The “preveterinary medicine curriculum” is just a list of courses that are required for admission to veterinary school. It is NOT an academic major, a minor, or an emphasis area.

**WHAT SHOULD I MAJOR IN?**

Many students choose a major in one of the sciences (Biological Sciences, Chemistry/Biochemistry, Physics) but other majors are acceptable including those in the humanities, social sciences, or business. Students should select the major in which they feel the most comfortable and in which they would like to work if they are not accepted into veterinary school.

Students wishing to study veterinary medicine typically take three or more years to complete a preprofessional curriculum, for example at the University of Southern Mississippi. Most veterinary schools prefer that students have a baccalaureate degree; other schools require the baccalaureate degree prior to matriculation. Even if you plan to apply to veterinary school after taking only the courses required for admission (minimum of 79 hours for the program at Mississippi State University), you still need to declare an academic major at the University of Southern Mississippi.

**Progress toward a Baccalaureate Degree**

Course work toward a baccalaureate degree at Southern Miss must be planned so the student meets all the requirements for the preprofessional curriculum, a major, a minor if appropriate, and the University General Education Curriculum. At Southern Miss, a minimum of 124 hours is needed for most baccalaureate degrees, with 45 of these hours from courses at the 300-level or above.

**What if you already have a Baccalaureate Degree?**

Some students already have a B.S. or B.A. or even higher degree and decide to pursue being a veterinarian. Each student’s circumstances is different and it is wise to consult with our preprofessional office if you fit into this category. In general, these students usually are lacking some of the science courses required by most veterinary schools. Some veterinary schools do not accept undergraduate prerequisite coursework over 10 years old to meet their requirements. It is common then for students to take their prerequisite undergraduate science or non-science courses they need at USM as post-baccalaureate students. Some take these courses as non-degree type students while others chose to pursue a second major at USM. In either case you must go through the University Admissions Office (www.usm.edu/admissions) to be admitted as a new student or to be re-admitted if you are a former USM student before you enroll in any courses.

Some students have met the course requirements already in their undergraduate degree but their GPA is not competitive for acceptance by veterinary schools. For these students they can retake courses as long as they are aware that both the previous courses and new repeat courses all count in calculating GPA’s for veterinary schools. Some students instead of repeating courses go on to graduate school in an area in which they have interest. If they do well in graduate coursework this can bring up their overall
GPA. A number of one year Master’s programs exist in universities that are designed to assist students in preparation for professional schools.

**Veterinary School Information**

Visit the following web pages for more information about schools of veterinary medicine:

- **American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMA):** [http://www.aavmc.org/](http://www.aavmc.org/)
- **American Veterinary Medicine Association (AVMA):** [http://www.avma.org/](http://www.avma.org/)

Link to accredited colleges and programs:
[https://www.avma.org/ProfessionalDevelopment/Education/Accreditation/Colleges/Pages/colleges-accredited.aspx](https://www.avma.org/ProfessionalDevelopment/Education/Accreditation/Colleges/Pages/colleges-accredited.aspx)

In Mississippi the veterinary school is at Mississippi State University in Starkville, MS. In Alabama there are veterinary schools at Auburn University in Auburn, AL and Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, AL. In Louisiana the veterinary school is at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, LA

**Requirements for Applicants**

Admission to a veterinary medicine program is very competitive. The overall GPA of accepted applicants is often 3.6 or higher.

Students *must gain experience working in a veterinary clinic* before applying to a vet school and they must consult the *specific admission requirements and application deadlines* for the school(s) to which they plan to apply.

The following list of **Required Courses** meets only *the minimal requirements for admission* for students seeking admission to the *four-year professional program* at the **College of Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State University**.

Link to MSU-CVM: [http://www.cvm.msstate.edu/](http://www.cvm.msstate.edu/)

Students *generally apply for admission* to the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine *at the end of their third year of preprofessional work* (must have 79 semester hours of required courses for application). This application is for attending veterinary school approximately one year later. Students are strongly advised to work toward *completing the baccalaureate degree in a science field*.

