



## Bachelor of Veterinary Science (BVSc)

The full-time BVSc programme is offered by the Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Pretoria, the only faculty of its kind in South Africa.

Entry into the BVSc programme is highly competitive due to the popularity of the programme and limited available spaces. Selection is based on academic merit and the compulsory Veterinary Science Value-added Form or the Veterinary Nursing Value-added Form (Read in conjunction with Annexures C, E and F (pages 13-20)).



### What does the programme entail?

- Applicants in the six-year BVSc programme will complete a core curriculum over four and a half years (nine semesters) and then conclude their programme with 18 months of work-integrated training in the core and elective components and a research project.
- The BVSc programme consists of a combination of lectures, electronic learning opportunities, discussions, demonstrations, seminars, assignments, curricular community engagement, group work, practicals and clinical work, which are offered mainly in the Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital and its satellite community clinics and include exposure to private practices, state veterinary services, commercial and small-scale farms, abattoirs and various other related industries.
- The programme's first year is a biological science foundation year and is presented on the Hatfield Campus. The remaining veterinary-specific years are offered at the Onderstepoort Campus.
- The language of tuition is English at the University of Pretoria.
- **Veterinarians and personal wellbeing:** The BVSc programme and a career in veterinary science is both challenging and enriching, and applicants should take note that a high level of mental resilience is required to thrive in this profession. Applicants with prior or existing mental health risks should consider this carefully and seek professional advice when considering a career as a veterinary professional.

A video about the BVSc curriculum is available at:  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vuV0tabSiXn3D9iEucPTV2KltMZhPutD/view?usp=drive\\_web](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vuV0tabSiXn3D9iEucPTV2KltMZhPutD/view?usp=drive_web)

# Veterinary Science (BVSc)

## State veterinary services

A significant number of veterinarians are employed as state or provincial veterinarians in government service. They render essential regulatory services related to the diagnosis, surveillance, monitoring, control, prevention and eradication of notifiable diseases. State veterinarians are also responsible for matters related to the import and export of animals and animal products and food safety and security. In regions where there are no private practitioners, state veterinarians also provide clinical services. Veterinarians are also employed in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and the South African Police Service (SAPS).

## Private practice

Most veterinarians in the country are gainfully employed in private practice, either in their own practices, in partnership, as assistants or as locums. There are several specialisations in private practice: production animal practice, providing veterinary services to the livestock farmer (cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, poultry and game), companion animal practice (dogs, cats, horses, cage birds, etc) and mixed practice (pets/production animals/wildlife). The services provided by the private practitioner include, among others, clinical services, disease prevention strategies, advice and a whole range of consultative services on nutrition, management, production, reproduction, and biotechnology.

## Research

Research can be conducted in a broad spectrum of areas (veterinary, agricultural and biomedical sciences), attending to problems related to both animals and humans.

## Academia

Graduates can teach at veterinary, medical, agricultural and natural science institutions, conduct research, participate in community engagement activities and provide clinical services.

## Private, state and provincial diagnostic laboratories

Graduates can provide routine or forensic diagnostic services involving pathology, clinical pathology, microbiology and toxicology.

## Career opportunities

The **Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD)** employs all South African BVSc graduates for 12 months' **Compulsory Community Service (CCS)** after completing the BVSc programme and before graduates are allowed to practice as veterinarians in South Africa for any other employer including self-employment. For more information, visit [www.dalrrd.gov.za](http://www.dalrrd.gov.za).

## Veterinary public health

Food security and the production of safe food for human consumption are critical fields in which the veterinarian plays a key role. Veterinarians are responsible for ensuring the maintenance of meat and milk hygiene in abattoirs and milk processing plants and their role in the maintenance and improvement of animal health on farms. Veterinarians involved in veterinary public health play an essential role in the control of zoonotic diseases (ie diseases transferred from animals to humans).

## Consultancy

The veterinarian can provide specialised or specialist services to the farm animal and pet industries, such as a consultant in the pig and poultry industries, feedlots, or specialist practices (such as surgery, internal medicine, ophthalmology, and dentistry). In a specialist practice, the practitioner will need to have the appropriate postgraduate qualification and be registered with the SAVC to practise as a specialist veterinarian.

