

Healthcare Practitioners and Technicians

Veterinarians

Veterinarians diagnose and treat disease, infection, illness, and other health problems in animals. They provide information about feeding, behavior, and breeding habits to the owners of animals, give vaccines to and medicate animals, dress wounds, set fractures, and perform surgery. They commonly work in two settings:

- Private Practices, and
- Private Mixed and Food Animal Practices

In private practice veterinarians usually care for not only dogs and cats but also birds, reptiles, rabbits, ferrets, and any other animal that can be kept as a household pet. In private mixed and food animal practice veterinarians care for pigs, goats, cattle, sheep, wild and farm animals.

Veterinarians sometimes collaborate with physicians and contribute to human health by conducting research on animals to determine ways in which various human health problems can be prevented and treated. They occasionally contribute by working with the government in food safety and inspections.

Veterinarians who work in private practice work long hours in a noisy environment and spend much of their day on their feet. Those who work in private mixed and food animal practices often drive out to the farms that the animals are located on. They practice there in all kinds of weather and may have to perform surgery and other medical treatments on animals in unsanitary conditions. Hours vary depending on the size of the practice, the number of clients needing service and the likelihood of emergencies while on-call. Veterinarians working with physicians spend less time with animals and work in clean, well lit areas.

Education/Training

How to Obtain:

To become a veterinarian a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M. or V.M.D.) must be obtained from a program accredited by the college of veterinary medicine. Requirements for entry into a veterinary program include:

- 45-90 semester hours completed at the undergraduate level,
- Completion of all pre-requisite course work, which includes coursework in biology, chemistry, and physics, and
- Test scores from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE),

- Veterinary College Admissions Test (VCAT), or Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT).

Most veterinary schools do not require a bachelor's degree for entrance into their program but most applicants possess one.

Once a D.V.M. has been obtained, one can begin practicing veterinary medicine. A 1-year internship under an already established veterinarian, however, is recommended because it allows for better paying opportunities later. If a veterinarian wants to be board certified (i.e. obtain certification in a specialty) a 3-4 year in a residency program of their choice is required. There are currently 39 AVMA-recognized specialties. Some of these specialties include orthopedic surgery, oncology, ophthalmology, physical therapy and rehabilitation, pathology, internal medicine, dentistry, and anesthesiology.

Licensure is required by all 50 states and the District of Columbia in order to practice veterinary medicine. Requirements for licensure are state specific, but all states require a D.V.M. and a passing grade on the North American Veterinary Licensing Exam. New York State requires:

- A D.V.M.
- Passing scores on the North American Veterinary Licensing Exam
- Be at least 21-years-old
- Good Moral Character
- Be a citizen or legal resident of the United States

More Information Licensing and Certification:

- American Veterinary Medical Association: <http://www.avma.org/>
- Veterinary College Admissions Test (VCAT): <http://www.gradview.com/articles/tests/vcat.html>
- Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges: <http://www.aavmc.org/>
- National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners: <http://www.nbvme.org/>
- New York State Licensure: <http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/vetmed/vetlic.htm>

Average Costs:

Tuition and fees for an accredited Veterinary School cost an average of \$17,609* per year. Completion time is generally 4 years

Licensure occurs at the state level and costs vary by state. The fee for licensure in New York State is \$372. North American Veterinary Licensing Exam (NAVLE): \$525, plus the cost of any exam study aids.

* Note: This figure does not include federal, state, or university financial aid resources such as grants, fellowships, scholarships or work study. It also does not include vocational rehabilitation or other state resources available specifically to people with disabilities.