



Academic Requirements Statement - 2009

The Faculty of Veterinary Science welcomes applications from students with disabilities. It is University and Faculty policy to take reasonable steps to make reasonable adjustments so as to enable the student's participation in the Faculty's programs, especially the Bachelor of Veterinary Science (BVSc) or Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM)

The veterinary degree is a broad degree attesting to the acquisition of general knowledge in all fields of veterinary science and the basic skills requisite for the practice of veterinary medicine. All students of veterinary science must possess intellectual, ethical, physical and emotional capabilities required to participate in the full curriculum and to achieve the levels of competence required by the faculty.

A candidate for the BVSc or DVM degree must have abilities and skills which include the following: observation; communication; motor skills; conceptual, integrative, and quantitative skills; and behavioural and social skills. Adjustments can be provided to minimise the impact of a disability, however students need to be able to participate in the program in an independent manner and with regard to their safety and the safety of others.

I. Observation: The student must be able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences, including but not limited to, physiologic and pharmacologic demonstrations in animals, and microscopic studies of micro-organisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states.

In particular a candidate must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and somatic sensation.

II. Communication: A candidate should be able to communicate with the client, and to observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity, and posture. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with clients. Communication includes not only speech but also reading and writing. A candidate must therefore be able to prepare clear case reports and maintain patient records. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with clients, lay public, responsible authorities and other members of the profession using language in a form appropriate to the audience and context. A candidate should be able to work effectively as a member of a team in the delivery of veterinary services to clients and must be able to obtain an accurate and relevant history of the animal or animal group.

III. Motor skills: Candidates should have sufficient motor and sensory function (vision, hearing, smell and touch) to elicit information from large and small animal patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion and other diagnostic tests. Candidates must be able to perform a thorough clinical examination and must be able to handle and restrain animals safely. The course requires that candidates are able to perform basic laboratory tests (urinalysis, haematology, etc.), carry out diagnostic procedures (fine needle aspiration, thoracocentesis), and read ECGs and radiographs. A candidate must have the ability to execute motor movements required to provide general care, restraint and

emergency treatment to patients. A candidate must be able to attend and administer first aid to all species (this may include control of haemorrhage, resuscitation procedures, immobilising limbs and cleaning wounds). Examples of treatment reasonably required of veterinarians are the administration of intravenous, intramuscular, subcutaneous and oral medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, basic surgical procedures, and the performance of obstetrical manoeuvres. A candidate must also be able to collect samples for diagnosis (such as blood, urine), preserve and transport the samples appropriately and interpret the results. Candidates must be able to use technical equipment (such as anaesthetic and x-ray machines) safely. This includes safety to the patient and to personnel assisting the candidate.

Inherent with working with animals is the risk of injury to those handling and treating them. It is therefore important that a candidate is able to recognise the requirement for sedation or general anaesthesia and is able to carry out sedation and general anaesthesia safely and efficiently. A candidate must also be able to recognize pain and be able to assess pain control. There will be circumstances where the only option that can be advised is euthanasia and candidates should not only be able to recognise when euthanasia is indicated but also be able to perform the euthanasia humanely and with compassion to the owner.

IV. Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities: These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem solving, the critical skill demanded of veterinarians, requires all of these intellectual abilities. In particular, candidates must have an understanding of science and a capacity to evaluate evidence, interpret results and plan treatment strategies (often under pressure). Candidates must be aware of legislation to ensure that they correctly prescribe and dispense medications. In addition, the candidate should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures.

V. Behavioral and Social Attributes: A candidate must possess the emotional health required for full utilisation of his/her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis, and care and management of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with the client and their professional colleagues. All candidates need to be aware of their personal limitations and be aware of when and where to seek professional advice or supervision. Veterinary education is an ongoing process during all candidates' professional careers and all candidates will therefore require commitment to continuing education. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress and isolation. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that are assessed during the admissions and education processes.

Students who feel their disability will prevent them from meeting the above academic requirements are encouraged to contact the Disability Liaison Unit.

Notes

- With acknowledgment to Medicine and Physiotherapy for the provision of the structure and philosophy and to the RCVS essential day one criteria
- Throughout, the reference to the patient is to the animal and to the client as the animal owner or carer.