career Center – Pre-Health Career Services Veterinary:
http://www.career.ucla.edu/Students/GradProfSchCounseling/PreHealthCareerServices/Veterinary.aspx
American Veterinary Medical Association: www.avma.org
AVMA Board of Veterinary Specialities: http://www.avma.org/education/abvs/default.asp
Student AVMA: http://www.avma.org/savma/default.asp
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges: http://www.aavmc.org/
NetVet Veterinary Resources and the Electronic Zoo: http://netvet.wustl.edu/
U.S. Food and Drug Administration – Animal and Veterinary:
http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/default.htm