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 through a holistic review process. 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 background checks (including legal, conduct, 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. These are summarized at http://www.aavmc.org/data/files/vmcas/prereqchart.pdf.

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

Core Courses

Regardless of your major, certain prerequisite courses expected by most schools include:

CHEMISTRY (a sequence of eight courses)

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

- General Chemistry series (includes labs): CHEM 161, 162, 163 [or Honors equivalent]
- Organic Chemistry lecture series: CHEM 351, 352, 353;
  - with two accompanying labs: 354 and either 355 or 356 (depending upon major)
- Biochemistry: CHEM 471, 472

BIOLOGY

- General Biology series (includes labs): BIOL 204, 205, 206
- Microbiology (with lab): BIOL 345, 346 [varies by school]
- Genetics (with lab): BIOL 321, 322
- Anatomy & Physiology: BIOL 348, 349 [varies by school]

PHYSICS

- Physics series (includes labs): PHYS 114, 115, 116 [or PHYS 161, 162, 163 series]

MATHEMATICS

- Calculus: MATH 124, 125 [varies by school]
- Statistics: MATH 240 [or major equivalent; i.e. BIOL 340 for Biology majors]

OTHER (NON-SCIENCE)

- One or more introductory Social Science GUR course: [i.e. PSY 101]
- Nutrition: HLED 350 [varies by school]
- English 101, plus additional composition course (ENG 201, 202, 301, 302) [varies by school]
- Communication: COMM 101, plus one of COMM 224, 318, 327

This document is for preliminary advising purposes only.

We encourage you to meet with a Pre-Healthcare advisor on a regular basis to determine a plan that is best for you.

Keep informed

- WWU students may join the Advisor’s Pre-veterinary Listserv. To join, e-mail Anna.Tognazzini@wwu.edu with the following SUBJECT information: Pre-veterinary listserv, Last name, First name, WWU student number, and major (if declared).
- Pre-Vet Club: Join this and other WWU Associated Students clubs at www.as.wwu.edu/clubs/.
Notes

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP): Check with targeted schools whether they recognize AP as college-earned credit. Not all do. It is better to view any earned credits as qualifying to enroll in upper-division courses rather than as “testing out” of prerequisites.

DECLARING A MAJOR: Departments vary in how to declare majors. Behavioral Neuroscience, Biology, Chemistry, and others allow students to declare as a “pre-major” while taking their specified prerequisites. Some majors require a specific GPA in certain courses. Declare early, even as a “pre-major”, to help shorten your time to degree. While working on any pre-major content, explore many disciplines to keep your options open.

ACCESS TO CLASSES: High demand exists for upper-division courses, especially in the sciences. Many departments grant enrollment priority to students declared in specific majors over those seeking enrollment for professional school purposes. Registration access procedures for courses can change, and departments generally provide updates via their websites and email notifications, or by checking with the department’s program coordinator.

REPEATING/DROPPING COURSES: When you repeat a course, only your most recent grade is used when Western calculates your GPA. However, the class still shows up on your transcript. Although some students think that repeating a course will help them get into professional schools, this is almost always untrue. Medical schools will take into account ALL college-level coursework when performing their own calculation of your GPA, and this will include any courses you have repeated at Western. Still, in some circumstances it may be appropriate to repeat a course so talk to an advisor to be sure. Also, dropping a course can have an impact on eligibility for financial aid, scholarships, and athletic participation so consider your options carefully and speak with an advisor before making a decision.

SHADOWING: Students should gain shadowing experience with veterinarians, ideally in multiple types of settings (hours vary, 250-500 typical). Discuss your shadowing options with Pre-healthcare advisors.

CLINICAL HOURS: Animal experience is essential, and can include owning/walking/volunteering with animals.

GRE: The Graduate Record Examination is offered monthly at the WWU Testing Center. It assesses your verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and analytical writing skills. Information is available at www.ets.org/gre.

Additional Resources

WWU Allied Health Advising: www.wwu.edu/alliedhealth
WWU Pre-health Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/wwuprehealth/
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC): www.aavmc.org
Explore Health Careers: www.explorehealthcareers.org

Pre-Healthcare Advising Events

Typical programming events offered by Pre-Healthcare Advising include (but are not limited to):

Fall:
Orientation Session: Getting you from WWU to professional school (PET DOC)
Health Professional & Grad School Info Fair, October 18 in MAC gym
Winter Registration Walk-in Advising: Nov 14 and Nov 15, 12-2 in BI 415

Winter:
Kaplan-sponsored practice MCAT in late January/February
Spring Registration Walk-in Advising: Feb 27 and 28, 12-2 in BI 415

Spring:
The Healthcare Professional School Application: A session overviewing the process
Fall Registration Walk-in Advising: May 15 and 16, 12-2 in BI 415

Advising for Pre Healthcare Professions/Career Services Center
Old Main 280 360.650.4240 Careers@wwu.edu

This document is for preliminary advising purposes only. Contact Advising for Pre-Healthcare Professions for updates and changes.