

# PRE-VETERINARY

## Pathway Information

There is no “best” major for pre-veterinary students. Biology is the most common major, as it provides a strong foundation and more of the required course work applies toward the major. However, other majors can be acceptable. Pursue a major that helps you excel.

Consult a pre-veterinary advisor about your individual plan, and to check with your veterinary school for their requirements. While at GSW, be sure to build credentials in scholarship, leadership, community service, and clinical experience, as well as shadowing in the various settings of the profession.

### REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED COURSES

#### Pre-Veterinary Requirements:

- Principles of Biology I & II  
BIOL 2107K & 2108K (8 hrs)
- Principles of Chemistry I & II  
CHEM 1211/L & 1212/L (8 hrs)
- Organic Chemistry I & II  
CHEM 3301/L & 3302/L (8 hrs)
- Intro to Physics I & II  
PHYS 1111/L & 1112/L (8 hrs)
- Composition I & II  
ENGL 1101 & 1102 (6 hrs)
- Biochemistry  
CHEM 4410 (3 hrs)
- Elementary Statistics  
MATH 1401 (3 hrs)

Note: All lab courses should be taken face-to-face.

#### Recommended Pre-Veterinary Courses:

- Animal Physiology  
BIOL 4400 (4 hrs)
- Human Anatomy and Physiology  
BIOL 2251K and 2252K (8 hrs)
- Animal Maintenance and Zoo Care  
BIOL 4750 (3 hrs)
- Nutrition  
BIOL 4108 (3 hrs)
- Genetics  
BIOL 4200 (3 hrs)
- Foundations in Microbiology  
BIOL 2260K (4 hrs)

Students do not have to take all these courses, but exposure to these subjects will prepare students to attend veterinary school.

### TIMELINE

Many of the required courses are sequence courses that have prerequisites and are not offered every semester. For example, you cannot take Organic Chemistry without successfully completing both Principles of Chemistry courses and their associated labs. You can't take Principles of Chemistry I without the pre-requisite/co-requisite Mathematics course. Organic Chemistry I is only offered in Fall and the Organic Chemistry II only in Spring.

### GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATION (GRE) AND GPA EXPECTATIONS

The GRE, or Graduate Record Examination, is required by most veterinary schools. Some also require the Biology GRE. Each school's requirements will differ, so you can double check each school's testing requirements on the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges website, [aavmc.org](http://aavmc.org). The minimum GRE score for most veterinary schools is about 308 combined and about 4.0 writing (scores above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile).

You should plan to take at least 5-6 full length practice exams (~\$40 each) since this is the best way to prepare and to gauge your progress. Commercial prep courses (~\$2000) can provide structure for studying, but you can succeed on the MCAT without them.

The ideal veterinary school applicant will have a 3.6 cumulative GPA and a science GPA or 3.5.

### SHADOWING, VOLUNTEERING AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

You are expected to spend time shadowing or volunteering at an animal clinic. This experience demonstrates that you understand the profession, but there is no specific hour requirement. While it is helpful to shadow a specialty that you are interested in, any shadowing or animal experience is better than none. You should try to get a variety of experiences with animal work (animal care, zoo maintenance, humane society, etc.) in order to understand the breadth of the veterinary profession. Ideally, you should build a good relationship with at least one veterinarian so that you may request a letter of evaluation.

Volunteering in the community is another important part of the application. Being involved in service shows commitment to your community, provides an opportunity to learn about social issues less familiar to you. Veterinary schools want to see depth of commitment and substantial involvement and leadership in the community. Volunteering can be done in a variety of settings.

There are many benefits to getting involved in undergraduate research, and the successful applicants to veterinary school do have research experience. You are highly encouraged to pursue research opportunities. You should plan to dedicate at least a year to a specific project or lab, and you must be able to discuss your research at various levels (“elevator speech” and in-depth). For Biology majors the required capstone research project fulfills is expectation.

### LETTERS OF EVALUATION

Most veterinary schools require 2 to 3 letters of recommendation. It's good to establish connections with your professors or anyone you worked with in internships or extracurriculars related to the field. Many veterinary schools require very specific letter of recommendation. These include recommendation letters from:

- Faculty member who taught a student a course in a major or who taught a science course
- Pre-veterinary committee representative
- Veterinarian or research scientist with whom a student have worked with

At GSW, it is easy to build a close relationship with faculty due to the small class sizes. You have the opportunity to work one-on-one with faculty both inside and outside of the classroom. A letter of recommendation has a greater value if it is from faculty that can address more than your grades in a course. You must be mindful of this and do your best to foster a strong relationship with faculty.

A letter from veterinarian is strongly encouraged as is a letter from a non-science faculty member. For additional letters, ask someone who will write the most compelling letter (volunteer coordinator, faculty, employer, etc.).