

Veterinary Advising

1. Websites with essential information for students interested in veterinary medicine
 - a. AAVMC.org (American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges)
 - b. AVMA.org (American Veterinary Medical Association)
 - c. aaplytovetschool.org (Veterinary Med School Admission Requirements website)
 - d. <https://www.aavmc.org/pre-vet-students/> (pre-vet student information)
2. About veterinary careers (courtesy of, above)
 - a. Veterinarians (DVMs) are physicians who examine, diagnose and treat the medical needs of animals, and help to protect the public health. Whether for individual pets, farm animals, or stock raised for human consumption, they test and vaccinate against diseases, perform surgeries, dress wounds, prescribe medications, advise owners and caretakers, and euthanize animals if necessary.
 - b. Veterinarians can assume different career paths:
 - i. caring for pets and companion animals in a private practice or at an animal hospital;
 - ii. working with and caring for farm animals and animals raised for food, and monitoring any possible disease outbreaks;
 - iii. working within the food safety sphere (government and other entities), inspecting and testing livestock and food products for zoonotic diseases (transmitted from animals to humans) and other public health concerns.
 - c. The median pay per year in 2024 was \$125,000, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Vets can be self-employed, or work for an employer.
 - d. Of course, it goes without saying that a vet should enjoy working with animals, and in full acceptance of the fact that their patients will not communicate their health status as a human would. They should willingly provide compassionate care, and tolerate repetitive daily activities. Providing advice and patient education to the animal caretaker is also a main task.
 - e. Generally, veterinarians complete a 4-year undergraduate degree, and then obtain a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree at a four-year accredited college or school of veterinary medicine.
3. Academic preparation - can vary by program/institution, but generally:
 - a. Undergraduate coursework:
 - i. Biology (or Animal Science or Zoology) - 2 semesters with labs
 - ii. General Chemistry - 2 semesters with labs
 - iii. Organic Chemistry - 2 semesters with labs
 - iv. Physics - 2 semesters with labs
 - v. Biochemistry, Microbiology, Genetics, English Composition, Math or Stat, Social Science - typically recommended courses, 1 semester each
 - vi. For the most up-to-date information for each vet school, consult this [Pre-req Chart for VMCAS 2026](#)

- b. Standardized Admission Tests: Requirements for a standardized test vary by school and program. Many vet schools do not require them. Some may require the GRE (Graduate Record Exam), and a few may require the MCAT. You should always check with the school(s) you are interested in attending as to what their requirements are for exams and courses.
- c. Courses at TCNJ
 - i. The **Biology major curriculum** will meet the admissions requirements for most veterinary programs (Bio Inquiry, Cell, Ecology, Genetics and Bio Sem, plus Bio options and correlate courses)
 - ii. **Non-Bio majors** need the basic Bio Inquiry course with lab, plus a second Bio lab course (Cell), plus Micro, as well as the correlate Chemistry, Physics and/or Math courses
 - iii. *Please note that there are some vet schools that require students to have taken some courses which TCNJ does not offer: for example, Animal Nutrition. It's incumbent upon the student to be aware of any such requirements, and to plan accordingly.*
 - iv. Also be aware that both vet schools and (human) medical schools are changing their requirements for biochemistry courses. Some still accept the content presented at TCNJ in Orgo and BIO 211/Cell and Biochem. But other schools additionally require a separate Biochem course.
- 4. Experiential Preparation - can also vary by program, but generally:
 - a. Exposure to animal and veterinary work is considered critically important
 - b. Type of experiences, number of hours can vary
 - c. Varied, first-hand experience is highly recommended
 - d. Veterinary shadowing or internships are often recommended or required
- 5. Steps to Take in Preparation for Vet School
 - a. Do well in your courses in order to keep up that GPA. Aim for a competitive 3.5 or better, although some programs may accept a lower minimum GPA
 - b. Establish good relationships with professors. Get to know them well, and enable them to get to know you well, in case you need them to write a Letter of Recommendation for you at some point
 - c. Set up an appointment to meet with Dr. Nayak, Chair, MCAC (Med Careers Advisory Cmte, nayak@tcnj.edu); or Dr. Pecor, Vet Club advisor (pecor@tcnj.edu)
 - d. Gain experience: Shadow a vet, or work in a veterinarian's clinic so that you have experience with the daily activities occurring there
 - e. Demonstrate leadership skills and involvement/interest in community service/participation in pre-vet clubs or organizations (like TCNJ's!)
 - f. Request Letters of Recommendation (LORs)
 - i. Most vet school admissions require from 3 to 6 letters of rec
 - ii. Letters are usually required from science professor(s), mentors, and/or veterinary work supervisors.

- iii. Multiple individual letters are usually requested; rarely is a Committee Letter required or preferred, and thus the MCAC need not be involved with LORs
- iv. Seek letters from mentors and veterinary supervisors who know you well, and can speak to your qualifications and abilities to succeed

6. Application Process

- a. The centralized application service for veterinary programs is VMCAS (vmcas.org). Students should apply through that platform
- b. The annual application process begins in January with the opening of the application, and runs through to mid-September.
- c. There are currently 33 accredited schools of veterinary medicine
- d. There is an initial fee for application to one school, and a lesser fee for each application to additional schools.

7. NEW NJ Vet School - [Shreiber School](#) of Veterinary Medicine of Rowan University

- a. NJ's first vet school - first class began Fall 2025
- b. Tuition is less for in-state residents
- c. Great new option for NJ students interested in veterinary medicine!

8. Beyond Veterinary School

- a. You must successfully complete the four-year accredited program at one of the schools or colleges of optometry. Different schools may emphasize different methodologies or missions, but all will provide the necessary education leading to licensure and practice.
- b. Depending on your interests and career goals, there are opportunities for specialization residency programs, in veterinary oncology, cardiology, dentistry, sports medicine, and many other advanced areas of study
- c. In order to practice veterinary medicine, you must be licensed by the state in which you intend to practice. In New Jersey, you must apply to the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners
- d. Licensing requires successful completion of both written and clinical portions of a licensure examination (NAVLE), a Jersey-specific online application, supporting documents and fees, a criminal background check, and an orientation program.
- e. All states also require continuing education courses to be taken to meet renewal requirements for state licenses.

