Frequently asked questions about applying to and studying Veterinary Science at The University of Liverpool

Below are some frequently asked questions which we encounter at our Open Days. Please make sure you also read our “Guidance notes for BVSc (D100) Applicants” and “Guidance notes on Work Experience for Applicants” to ensure that you are fully informed of our application requirements. These are available at https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/veterinary-science/undergraduate/prospective-applicants/

This list of FAQs is split into: Application - academic criteria, Application - Work experience, Interviews and The BVSc course.

Application - academic criteria

Q. What do you look for in Personal statements on UCAS forms?
A. We do not use Personal Statements for assessing applications or selection for interview. Information about your work experience is obtained from the Work Experience Questionnaire, which applicants are required to complete by 20th October, and is available via our website from September https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/veterinary-science/undergraduate/prospective-applicants/

Q. Is completion of a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) required?
A. MOOCs, such as those run by the University of Edinburgh, are not a requirement for application to The University of Liverpool and are not a criterion that we use for selection of applicants for interview. However, such courses may be helpful in terms of finding out more about studying veterinary science, and if it’s right for you.

Q. Is there benefit in doing an EPQ?
A. The EPQ subject or grade is not considered either as part of the selection for interview process, or any offer made to an applicant to veterinary science. However, thinking about veterinary related issues in more depth, either as part of an EPQ, or otherwise, may be beneficial in an interview.

Q. Does the University of Liverpool make Contextual Offers?
A. Contextual data includes the school or socio-economic context in which you have previously studied, together with information about any disability you may have, and whether you have been in care. This information may be taken into consideration at confirmation (i.e. when all outstanding exam results are known, and when applicants with conditional offers are successful or unsuccessful), but we do not currently give lower offers to applicants to whom this may apply.

Q. Do you accept applications for deferred entry?
A. Yes. Applications for deferred entry are welcome. These applicants must meet the same criteria at the point of application. We do not make a judgement as to how the applicant is going to spend the gap year, and we do not have a “quota” for deferred entry applications. Requests for deferring entry after offers have been made are highly unlikely to be considered, so if you would like to take a gap year, please apply for deferred entry.

Q. Do you accept the Cambridge Pre-U?
A. Yes; we require grade D3
Q. Do you accept the Welsh Baccalaureate?
A. Yes, as the third/other subject.

Q. If an applicant is not predicted AAA at A-level (e.g. if predicted AAB) will the application be unsuccessful?
A. Yes.

Q. If you apply after completing A-levels (and have obtained AAA), are these candidates distinguished on their GCSEs grades?
A. No; applicants need to have obtained the minimum GCSE (or equivalent) requirement of AAABBBB to include Maths, English and Physics (or dual award science); if applicants have achieved this, then no further distinction is made.

Q. Are AS-levels grades taken into consideration when selecting applicants for interview?
A. No. We use GCSE grades and predicted A-level grades.

Q. Are predicted grades affected by whether students have sat AS-levels?
A. We don’t know. Grade predictions are made by the schools and it isn’t clear how the change in the A-levels will affect the accuracy of predictions.

Q. If you have already achieved an A grade in one subject, can you apply without resitting this at the same time as other subjects? i.e. do all three grades have to be obtained in same sitting?
A. If you have already obtained a grade A in a required subject, you do not need to resit this at the same time as other subjects. Similarly if an applicant is resitting GCSEs, these need to put in the “pending results” section on the UCAS form.

Q. Do you consider reapplications?
A. Applicants are welcome to reapply on one further occasion; these applications are made through UCAS.

Q. Do you require UKCAT/BMAT?
A. No; neither of these assessments is currently a requirement.

Q. Does the BVSc course go into clearing?
A. In the past, the BVSc course has not gone into clearing. We may make some offers to applicants to start the BVSc course the following year, on the understanding that if places are available, these applicants may invited to bring their year of entry forward.
Application; Work experience

Q. Does work experience have to undertaken within the UK?
A. All work experience should be relevant to a UK-based veterinary career; however, although the majority should be completed in the UK, not all has to be.

