



Veterinary interviews

A guide to help you begin preparation for Veterinary Medicine interviews.

If you are interested in becoming a vet, there are some extra steps you will have to go through when you apply for a university place. As well as completing your UCAS application like any other student, you will also have to attend an interview at the university you apply to and do some work experience to show your interest in the subject and career.

This guide will help you get ready for your Veterinary Medicine interviews and give you some tips on how to get the most from work experience. Work through each section to find out more and get ready for your interviews.



Higher Horizons are a partnership of universities and colleges, working together to inform young people about their educational options. We provide free, impartial information, advice and guidance on study options after sixth form and college. We put together resources like this one to give you more information about the options available.

If you have any questions about college or university, you can chat to our friendly team for free online at <https://higherhorizons.co.uk/ask/>.

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Important information pertaining to COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Please refer to the specific guidance being provided at each university you are researching.

Download the Veterinary Schools Council (VSC) guide to UK veterinary degrees which contains information from admissions staff at each veterinary school. The guide provides a brief overview of the application structure to the veterinary medicine courses in the UK:

<https://www.vetschoolscouncil.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/VSC-course-guide.pdf>.

The 2020 version will be made available later this year.

Harper & Keele VETERINARY SCHOOL

For the latest information from Harper & Keele Joint Vet School, an initiative shared by Keele University and Harper Adams University, use the link below.

<https://www.harperkeelelevetschool.ac.uk/>

1. Introduction to veterinary interviews

There are eight institutions in the UK that provide a veterinary science/medicine course. The two interview styles used across these institutions during the admissions process is traditional interviews and Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI), with MMIs being the most common.

Read the “What is the format of a veterinary medicine interview?” paragraph at the following link:

<https://www.mpw.ac.uk/university-guides/getting-into/veterinary-school/how-to-pass-an-interview-for-vet-school/#format>



Questions

Go to the following links below and answer the following question:

- 1) <https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/medical-school-interview/mmi-interviews/> (read the ‘What is an MMI Interview?’ section)
- 2) <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/media/wwwnclacuk/careersresources/files/vetmedicineFAQs.pdf> (page 11)
- 3) <https://blog.medify.co.uk/admissions-guide/medical-school-interviews/multiple-mini-interviews-mmis>



1. Which statement best describes MMIs?

- A. MMIs consist of mini interviews that last no longer than 2 minutes. Generally there are about 10 MMI stations and the whole process last about 30 minutes.
- B. MMIs consist of mini interviews that last about 20 minutes each. Generally there are about 5 MMI stations and the whole process last about 2 hours.
- C. MMIs consist of mini interviews that last no longer than 10 minutes. Generally there are about 10 MMI stations and the whole process can last up to 2 hours.

Read the University of Surrey's veterinary medicine and science admissions procedure for 2019/20 entry:

<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-05/full-vet-admissions-procedure.pdf>



2. What type of interview do they hold at Surrey?

- A. MMIs plus a traditional interview
- B. MMI
- C. Traditional interview

3. How long does the interview process last at Surrey?

- A. 2 hours
- B. Under 1 hour
- C. 3 hours

Bristol offers a Gateway to Veterinary Science course (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/2021/vet-science/bvsc-gateway-to-veterinary-science/>) as well as a Veterinary Science course (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/2021/vet-science/bvsc-veterinary-science/>). The Gateway to Veterinary Science course has a lower grade entry requirement and requires 6 years of study compared to 5 years of study required by the Veterinary Science course.

Read the Interview section of the Gateway to Veterinary Science admissions statement: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/media/undergraduate/admissions-statements/2020/gateway.pdf>

Do the same for the Veterinary Science admissions statement and answer the questions below: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/media/undergraduate/admissions-statements/2020/veterinary-science.pdf>

4. Which statement best describes the approach to interviews for the Gateway to Veterinary Science course?

- A. Applicants who satisfy the academic requirements will be invited to an MMI.
- B. Applicants who satisfy the academic requirements will be invited to a traditional face to face interview.
- C. Applicants who satisfy the academic requirements will be invited to both an MMI and a face to face interview.
- D. Applicants who satisfy the academic requirements are not required to attend an interview.



