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This is the presentation delivered to Vetquest students and their parents. The aim to provide an overview of considerations for those in years 11 and 12 thinking about applying to study veterinary science and veterinary nursing degree programmes. Bristol is used as the main illustration, other universities are used as contrast where I know that they are completely different to Bristol. All veterinary schools in the UK provide an excellent veterinary education and are accredited by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. Every vet in the UK generally thinks that their own school is the best and most vets are very loyal towards their own schools so take whatever any UK vet says about vet schools with a pinch of salt! Information is accurate as of 12/13 March 2016.

What can vets do?

Under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 animals may only be treated by those people qualified to do so. These restrictions apply where the 'treatment' is considered to be the practice of 'veterinary surgery', as defined by the Act.

19.2 Section 19 of the Act provides, subject to a number of exceptions, that only registered members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons may practise veterinary surgery. 'Veterinary surgery' is defined within the Act as follows:

“veterinary surgery” means the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, shall be taken to include—

- a. the diagnosis of diseases in, and injuries to, animals including tests performed on animals for diagnostic purposes;
- b. the giving of advice based upon such diagnosis;
- c. the medical or surgical treatment of animals; and
- d. the performance of surgical operations on animals.’

What can vet nurses (VNs) do?

18.3 The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (Schedule 3 Amendment) Order 2002 provides that veterinary surgeons may direct registered or student veterinary nurses who they employ, to carry out limited veterinary surgery

18.4 Under this Schedule 3 exemption, the privilege of giving any medical treatment or carrying out minor surgery, not involving entry into a body cavity, is given to:

Registered veterinary nurses under the direction of their veterinary surgeon employer to animals under their employer's care. The directing veterinary surgeon must be satisfied that the veterinary nurse is qualified to carry out the medical treatment or minor surgery
For example assisting in monitoring anaesthesia; administering vaccinations; routine dental procedures like scale and polish

Work experience in veterinary practice

This is essential to find out what vets and VNs do in the workplace

Ideally we like to see a variety of experiences in vet practices so you can see how the roles may vary between practices

Few, if any, universities would offer a place to someone to study on either degree course without some vet work experience

What is the difference between vet roles and nursing roles?

We would expect applicants to:

- have reflected on the roles of the vet/ VN including the positives and negatives of the job
- be aware of common things (vaccinations/ anaesthesia/ surgery)
- do additional reading
- be able to talk about anything they have mentioned in their personal statements.

Career roles for vets

General practice (small, large, equine, mixed)

Specialist/ referral practice

Academia— e.g. teaching vet/ VN students

Academia/ research institutions/ pharmaceutical companies – undertaking research and/or supporting/monitoring/ policing the use of animals in research

Veterinary/ pharmaceutical businesses – business management and sales roles

Agribusiness and wildlife -Veterinary public health (disease surveillance/ meat inspection etc)

Government – advising/ making policy

NGO – e.g. Mission Rabies (NB mostly voluntary)

Career roles for vet nurses

General practice (small, large, equine, mixed) – clinical or as a practice manager

Specialist/ referral practice including providing services like behaviour counselling/ hydrotherapy etc

Academia– e.g. teaching vet/ VN students

Academia/ research institutions/ pharmaceutical companies – undertaking research and/or supporting the use of animals in research

Veterinary/ pharmaceutical businesses – business management and sales roles

NGO – e.g. Mission Rabies (NB mostly voluntary)

Disabilities that might preclude entry onto a vet/ VN course

You MUST declare any disabilities when you apply for a course

Universities have to comply with the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Any disabilities would be assessed individually and many have varying degrees so an applicant with mild symptoms might be fine but severe symptoms may not be

Duty care towards the veterinary and veterinary nursing profession – there can be no exemptions on teaching

Admissions tutors consider:

'Day One' competences.

'Coping strategies' to deal with course and day one competences.

Physical ability to carry out all the tasks normally done by veterinary surgeons/ veterinary nurses.

Useful websites for veterinary information

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons <http://www.rcvs.org.uk/home/> - has an 'I want to be a vet/ vet nurse' section with helpful information about registered course providers for both professions.

Courses in animal and veterinary education (CAVE) <http://www.vetnetln.ac.uk/cave.html>

Vet Record Careers – free to view website <http://www.vetrecordjobs.com/> if you scroll to the bottom there are regular interesting articles about careers in the vet profession

<http://www.vetsonline.com/> - free online issues of Veterinary Times and VN Times

How to find out about university/ find a course etc

Go to the UCAS website <https://www.ucas.com/>

There is a huge amount of useful information in the sections that lead off the home page for both applicants and parents.

1/ Getting started

2/ Find a course

3/ Apply and track

4/ Finance and support

Things to consider when making your university applications

1. Geographical location of the university – fairly obvious!
2. Living arrangements (costs, location etc)
3. Academic entry requirements
4. Other entry requirements (work experience etc)
5. Selection process
6. Where and how the course is taught
7. Mandatory work experience (EMS = extra mural studies)
8. Support
9. General uni - extracurricular activities/ mixing with other students

2. Things to consider – living arrangements

Using Bristol University as the example:

Accommodation guarantee for all non-local first year students who put Bristol as firm offer.

We have over 4,500 places available in a variety of student residences. This includes:

- residences of varying sizes, from eight-bedroom, self-catered student houses to a 700-bedroom hall of residence;
- a variety of room options including shared, standard single, single with basin, and en suite;
- adapted accommodation for young families and students with disabilities;
- residences within walking distance of the University;
- a free bus service for students living in University-allocated accommodation.