- writing; English Composition is suggested (6 hours)
- speech or technical writing (3 hours)
- math; college algebra is minimum level (6 hours)
- biological science courses with laboratories for science majors (8 hours)
- microbiology with laboratory for majors (4 hours)
- advanced science electives (12 hours), which may include junior, senior, graduate level courses in biochemistry, nutrition, comparative zoology, cellular physiology, embryology, histology, microbiology, quantitative analysis, calculus, statistics, immunology, zoology, comparative anatomy, animal physiology, genetics, parasitology, molecular biology, physical chemistry, differential equations, physics
- 25 hours of physical science courses [inorganic chemistry {general chemistry} & lab (8 hours), organic chemistry & lab (8 hours), biochemistry (3 hours), physics & lab (6 hours, may be trig based)]
- humanities, social/behavioral sciences, fine arts (aesthetic values) (15 hours); for students pursuing a baccalaureate degree at Southern Miss, must take humanities (6 hours), social/behavioral sciences (6 hours), aesthetic values (3 hours)
- students must have a minimum GPA of 2.8 and no required course less than a C- to apply
SUGGESTED COURSE SEQUENCE & STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

The *suggested course sequence* below is merely a guideline of courses required for the MSU program in a timely manner. Courses to fulfill the major must be worked into the student’s schedule. Students must consult the USM Undergraduate Bulletin, the USM Class Schedule Guide for each semester, and their academic advisor. During the last semester of the Sophomore year, students should develop a more detailed plan for the Junior and Senior years because many upper level courses in all majors are offered in specific semesters (Fall or Spring only) and/or on a rotating two-year cycle.

**YEAR 1**

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<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSC 110&amp;L OR</td>
<td>4 h</td>
<td>BSC 111&amp;L OR BSC 110&amp;L</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSC 111&amp;L</td>
<td>4 h</td>
<td>CHE 107&amp;L</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAT 101 b</td>
<td>3 h</td>
<td>MAT 103 b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 101 c</td>
<td>3 h</td>
<td>ENG 102</td>
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<td>Required elective d</td>
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a. The order that students take the introductory Biological Sciences (BSC) courses does not matter; BSC 110/L covers molecular and cellular topics whereas BSC 111/L covers ecology and organisms.

b. Placement in mathematics (MAT) courses depends on the student’s ACT mathematics subtest score.

c. Placement in English Composition courses depends on the student’s ACT English subtest score.

- ACT English subtest score 16 or below: ENG 99E (Expanded Composition Studio) and ENG 100E (Composition I expanded)
- ACT English subtest score 17-19: ENG 100E (Composition I expanded)
- ACT English subtest score 20 or above: ENG 101 (Composition 1)

d. Students must take 15 hours of any combination of Humanities, Social/Behavioral Sciences, and Fine Arts (Aesthetic values) courses. However, to fulfill the requirements for a baccalaureate degree from Southern Miss (or from MSU), students should select:

- one Fine Arts/Aesthetic Values course (ART 130, DAN 130, MUS 365, THE 100)
- two Humanities courses; take ENG 203 and select two courses from (HIS 101, HIS 102, PHI 151, REL 131), at least one must be a history course
- two Social and Behavioral Sciences courses; select one course from (ANT 101, SOC 101) and one course from (ECO 101, PS 101, PSY 110)

**Strategy for Success**

- Students should focus on doing well in their academic studies, particularly the required science and math courses.
- Students should become involved with extracurricular activities, including meaningful community service learning, volunteer activities, and leadership positions that will demonstrate effective interactions with diverse people and effective time management skills.
- Students should start getting some hands-on exposure to veterinary medicine usually by working in a veterinary office.

**YEAR 2**

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<th>Fall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSC 380/L</td>
<td>4 h</td>
<td>Advanced Science elective</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHE 255&amp;L</td>
<td>4 h</td>
<td>CHE 256&amp;L</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHY 111&amp;L</td>
<td>4 h</td>
<td>PHY 112&amp;L</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two required electives d</td>
<td>6 h</td>
<td>Speech or Technical Writing f</td>
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One required elective  

