



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

School of Biological Sciences

Veterinary Students Handbook



Image description: Spiral DNA Sculpture in Clare College garden

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Veterinary Medicine Students Handbook

VetST Part IA and IB

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Veterinary Medicine at Cambridge

Welcome to Cambridge, and congratulations on gaining a place to study veterinary medicine. This is an exciting time; the next step to becoming vets. Our role is to support and assist you as you develop from bright, passionate students to skilled, professional, and empathetic vets.

I oversee the first two years of the course (known as 'the pre-clinical years'); these provide you with a thorough grounding in scientific knowledge alongside behavioural, psychological, and social sciences. Once you complete the pre-clinical course (and for students on the standard course, the Part II year) you will enter the clinical course.

I hope that your time at Cambridge is a rewarding one, it will be busy and at times challenging, but we are here to support you. Please reach out to us if you have any concerns, our contact details are in the 'Support' section.

We look forward to welcoming you at the start of new academic year.

Dr Holly Canuto

Director of Pre-Clinical Education, Medical and Veterinary Sciences Tripos



Image description: Graduating students in gowns

Aims of the First Two Years of your Veterinary Education

Our continuously evolving understanding of basic sciences fundamentally underpins the practice of veterinary medicine. The first two years of your veterinary medical course is designed not only to give you a thorough knowledge and understanding of that core science but also to make you aware that because this is continually changing, you will need to engage with life-long learning throughout your professional career. These first two years contain much material which will be built upon in your clinical years – a spiral approach to learning and understanding reflected in the spiral of the DNA model on the cover of this handbook!

The clinical curriculum at Cambridge builds on the pre-clinical curriculum. You will need to draw on biochemical knowledge to understand the metabolic diseases of cattle and sheep, physiological knowledge as you monitor a dog experiencing renal failure in the intensive care unit, and neurophysiological/anatomical knowledge when explaining the uncontrolled twitching in the hind leg of a thoroughbred horse. In addition to technical skills, other skills including communication and animal handling are essential for a veterinarian. We expect you to practise and develop these skills through supervisions arranged by your college and through Extra-Mural Studies (EMS). Do make the most of supervisions - they are not just teaching sessions but active learning sessions, and learning requires self-expression.

Although most of the teaching that you receive during the first two years is under the supervision of the Faculty Board of Biology, working through the Director of Education for the Medical Sciences Tripos (MedST), and Veterinary Sciences Tripos (VetST), (Dr Holly Canuto), it is the Faculty Board of Veterinary Medicine, and the Associate Clinical Dean at the Veterinary School (Prof Jane Dobson) who are formally responsible for overseeing professional aspects of the veterinary curriculum. Holly and Jane work closely together to ensure co-ordination between the Tripos (BA science degree) and VetMB (professional degree) requirements. The overall six-year course is overseen by the Veterinary Education Committee whose membership includes representatives of both the above Faculties.

Code of Conduct

Fitness for Practice, Health and Conduct: Guidance for Veterinary Students

As members of the University, veterinary students are subject to the statutory provisions of University discipline as set out in the [Statutes and Ordinances](#). In addition, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and the University expect all veterinary students to behave in a manner appropriate to their future role as veterinarians.

The University has agreed a Code of Conduct for veterinary students to guide you during your studies. The Code of Conduct, which details the conduct expected of you, together with some guidance notes, shown in this document.

Veterinary students are required to confirm their acceptance of the University's Veterinary Student Code of Conduct and of the rules to be observed by veterinary students by signing the Veterinary Student Register form. A copy of the Veterinary Student Register form is on pages 39-40 at the end of this document, serving as a reminder of the standards you should follow.

At the start of the course you will be issued a copy to sign and return. Please read this carefully before you sign it; the RCVS expects qualified veterinary surgeons, and veterinary students, to conduct themselves in full accordance with what they have signed.

It is important that you are aware that students whose health or conduct may lead them to be a risk to patients, clients or Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) placement providers, or who breach the Code of Conduct for other reasons, may be removed temporarily or permanently, from the Veterinary Student Register. They may not be permitted to enter VetMB examinations leading to the award of the VetMB degree and registration with the RCVS. The RCVS requires veterinary graduates to confirm that they have “no convictions, cautions or other adverse findings” at the point of registering with RCVS as a qualified veterinary surgeon.

Responsibilities

All University and college staff, and fellow veterinary students, have a duty, in the public interest, to report matters that may affect a student's fitness to practise, to the Associate Clinical Dean in the Department of Veterinary Medicine. Matters may be referred if they concern poor academic progression, serious conduct issues, or low-level conduct issues that continue over a long period. Health concerns will not normally require referral unless there are serious concerns over fitness to practise, but will be referred under other circumstances, where students have agreed to disclosure. Students are strongly encouraged to disclose health concerns to their College Tutor, Director of Studies and to the Associate Clinical Dean at the vet school, so that support to aid learning can be provided.

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and the University expect veterinary students to behave in a manner appropriate to their future role as veterinarians.

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Schools Council have published a fitness to practise guide for UK veterinary schools and veterinary students. Part two of the guide sets out the broad principles of fitness to practise that students should follow, and which veterinary schools should expect and uphold. It is important that you read and understand the practise guide from the [Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons](#).

You agreed by signing the University Matriculation form to abide by the statutory provisions of University Discipline as set out in the Statutes & Ordinances: [Statute D of Discipline, the University Courts and Disciplinary Panels](#) and [Special Ordinances under Statute D](#).

You may be referred to the [University's Fitness to Practise Procedure](#) to answer grave concerns relating to your behaviour.

The University has agreed a Code of Conduct for veterinary students to guide you during your studies and to ensure that you meet the standards to be fit to practise. The conduct expected of you, together with guidance notes, is explained below.

You are required to confirm your agreement to abide by the University's Veterinary Student Code of Conduct by signing the Veterinary Student Register form, which imposes important obligations

Responsibilities

on you. When you have signed the Register form your name will be placed on the University's Veterinary Student Register.

It is important that you are aware that if your health or conduct demonstrate that you may be a risk to patients, clients or Extra-Mural Studies placement providers, you may be referred to the Veterinary Fitness to Practise Committee. This may result in temporary, or permanent, removal from the Veterinary Student Register, as a consequence of which you will not be permitted to enter the Final VetMB examinations for the award of the VetMB degree and registration with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons unless reinstated on the Register.