Accommodation fees at Bristol vary according to the location of your residence, facilities available and type of room. In 2015/16 weekly costs ranged from around £98 for a shared room in a self-catered residence to £165 for a single en-suite room in a catered residence. Most tenancies are for 42 or 43 weeks.

After your first year

Most students move into private accommodation after their first year. There is a good choice of private accommodation near the University, and rents vary according to the area and type of property. You could spend anything from £320 to £500 on rent per month, with around £400 (per calendar month) plus bills being the average in 2015 for a shared 4 bedroom house/ flat.

The Accommodation Office will help you find accommodation and support you

3. Things to consider – academic entry requirements

Do not assume that this is identical for all unis offering the same course

Check on UCAS and university website – this information will ALWAYS be available

Only contact the relevant uni admissions team AFTER looking at their website

As of 2016, only Cambridge is asking for BMAT for Vet Sci.

Common errors on application to Bristol

Vet Science – we ask for 5 A at GCSE and must have A in GCSE maths.

Vet nursing – you must have A level chemistry (or equivalent) – this is due to the bioveterinary science element

Both – we do not make tariff point offers but have very specific requirements.

4. Things to consider – other entry requirements: work experience (WE)

Generally essential for both Vet Sci and VN courses – how can you decide if you want to do a professional degree if you don't know what the profession does?

Type – with a vet and other animal (including labs/ abattoir)

Make the most out of your WE – possibly keep a journal/ do personal research around topics you see/ know the common stuff

Read the course information to ensure that you fit the WE criteria

Time limited? – some unis will only allow WE undertaken within specified time period prior to application

Liverpool – very specific WE requirement – if you don't fit this then don't apply there

5. Things to consider – selection process

How does the course select students?

Is it selecting (all the vet science courses) or recruiting (many VN courses)?

Are interviews used?

How are candidates selected for interview?

(Bristol Vet Science – 30% academic from GCSE and A level; 70% from personal statement

Bristol VNBS – pass academic scoring, have a minimum of 1 week work experience)

What is the interview format?

(Bristol Vet Science – 2 interviews: Face to face 15 minutes; MMI 5 stations of 4 minutes

Bristol VNBS – face to face interview 15 minutes)

6. Things to consider – where and how is the course taught?

(i) Many universities have multiple campuses – Bristol main campus and Langford 14 miles from main campus

Check where your course of interest is delivered.....

.....it may be remote from the rest of the university – Bristol Vet Science years 1-3 in Bristol and come to Langford 1 or 2 days a week (we provide and pay for coaches), Langford full time years 4 and 5. In contrast at Nottingham and Edinburgh all 5 years are based at out of city campuses about 10 miles from the city.

(ii) Where is the campus where teaching is delivered compared to the student accommodation?

Bristol – preclinical students live in city when most teaching is in the city (years 1-3); clinical most students move to Langford (years 4 and 5).

Nottingham – student accommodation at Sutton Bonnington; Edinburgh no accommodation on vet campus students live in the city.

Is transport provided between campuses/ accommodation to campus etc. will you have to factor this into your lifestyle and possibly budget for transport costs?

Where does the clinical (non EMS) teaching occur?

Most vet courses have a lecture free final year primarily based around clinical teaching.

VN courses will do a varying degree of clinical placement (in addition to EMS) at different points in their courses. (At Bristol 21 weeks in clinical practice plus 21 weeks in Langford clinics plus 2 x 10 week EMS placements in years 1 and 2).

Bristol, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Glasgow, Cambridge, RVC (London) have their own clinical facilities on a university campus and may also use a few off site partners.

Nottingham and Surrey do not have own clinical facilities but use off site partners only for all clinical placements.

There are pros and cons to both systems however you may have an individual preference for one over another.

7. Things to consider - EMS

All Vet Science courses have mandatory 12 weeks preclinical EMS and 26 weeks clinical EMS as determined by the RCVS this is undertaken in the university vacations

How does the university support you in finding EMS placements?

Where can you do placements?

Varying amounts of EMS required by VN courses – you need to check this.

At Bristol

- EMS team help with placements – academic lead plus administrators.
- Online database of providers and previous placement students' experiences.
- Can do placements anywhere in UK provided we check out provider if they are not already on our database.
- Limited ability to do placements outside UK

8. Things to consider – student services/ support

Within school/ programme (e.g. Personal tutors/ peer mentoring)

Medical – health centre/ occupational health

Learning support – general to all students or only if you have specific learning issues like dyslexia

9. Things to consider - general university life - extracurricular activities/ mixing with other students

You will be able to find out about sports and other facilities and student clubs and societies from the universities' websites.

What students will you get to mix with? Will it be with only those from your programme or school or from the university as a whole?

Where are the activities/ clubs/ sports facilities compared to your accommodation/ campus?

IN SUMMARY - TAKE HOME TOP TIPS**Before application**

Read ALL the entry criteria before going to an open day – there's no point turning up to discover that you can't apply!

Read ALL the entry criteria before applying – don't waste a university application.

The best place to find the entry criteria is on the university's own website (under consumer protection law the information that they provide must be accurate). Books, online forums, chat rooms etc can be out of date or just plain wrong!

After application

Open all the emails that the university sends to you – most universities now work with a paper free process.

Ensure that you complete any additional forms required and submit them on time.

Make sure you know WHERE to go for your interview, plan your journey to arrive in good time with everything you need.