

Los Angeles Pierce College Pre-Veterinary Handbook



September 2009

THE PIERCE COLLEGE PRE-VETERINARY HANDBOOK

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(updated September 2009)

PREFACE

The purpose of this handbook is to help prepare both the high school student and beginning college student in meeting the entrance requirements for veterinary school. Because we are located in the State of California, our main emphasis will be to prepare the student for the articulated agreement between Pierce College and the University of California at Davis. Pierce has been very fortunate in obtaining this agreement as well as having our graduates and transfer students accepted at 27 different veterinary colleges. We currently have 151 of our former students either practicing veterinary medicine or are enrolled in veterinary school as this handbook is being published.

The information contained within this handbook is a summary of the requirements and suggestions on "how to make it." You (the student) need to be diligent in meeting with me at least twice a semester to make sure that your goals are being met by your course work, work experience and level of achievement. You should make it a point to participate in the pre-veterinary club each and every semester and maintain a working relationship with a veterinarian in practice during your entire tenure at Pierce. Your participation in the [pre-veterinary club](#) will demonstrate your dedication to helping others in your profession, seeking a life away from your books but still connected to your profession, will introduce you to others struggling to be accepted in your future vocation, will introduce you to former students who have made it, will allow you to have a fun time during your stay at Pierce College.

Students considering a career in veterinary medicine should select courses, extra-curricular activities and work experience that will provide a sound foundation in the biological, physical and animal sciences. For those still in high school, you should be taking as many math and science courses (Chemistry, Physics, Biology, and Animal Agriculture) as your schedule and counselor permit. Your educational program should lead to the development of intellectual maturity, efficient study habits, and effective powers of reasoning. Discipline in study is essential. Proficiency in accurate, rapid, interpretive reading should be mastered. Methods of observation and collection of data, evaluation, deduction, and interpretation of findings are equally important tools to become proficient in. Proficiency in typing increases the speed and accuracy of communication and, along with being able to use the computer (word processing, the Internet) will aid you in both veterinary school and in your professional work. Because of the highly competitive application process, not every qualified student will be admitted to veterinary school. Use this handbook to find methods of increasing your odds, for preparing for a very exciting career in animal medicine.

Obstacles don't have to stop you.

If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up.

Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.

--- Michael Jordan

Dr. L. S. Shapiro
September 2009

Ag 120	Animal Ethics	3
Biol 6	General Biology I	5
Biol 7	General Biology II	5
Chem 101	General Chemistry I	5
Chem 102	General Chemistry II	5
Chem 211	Organic Chemistry I	5
Chem 212	Organic Chemistry II	5
Chem 221	Biochemistry	5
Physics 6	General Physics I	4
Physics 7	General Physics II	4
Physiology 1	Introduction to Human Physiology 1	4
Math 227	Statistics	4
Eng 101,102,103	English 101,102,103	9
American Hist/Gov	Hist. 11 or 12 or Poli Sci 1	3
Micro 1	Introduction to Microbiology	5

In addition to the above courses, UC Davis, and most other colleges require one additional course that must be taken at a four year institution (CSUN or UCLA are the recommended universities for the remaining course work):

Genetics-Principles of Genetics (4 units)

Senate Bills 1914 and 361 allow Pierce College students to take one course per term at a California State University (space available basis) without formal admission and without assessment of additional course fees. In other words, you can take the above two courses at CSUN while you are a full time student at Pierce. Please let me know if you need assistance in regards to this matter. During these tough economic times students may need to take an online course in Genetics (if there is no room in the concurrent enrollment program at the CSU). UC Davis accepts the following online genetics course from UC Berkeley:

Genetics

X143 (3 semester units in Molecular and Cell Biology)

45 hours CE credit: BRN provider #00226

This course integrates the most important concepts in classical and molecular genetics into an overall picture of what a gene is, how it functions, how it may be altered, and how it is inherited.

You learn about the molecular basis of gene function and mutation, Mendelian genetics, transmission systems, regulation of cellular processes, developmental genetics, cytoplasmic inheritance, population genetics, and multifactorial inheritance. Also covered are recent advances in biotechnology that have genetic implications, including the Human Genome Project, and advances in genetic engineering technology.

Prerequisite: A year of college-level general biology for majors.

Click below for sections, start dates, locations, instructors, and to enroll.