You may also be removed from the Veterinary Student Register if you fail all statutory attempts at 2nd VetMB or Final VetMB examinations.

Referral to the Fitness to Practise Committee may result in sanctions ranging from admonition to special conditions placed upon you as an individual, and may lead to you losing a full year of study if the Fitness to Practise Procedure is prolonged. You should be clear that if you are found to be unfit to practise this is a career-ending situation.

A copy of the Register form is included in this handbook. You will be issued with a copy to sign and hand in at the beginning of your first year of pre-clinical studies, and again at the beginning of your fourth and sixth years of clinical training. The copy in this booklet serves as a reminder of the standards that you have agreed to follow.

Veterinary Student Code of Conduct

Be considerate of others: clients, University and college staff, staff at EMS host practices and fellow students

Treat others with politeness and consideration, be considerate of their views and listen to them.

Be an effective and considerate communicator

Responsibilities

Guidance note

In your dealings with, or in relation to clients, teachers and colleagues, act without any discrimination, whether on grounds of age, colour, disability, gender, illness, marital status, national or ethnic origins, nationality, perceived economic worth, race, sexual orientation, social status, religious or philosophical belief.

- Always make clear that you are a student and not a qualified vet; be aware of your limitations and do not exceed your ability when giving information to clients.
- Understand, accept and agree to be bound by the principle of confidentiality of patient data and information concerning staff and other students.
- Ensure that you can be easily contacted by University and Veterinary Hospital staff and always reply promptly to all communications.
- Do not use mobile electronic devices or cloud locations to store patient information.
- Do not post images of clients' animals on outward-facing social media unless you have obtained, in writing, their explicit, informed consent and then only for the exact purposes to which they have agreed.

Guidance note

- Contribute to the review of teaching by completing feedback forms as requested by Course Organisers and report any teaching issues through the appropriate channels, e.g. student year rep, Tutorial Office.
- Do not discuss clients or their animals with other students or professionals outside the clinical setting, except anonymously. When recording data or discussing cases outside the clinical setting, ensure that clients and patients

Responsibilities

cannot be identified by others.

- Do not use mobile electronic devices – cameras, mobile phones, discs, data-sticks – or cloud locations to store patient images and other information. You are permitted to use your mobile phone to take pictures of patients/lesions and to download them to the patient file, but these images should then be deleted from your phone.
- Never use e-mail, social networking sites, blogs, Twitter, Facebook etc. to share information about clients or patients with others: this is a disciplinary offence (see RCVS ruling; Vet Record 2019; 184: 538).

Abide by rules and policies, follow procedures and guidelines

You must be aware of and comply with the rules, policies (including health and safety), procedures and guidelines of the University, Colleges, the Queen's Veterinary School Hospital and Extra Mural Studies placements.

Guidance note

- Comply with rules and procedures laid down by the Director of Education (Medical and Veterinary), in the Faculty of Biology, Associate Clinical Dean in the Department of Veterinary Medicine, EMS placement providers, Head Nurse or their deputies.
- Attend at the times and hours directed by them and as required to gain experience of emergency situations. As a veterinary surgeon you will have to make decisions not to go to places at the times you would like because of your clinical duties. You have a responsibility to yourself, your financial sponsors and your future patients to complete your rotations and EMS placements.

Responsibilities

Be open and honest

Do not break the law. Never threaten violence, act violently towards others or bully, harass, manipulate or exploit others; do not act dishonestly. Such behaviours may lead to referral to the Veterinary Fitness to Practise procedure.

Guidance note

- A criminal conviction could jeopardise your career prospects in veterinary medicine.
- Inform the Associate Clinical Dean in the Department of Veterinary Medicine immediately if you are involved in any University or police investigation which may lead to charges being brought; concealment of involvement in a drunken brawl that may lead to prosecution may be viewed as an even greater offence than the incident itself.
- Be considerate of others at all times, and reflect on how your behaviour might impact on them; remember that bullying and harassment is defined as behaviour that is unwelcome or unwanted by the recipient.
- Avoid any concerns of plagiarism or other academic misconduct (gaining or attempting to gain, for oneself or for others, an unfair advantage in any aspect of formal assessment): Be sure you understand University guidance on this matter: [Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct](#). Cheating, at any level, destroys trust and those who cheat may also lie and be unfit for veterinary practice.
- Do not misuse information and do not falsify or falsely sign documents.

Comply with appropriate current and any new health-testing requirements

Be aware of potential zoonotic infections and comply with control procedures.

Take care of your appearance

Responsibilities

Your appearance, personal hygiene and demeanour should always be modest and reasonably conventional.

Guidance note

- The appearance of a veterinary student or veterinary practitioner should not be such as to potentially affect a client's trust in that person's veterinary judgement or standing.
- Always wear an identification badge so that you can be identified by clients, teachers and staff.
- When examining patients in any clinical setting, observe the appropriate clinical dress code as laid down for the establishment or placement in which you are working.

Take action at an early stage when any problem arises and when fitness to practise may be compromised

Inform the Associate Clinical Dean at the Department of Veterinary Medicine or a College Tutor immediately if you become aware of any problem (personally or in others) that may put the health or well-being of clients or their animals at risk, or call into question their fitness to practise.

Guidance note

- Veterinary Medicine is a demanding profession and, at times, all veterinary students are subject to stress and anxiety; emotional problems and psychiatric conditions such as depression and eating disorders are not uncommon; do not hesitate in seeking support. The earlier a problem is addressed, the greater the likelihood of a successful outcome.
- Seek advice if you think another student or a veterinary surgeon or has behaved in a way that suggests that they are not fit for practice. Examples of

Responsibilities

such behaviour include:

- making serious or repeated mistakes in diagnosing or treating a patient's condition
- not examining patients properly or responding to reasonable requests by owners for treatment for their animals
- misusing information about patients
- treating patients without properly obtaining the owner's consent
- posting pictures, information or comments about farmers, clients or their animals on social media sites
- behaving dishonestly in financial matters, or in dealing with clients, patients, or research
- displaying disruptive, abusive, manipulative or violent behaviour towards others
- making improper advances towards clients
- misusing alcohol or drugs

Do not abuse drugs and alcohol

Guidance note

- Abuse of alcohol and other mind-altering substances may lead to behaviour that puts clients or patients at risk; problems associated with such abuse, e.g. violent and aggressive behaviour, may jeopardise your career.

