Veterinary Medicine

Veterinary Medicine at Cambridge

Studying to become a vet is challenging wherever you choose to do it, but the Cambridge course offers the most diverse and rewarding veterinary education experience possible. Cambridge provides a uniquely supportive environment in which to learn, succeed and enjoy your university years. Our veterinary school has a long tradition of producing the finest veterinary graduates – based on a combination of world-beating science, and a focus on practical skills.

A major feature of the Cambridge course is its practical emphasis – progressively guiding you towards your clinical goals. From their first week, our students learn handling and management skills in all the major domestic species, and subsequently with amphibians, reptiles, birds and ‘exotic’ mammals. In the early years this is supplemented by integrated sessions in clinical examination, thoracic auscultation, abdominal palpation, orthopaedic evaluation, echocardiography and neurological examination. Our students have the use of superb facilities – bespoke consultation and examination facilities, imaging and surgical suites, a linear accelerator for radiotherapy, clinical pathology and post mortem labs, and our Clinical Skills Lab is available 24 hours a day for student use.

The key to being a skilled vet is combining practical skills with excellent grounding in the science underlying practice. Cambridge gives you the unique opportunity to study to become a vet at the world’s premier science university – also consistently ranked as one of the best-funded and most productive UK universities. You will be fully immersed in our environment of cutting-edge biomedicine, and experience shows that this makes our graduates better equipped to deal with the high pace of change in veterinary medicine, and poised for a wide variety of flexible and challenging careers.

Most important is the additional third year – when those of our vet students who do not already have a degree study a single subject to a high level to gain a full Cambridge BA science degree. Most select a biological discipline, but other options are available, such as Management Studies – ideal for a role leading a veterinary practice. The unique opportunities provided by a Cambridge veterinary education are invaluable in our graduates’ future career progression and flexibility. Indeed, external feedback confirms that our graduates are better equipped to deal with unexpected clinical situations and the high pace of change in veterinary medicine.

Ours is the smallest UK vet school, training around 70 each year, and this is central to our students’ experience. Right from the start, you will be in very small dissection, animal handling, and lab practical groups. You will also benefit from Cambridge’s unique ‘supervision’ small group teaching system – which gives you regular opportunities to consolidate your learning and follow up on your interests. Later in the course, the small class size become even more valuable. Our clinical rotation groups are tiny, which ensures a high caseload exposure, and thus more experience and confidence by the time you qualify.

For much more information about the Cambridge veterinary course, including the structure of the course, vet student life at Cambridge, the careers of our vet graduates, see this page http://www.vet.cam.ac.uk/study/vet on the Cambridge Veterinary School’s website.

Veterinary Medicine at Selwyn

The Director of Studies in Veterinary Medicine is Dr Stuart Eves (College Lecturer in Veterinary Medicine). Professor Michael Herbage, Dean of the Clinical School, acts as Clinical Adviser to clinical students. Our teaching Fellows are Dr Gavin Jarvis (Pharmacology), and Dr Paul Upton (Biochemistry).

Qualities we are looking for

At the interviews we are very much aware that we are choosing future veterinary surgeons and not just bright students. High academic ability is, however, essential. We need students who will take an active part in the community of the College and give to the College and their colleagues as much as they take out of it themselves.

Subject requirements

We seek applicants with strong scientific and clinical potential, as evidenced by performance in science/maths subjects at school, and in the University’s admissions assessments, as well as an ability to discuss any veterinary work experience they have seen. Indeed, if you are doing well in science/maths at school, then you may find that Cambridge is the veterinary course on which you have the highest chance of gaining a place.

Our typical conditional offer for Veterinary Medicine is A’AA at A-level, and for the IB, 40-42 points, with 776 at Higher Level.

We require that applicants should be taking Chemistry and at least two of Biology/Human Biology, Physics, Mathematics. Most applicants have at least three such maths/science subjects.

Work experience is not a requirement but some experience is useful to understand the profession and what is required of its members. We suggest that a total two weeks of experience shadowing a vet or vets in any clinical setting is sufficient. You will probably be asked about your work experience at interview, and the focus will be on how observant, questioning, interactive and thoughtful you have been about the veterinary practice you have seen.

Admissions Assessment

All candidates for Veterinary Medicine are asked to take a pre-interview written assessment for Natural Sciences, which will take place in schools and other assessment centres on 31 October 2018. You must be registered in advance (separately to your UCAS application) to take the assessment. The registration deadline is 15 October 2018. Your assessment centre must register you for the pre-interview assessment (you can't register yourself).
Interviews

Applicants will have two subject interviews. In one interview an assessment will be made of the candidate’s suitability to read Veterinary Medicine. Discussion may include such wide-ranging issues as work experience, moral issues, important veterinary developments in both scientific and healthcare fields, and biological basic principles. In the other more scientific interview, assessment will be made of the applicant’s ability to think clearly and develop a logical argument on a familiar topic from A-level course work. This interview will be concerned to probe candidates’ scientific understanding and their ability to reason.

Secondly, candidates have a general interview with the Admissions Tutor (Sciences). This is designed to learn about the candidate’s interests and activities outside Veterinary Medicine, his/her motivation in choosing to study Veterinary Medicine at Cambridge, and the candidate’s maturity of approach towards academic work.

Finding out more and Open Days

Details of the VETCAM course can be found at

http://www.vet.cam.ac.uk/study/vet/vetcam

The Veterinary School will be participating in the Cambridge Open Days on 5 and 6 July. See the insert in our prospectus about this and other open days at Selwyn. Full details are also available on our website.