



THE *MYTHS* SURROUNDING ADMISSION TO THE STUDY OF VETERINARY MEDICINE or the things people.....

“A student must have a cumulative gpa close to 4.0 on a 4.0 grading scale in order to be seriously considered for admission to the study of veterinary medicine.”

Actually those who interviewed for the Class of 2009 (entering August, 2005) had a mean cumulative gpa of about 3.50 and a science gpa of 3.47. For many years classes of students entering the study of veterinary medicine at the University of Illinois have had mean cumulative grade point averages in the 3.50 range. We also have a new approach to evaluating the credentials of applicants that focuses on the “whole person” rather than only considering their level of academic achievement.

“It is harder to get into vet school than it is to get into human medical school.”

Surprise! This is NOT a myth. There are only 29 schools of veterinary medicine in North America and there are 160+ schools for the study of human medicine. The lack of availability of seats for students who wish to study non-human medicine makes it very challenging to be admitted. Each year around 15,000 students apply for about 2500 – 2600 seats for entering DVM students.

“The most difficult part of the study of veterinary medicine is getting admitted to the College. Once you are admitted you don’t have to work very hard.”

Definitely a myth! The course work that prepares a student for a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine is a science based medical curriculum with all of the challenges. During the first two years of study students take anywhere from 17 – 22 semester hours of solid science course work per semester. They attend class from 8:00 a.m. in the morning to about 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. and then do on average 35 more hours of outside of class studying. Every student who achieves their dream of becoming a veterinarian has worked extraordinarily hard to get there.

“You must do your undergraduate college work at the University of Illinois to be admitted to the U of I College of Veterinary Medicine.”

Myth, myth, myth! We encourage students to attend an undergraduate school that provides them with academic challenges. At the same time we want that college or university to feel like a home away from home for the student so they can focus on their learning and achieve well. The University of Illinois is a marvelous place for learning...but it may feel way too large for some students to perform their best academically. Those students may prefer a small public institution or a mid-size private college in a small town in another part of the country. Where to study on the undergraduate level is a very personal decision and the best choice will depend on a variety of factors. We accept students for admission from all regionally accredited institutions of higher education.

“Vet schools don’t admit students who attended junior or community colleges.”

Absolutely a myth! We fully understand that financing a college education these days can be very difficult for students. Therefore, we also fully understand that a student may choose to begin their undergraduate studies at a local junior/community college sparing the expenses of living away from home etc. However, we also want to remind students that the community colleges are, by definition, freshman and sophomore level institutions. The study of veterinary medicine is a “post-graduate” science based effort. In order to be well prepared for the academic challenge of the curriculum of veterinary education, it is important to take a good number of junior and senior year science courses at a four year institution that offers rigorous courses. This will provide a fine preparation for veterinary medical studies.

“If you have a relative who graduated from the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine you do not have to meet the same standards for admission as others.”

Absolutely a myth...period. Every student who applies for admission is evaluated under the same standards. There are no special opportunities provided for “legacy” admissions of any kind.

“If you take the minimum science course prerequisites you will be well prepared for the study of veterinary medicine.”

This isn’t an absolute myth...but it bears serious consideration. In light of the rigorous demands of the DVM science curriculum, it is really a good idea to be more prepared rather than just adequately prepared. Students in the professional DVM curriculum include individuals with master’s degrees in science areas and even those with Ph.D. degrees. Some of the students have undergraduate degrees in biochemistry from very intense universities. Some of the students have undergraduate degrees in animal science that include very specifically focused science course work. It is just a good idea to take as much science as possible prior to entrance so that the challenges in the learning will be manageable.

“Take the VCAT exam instead of the GRE exam...it is easier and your score will look better for admission.”

A myth in many ways! The VCAT exam no longer exists and we only accept scores from the GRE General Exam for admission purposes.

“If you get a letter of recommendation from a U of I College of Veterinary Medicine graduate you will receive extra attention in the admission process.”

A solid myth! Absolutely not true.

“Students who say they will be interested in food production animal/large animal medicine get extra special consideration because there is a shortage of doctors working in these fields.”

This is a myth as well. There is a shortage of such doctors in various parts of the country, but there is no fully fair way for us to give an advantage to such applicants. Certainly, with such stiff competition for admission to the study of veterinary medicine an individual might consider making such a statement for admission purposes and then “change their mind” at a later date among other possibilities. And, in fact, this is not the only veterinary career experiencing inadequate numbers of professional graduates. Areas of research, public health, the military and others are constantly seeking well prepared veterinarians and never able to hire as many as they would like.