5. Which statement best describes Bristol Veterinary School's approach to interviews for the Veterinary Science course?



- A. Applicants who satisfy the academic requirements will be invited to both an MMI and a face to face interview.
- B. Applicants who satisfy the academic requirements are not routinely interviewed.
- C. Applicants who satisfy the academic requirements will be invited to an MMI.
- D. Applicants who satisfy the academic requirements will be invited to a traditional face to face interview.

Read the interview section of the University of Liverpool's Institute of Veterinary Science prospective applicants page: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/veterinary-science/undergraduate/prospective-applicants/>

Then read the 'How to Apply' section (page 13) of the brochure for The Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme at the University of Edinburgh: <https://www.uwp.is.ed.ac.uk/publish/php/pdf/phpMkK0Ht.pdf>

And finally, have a look at the 'The Interview' section of the 'How to apply' page of the University of Cambridge Veterinary School: <https://www.vet.cam.ac.uk/study/vet/howtoapply>

6. Which of the following topics come up at interview at any one of the above universities? (Pick all that apply)



- A. Scientific research
- B. Scientific data interpretation
- C. Numeracy
- D. Your choice of clothing for the interview
- E. Knowledge of the profession
- F. Ethics
- G. Work Experience
- H. Practical manual tasks

[Go to section 1 answers](#)

2. Your motivation to be a vet

Interviewers will often ask questions to try and understand your motivations for studying Vet Medicine.

Vet Medicine is a hard course at university and a gruelling career choice. Some questions in this area may well concentrate on how you think you will cope with the challenges of being a Vet. This will require careful thought and research.

When preparing for this type of question, you do not want to repeat a remembered answer, but you do want to have mental "bullet points" which you can develop in a pressurised interview situation.



Questions

Interviewers want to know if you understand what veterinary medicine is really like and that you have seriously considered the less exciting or enjoyable parts. It is good to have a clear idea of what these are before you plan your answers to the questions.

Using the worksheet below, spend some time thinking about the positive and negative aspects of being a veterinarian and what strategies you have to cope with or overcome these things. On the second half of the worksheet, you will find questions relating to what motivates you to study veterinary medicine. Once you have completed the first part of the worksheet. You should then find it easier to plan your answers to the questions on the second half of the worksheet.

If you can't print out the sheet you can draw the diagram yourself.

File: [Veterinary-Interviews-Motivation-to-be-a-vet.](#)

Read the Medic Portal's bank of motivation questions. The site is designed for medicine applicants but the strategies for answering motivation questions are the same.

<https://www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/background-motivation/>

1. Which of the following are common mistakes when answering motivation questions? (Pick all that apply.)



- A. Referring to financial rewards or social status
- B. Saying that the life of a vet is entirely positive and failing to appreciate the emotional difficulty involved
- C. Focusing too much on extracurricular agendas at the expense of the Veterinary School
- D. Using aspects of work experience as evidence to your understanding of the role of a Vet
- E. Focusing on one aspect and not demonstrating that you appreciate that Veterinary science is a multi-disciplinary and varied area of study and practice
- F. Forgetting to mention that you wish to help animals in some way. After all, that's what being a vet is about

Interviewers may ask questions which require you to assess your own strengths and areas for development. With these questions, it is important that you demonstrate that you can be self-reflective.

Go to the "personal insight" section of the Medic Portal website and read the questions and answer advice (the website is designed for medicine students, however the strategies for answering these questions are the same for Veterinary Medicine students):

<https://www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/background-motivation/>

The key to answering questions about your potential weaknesses is to identify small, precise problems and to show what steps you have taken to mitigate them. Use the worksheet below to brainstorm your strengths and weaknesses.

File: [Veterinary-Interviews-Personal-Insight.](#)

2. Which of the following are common mistakes when answering personal insight questions? (Pick all that apply.)



- A. Saying that you would struggle with something that is crucial for vets to be comfortable with.
- B. Not understanding that you will inevitably experience failure at some point in your vet career.
- C. Stating something that isn't really a weakness, like working too hard.
- D. Acknowledging that Veterinary medicine is stressful but implying that you will be able to deal with that quite easily.
- E. Referring to genuine weakness that needs to be worked on in order to be a great vet.
- F. Referring to a strength not relevant to Vet med e.g. being a good cook.