Responsibilities

- Never obtain or seek to obtain drugs that have not been properly prescribed, prescription or non-prescription, for yourself or others by any means.

Course Outline

The table below provides an overview of the three stages of learning on the 6 year course (pre-clinical, third year Tripos specialised study, and clinical). Year 3 is not taken by affiliated students who already have a degree.

Year of Study	What you will study	Subjects and Courses	Qualifications Obtained
Year 1 - VetST IA	Veterinary science knowledge	Veterinary relevant core scientific knowledge and skills	2nd VetMB, Tripos IA
Year 2 - VetST IB			2nd VetMB, Tripos IB
Year 3 - Part II	Part II course of specialised study	A wide range of courses and subjects (other Tripos courses are also available)	BA
Years 4 - 6	Clinical veterinary studies in Cambridge	Clinical veterinary medicine, leading to the development of skills and knowledge in a range of specialities and species	Final VetMB

What Next?

On completion of the course, students are awarded the degree of VetMB and eligibility for membership of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) – which entitles them to work as veterinary surgeons in the UK, EU, (Brexit terms allowing), South Africa, Australasia and other countries with which the RCVS has a specific agreement. Many of our graduates go into clinical practice but many also go on to further specialist study, work within academia, industry, government, or charities.

The Course in Detail

Years 1 & 2 will provide you with the scientific knowledge and understanding of the animal body that underpins clinical work. You are also introduced to the many non-scientific aspects of being a veterinary professional.

Course

First Year (Part IA)

Core Science modules:

Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology (VAP) – layout and function of body structures

Molecules in Medical Science (MIMS) – chemical and molecular mechanisms underlying the function of the body

Histology and Homeostasis (HIS/HOM) – mechanisms underlying communication/maintenance of a stable internal environment within the body

Clinical and Professional Strand modules:

Foundations of Evidence Based Practice (FEBP) – basic concepts of epidemiology and biostatistics as tools for critical assessment of the quality of scientific evidence and inferences drawn from scientific data.

Principles of Animal Management (PAM) – introduction to animal husbandry and nutrition including practical animal training.

Principles of Animal Management:

This course is designed to provide basic animal health/handling/nutrition teaching and to ensure that students obtain maximum benefit from their pre-clinical Extra-Mural Studies (EMS). The aims of the course are to provide you with an understanding of UK agriculture and the roles of veterinary surgeons within that industry. The course consists of lectures, seminars, practicals and computer assisted learning (CAL) packages available from veterinary school's website. The course will also highlight some of the risks of working with animals on farms. The animal handling practicals will be held at the Department of Veterinary Medicine, the University Farm and at the Milton Campus of the University of West Anglia. Transport to the latter will be provided.

Course

Attendance at a health and safety briefing given at the beginning of your first term and related to risks of working on farms is **compulsory**. Failure to attend will mean that you will not be permitted to undertake EMS.

Documentary evidence of satisfactory attendance at all the animal handling practical sessions in the first term must be provided before you can sit the Principles of Animal Management exam.

Following training, satisfactory evidence of animal handling practical skills must be demonstrated before you can undertake pre-clinical EMS.

Second Year (Part IB)

Core Science modules:

Mechanisms of Drug Action (MoDA) – mechanisms of drug action upon the body

Biology of Disease (BOD) – processes underlying disease and their effects on cells, tissues and organs

Veterinary Reproductive Biology (VRB) – the structure and function of the reproductive system

Neurobiology and Animal Behaviour (NAB) – the structure and function of the sense organs and central nervous system and their role in determining animal behaviour

Comparative Vertebrate Biology (CVB) – the anatomy and biology of non-mammalian vertebrates and “exotic” mammalian species.

Clinical and Professional Strand module:

Preparing for the Veterinary Profession (PfVP) – introduction to aspects of the veterinary profession, professional ethics, communication skills, and the role of the veterinary surgeon in protecting human health. This course aims to give you an introduction to ethical issues

Course

encountered in professional practice, communicating effectively with clients, and the social and professional responsibilities of the vet within society (nationally and internationally) as you transition from academic preparation to practising within the profession.

Third Year (Part II)

An advantage of Cambridge is this year of specialist study choosing one of a wide range of subjects outside the typical veterinary medicine curriculum. Options vary from more science-related subjects such as Zoology, Pathology and Physiology, to less science-related subjects such as History and Philosophy of Science or Management Studies. At the end of this third year, you receive a BA (Hons) degree. Your Director of Studies and the "Subjects Fair" in March of your second year will help you make the decision about what to study. If you are an affiliated student (who came to us already holding a science degree), you skip this year but still receive a BA(Ord) degree.

4th, 5th, 6th Years - The Clinical Years

The clinical training in the fourth and fifth year is an integrated teaching programme based on a matrix of modules covering medicine, surgery and reproduction in three species-based themes (equine, farm animal, small animal), body and subject disciplines (e.g. surgery, cardiology, diagnostic imaging), alongside small-group practical work. The practical work is done on a rotational basis and deals with aspects such as clinical methods, performing post-mortems, radiography, clinical pathology and animal breeding, obstetrics and gynaecology. These practical sessions are supported by a Clinical Skills Centre to which students have 24/7 access. Regular formal assessment takes the form of modular exams at the end of each term, the aim being to encourage steady work and personal development; students need to pass all these modular exams (Final Veterinary Examination Part I) to be eligible to progress into final year.

The lecture-free 40-week final year of the clinical course consists of small group rotational work in the clinics of the Department of Veterinary Medicine. There is an increasing emphasis on students taking responsibility for their learning and development, with case and client management under supervision. During this period, some of the rotations will take place during University vacations

Course

and some periods of Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) can be scheduled during University term time. Continuous assessment forms an important part of this rotational work and students must achieve a satisfactory level of performance in all their final year rotations before they are eligible to sit the Final VetMB Examination Part III that completes the course at the end of the final year. On passing this exam, students are then eligible to register as members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS).

There is a proportion of student-selected (“elective”) work in the clinical course which is carried out during the 4th-6th years of the course; students conduct a clinically oriented VetMB research project in a chosen area and a 4-week tracking period of more in-depth exploration of a subject area after the Part II examinations in their penultimate year. The VetMB research project is assessed within the Final Veterinary Examination Part III.

