



# Career Focus - VETERINARY SCIENCE

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## TUCSIN Alumni 2013

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Dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, birds or any animal you can think of, these are all part of being a veterinarian. Dr X is a veterinarian. He works at a clinic with one other vet which means he sometimes works 24 hours a day. He dreamt of becoming a vet since he was a little boy. He says that his Biology teacher guided him towards this career which is definitely his dream job. If you have ever dreamt of becoming Doctor Dolittle then read on about this howling career.....

## What is Veterinary Science?

If you are a patient and caring person who loves animals and feels comfortable around them, you may want to explore the educational and career options within the field of veterinary science and animal care.

Veterinary scientists, technologists and technicians, as well as obedience trainers and even pet groomers, play a vital role in the maintenance and healthcare of pets, zoo animals, and livestock. In addition to meeting the healthcare and maintenance needs of animals, some individuals working in veterinary science use their skills to research diseases that also affect humans.

For example, veterinary research played a significant role in conquering diseases such as yellow fever and malaria, and in understanding human heart disease, organ transplant procedures, and a variety of drug therapies.

Perhaps the most important thing to take into consideration is how you feel about animals. Though the field of animal care is exciting and rewarding, working with animals requires patience, compassion, flexibility and a lack of squeamishness. Appreciating and loving animals is not enough. You must be genuinely invested in and intrigued by animals' behaviors, physical systems, and habits. Animal specialists must not only promote the health and maintenance of the animals under their care, but they must also be able to lift and restrain animals, and risk exposure to sick or angry ones.

The veterinary science field offers many possible career choices. There are veterinarians, animal care and service workers, and veterinary technologists and technicians.

You may also want to spend time with animals in a variety of settings in order to explore your interest in veterinary science. As you do, you should consider the following questions in order to discern what aspects of veterinary science you would enjoy the most.

- How do I feel when I see an animal in distress?
- Am I able to work in adverse settings?
- What is my tolerance of patience with both animals and humans?
- Am I able to emotionally deal with the intensity of wounds and injuries?

Would I be willing to have a consistently flexible schedule?



## Veterinary Science & Animal Care: Education and Career Paths

### Requirements

A veterinary surgeon should:

- have an aptitude and interest in the biological sciences;
- respect and love for animals and have an ability to work with them;
- have good powers of observation;
- have adequate coordination to be able to handle instruments;
- have good vision, hearing, stamina and health.

### School Subjects

Grade 12 with university exemption and science and maths are important for this career. You would also need to complete a BVSc from Onderstepoort. Following this you will have to complete an internship at Onderstepoort Veterinary Hospital.

### Compulsory Subjects:

- Mathematics,
- Physical Sciences

### Recommended Subjects:

- Life Sciences

### Training

Degree: BVSc - UP, at Onderstepoort, near Pretoria, This is a 6-year degree course. (Medunsa staff have been relocated to Onderstepoort . )

### Job description

A veterinarian consults with clients as well as patients every day, the owner being the former and the pet the latter. A **vet** does operations and surgical procedures on animals throughout the week as well as some paperwork which deals with client information.

### Pros and cons

“The pros,” says Dr X “are working with animals and people.” He finds this very rewarding and loves the human contact as well.

“The cons,” according to Dr X, “are the long hours you work, especially in a small

### Basics

A veterinarian earns, on average, R14 500 a month as a new graduate. If you work for someone, you can earn R27 000 a month with 10 years experience. “If you work privately the salary will depend on how well your business does,”

### Some satisfying aspects of this career

- working with animals and with people
- helping animals
- the opportunity to specialize in your area of interest
- the variety of the work

### Some demanding aspects of this career

- long and irregular working hours
- working outdoors in poor weather conditions
- the possibility of injury
- the danger of infection
- the expense of starting a private practice
- having to keep up with new developments in the field
- dealing with unpleasant people.



## The following proud alumni are examples of Veterinary Science .

**Dr. Udo Mahne** is a registered South African 'Team leader' and thus qualified to flush embryo's for import and export from South Africa. He is also registered with the International Embryo Transfer Society (IETS).

Udo grew up in Namibia on a big cattle farm. As a child he enjoyed working cattle on horseback. His father's strict selection for fertility and reproductive ability, triggered Udo's curiosity for bovine reproduction and embryo work.

Udo started with Veterinary Science at Onderstepoort University of Pretoria in 1997. He qualified in 2002 with an award as best student in clinical reproduction. He then worked as an Equine Veterinarian with Dr. Hildegard Setzkorn at Chartwell Equine Clinic for 18 months. In 2004 he joined the team at Embrioplus, Brits RSA.

Here he helped to run a Quarantine station, doing semen and embryo imports and exports. He also did a lot of work in Kenya and Zambia, flushing Boran embryos in Quarantine stations for export to Namibia and South Africa.



**Dr Udo Mahne**  
**DAAD 1997 Grantee**  
**Graduate at Onderstepoort**  
**Univ of Pretoria , South Africa**

### Other Veterinary / Animal Scientists that Graduated with a DAAD Scholarship:

Dr Griselda Hanstein Kloppers ( Private practice )

Dr Ronnie Bock ( Lecture at UNAM Faculty of Science )

#### **Animal Science :**

Lorna Shikongo

Bianca Claasen(UNAM—Neudamm)

## Where to study Veterinary Science

### Faculty of Veterinary Science

University of Pretoria

Private Bag X04

Onderstepoort

0110

### Contact telephone number

(002712) 529 8000

### Dean's Office

(002712) 529 8201



**Veterinary Science students at**  
**Onderstepoort Campus (Univ of Pretoria)**

# TUCSIN Alumni 2013

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A man is but  
the product of  
His thoughts.  
What he thinks,  
He becomes.

By Mahatma Gandhi



*"Some people dream of success  
while others wake up  
and work hard at it."*

*Thomas Jefferson*

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**Next week we will focus on INFORMATION SCIENCE**

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