[Go to section 2 answers](#)

3. Work experience questions

Important information pertaining to COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Admissions staff are aware that some applicants may currently be unable to complete work experience requirements due to restrictions caused by COVID-19. As the situation is currently evolving, please refer to the **specific guidance** provided at **each university** you are interested in applying to, and **check entry requirements** web pages regularly for any updates.

If you are unable to carry out work experience for your application, there are a number of things that you could do to demonstrate that you are committed to building your knowledge and understanding of veterinary science:

- Arrange a phone call or online call with a vet to discuss their work with them - you could ask them about any interesting cases or projects that they have worked on recently and then complete the worksheet on Veterinary Interview Work Experience Questions, on the next page
- Carry out a personal research project into a topic that interests you using some of the wider reading examples on the Causeway website: <https://causeway.education/wider-reading/2020y/3m/18d/medicine-and-health-care>
- Join the Royal Veterinary College's Teen Vet Club, to receive tips and advice for developing your career working with animals: <https://www.rvc.ac.uk/study/rvc-for-all/teen-vet-club>
- Complete an online course with the Dick Vet School at the University of Edinburgh: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/vet/studying/moocs-overview>

Interviews and work experience questions

Your interviewers will want to see that you have made the effort to prepare for a career in veterinary medicine, including completing work experience.

When considering your work experience, the best way to discuss it effectively is to focus on one or two specific aspects of it. If you try to describe everything that happened, your answer will be vague and unfocused. Instead, choose the most interesting aspect of it - a case, a condition or a treatment - and think about how to explain your interest in detail.

You may well be asked to go into lots of detail about important interactions, situations or conditions which you experienced during your work experience. For example, your personal statement might say that you witnessed the importance of working as a team during a surgical emergency. The interviewer might then ask you to go into more detail about how the team worked.



Questions



In order to answer work experience questions well at interview, you should spend time thinking in depth about the important interactions, situations or conditions you experienced. Look at the worksheet attached and answer the question below. Feel free to download and print the worksheet as a template for taking notes.

File: [Veterinary-Interview-Work-Experience-Questions](#).



1. Once you have picked a specific aspect of your work experience you would like to talk about, what do you then need to think about when preparing your interview notes? (Pick all that apply.)

- A. Why the specific aspect you are referring to was of interest to you.
- B. Specific details that show your understanding of that particular situation.
- C. How well you got on with your colleagues.
- D. What this specific aspect/topic has taught you about veterinary medicine more generally.

Read the “What kind of questions will I be asked?” section of the following website: <https://www.mpw.ac.uk/university-guides/getting-into/veterinary-school/how-to-pass-an-interview-for-vet-school/#questions>



2. Which of the following statements about work experience questions is correct?

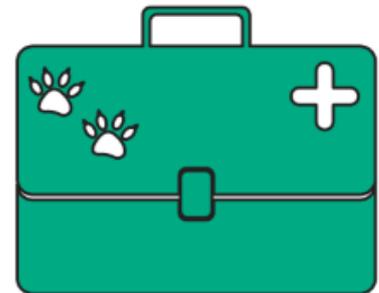
- A. Interviewers want you to be overly descriptive and explain processes and procedures at length.
- B. Interviewers do not want to hear what you enjoyed, just the complex processes you witnessed.
- C. Interviewers do not want to hear an overly descriptive account of the processes and procedures you witnessed. Instead they want to know what you found particularly thought-provoking.

[Go to section 3 answers](#)

4. Current topics in veterinary medicine

During interviews, it is common to be asked questions about current veterinary issues.

Current topic questions allow interviewers to gain insight on how aware you are of veterinary medical news and any recent changes or debates in the field. These questions will usually involve the interviewer asking your opinion on a specific topic, for example:



How will Covid-19 affect veterinary practice in the UK?