Extra-Mural Studies

The RCVS requires all veterinary students in UK veterinary schools to complete periods of animal husbandry-related and clinically-focused Extra-Mural Studies (EMS), a minimum of twelve weeks pre-clinical and twenty-six weeks clinical EMS.

Each student will be allocated a Veterinary School Clinical Supervisor (VSCS) who will advise on EMS, both in pre-clinical and clinical parts of the course. If you have not been contacted by your VSCS before the end of the second week of term please contact Katheryn Ayres (kma28@cam.ac.uk). Your VSCS should meet with you at least once per term.

You will need to submit a report on visits to each farm as well as certificates from all placements to demonstrate your attendance. The submission deadline for pre-clinical EMS reports and certificates is by the end of the first week of Easter Term of 3rd year (2nd year for affiliated students).

Course Organisers

VetST Part IA (2023-24)

Name of Course	Organiser and Department	Email address
Histology	Prof. N. Brown (PDN)	nb117@cam.ac.uk
Homeostasis (HOM)	Dr J. Fraser (PDN)	jaf21@cam.ac.uk
Foundations of Evidence Based Practice (FEBP)	Dr M. Fortune (Public Health and Primary Care)	mdf34@medschl.cam.ac.uk
Molecules in Medical Science (MIMS)	Dr D. Nietlispach (Biochemistry)	dn206@cam.ac.uk
Principles of Animal Management (PAM)	Dr G. Pearce (Veterinary Medicine)	gpp28@cam.ac.uk
Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology (VAP)	Prof. D. Bainbridge (PDN)	db125@cam.ac.uk

VetST Part IB (2023-24)

Name of Course	Organiser and Department	Email address
Biology of Disease (BOD)	Dr C. Crump (Pathology)	cmc56@cam.ac.uk
Comparative Vertebrate Biology (CVB)	Prof. K. Franze (PDN)	kf284@cam.ac.uk
Mechanisms of Drug Action (MODA)	Dr P. Miller (Pharmacology)	pm676@cam.ac.uk
Neurobiology and Animal Behaviour (NAB)	Dr H. Matthews Dr S. Edgley (PDN)	hrm1@cam.ac.uk sae1000@cam.ac.uk
Preparing for the Veterinary Profession (PfVP)	Prof. A. Hollis (Veterinary Medicine)	arh207@cam.ac.uk
Veterinary Reproductive Biology (VRB)	Prof. D. Bainbridge (PDN)	db125@cam.ac.uk

Study Skills

University is not like school. There are significant differences between the way you were taught at school and the way you will learn at University, and sometimes you may feel confused by the transition. In order to help you with this, you will be asked to attend an academic induction session at the start of Michaelmas Term in your first year.

In place of relatively small school classes, information at University is delivered by means of lectures, which can be to groups of over 300 students. Most lecturers will issue hand-outs (some of which will be available online only, via the University's virtual learning environment, Moodle) and live recordings may become available for some lectures, but you will also need to develop your listening, concentration and note-taking skills to get the best out of the lecture experience. The material will be delivered quickly, and it is then up to you to understand and assimilate it; you are also expected to read further material on the subject matter. The information you are provided within lectures will be developed and set in context in practical classes. Although some practical classes may be large, you will work in small groups with demonstrators on hand to help and answer questions. These practical sessions are vital to your education and attendance is mandatory.

The College supervision system is there to complement the formal teaching and the onus is very much on you to make use of it, and to develop study and time management skills to help you assimilate, and master, the material. College supervisions will play a very important part in your education. Make them interactive and take full advantage of them to ask questions about any parts of the course you need help with.

You will need to use the internet to consult library catalogues, past examination papers, databases of scientific literature - and much more. The departments that deliver your teaching provide supplementary information on Moodle (a virtual learning environment), and the [Faculty of Biology website](#) also provides a lot of basic information. You need to be aware that the University takes plagiarism very seriously, and you can [read more about this on the Faculty website](#).

Biological Sciences Libraries support

Throughout your studies you will be supported primarily by your College Librarians but there is also a Biological Sciences Libraries Team. The Team can be found in different libraries across Cambridge and you can discover more about where to find them on the [Biological Sciences Libraries website](#).

They can help you with a lot of things including getting access to resources to support your studies such as books, articles, databases and much more. They can chat about your work through one to one meetings as well as in their teaching sessions where they will help you develop many of the skills you'll need for managing your studies at Cambridge. They will also see you in some timetabled sessions as part of your lectures.

You can get in touch with any questions you might have: sbslibraries@lib.cam.ac.uk.

Attendance

Attending lectures and practicals in person provides a social aspect to learning which has significant benefits that are lost when relying on lecture recordings. Lecture recordings should be used as an adjunct rather than primary source of learning. However, if you are unwell or unable to attend then they can be used to ensure that you can access the learning materials.

Diligent attendance is a requirement of the Faculty Board of Biology as you will need a record of diligent attendance to permit you to take the 2nd MB examinations. Attendance at practical classes and seminars in particular is recorded and, if your attendance at these classes falls below 80%, your progression in the course and professional future will be in jeopardy. The required attendance level for PAM includes 100% attendance of animal handling classes and for PfVP, attendance at all seminars and practicals.

If there is a good reason why you are unable to attend a practical class then you must tell your Director of Studies or Tutor immediately. You must also inform the department, the contact details for this will be found on the individual course VLE (Moodle). It may be possible for you to do the

Course

practical at some other time. Organisers of practical classes will notify students and their Colleges if a student's attendance record is unsatisfactory. If you have been requested to sign in via an app and you are unable to do so, you must inform the classroom technician at the time so they can log your attendance.

Some lectures and seminars (e.g. some of the PfVP course) and practicals (e.g. PAM, PfVP) are delivered at the Veterinary School, a 10-12 minute cycle ride from the centre of Cambridge. There are a number of catering facilities adjacent to the veterinary school on the West Cambridge Site.

Assessment and Exams

Courses have been designed to allow students, wherever possible, to learn for themselves rather than being passive recipients of instruction. You will get far more out of your course, and are more likely to do well in your exams, if you regard university as an opportunity to study what interests you, rather than just learning a syllabus to pass an exam.

