Pre-Veterinary Medicine

What does it mean to be Pre-Veterinary?

Students who self-identify as “Pre-Veterinary” may consult with Pre-Healthcare Advising about matters pertaining to their academic studies, extracurricular activities, and applications. Western does not offer a “Pre-Veterinary” major and no specific formula exists for getting into veterinary schools. Applicants are evaluated across multiple areas in a process known as holistic review. All aspects are important: GPA (both cumulative and science), admission test scores (commonly GRE or MCAT), volunteer experience within the field, letters of recommendation, extracurricular and community activities, interview, and personal characteristics as well as legal and social records.

Pre-Veterinary Education

Western offers undergraduate coursework addressing most DVM prerequisites but programs vary in their admissions requirements. In general, applicants must have strong academic backgrounds in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics and English. Research schools of your choice to confirm all required courses. Prerequisites are summarized at [http://www.aavmc.org/data/files/vmcas/prereqchart.pdf](http://www.aavmc.org/data/files/vmcas/prereqchart.pdf).

Veterinary schools do not recruit students from one specific major or discipline; a liberal arts education is emphasized. Examples of majors popular among students are Biology, Biochemistry, Environmental Science, Kinesiology, Psychology, and Business.

Program Checkpoints (Note: each person’s path will look different; use this as a guide ONLY)

**Freshman year:**
- Take Math Placement Test; begin appropriate math sequence to complete Calculus: MATH 124, 125.
- Begin General Chemistry series as soon as possible: CHEM 121, 122, 123 (or Honors: 125, 126, 225).
- After completing CHEM 121 or 125, begin General Biology series: BIOL 204, 205, 206.
- Work on GUR courses, including ENG 101 and COMM 101 or 224.
- Begin prerequisite and co-requisite courses for possible major.
- Meet with Pre-Healthcare Advisors (OM 280) to develop a plan of study.

**Sophomore year:**
- Research veterinary schools and graduate programs.
- Begin Physics series: PHYS 114, 115, 116 or 161, 162, 163.
- Begin Microbiology sophomore or junior year: BIOL 345, 346 (or BIOL 245).
- Take Statistics: MATH 240 or a major equivalent if suitable (or do junior year).
- Take a second English composition course: ENG 201 or 202.
- Take Genetics sophomore or junior year: BIOL 321, 322.
- Declare or apply for major.
- Begin to shadow Veterinarians sophomore and/or junior year.

**Junior year:**
- Begin Biochemistry: CHEM 471, 472.
- Depending upon schools, take Anatomy & Physiology: BIOL 348, 349 (or equivalent elsewhere).
- Take a third English composition course: Select from ENG 201, 202, 301 and 302.
- Depending upon schools, take additional Communication course: COMM 318 or 327.
- Depending upon schools, take Nutrition: HLED 350 (or equivalent elsewhere).
- Take appropriate admission test (GRE or MCAT) by the summer after junior year.
- Begin primary application to the Veterinary Medical College Application Service (VMCAS).
- Draft personal statement.
- Request letters of recommendation from professors and professionals.

**Senior year:**
- Prepare for possible veterinary school interview with a mock interview (or do spring of junior year).
- Complete major, GUR, WP, and other graduation requirements.
- Two quarters before graduation, meet with declared major advisor and apply for graduation.

**Note:** Advanced Placement may not be recognized by professional schools as college-earned credit. Check with each school. [It is better to view such earned credits as qualifying to enroll in upper division courses rather than as “testing out” of prerequisites.]

**GRE/MCAT:** Most veterinary schools require the Graduate Record Exam (GRE); some accept the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). Applicants should test no later than August of the year preceding anticipated admission.

This document has been created for advising purposes only. Please contact Advising for Pre-Healthcare Professions for updates and changes.
Core Courses

Course requirements for veterinary schools vary but, regardless of your major, certain prerequisites expected by most schools include:

- General Chemistry series with labs: CHEM 121¹, 122, 123 [or Honors: CHEM 125¹, 126, 225]
- General Biology series w/labs: BIOL 204², 205, 206
- Organic Chemistry series w/labs: CHEM 351, 352, 353; labs: 354 and 355 or 356
- At least two quarters of Biochemistry: CHEM 471, 472
- Physics series w/labs: PHYS 114³, 115, 116 or PHYS 161⁴, 162, 163
- Additional courses under advisement:
  - Genetics: BIOL 321, 322 [Required by WSU]
  - Microbiology: BIOL 345, 346 [or BIOL 245]
  - Anatomy & Physiology: BIOL 348, 349
  - Nutrition: HLED 350
  - Interpersonal Communication: COMM 318 or 327
- Two quarters Calculus: MATH 124, 125
- Statistics: MATH 240 or a major equivalent
- One year of English is highly recommended; select from:
  ENG 101, 201, 202, 301, or 302

¹ Completion of MATH 114 or Math Placement into MATH 115 or higher is a prerequisite for CHEM 121 or CHEM 125
² CHEM 121 or CHEM 125 is a prerequisite for BIOL 204
³ MATH 115 is a prerequisite for PHYS 114
⁴ MATH 124 is a co-requisite for PHYS 161

NOTE: It is imperative that students begin general chemistry as early in their program as possible.

Courses listed below apply to WWU GUR as well as some prerequisites for veterinary schools.

ACOM: ENG 101
BCOM: COMM 101, 224
  ENG 202
QSR: MATH 124, 240
LSCI: BIOL 204, 205, 206
  CHEM 121, 122, 123 [or Honors: CHEM 125, 126, 225]
  PHYS 115, 116, 161, 162, 163
SCI: PHYS 114

DECLARING A MAJOR: Always check with the department of your intended major for clarification about how to declare. Many programs (such as Behavioral Neuroscience, Biology, Chemistry, Kinesiology, and others) do not allow students to declare a major until certain prerequisites have been met, such as having taken specific courses and/or maintaining a specific GPA. Many departments allow you to sign up as a “pre-major” which will keep you updated on major requirements as well as events happening within the department.

ACCESS TO CLASSES: Due to high student demand for many upper-division courses, especially in the sciences, many departments give enrollment priority to students who are declared in the major over those seeking enrollment for elective credit or as a prerequisite for professional school. Registration details for heavily impacted courses and programs change frequently and are posted at department websites.

REPEATING COURSES: In general, this is not viewed favorably by professional schools but an isolated case may be acceptable. It will likely also require an explanation on your application, so discuss your options first with a Pre-healthcare Advisor. Both dropping and repeating courses can have impact on eligibility for financial aid, scholarships, and athletic participation. Speak to an advisor in each area that applies to you when making your decision.

Additional Resources:

Join the advisors' Pre-veterinary Listserv, e-mail Renee.Murray@wwu.edu with SUBJECT: pre-veterinary listserv, Last name, First name, student number, and major and concentration (if declared).

WWU Pre-Health Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/wwuprehealth/
Pre-Veterinary Club: Join this and other WWU Associated Students clubs at http://as.wwu.edu/clubs/.

Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC): www.aavmc.org. This site includes a link to the Veterinary Medical Centralized Application Service (VMCAS) and to a monthly newsletter service: http://aavmc.org/vses.aspx.

Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine http://dvm.vetmed.wsu.edu/prospective-students

Standardized Tests

- Graduate Record Exam (GRE) www.ets.org/gre
- Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat

Explore Health Careers: www.explorehealthcareers.org

This document has been created for advising purposes only. Please contact Advising for Pre-Healthcare Professions for updates and changes.