

Wow! That's a lot of money.

Veterinarians must have very high salaries to pay back those loans.

Most new graduate veterinarians in full-time positions earned between \$57,000 and \$89,000 in 2016.

Over the last decade increases in the cost of education have far outpaced starting salaries for veterinarians. Veterinary graduates should expect to be repaying their student loans over a 10 to 25 year period depending on their repayment plan, income, and family situation. Borrowing from private lenders is not advised for those needing to finance the majority of their cost of attendance.

Although the options and rules can seem complex, federal student loans offer income-driven repayment (IDR) options enabling veterinary graduates to live a reasonable lifestyle while meeting their repayment obligations. These programs are evolving and do not apply to private loans. Information about IDR options (IBR, PAYE, REPAYE), other government student loan and forgiveness (PSLF) options can be found at studentaid.ed.gov and VINFoundation.org.

Is becoming a veterinarian worth it?

For many generations of veterinarians, the positives of the profession far outweighed the negatives. The past two decades have seen significant increases in educational costs without a comparable increase in salaries. The hours can be long, the physical effort grueling, and the emotional impact of treating ill and injured animals daily can be difficult. While salaries vary widely, veterinarians rarely become wealthy.

As long as there are animals, there will be a need for veterinarians to care for them. The emotional and intellectual rewards of veterinary medicine are rich and diverse. The career of a veterinarian offers interest, challenge, excitement, and unparalleled opportunities to celebrate the human-animal bond and to contribute to the welfare of humans and animals. For more information on becoming a veterinarian visit IWantToBeAVeterinarian.org. If you're ready or almost ready to apply to veterinary school, visit VetSchoolBound.org

For further information regarding the economics of attending veterinary school and tools to help you decide if veterinary medicine is right for you, visit IWantToBeAVeterinarian.org

I want to be a
VETERINARIAN

Because you need more than a love of animals.
IWantToBeAVeterinarian.org



Phoenix House
413 F Street, Davis, CA 95616
(888) 616-6506 | info@vinfoundation.org
VINFoundation.org

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Frequently Asked Questions
About Becoming a Veterinarian



What do veterinarians do?

Most veterinarians in the U.S. work in private practice. While veterinarians are licensed to care for a wide variety of animals (dogs, cats, horses, farm animals, exotics, etc.), most limit their practice to certain types of animals or medical specialties. Currently, the majority of veterinarians in the U.S. provide medical care for pets such as dogs and cats.

Veterinarians also work in teaching, research, private industry, and government, expanding scientific knowledge and finding solutions to human and animal health problems. Most organizations housing or using animals utilize veterinary services, including: zoos, aquatic animal parks, meat production and inspection, the space program, wildlife management, racetracks, circuses, animal shelters, the military, and more.

Is veterinary medicine the right choice for me?

Working and talking with veterinarians, veterinary students, and veterinary technicians and staff is the best way to get a realistic picture of the profession. Veterinary medicine is a big commitment, both academically and personally. A prospective veterinarian should be a good student with strong science, math and communication skills.

A veterinarian must have compassion for both animals and people, enjoy working with people, and possess strong communication skills because every animal comes with a human. Veterinarians must be willing to advise clients on decisions that will have significant financial and emotional impact.

Since I love animals, isn't veterinary medicine a perfect career for me?

While veterinary medicine can be richly rewarding, a veterinarian's day is not filled solely with adorable animals. It is important to develop a realistic picture of the profession before choosing this career. Failure to understand the demands and challenges of the profession can lead to dissatisfaction. Veterinarians must handle failure, loss, grieving and angry clients, and sometimes animals that have been neglected.

Veterinary education is equivalent to that of a physician in time, cost, and intensity. However, veterinary salaries are typically much lower than those seen in other medical professions.

A love of animals is not enough to make veterinary medicine a good career choice.

How long do I have to go to veterinary school?

In the United States, veterinary school is a four-year degree program following undergraduate Bachelor's degree level education (a total of 7 to 9 years: 3 to 5 years undergraduate plus 4 years of veterinary school).

After graduating from veterinary school, many new graduates choose an additional year of general or specialty clinical training as interns. Some pursue 2 to 5 years of additional residency training leading to board certification and practice within a wide variety of medical or surgical specialties, such as neurology, cardiology, dermatology, orthopedic surgery, equine medicine, zoo medicine, etc.

How do I prepare for veterinary school? What experience do I need?

Each veterinary school's website lists the school's application process and pre-requisites. In general you will need to take a number of classes including: biology, math, English, chemistry, and physics to apply. Veterinary schools will consider any undergraduate that has taken the courses required by that school. Most schools require you also take the GRE, get letters of recommendation, and submit a personal statement. Although there are generally not specific experience requirements, prospective veterinary students should acquire animal experience by working for or shadowing a veterinarian in private practice, in research, at a zoo, on a farm, or in an animal shelter.

How much does it cost to attend veterinary school?

First, consider the cost of your undergraduate education. Veterinary school costs vary depending upon whether you attend a private or a public school and whether you have residence in that state. Like all higher education, the cost of attending veterinary school in recent years has risen at a much higher rate than the average cost of living.

For those entering veterinary school in the US in the fall of 2018, the estimated total cost of attendance (tuition + fees + average living expenses), for four years ranges from 148,807 to 407,983. Your cost will depend on your state of residency or choice to pursue a private veterinary school education. You can compare costs at schools you're considering, by visiting VINFoundation.org/CostofEducation.

While scholarships can help, most veterinary students finance their education through loans. If you have student loans, interest accrued while in school will further increase the total cost of attendance.