You will encounter two kinds of assessment:

- Formative assessment is an informal, continuous review of progress. For example, you will receive extensive constructive feedback on your work in college supervisions. There are seven in-person formative assessments across the anatomy-related courses in the first two years.
- Summative assessment is your formal end of year exams - many of which take place at the end of the first and second academic years, in late May and early June. You are studying for two qualifications simultaneously :
 - The '2nd VetMB' is necessary for you to proceed to professional qualification
 - The 'Tripos' determines your class of university BA degree – first, 2.1 and so on.

Some courses (PAM, FEBP and PfVP) contribute only to the VetMB qualification, not Tripos, and take place earlier in the academic year – late in Lent Term.

Course

In each of the first and second year exams, there are three sections to the summative assessment of each of the three-to-five major scientific courses you will study:

- Section I papers are one-hour theory exams based mainly on lecture material and consists of short answer questions or multiple choice questions (MCQs).
- Section II papers are one or two-hour practical exams based mainly on practical material covered. In some subjects, Sections I and II are combined into a single exam.

Please note, Sections I and II contribute to both professional qualification and your degree class. Because these 2nd VetMB exams contribute to a professional qualification, you are expected to pass them by demonstrating a good knowledge and understanding of the full range of the subject material. Furthermore, you will be expected not merely to know this material but, more importantly, to understand it and apply that understanding to the solving of problems.

You must pass all 2nd VetMB courses to progress onto the clinical part of the course. If you do not pass one, you are allowed one further attempt in September. Students are permitted only these two attempts at 2nd VetMB examinations unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as illness or another good cause. In this case, your College must apply on your behalf for a further attempt to the Faculty Board of Veterinary Medicine.

Finally, Section III is a two or three-hour exam consisting of essay questions from a wide range of topics. This section contributes (along with Section I and II marks) toward your Tripos degree qualification, not your professional VetMB. To do well in the Tripos, you will need to show a deeper understanding of the material, and be able to marshal facts into coherent arguments.

You should remember you would be expected to know more than just enough to pass exams when working as an excellent professional veterinary surgeon!

In addition to the main science courses, there are three courses: Principles of Animal Management, Foundations of Evidence-Based Practice (both in 1st year) and Preparing for the Veterinary Profession (2nd year), which are only assessed for the 2nd VetMB and not Tripos. Assessments in the these subjects take place earlier in the academic year – usually late in Lent

Course

Term.

Further details of these exams and how they relate to the course can be found in the tables at the end of this section and on the [VetST website](#).

Course

Year One Examination Summary

Course	Exam Paper Structure		Material Examined	Assessment		Exam format	Notes
	Section	Time		2nd Vet MB	Tripos		
Homeostasis (HOM) and Histology	Section I	1 h	Lecture Material	2nd Vet MB	Tripos	MCQs or short notes	Sections I & III taken as a single 3 hour paper
	Section II	2 h	Practical material	2nd Vet MB	Tripos	Practical questions (by MCQs)	
	Section III	2 h	Whole course		Tripos	Essay questions	
Molecules in Medical Sciences (MIMS)	Section I	1 h	Lecture Material	2nd Vet MB	Tripos	MCQs	
	Section II	2 h	Practical material	2nd Vet MB	Tripos	Practical questions	
	Section III	2 h	Whole course		Tripos	Essay questions	
Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology (VAP)	Section I	1 h	Lecture Material	2nd Vet MB	Tripos	MCQs	Section I & III taken as a single 3 h paper
	Section II	2 h	Practical material	2nd Vet MB	Tripos	Practical questions (short notes and MCQs)	
	Section III	2 h	Whole course		Tripos	Essay questions	
Foundations of Evidence Based Practice (FEBP)	One paper	45 min		2nd Vet MB		MCQs	
Principles of Animal Management (PAM)	One paper	1 h		2nd Vet MB		MCQs	

Notes

Histology is examined as part of the Homeostasis practical.

The regulations for VetST IA stipulate that each subject of the IA examination should carry the same marks. [Form and Conduct notices](#) describe in detail the format of each examination.

Course

Year Two Examination Summary

Course	Exam Paper Structure		Material Examined	Assessment		Exam format	Notes
Biology of Disease (BOD)	Section I	1 ½ h	Lecture Material	2nd VetMB	Tripes	MCQs	Sections I & III taken as a single 3 ½ h paper
	Section II	2 h	Practical material	2nd VetMB	Tripes	Practical questions	
	Section III	2 h	Whole course		Tripes	Essay questions	
Mechanisms of Drug Action (MODA)	Section I	1 ½ h	Lecture Material	2nd VetMB	Tripes	MCQs	Sections I & III taken as a single 3 ½ h paper
	Section II	1 h	Practical material	2nd VetMB	Tripes	Practical questions	
	Section III	3 h	Whole course		Tripes	Essay questions	
Neurobiology and Animal Behaviour (NAB)	Section I	1 h	Lecture Material	2nd VetMB	Tripes	Short answer questions	Sections I & III taken as a single 3 hour paper
	Section II	1 h	Practical material	2nd VetMB	Tripes	Practical questions	
	Section III	2 h	Whole course		Tripes	Essay questions	
Veterinary Reproductive Biology (VRB)	Sections I & II	1 ½ h	Whole course	2nd VetMB	Tripes	Steeple chase	
	Section III	1 ½ h	Whole course		Tripes	Essay questions	
Comparative Vertebrate Biology (CVB)	1st paper	1 ½ h		2nd VetMB	Tripes	Steeple chase	
	2nd paper	1 ½ h			Tripes	Essay questions	
Preparing for the Veterinary Profession (PfVP)	One paper	45 min		2nd VetMB		MCQs	

Notes

The regulations for VetST IB stipulate that the proportions in which marks achieved in each subject at IB contribute to the overall grade classification for that year's exams should be in the following proportions:

Course

Biology of Disease 10

Comparative Vertebrate Biology 8

Neurobiology and Animal Behaviour 10

Veterinary Reproductive Biology 8

Mechanisms of Drug Action 10

[Form and Conduct notices](#) describe in detail the format of each examination.