Advanced science electives include junior, senior, and graduate level courses in Biochemistry [CHE 420 (1 semester survey) or CHE 421/L, CHE 422/L, CHE 424/L (majors/minors sequence)]; nutrition (NFS 362); Cell Biology (BSC 360); Comparative Anatomy (BSC 361/L); Genetics (BSC 370); Vertebrate Biology (BSC 407); Comparative Animal Physiology (BSC 450); Histology (BSC 461/L; Embryology (BSC 465/L); Molecular Biology (BSC 476, BSC 478L); Pathogenic Microbiology (BSC 481/L); Immunology (BSC 486/L); parasitology; Analytical Chemistry (CHE 311/L); Calculus [MAT 114 (1 semester survey); MAT 167, MAT 168, MAT 169 (majors/minors sequence); statistics (PSY 360); Physical Chemistry (CHE 461/L, CHE 462/L); differential equations; advanced physics. These advanced science courses can not be used to meet both the basic requirements (8 hours of biological science, 25 hours of physical sciences, 4 hours of microbiology, 6 hours of math) and the 12 hour advanced science requirements at the same time.

Strategy for Success

- Students continue to focus on doing well in their studies.
- Students remain involved with meaningful community service learning, volunteer activities, and leadership positions.
- Students continue to participate in hands-on exposure to veterinary medicine.
- The Application Process may begin this year but this is rare. (See below for application process) Applications require 79 semester hours of required courses. To do so by the end of the second year, students would have to take some courses during the summer semesters of the first and/or second years. Otherwise, most students continue into the third and fourth year to complete the prerequisites. Most competitive applicants will be receiving their BS or BA before entering veterinary school.

YEAR 3

Fall | Spring
---|---
CHE 420 | Advanced Science elective  
3 h | 4 h
Advanced Science elective  
4 h | Classes to fulfill major, etc.  
12-14 h
Classes to fulfill major, etc.  
8-11 h

Strategy for Success

- Students continue to focus on doing well in their studies.
- Students remain involved with meaningful community service learning, volunteer activities, and leadership positions.
- Students continue to participate in hands-on experiences related to any aspect of veterinary medicine.
- Apply to vet school typically at the end of your junior year when you have completed or have a plan to complete the required courses before entering veterinary school (see below for application process). Most competitive applicants will be receiving their BS or BA before entering veterinary school.

YEAR 4 (If pursuing a baccalaureate degree from the University of Southern Mississippi)

Fall | Spring
---|---
Classes to fulfill major, minor  
15-18 h | Classes to fulfill major, minor  
15-18 h

The application process can begin this year, if not done previously. If applying after the Sept 15 deadline in year 4 the earliest that you can be admitted will be after another year after year 4. This year of waiting is called a “gap” year.
THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process may begin after the second year, but typically begins in the end of their Junior year.

- Students apply through the Veterinary Medicine Colleges Application Service (VMCAS), which typically opens in June; deadline is September 15. Official transcripts are to be submitted to VMCAS by September 15.
  Link to VMCAS:  http://www.aavmc.org/vmcas/vmcas.htm
- Three evaluation letters are required; at least one must be from a veterinarian. These must be submitted to VMCAS by September 15.
- Applicants must have a minimum GPA of 2.8 on a 4.0 scale, both in the overall GPA and in the required sciences and mathematics courses; at no time may these GPA calculations fall below the minimum level. NOTE: successful applicants typically have GPAs of about 3.6 or higher.
- No grade lower than “C” is acceptable in any required course.
- Non-academic qualities of the student are part of applicant’s evaluation – such as their personal character, familiarity with the veterinary profession, familiarity with animals, and other demonstrated good characteristics of the applicant.
- Mississippi State University no longer requires the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) be taken for application to their veterinary medicine school. Many other veterinary schools still require the GRE be taken and scores submitted as part of their application process.

THE INTERVIEW

Students are advised to practice their interview skills BEFORE attending their first interview.

- You may use the online Perfect Interview™ resource:  http://www.perfectinterview.com/usm/
- Or, sign up for mock interviews through Career Services by calling 601-266-4153:
  http://www.usm.edu/career-services/about-us
- Dress professionally and act professionally at your interview.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT A CAREER IN HEALTHCARE, CONTACT THE PREPROFESSIONAL OFFICE

Preprofessional Office
Dr. Jeffrey Evans, Preprofessional Advisor
jeffrey.evans@usm.edu
Phone: 601-266-4315
Office Location: Bobby Chain Technology Center (TEC 100)

College of Arts and Sciences
118 College Dr., #5004
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001