<http://www.unex.berkeley.edu/cat/course358.html#>

Not every student will require the same course work or require the same sequence in courses. Depending on your previous experience, your GPA, your success in a particular class, I may direct you to go in a different direction than another student. Please confer with me each semester as to the particular sequence of classes you are enrolling in. The following Experiential Courses and Recommend Courses will vary depending on the aforementioned and the school you are applying to.

Pierce Pre-Veterinary **Experiential Training** (to provide hands-on experience under the direction of a veterinarian/RVT)

- Ag 410/411 - Animal Nursing/Laboratory 3
- Ag 420/421 - Clin Procedures in Ani Care I/Lab 3
- Ag 430/431 - Vet. Clin Path/Lab 3
- Ag 435/436 - Vet Radiography/Lab 3
- Ag 506 -Urban Farm Animal techniques 3
- Ag 515/516 – Artificial Insemination lecture/lab 3
- Ag 530/531 – Poultry Production 3
- Ag 603 - Equine Mgt. Techniques 2
- Ag 650 - Equine Health and First Aid 2
- Ag 470 – Laboratory Animal Care 3

Electives (optional)

The following electives may be required by some of the veterinary colleges in the United States. The more course work you complete within your field, the better the chances for admission (so long as you keep up your grades).

- Ag 450 Intro to Anim Facilitated Therapy 1
- Ag 460 First Aid for Companion Animals 2
- Ag 466 - Avian Care and Husbandry 1
- Ag 601 - Horse Production 3
- Ag 602 - Horse Husbandry 3
- Math 261 - Calculus I 5

THE PIERCE COLLEGE

PRE-VETERINARY HANDBOOK

GRADES AND GRADES

GRADES and GRADES You will hear from some veterinarians that grades are not all that important. Others will tell you that you need straight A's. The real answer is somewhere in between. You do need good grades, as previously outlined. If you receive one "C" - it is not the end of the world. You can still make it. If your average GPA is in the "C" range, you need to buckle down and change that - immediately or perhaps look at an alternative career in animal medicine. I will be happy to guide you in that direction, as well. Pierce has an excellent Registered Veterinary Technician program which does not require as stringent GPA and course work.

Before taking the GRE exam, students should complete as many of the science courses as possible. There are two major sections to this exam:

General Test - this section measures one's verbal, quantitative, and analytical ability. It is approximately 3 1/2 hours long.

CSUN offers preparatory courses for taking the GRE. Please check with me at least six months in advance for the time of the course and the exam. You may also want to contact the Stanley Kaplan GRE Review Course at 204 "F" Street, Davis, CA (530) 753-4800 for preparation manuals. The ETS Practicing to Take the GRE and Harcourt Brace Javonovich Manuals are also excellent review sources. Examples of old GRE test questions are available through the Educational Testing Service (ETS) for a minimal charge. Write or call ETS for more information. (P.O. Box 23470, Oakland, 946230470; [415]653-5400). Exams are offered only twice a year. Try and take the GRE general examination and biology examination on separate test dates. Seven hours of testing in one day is usually too much for most students. For an extra fee you can take the GRE by Special Administration Service test centers on dates other than those provided on National Administration test dates. An applicant with a marginal GPA can really strengthen his/her application with an excellent GRE score. If you do not do well the first time you take the GRE take it again. The admissions committee only looks at your most recent scores. Allow enough time to take it a second time, if need be.

Veterinary and Animal Related Experience

All pre-veterinary students should acquire a diverse (food animal, small animal, poultry, exotics, equine, research) experience in the veterinary medical field prior to applying to veterinary school. The purpose of this is four fold:

- 1) It demonstrates a sincere desire by the student to a career in veterinary medicine
- 2) It allows the student to develop a realistic understanding of the veterinary profession.
- 3) This understanding will greatly assist the student in the narrative portion of the

application.

4) It helps the student define his/her goals and objectives within the profession.

The type and degree of experience required varies from college to college and varies due to the background of the applicant. Applicants born and raised on commercial animal farms probably received a tremendous hands-on experience at home with large animals and could therefore concentrate more on small and research animal experience. In any case, experience in a variety of animal type practices (including research) is generally recommended. Even though your work experience is important, you will NOT be considered a worthy candidate without proper grades. **Do NOT let your grades suffer** because you are working too many hours. Save your long work experience hours for summer and other school breaks. You can always make up missed hours of experience. You cannot make up four years of poor performance (grades). **STUDY!**

What are Your Chances of Being Accepted?