Costs

In addition to standard living costs, vet students should expect to have to meet some extra costs. Estimated costs below are subject to change. **Details and methods of payment for the below will be confirmed and announced in due course.**

An announcement will be made in due course as to how to purchase the following items. If you do not manage to obtain two lab coats from the vet school, you must purchase them during the Molecules in Medical Science (MIMS) lab coat session

Two Lab coats (Vet students need a second lab coat for dissection)	£15.60
	each
Wellington boots (with toe protector) (from Vet School stores)	£19.64
Overall (boiler suit) (from Vet School stores)	£23.40
Waterproof trousers (from Vet School stores)	£10.20
Dissection kit, gloves, safety glasses, loan of locker and key, loan of dog skeleton	£35.00
(allocated in a timetabled session – more information in Wednesday introductory talk)	

Lab Coats

You will be expected to have two lab coats. These can be purchased before arrival from external suppliers or from the University during your scheduled Molecules in Medical Science (MIMS) lab coat sessions which occur in the first week of Michaelmas term. [This can be pre-paid online.](#)

Course

You will also have the option to pay by card on collection.

Lab coats purchased before arrival must be clean, full-length (down to your knees), high collar, close-able, and white with pockets.

Paper Handouts

Printed handouts are not provided for lectures in some of the 1st and 2nd year courses (unless students have a particular learning needs requirement for printed notes); materials for all lectures will be available on line.

Laptop requirements

The Faculty Board of Biology has issued minimum specification guidelines for laptops that relates to the materials it provides:

- Windows: 7, 8, and 10 on 64-bit platforms
- macOS: OS X 10.14 and higher
- CPUs newer than 2011 (Intel Sandy Bridge or newer)
- 10 MBs of disk space
- Web camera and microphone (internal or external)
- A broadband internet connection (0.15Mbps upload speed)

Note: Our Exam Portal does not run on Google Chromebooks, virtual machines, machines running Linux, tablets, or mobile phones.

Additional Costs for Clinical Years

The following items will be required later in the first year:

Course

University approved calculator (Casio FX991/FX115/FX570 or Texas Instruments BA II Plus / Texas Instruments BA II Professional)	£14.00
EMS (pre-clinical) 12 weeks practical vacation experience with animals, particularly farm animals. BVA insurance cover at a cost of £42.00 per annum, will be met by the Veterinary School. You should enquire via your College's website, or your College Tutor, about the availability of grants to support course-related travel and work experience.	Variable

Fourth year students are expected to purchase the equipment items below from the Department's Stores Office for practical/clinical rotation work during term time and for EMS use in the vacations (please note that the Veterinary Department's Stores do not stock 'Yard Boots').

In addition to the list below, students will be required to purchase white theatre shoes (~£26.10) and protective clothing to be worn in theatre (~£6.18) prior to starting their 6th year rotations.

Locker padlock- (combination lock)	£8.36
Stethoscope (basic - many students purchase a higher quality one, and fob-watch for use in theatre, later in clinical course via Student Society)	£4.50
Digital thermometer	£5.40
6" scissors, curved on flat	£2.90
Spencer Wells forceps, 5"	£3.84
Pen torch	£1.58
Dog lead (red)	£1.43
Hoof pick	£0.69
Nail clippers, stainless steel (each)	£10.00
'Yard Boots' (steel toe-capped leather boots)	Purchase your own
EMS - 26 weeks required by RCVS - variable depending on chosen placements (Grants are available to assist with costs)	Variable
BVA insurance cover, at a cost of £42.00 per annum, will be met by the Veterinary School, for 4th, 5th and 6th year students	

Feedback and Representation

Student Feedback and Representation

Course Organisers will actively solicit opinions from you about the teaching you receive. We do change our teaching as a response to comments and suggestions made by previous students, and you owe it to those coming after you to respond to questionnaires, so that those responsible for organising the teaching know when something is right, and when something could be improved. When you complete a teaching questionnaire, please try to be honest, informative, polite and constructive.

Course liaison committees have student representatives and it is at this level that most of the useful work is done in providing and contextualising feedback to those who teach from those who are learning.

The Faculty Board has student representatives, and we hope that some of you will contribute through this means of discussion. The vet student elected to the Faculty Board also sits on the Veterinary Education Committee, which maintains an overview of Cambridge veterinary education from admission to qualification. There is also a Faculty Committee, the Med and VetST Part I Committee, which oversees VetST IA and IB, and includes student representatives. Please feel free to take any thoughts you have about the course to your student representatives.

Concerns about Other Students/Members of Staff

The Veterinary Student Code of Conduct requires students to 'take action at an early stage when any problem arises'. All veterinary students should seek advice from their College Tutor or Director of Studies if they think another veterinary student has behaved in such a way that suggests he or she is disrupting the studies of fellow students and/or whose attitudes, conduct or behaviour brings into question whether they are fit to practise as veterinary surgeons in a professional manner.

Examples of such behaviour include:

- Behaviour, in whatever form, that adversely affects themselves or other students or staff;

Course

- misusing information about clients;
- treating animals without properly obtaining consent;
- posting material about farmers, clients or their animals or other students' studies on social media sites without written permission;
- behaving dishonestly in financial matters, or in dealings with clients, or research;
- making sexual advances towards clients;
- misusing alcohol or drugs.

Complaints about the Course

If you have problems with the organisation of a particular course, you should communicate this to the Course Organiser. You can also tell student representatives who sit on the management committee for the course to raise the problem on your behalf.

Problems with the teaching provided for you by your College should be raised with your Director of Studies, if that fails, with your Tutor or with the Senior Tutor.

Complaints about Exams

Any complaints about the conduct or the results of examinations must be raised in the first instance with your College Tutor - please do not directly contact any examiners. It is your Tutor's responsibility to advise on these matters. Cambridge exam rules and regulations make provision for cases of illness or other misfortune, and if you encounter any such impediments to exam preparation, the sooner you inform your College Tutor the better. All liaison between a student and the central administration of examinations must be conducted through your College Tutor.

Cambridge Culture

The Complementary Roles of the University and the Colleges

Cambridge is a collegiate university, and responsibility for your education is shared between the University and your College.

Within the University, the Faculty of Biology is responsible for organising your teaching for the first three years. You will undergo practicals and lectures from staff of six departments: Biochemistry; Genetics; Pathology; Pharmacology; Physiology, Development and Neuroscience (PDN) and Veterinary Medicine. Departments will provide course online handbooks for each of the courses you take, and these will include details of the arrangements for lectures and practical classes in that subject, and detailed guidance about the form and conduct of examinations. [More information, especially on timetables, is available on the Faculty of Biology website](#) and you should become accustomed to consulting it.