There are a number of websites which are useful sources of information regarding current topics and debates including the Vet Times and the "Newsroom" and policy sections of the British Veterinary Association (BVA):

1. <https://www.vettimes.co.uk/>
2. <https://www.bva.co.uk/News-campaigns-and-policy/>

If you are interested in current veterinary research, you can also look at the Veterinary Medicine section of the Science Daily website:

https://www.sciencedaily.com/news/plants_animals/veterinary_medicine/



Questions

Read the "What kind of questions will I be asked?" section of the following website: <https://www.mpw.ac.uk/university-guides/getting-into/veterinary-school/how-to-pass-an-interview-for-vet-school/#questions>

1. Which of the following statements is true?

- A. Avoid talking about current affairs or politics in your interviews. Politics is not relevant to veterinary medicine.
- B. Being able to discuss relevant current affairs or politics in your interviews shows genuine interest in the field.
- C. Make strong political arguments in your interview where you pick one particular side of an argument and argue it in depth.



Read the following guide on answering current topic (also referred to as “Hot Topic”) questions in medicine interviews: <https://www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/nhs-hot-topics/>

This particular guide refers to human medicine, however, the information regarding how to formulate an answer is very useful when it comes to answering veterinary medicine current topic questions.

2. What are common mistakes made by applicants when answering current topics questions? (Pick all that apply.)



- A. Belittling patients (for veterinary medicine this refers to both the animals and their carers).
- B. Being closed minded and not seeing all sides of the debate.
- C. Simply agreeing or disagreeing with the statement without any logical reasoning.
- D. Considering different sides of the debate.
- E. Taking up a partisan position based on personal opinion.
- F. Holding a strong opinion against a certain organisation.

A helpful way to prepare for current topic questions is to speak about these topics with friends or family – for example, try discussing the effects of Covid-19 on veterinary practice. Ask questions back and forth and most importantly, weigh up different sides to the debate.

Use the worksheet attached to plan and practice answers to potential questions about current topics in veterinary medicine.

File: [Veterinary-Interview-Current-Topic-questions.](#)

[Go to section 4 answers](#)

5. Visual questions



In a veterinary medicine interview, you might be given some visual, graphical or anatomical information to interpret or produce.

The key to answering these questions is to verbalise your thoughts in a step-by-step process and not to try to find a "correct" answer. The interviewer wants to see how you think.

There are lots of interesting images and presentations which you can practice with at the Royal Veterinary College's Online Veterinary Anatomy Museum website:

<http://www.onlineveterinaryanatomy.net/>



Questions

Watch the following YouTube video from 5:25 to 8:45 and answer the following questions.

<https://youtu.be/KNnPQtLrMXE?t=5m26s>

1. Does the interviewer expect a perfect sketch of the drawing he requested?



- A. No, he only asks for a rough sketch
- B. Yes, it should be scientifically accurate

2. Does the interviewee draw in silence?



- A. Yes, as it is important to remain focused when producing sketches, so it is best to do this task in silence.
- B. No. It is important to talk through your thought processes. This is important as the interview wants to see how you think.

Look at the strategies for answering MMI Questions 7 and 9 at the following link and answer the following questions: <https://www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/mmi-questions/>

Again, this website is referring to human medicine, however the strategy for answering the question remains the same for a Veterinary Medicine interview.

3. When asked to describe or work with a diagram or a graph, your ability to interpret an image is being observed as well as...

(Pick all that apply)

- A. Your communications skills
- B. Your creativity
- C. If you're a visual learner
- D. Your scientific knowledge



[Go to section 5 answers](#)

6. Ethics questions

It is common to be asked ethical questions in a veterinary medicine interview.

There are a number of guidelines which can be useful in answering these questions.

Firstly, similarly to the current topic questions, do not try to give a simple "correct" answer. Think and discuss both sides of the question and then try to reach a reasoned conclusion.



Secondly, you should read the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' Code carefully so that you are aware of the guiding principles of professional behaviour. <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/>

Further reading: <https://www.bva.co.uk/resources-support/ethical-guidance/>



Questions

Read the following information on answering medical ethics questions: <https://www.themedicportal.com/blog/how-to-answer-medical-ethics-questions/>

This is aimed at Medicine students but the strategies for answering ethics questions still apply to Veterinary Medicine students.

1. **Why is it important to define the terms you are using in your answer to ethical questions?** (Pick all that apply.)

- A. So that the interviewer knows you understand the terms presented in the questions.
- B. So that you can use your own definition of these terms in your following argument.
- C. If you're wrong, the interviewer can correct your definition before you begin your argument.

