

## **Completing your UCAS form for applications in Autumn 2014 – Hints and tips from Bristol University Veterinary Admissions tutor**

### **General Points**

There is a useful general information fact sheet from the University of Bristol at the link below.

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/study/schools/factsheets/fsautumn2008.pdf>

### **Entry Requirements**

Please read our entry requirements and if you are not certain check with the admissions team ([vet-ug-admissions@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:vet-ug-admissions@bristol.ac.uk)) prior to making an application – every year we turn down a proportion of students at the initial assessment due to them not having the correct A levels/ grades etc. Not all the Vet Schools have the same entry requirements.

### **Fill the form in correctly!**

Complete the form correctly in all sections. Check it once, twice and again before you submit it.

If you have a lot of qualifications please list the most recent ones first as it makes the form easier for us to read.

### **References**

We expect an academic reference except in rare cases e.g. some mature applicants. A suitable referee could be a sixth form tutor, your college tutor or your university tutor (if you are a graduate applicant). We really need to know about your academic ability to complete the course and not just the great attributes you have which means that your referee thinks you would do well as a vet.

### **Information for Referees**

What we are looking for are academically excellent students who will be able to cope with the very large demands of the undergraduate course. To cope successfully on our course they need to be very self-motivated. We find that generally those who are able to cope with the A level workload and get the top grades while also doing lots of other stuff (like sports, volunteering, working) do better on our course than students who have to spend 100% of their time doing school work in order to achieve the grades. Equally mature students who have taken additional qualifications while balancing family life and work would show their ability to cope with our course.

Our course and profession is at times stressful and we look for people who have the ability and resilience to cope with this. A mature outlook and ability to take responsibility for themselves or others also are factors we consider.

Please explain anything which may make the candidate appear to be academically weaker on paper – the 'standard' applicant will have 8 or more GCSEs at A or A\* including Maths and English and a spread of other subjects most of which will have been taken at one sitting and they will have/ be predicted anything from 3 A\* to 3 A at A level, again taken at one sitting. If your candidate does not have this please indicate why (e.g. mitigating circumstances, resits etc). We do not score any aspect of the reference but would use this to inform the scores awarded to the application and potentially not reject a student who does not fully meet our academic criteria.

Predicted grades should be included on the application form in the relevant section and not only in the reference. If you are taking an alternative qualification to A levels/ IB or Highers such as a BTEC

or Access Course please provide as much information as possible such as grades received for on-going units, this is particularly important if the type of course you are taking cannot supply predicted grades. If we contact you for additional information please reply as quickly as possible if you wish us to consider your application.

If you are providing a reference for a mature student (e.g. a graduate or adult returner to education) the same principles apply – we need to know how well you think they would cope with the workload because however good you think that they might be as a vet, no-one gets to be one until they have completed a veterinary degree!

### **How do we use the UCAS form information to select for interview?**

Each UCAS application form is scored in 3 areas and candidates with the highest scores will be invited to interview. GCSE results contribute 15%, A level s contribute 15% and the personal statement contributes 70% towards the overall mark.

1. GCSE - credit is given to grades at A/A\* up to a maximum of 8 subjects to include English Language, Maths and 2 Sciences (or double science).
2. A level – credit is given to grades at A\*/A/B up to a maximum of 3 subjects taken at one sitting to include Chemistry and Biology and excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking.
3. Personal statements. This is the only way we can find out about you and your non-academic achievements – we think it is so important that we award 70% of the total marks to this. We know it is tough to sell yourself in not very many words – that is part of the test! This is the only part of the form where you can make yourself stand out because you have to assume that everyone will have an impressive academic record. Please spell correctly and punctuate properly! Get someone else to read your statement before you send it as sometimes it can be difficult to see mistakes yourself.

### **What are we looking for in the personal statement?**

We assess five categories in the personal statement, these and their weighting are:

- Is the candidate realistic and informed about a career in veterinary science? 30%
- Has the candidate got work experience in veterinary practice? 20%
- Has the candidate got related work experience in animal establishments? 20%
- Has the candidate contributed to school/ college/ community activities and does the candidate have interests outside of veterinary sciences? 10%
- Does the candidate have evidence of non-academic personal achievements? 20%

### **Realistic and informed**

If you say you love animals as your sole reason to becoming a vet you will get no points! We are expecting you to have made a mature and considered decision that should have be informed by your WE and general research about the career.

### **Work experience (vet and animal)**

We expect all UK/EU candidates to have obtained work experience (WE) in both veterinary and animal establishments; without this we will not consider your application. For overseas applicants from outside the EU we would take the country of your origin into account when assessing the WE type and quantity. We are not prescriptive about type and quantity of WE but the top score would be given to those candidates who have seen more than 4 weeks (i.e. more than 20 days) practice at

more than 1 veterinary practice and more than 4 weeks at a good range of animal establishments (e.g. lambing, beef, dairy, kennels, wildlife, abattoir, laboratory) – it is not possible to get extra 'brownie points' for WE above and beyond this. We will only count the WE that you have already completed but do mention if you have any planned/ booked for later in the year. You do not need to list your WE placements but a summary statement to say exactly how much you have done is very helpful for our selectors (e.g. I have completed 5 weeks of animal work experience at a variety of placements.....)

### **Non-academic activities and responsibilities**

School/ college/ community activities – e.g. being a prefect, helping at a club, charity work.

Interests outside of veterinary sciences e.g. sports, music, drama, hobbies and/ or part time work

### **Non-academic personal achievements**

Examples are: sporting success, examinations in music, charity challenges achieved, promotion to a position of responsibility in the workplace. You are bound to have done some amazing things – think of a statement where you would say 'I am really proud that I.....' There is no expectation that you should be a county sportsman or play in a national orchestra; anything that is an achievement for YOU.

Good luck and I hope to see you at an interview day!