This may not be possible for students from outside the UK; in this case, work experience can be gained in an applicant’s home country, but the nature of experience should be relevant (please see our guidance notes as to the types of experience required). [https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/veterinary-science/undergraduate/prospective-applicants/](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/veterinary-science/undergraduate/prospective-applicants/)

Q. What is the maximum number of placements that can be entered on the work experience questionnaire?
A. Criteria for work experience can be found in the guidance notes at [https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/veterinary-science/undergraduate/prospective-applicants/](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/veterinary-science/undergraduate/prospective-applicants/)

Once you have fulfilled the criteria set out in the guidance notes there is no advantage (in terms of selection for invitation to interview) in providing details of additional placements. For husbandry/non-clinical placements up to six placements can be entered on the questionnaire. For Veterinary/clinical placements up to five placements can be entered.

Q. Can you count a placement of a single day?
A. No, not if that is the total amount of time you spent at one placement. However, work experience does not have to be consecutive days, it is perfectly acceptable to spread it over time, e.g. several Saturdays.

Q. Can you count two different branches of the same large practice as two different placements?
A. Yes.

Q. Are references required from work experience placements?
A. Applicants who are invited to interview will be asked to bring a selection of references from work experience placements (specific placements will be selected from your work experience questionnaire) with them to the interview. These are to verify that you attended the placement for the period you have stated; we do not need long character references. We recommend that you collect these as you go, rather than try and obtain them all in December! Please don’t send them to the Institute of Veterinary Science in advance.

Q. Can “Summer Schools” such as VETSIM be included as work experience?
A. No. If these include hands on practical experience of at least two days in a single facility, then these could be counted (please note the advice above regarding references), but lecture based courses are not considered. Furthermore, attendance at these courses gives no specific advantage in the selection of applicants for interview.
Interviews

Q. How many applicants are invited to interview?
A. We interview all candidates who meet our academic and work experience criteria; in 2016 we interviewed approximately 700 applicants.

Q. How are the interviews structured?
A. We have been using the multiple mini interview system at Liverpool for many years. This consists of several “stations”, each with a theme/topic relevant to studying veterinary science. Some stations will be face to face interviews, some will be written exercises.

Q. Who conducts the interviews?
A. A variety of staff take part in our interview process. This includes staff from the Institute of Veterinary Science, staff from related fields within the university and veterinary surgeons from outside the university. The interviewers will not have seen the interviewees’ UCAS forms; they will only know that each applicant has met the academic and work experience criteria in order to be invited for interview.

Q. What advice would you give on preparation for the interview?
A. Which topics do you think are most important to ask the vets of the future? Are there any current “Hot topics” in the veterinary profession? As we do not assess applicants’ personal statements, we will also ask you questions about your experiences and interests that applicants typically include in their personal statement.

Q. How are international students interviewed?
A. International students are welcome to attend Interviews in Liverpool in person. Otherwise, telephone interviews, which try to emulate the face to face interview experience as closely as possible, are conducted for International students. Applicants from EU countries are expected to attend the interviews in Liverpool in person.
The BVSc course

Q. Can vet students study abroad?
A. There are opportunities to study abroad within the BVSc course at Liverpool, either as part of the Extra-Mural Studies, to complete part of your clinical training at a partner vet school in Europe through the Erasmus programme, or to spend a Year in China at The University of Liverpool’s campus XJTLU (Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University) in Suzhou, near Shanghai. The Year in China programme is not veterinary related, but introduces you to Chinese language and culture. https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/goabroad/year-in-china/

Q. What are the teaching group sizes on the BVSc course?
A. The group size varies with the type of learning activity; approximately half of the timetabled activities are lectures or classes in which the whole year group is involved. The remainder of the activities are in smaller groups, which vary in size; many activities are in groups of 25-30, or smaller, for example in clinical scenarios students work in small teams of 5 or 6, but also then come together with half the year group to review the case. Rotation (clinical teaching) groups are of three or four students per group.

Q. How much time do students spend at Leahurst in the first three years?
A. Students in the first three years are primarily based on the Liverpool campus. The following activities take place at Leahurst: animal handling classes, necropsy classes, clinical exam practice, and some research projects. Many student social events are held at Leahurst and are a good way for students from all years to meet.

Q. How many weeks of EMS are required during the BVSc course?
A. The current RCVS requirement is for 12 weeks animal husbandry and 26 weeks clinical experience to be completed over the five year degree. See http://www.rcvs.org.uk/education/accrediting-primary-qualifications/accrediting-veterinary-degrees/extra-mural-studies-ems/