From 1997 - 2008, eighty-five Pierce College students applied to veterinary school; seventy-five were accepted. These were exceptionally good years for our program. We hope to continue this success and hope you will understand when we demand excellence in performance and many hours of work. We hope to prepare you for the marathon (veterinary school). You cannot expect to be prepared for a marathon by running hundred yard dashes (taking one class at a time). On the same thought, if you over extend yourself by taking too many classes (try and limit your class load to 16-18 units/term) you will be worn out by the time you apply or unable to maintain that high GPA that will make you shine on your application.

At UC Davis evaluation of applicants are based on: Overall GPA = 11%, science GPA = 5%, last 45 units (taken in two years or less time) GPA = 12% or a total of 28%. GRE scores (general aptitude test) = another 28%. 20% = the interview. 6% = references. 18% = an essay written about why the student wants to be a veterinarian, veterinary experience, understanding of the veterinary profession, extracurricular activities (such as the pre-veterinary club). Note: These percentages may vary slightly year to year.

Pierce students who have been accepted into veterinary school have generally exceeded the following scores:

GPA last two years should average 3.5 or greater.

GPA overall should average 3.4 or greater

GPA for science overall should average 3.4 or greater.

GRE scores should average >80% for verbal, quantitative and analytical

Please complete the following information sheets throughout your stay at Pierce College. They are meant to guide you along the way and to demonstrate what will be required of you when you ask for a letter of recommendation to a school of veterinary medicine. Good luck and never give up! If your heart, your motivation and your preparations are sincere, **YOU WILL MAKE IT!**

Remember the old farmer's parable:

This parable is told of a farmer who owned an old mule. The mule fell into the farmer's well. The farmer heard the mule praying -or-whatever mules do when they fall into wells. After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving.

Instead, he called his neighbors together and told them what had happened . . . and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery. Initially, the old mule was hysterical! But as the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling and the dirt hit his back a thought struck him. It suddenly dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back he should shake it off and step up!

This he did, blow after blow. "Shake it off and step up . . . shake it off and step up . . . shake it off and step up!" He repeated to encourage himself. No matter how painful the blows, or how distressing the situation seemed the old mule fought "panic" and just kept right on shaking it off and stepping up!!!

It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the wall of that well! What seemed like it would bury him, actually helped him all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity.

That's life! If we face our problems and respond to them positively, and refuse to give in to panic, bitterness, or self-pity . . . The adversities that come along to bury us usually have within them the very real potential to benefit us! **Never be afraid to try something new.** Remember, amateurs built the ark. Professionals built the Titanic! Never be afraid to learn, to work hard, and to try something you are not good at!

PRE-VETERINARY LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Date _____

Major _____

Full Name: (last name, first)

Local Address: _____ City _____

Zip _____

Local Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Entered college in _____ 19/20 _____ Expect _____ degree in ____ 20 ____

College activities (athletics, publications, **pre-veterinary club**, etc., with average number of hours per week, offices in club held and when):

Freshman year _____

Sophomore year

Junior year

Senior year

Outside work during school year (state nature of work, with average number of hours per week): Freshman year

Sophomore year _____

Junior year

Senior year

Animal care related experience (give nature of position, the organization and location, hours per week, and length of time for each one listed):

Research experience:

Work, travel or other experiences (during the past two summers):

Undergraduate grade point average:

Overall GPA _____

Overall Science GPA _____

Last two years GPA _____

GRE Scores: Verbal _____ Quantitative _____ Analytical _____

I expect to apply for admission in September, 20 ____, to _____
veterinary school or _____ graduate school
(list major if choosing grad. school) _____

Last year attended Pierce, list classes, when taken and grades given by Dr.
Shapiro: _____

List Offices held while in the pre-veterinary club _____

Other comments (you may use additional sheets):

For the schools you are applying to please provide me with individual stamped envelopes with each schools name and address typed across the front (or simply apply through VMCAS to complete all the letters on line). Check off the “waived” portion of your application. Give me ample time to create a proper letter of recommendation to go along with your application.

Return to:

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