## Commerce

The veterinarian is involved in research and product development in the pharmaceutical and feed industries and the provision of technical advice in sales and management.

## Laboratory animal science

The veterinarian is an essential member of the team involved in the welfare of laboratory animals, monitoring the utilisation of animals for experimental purposes and giving advice on ethical issues.

## Poultry production

The poultry industry provides large volumes of animal protein for human consumption, and veterinarians play a pivotal role in food security.

## Animal welfare

The veterinarian is intimately involved in animal welfare in providing clinical services and advice, and management at welfare organisations. Veterinarians are involved in general matters pertaining to the welfare of animals through the promotion of appropriate husbandry practices, nutritional practices, disease prevention strategies and sound production systems.

## Wildlife management

The veterinarian may pursue career opportunities in wildlife ranching, conservation and zoological institutions. This has been a growing field in recent years.

## International employment

Graduates from the Faculty enjoy wide national and international recognition. The BVSc degree of the University of Pretoria is accredited for registration as a veterinarian in the United Kingdom by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council, and the Veterinary Council of Namibia.

## More information

**South African Veterinary Association (SAVA):** [www.sava.co.za](http://www.sava.co.za)

**SAVA Young members:**  
[www.facebook.com/SAVAyoungmembers](http://www.facebook.com/SAVAyoungmembers)

**South African Veterinary Council (SAVC):**  
[www.savc.org.za](http://www.savc.org.za)

## Who is the ideal candidate?

For a young person who likes working with people and is interested in animals and a career in biomedical sciences, veterinary science provides a spectrum of exciting opportunities. Like many similar career options, veterinary science may perhaps be considered a 'calling', and the decision to become a veterinarian involves the mind, the body, as well as the heart.

While love for animals may be a component of the decision to pursue veterinary science or veterinary nursing as a career, a more profound empathy will be required, as well as the passion for improving people's lives by improving food safety and security, coupled with a sense of compassion and caring for animals, their owners and farmers. The course is demanding and requires significant mental and emotional resilience, engagement, dedication and hard work.

Being a veterinarian or a veterinary nurse are both careers with long and often irregular hours and usually involves hard physical work while testing tolerance levels. The ability to work with animals, but even more so with people, is essential.

## What makes this programme unique?

BVSc is regarded as level 8 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), enabling the graduate to enter postgraduate programmes at the master's level.

### Accreditation and professional registration

The BVSc programme is accredited with the **South African Veterinary Council (SAVC)**, the **Veterinary Council of Namibia (VCN)**, the **Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)** in the United Kingdom, and the **Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC)** in Australia and New Zealand. BVSc graduates are eligible to register as veterinarians in these and several other countries without passing any further professional examinations. The **SAVC** governs the ethics and standards of veterinary education and practice in South Africa. All students must register with the Council at first registration in the BVSc programme, maintain their registration annually, and adhere to its rules. Registration with the SAVC is a prerequisite for practising as a veterinarian in South Africa.

## Minimum admission requirements

Programme	Minimum requirements for NSC and IEB for 2023			APS
	Achievement level			
	English Home Language or English First Additional Language	Mathematics	Physical Sciences	
<b>Bachelor of Veterinary Science (BVSc)</b> [6 years] Closing date: 30 June	5	5	5	35

Proposed second choice programmes for BVSc are BSc (Biological Science), BSc (Zoology) and BScAgric (Animal Science). These programmes are also recommended for applicants who intend to apply again for a transfer to the BVSc programme in 2023 or later. Note: Students who intend to apply for admission to BVSc may register for BSc (Biological Sciences) modules, including Medical Terminology (MTL 180).

**Careers:** Veterinarians in private practice, research, academia or state veterinary services. Veterinarians can also work in the following fields: diagnostic laboratories, veterinary public health (milk and meat hygiene, control of transfer of disease), technical services, research and product development in pharmaceutical and food industries, consultancy, laboratory animal management, wildlife management, poultry and pig production and animal welfare. Further details appear on page 5.

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