Read the following document from [vettimes.co.uk](https://www.vettimes.co.uk/app/uploads/wp-post-to-pdf-enhanced-cache/1/veterinary-ethical-dilemmas-underfeeding-and-euthanasia.pdf) which takes you through two ethical dilemmas: <https://www.vettimes.co.uk/app/uploads/wp-post-to-pdf-enhanced-cache/1/veterinary-ethical-dilemmas-underfeeding-and-euthanasia.pdf>

Pay particular attention to how the writer answers, then answer the following question.

2. In the case of the 'anorexic client who is not feeding her dog', how did the writer assess the animal's needs in reference to the client?



- A. Your primary obligation as a vet is with the animal, the client's wants are secondary.
- B. As the client's communication is clearer than the animal's, you should prioritise their needs.
- C. The needs of the animal and the client are of equal importance to you as a vet.

[Go to section 6 answers](#)



You have now completed the booklet.

The answers to the questions are on the following page, but before you do that please [click here](#) to complete a short survey.

The link will redirect you to a survey collecting feedback about the activity you have taken part in or accessed. The survey is hosted in a secure SurveyGizmo account, and is controlled by Higher Horizons, who have funded this activity. There is an opportunity to be included in a prize draw (£25 Amazon voucher) for those who complete it.



Answers



1- Introduction to veterinary interviews

1. C
2. B
3. B - As you can see, although MMIs can last up to two hours, they can also be much less than that.
4. C
5. B
6. **Correct answers:** A, B, C, E, F, G, H
Incorrect answer: D - You will not discuss your clothes at interview. As the Cambridge website states (<https://www.vet.cam.ac.uk/study/vet/howtoapply>) you do NOT need to dress smartly for your interview.

[Go to section 2 - Your motivation to be a vet](#)

Answers



2- Your motivation to be a vet

1. **Correct answers:** A, B, C, E, F

A - These are not good motivators and there are other careers that offer more of both.

B- Giving a balanced answer to questions about life as a vet make it clear to the interviewers that you have research the reality of being vet on a day to day basis.

Incorrect answer: D - This is not a mistake. This is exactly what you should be doing in your interview.

2. **Correct answers:** A, B, C, D, F

D- You need to be able to articulate how you will cope with a situation that is NOT easy.

F - Any strengths you mention should be related to the the study an/or practice of veterinary medicine

Incorrect answer: E - You should be genuine when talking about the skills you need to develop. It shows that you understand the skills needed to be a vet. Talking about your weaknesses requires careful consideration. It's important that you choose something which isn't debilitating (e.g. fear of blood) and that you have worked on to counter. For example, 'I was not very confident with public speaking and found it intimidating. While it is still quite difficult for me, I have joined the debating society so that I can get better in this area and my peers say they have noticed a great improvement.'

[Go to section 3 - Work experience questions](#)

Answers



3- Work experience questions

1. **Correct answers:** A, B, D,
Incorrect answer: C - This may feed into answers regarding team work but it should not be a main focus when preparing answers.
2. C

[Go to section 4 -Current topics in veterinary medicine](#)

Answers



4- Current topics in veterinary medicine

1. B
2. **Correct answers:** A, B, C, E, F
C - These questions should be answered with yes or no answers. You need to vocalise how you reached your position by weighing up different angles of the debate/current topic
Incorrect answer: D - This would not be a mistake - it is exactly what you want to be doing!

[Go to section 5 - Visual questions](#)

Answers



5- Visual Questions

1. A
2. B
3. **Correct answers:** A, D

A - Questions where you are asked to interpret images are also a chance for you to display your communications skills. Take a look at the diagram before you begin to speak and give your answer a logical structure, using words such as first and next to guide your answer.

D - If the image is of a graph for example, you want to make sure you have paid attention to the axis labels, describe the data and point out any trends you notice. You should be using prior knowledge from GCSE and A Level to provide the scientific content of your answer.

Incorrect answers: B,C

[Go to section 6 - Ethics questions](#)

Answers



6- Ethics Questions

1. A, C
2. A

You have now completed the booklet, if you have not already done so please [click here](#) to complete a short survey.

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