This teaching will be augmented and enhanced by small-group teaching (supervisions) organised by your College. These help with academic work, but also communication and writing skills. Your college Director of Studies will get to know you as an individual, and will organise the provision of Supervisions to support and enhance the formal teaching given by departments. Your College Supervisors, Director of Studies and Tutor provide a unique pastoral network designed to support your studies at Cambridge.

Student Societies

Within Cambridge there are societies organised by, and run for, veterinary students. Here are 'welcome' messages from two of them:

Cambridge University Veterinary Zoological Society (CUVZS):

Are you interested in working with exotic animals, zoo animals or wildlife? The Cambridge University Veterinary Zoological Society warmly welcomes all vet students to join our society and learn more about how to become an exotics vet. With fortnightly talks, weekend events and our annual symposium attended by vet students from all seven vet schools, CUVZS offers exciting opportunities to meet and learn from exotics, zoo and wildlife vets.

Cambridge University Veterinary Society (CUVS):

CUVS is the Cambridge University Veterinary Society and we are the representative body of the vet students at Cambridge. We have a 21 strong committee composed entirely of students whose main role is to act as a platform for student opinion and a source of information, advice and entertainment.

On top of this, we sit on several committees around the vet school, arrange weekly talks on topics of veterinary interest, design and order vet school 'stash' and, most importantly, organising entertainments for you, the vet students! The events we run in the year include the freshers' Cherry Party, the Keith Entwistle memorial lecture and dinner, the CUVS annual Dinner Dance and the CUVS BBQ. The committee will be introduced to you early on in your first term and one of you will even have the chance to become '1st year rep', so make sure you keep an eye out for emails and leaflets in your College pigeonholes to tell you more about it! We'll also be sending you an additional 'Freshers Handbook' from the society which will give you some advice for your first year and tell you about all that you'll be getting up to in your first few weeks at Cambridge!

Academic Support

As a veterinary student and future professional you must be prepared to take responsibility for your own actions and personal development. This means thinking about what you do and in particular, facing up to and dealing with problems in the context of your studies, work and relationships with others.

Motivational problems: are you on the right course?

If you are having serious doubts, talk about them immediately with your College Tutor, Veterinary School Clinical Supervisor (VSCS), a member of the pastoral support team, or the Associate Clinical Dean. There are individuals who suddenly realise, having got to this stage, that they now see their future differently. If you think you might want to leave the course, then don't hesitate to say so; it is never too late to change your mind, but open discussion at an early stage will help you make the right decision.

The role of the pastoral support team in the Vet School is to provide a resource for any student who is experiencing difficulties. Individual members of the pastoral support team provide non-judgemental active listening to veterinary students in their clinical years.

This support is confidential, and no information will be passed on without the permission of the person involved, unless life is at risk. For more information, please go to the [Student Wellbeing & Welfare Moodle site](#).

Are you having difficulty coping with the demands of the course?

Again, talk to your Director of Studies, College Tutor, Clinical Supervisor or a member of the pastoral support team. If you have a serious problem they will help, or in some cases direct you to sources of professional help, but they should be your first port of call.

Are you having Academic problems?

Begin by speaking to your Director of Studies who will be able to signpost you to appropriate

assistance. You can also ask teaching staff in the appropriate subject, and other University teachers can be approached if a problem remains unsolved and, in practical classes, demonstrators are on hand to deal with immediate queries. Problems with these lectures and practical sessions can be raised with those who are lecturing or running a particular class.

Monitoring and mentoring student progress

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons has certain expectations regarding the attitudes, behaviour and performance expected of veterinary students from the beginning of their course through to graduation and provisional registration and places the responsibility for monitoring this on the University.

In the University of Cambridge, much of the day-to-day responsibility for this rests with the College Tutorial and pastoral care system.

The Medical and Veterinary Student Progress Panel

The College Tutorial and pastoral system is supported by the Medical and Veterinary Student Progress Panel, which maintains a general overview of veterinary student progression throughout the pre-clinical and clinical course at Cambridge. It monitors the cases of students who, for one reason or another, may be having problems with the course. This may be because of illness, personal difficulties or due to repeated examination failures. The Medical and Veterinary Student Progress Panel consists of senior members of the School of Clinical Medicine and Department of Veterinary Medicine together with College Tutorial representatives.

In co-operation with Colleges, through the Senior Tutors and the College pastoral system, the Medical and Veterinary Student Progress Panel reviews student cases with a view to offering advice about support for students who are encountering difficulties with the course. The committee is not a disciplinary body and is set up to provide support for students and Colleges. Its remit is to ensure that students have a timely and, as far as possible, trouble-free progress through the course. A more detailed description of the [Panel and its functions can be found on the Department of Veterinary Medicine website](#) (Raven login required).

The Medical and Veterinary Progress Panel is aware of the RCVS expectations of veterinary students and it will have the option of referring cases which raise serious concerns to the Fitness to Practise Committee. [Details of the Fitness to Practise Procedures are on page 231 of the University Ordinances.](#)

Non-Academic Support

We understand that some members of the student body may encounter non-academic challenges – financial, health, emotional or family problems, for example – which can affect their wellbeing and progress on the course. There are a variety of sources of support for students within Colleges, the wider University and externally.

Support within your College

The central person in your pastoral support while at Cambridge is your Tutor, and they should usually be your first port of call with any problems you may have. This is partly because they will have training and experience in helping students, but also because they have a recognised role in the University. For example, if you have health problems which affect your performance in exams, it would be your Tutor who would be asked to write in your support. Similarly, if you wish to apply for additional funding for travel (including extramural studies) or hardship, that application would be made via your Tutor.

For all these reasons, even if you decide to seek help elsewhere (for example a self-referral to the University Counselling Service), we strongly encourage you to inform your Tutor that you are doing so. Finally, if for some reason you do not feel happy discussing a particular issue with your allocated Tutor, you can speak to another Tutor at your College, or the Senior Tutor, as well as:

- Clinical Supervisors
- Directors of Studies

Support

- College Nurse
- Student mentors and welfare reps
- College welfare teams and chaplains

Support within the wider University

The University provides a wide range of support services, the main ones being:

[Student Wellbeing](#)

[Cambridge Nightline](#)-Term time only (7pm-7am from the 17th of January to the 17th of March)

Night-time listening support run by students for students

Tel: 01223 (7)44444

email@cambridge.nightline.ac.uk

[University Counselling Service](#)

Tel: 01223 (3)32865

counsellingreception@admin.cam.ac.uk

[Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre](#)

Tel: 01223 (3)32301

disability@admin.cam.ac.uk

[Occupational Health Service](#)

Tel: 01223 (3)36594

occhealth@admin.cam.ac.uk

Support

[CUSU Student Advice Service](#)

Tel: 01223 (7)46999

advice@studentadvice.cam.ac.uk

[University Church Chaplain](#)

Tel: 01223 (7)41718

chaplain@gsm.cam.ac.uk /

[Breaking the silence – preventing harassment and sexual misconduct](#)

Support outside the University

For a comprehensive list of contacts and resources, visit the [Student Wellbeing website](#).

[LifeCraft](#) (11am -11pm, 365 days a year)

Confidential support service across Cambridgeshire

Tel: 0808 808 2121

[Samaritans](#) (24/7, 365 days a year)

Confidential help line

Tel: 116 123

jo@samaritans.org

Local branch-(10:30am-10:00pm)

4 Emmanuel Road, Cambridge, CB1 1JW

VETERINARY STUDENT REGISTER AGREEMENT 2023

I hereby confirm that:

I have read and understood the following information:

1. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons publication [Fitness to Practise – A Guide for UK Veterinary Schools and Veterinary Students](#)
2. The University's Veterinary Student Code of Conduct and explanatory notes;
3. The University's [Confidential Sources of Help and Advice](#)
4. The University's [policy on plagiarism and academic misconduct](#)

I am aware of the [University's Fitness to Practise procedure](#).

I will comply with the rules and procedures laid down by the Faculty Board of Biology and Faculty Board of Veterinary Medicine relating to the veterinary course;

I recognise that I should at all times behave towards other people in an open and considerate manner, should be open and honest in all my dealings, and should not misuse social media;

I recognise that all information obtained about any patient or their owner during the course of my duties is strictly confidential, may not be divulged to anyone other than in a clinical context, and may not be posted on any external social media without the explicit, written, informed consent of the owner;

I recognise that my conduct and dress when engaged in the care of patients and while undertaking Extra-Mural Studies will be appropriate to the status of a future veterinary surgeon;

I will inform the Director of Veterinary Teaching immediately if I am involved in any police investigation, which may lead to charges being brought against me;

I will inform the Director of Veterinary Teaching immediately if I am no longer able to meet the requirements of this agreement or if I become aware of any change to my physical or mental health which may put at risk the health and well-being of patients, their owners, teaching staff, EMS placements providers and fellow students;

I understand that the Veterinary Fitness to Practise Committee has the authority to remove my name from the Veterinary Student Register, either temporarily or permanently, for failing to observe the Veterinary Student Code of Conduct or failing to progress academically;

I understand that I will remain on the Cambridge Veterinary Students' Register and observe the University's Veterinary Student Code of Conduct until such time as I have:

1. satisfied the requirements of the clinical veterinary course, passed all the examinations thereof and am presented for the VetMB degree;
2. withdrawn voluntarily from the veterinary course;
3. attempted any Second or Final VetMB examination on two occasions without passing;
4. been suspended by the Veterinary Fitness to Practise Committee;

I understand that if I fail to abide by this agreement and the Veterinary Student Code of Conduct, I may be responsible for paying any reasonable costs arising from a review of my fitness for practice in the event that such review leads to me being found unfit for practice or fit for practice only on certain conditions;

I give my consent to the processing of my data by the University.

Student Name:

Witness Name:

Signature:

Signature:

Date:

Please note that you will be reminded annually of the importance of this declaration

Please return this signed form to Tutorial.office@vet.cam.ac.uk by Friday 13th October 2023

Programme Outcomes

Pre-clinical Curriculum:

Knowledge and Understanding

- Knowledge of the structure and function of healthy animals, which will allow students to recognise and understand abnormal and disease states of body systems;
- Sympathetic understanding of the handling, management and nutrition of domesticated animals and of their needs in health and disease;
- Knowledge of the principles and practice of preventive veterinary medicine and veterinary public health;
- Knowledge of reproductive physiology and genetics sufficient to understand breeding management in farm and companion animal species;
- Understanding of the principles underlying the pathogenesis, diagnosis, epidemiology and control of disease;
- Basic knowledge of the law, and of welfare and ethical codes affecting veterinary practice;
- Knowledge of the principles of surgical techniques;
- Basic knowledge and interpretation of diagnostic imaging (radiography and ultrasound), and basic introduction to advanced imaging techniques, e.g.: nuclear medicine, MRI;
- Basic clinical knowledge of veterinary pharmacology, pharmacy and toxicology;
- Basic knowledge of clinical pathology.

Intellectual Skills

- Basic skills in diagnostic problem solving, and in the formulation of treatment strategies.

Appendix

Practical Skills

- Ability to handle and restrain animals safely.

Transferable and Professional Skills

- Understanding of scientific method, and an ability to apply basic scientific knowledge, sufficient to enable students to extend their knowledge of, and utilise future developments in, veterinary science;
- Basic communication skills.

Clinical Curriculum:

Intellectual Skills

- Knowledge of techniques necessary to carry out under supervision common surgical procedures in domesticated animals, including anaesthesia of most species;
- Ability to employ clinical reasoning to draw up a rational list of differential diagnoses following investigation of disease;
- Ability to devise and carry out a treatment or management plan following clinical assessment of common medical problems.

Practical Skills

- Ability to take a clinical history from an owner;
- Ability to carry out a full clinical examination in all the main domestic species;
- Ability to dispense and administer drugs to animals;
- Ability to undertake basic clinical diagnostic problem solving;
- Ability to formulate disease treatment and prevention strategies;
- Ability to manage common obstetrical problems;
- Ability to perform intravenous catheterization and to take a blood sample;

Appendix

- Ability to perform basic surgical techniques;
- Ability to perform basic diagnostic laboratory techniques.

Transferable and Professional Skills

- Capacity to communicate effectively with clients and with colleagues both in the veterinary profession and in other disciplines;
- Ability to work well as a member of a team;
- Capacity to undertake successfully an extended study of a topic and to communicate the results verbally and in writing.

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