

Programme Specification¹ (2026 – 27)

Veterinary Science Tripos

Programme title	<i>Veterinary Sciences</i>
Name of final award	<i>B.A. (Hons) (for all students) 2nd Vet MB</i>
Awarding Body	<i>University of Cambridge</i>
Teaching institution	<i>University of Cambridge Faculty of Biological Sciences</i>
PSRB/Accreditation details and date the course was last accredited	<i>Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons</i>
UCAS code	<i>D100MB/ VetMB</i>
HECoS code(s)	<i>100531 (veterinary medicine)</i>
ATAS code	
Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	<i>Veterinary Medicine</i>
Qualification framework level	<i>Level 6 (Honours)</i>
Date specification approved	<i>January 2026</i>
Linked course	

Brief overview of the course

(Please explain the purpose of the programme in a brief paragraph of no more than 5-6 sentences.)

Veterinary Medicine at Cambridge gives students the opportunity to study the scientific basis of veterinary medicine and clinical veterinary science. This course provides a thorough veterinary education, equipping students to pursue a wide variety of veterinary related career pathways, having the opportunity to learn core scientific foundations along with intensive yet supportive practical and clinical training.

¹ Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this programme specification. At the time of publication, the programme specification has been approved by the relevant Faculty Board (or equivalent). Programme specifications are reviewed annually, however, during the course of the academical year, any approved changes to the programme will be communicated to enrolled students through email notification or publication in the *Reporter*. The relevant faculty or department will endeavour to update the programme specification accordingly, and prior to the start of the next academic year.

Educational Aims

What are the educational aims of the programme?

The programme aims to:

- provide high quality education in clinically relevant biosciences leading to intellectually self-reliant graduates of the calibre sought by the profession.
- provide a stimulating and challenging learning environment where teaching is informed and enhanced by research to international standards of excellence.
- provide training and experience in the scientific principles and practice of research and its evaluation.
- continue to attract outstanding students from a variety of backgrounds, and to develop their potential to enable them to contribute fully to the cultural and intellectual base of society.
- contribute to the national and international needs for practitioners and leaders in the veterinary professions.

Learning Outcomes - *What is a student expected to learn from the programme? These should have been included on the new course proposal when the course was first approved.*

(Please refer to the guidance on [Learning Aims and Outcomes](#) and the [Office for Students](#) sector-recognised standards for sector expectations of the graduates of higher education qualifications)

By the end of the first two years (VetST Part IA and IB) students should be able to:

Describe and explain the basic principles and processes of biomedical science

Discuss common forms of disease and the contribution made by biomedical science to understanding their basis

Apply observational and deductive skills in associating molecular and cellular events with the outcomes of disease

Apply basic laboratory manipulative skills and skills in analysis and interpretation of experimental data

Use basic information technology skill to search for and retrieving information

Apply skills in oral and written communication and demonstrate learning through curiosity

Apply communication skills to effectively communicate with clients

Describe some of the standards of competence, care, conduct and responsibilities expected of a member of the veterinary profession

Demonstrate a commitment to learning and professional development, including recording and reflecting on professional experiences

Describe the normal structure and function and physiological processes apply in domestic species

Programme structure

Please give a brief outline of the course structure and how it supports progress. Please note details of individual papers/modules are not needed. What elements does the programme contain? If you have a part-time route show how this is aligned with the full-time course.

As an overview, students study veterinary science foundations for the first three years and then apply their knowledge to a veterinary practice as a clinical student for the last three years.

- for the first three years, students focus on scientific principles underlying veterinary medicine and develop their knowledge of the professional, ethical, financial, management and social responsibilities veterinary surgeons have.
- for the last three years, students will apply their knowledge to clinical scenarios and clinical practice. This includes a whole year spent mainly undertaking clinical work.

In the first two years, vets study for both the Tripos and for the professional qualification of 2nd Vet MB. Some courses are assessed for both qualifications; some are for professional purposes only.

In Part I, individual courses focus on the “core” scientific knowledge, which vets need to have to cope with clinical practice.

A range of courses is available in third year. Students may take in-depth courses in many of the subjects studied in their first two years; these are offered in the NST (Natural Sciences Tripos) Part II courses. Students who wish to maintain breadth of study can combine courses from different departments in NST (Natural Sciences Tripos) Part II BBS. Alternatively, they may choose to take courses in something different, such as Anthropology, Management Studies, or Philosophy, subject to approval by the relevant Director of Studies, College and Department.

Overall, if students successfully complete the first three years of the course, they will graduate with a BA (Hons) degree. If they then successfully complete the last three years, they will graduate with a BA as well as VetMB.

Teaching and Learning

Please indicate which methods are used, i.e., lectures, seminars, practical sessions etc. Include any activity that does not lead to summative assessment. How is the programme taught? How do students learn?

Each subject within Part I of the course employs a variety of teaching and learning methods, including lectures, small-group teaching sessions (supervisions), computer work, practical classes, and problem-based learning. There is an introductory session at the beginning of first year.

In addition, vets engage in practical animal handling as part of the Principles of Animal Management course.

Self-directed learning modules and other additional audio-visual resources are provided in the Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) as part of a blended learning programme. Veterinary students also undertake animal management placements across a range of species through the Extra Mural Studies programme.

Students can typically expect 20 to 25 teaching hours each week. Students also have 120 hours of dissection across the first three years.

During first and second year, students learn the core scientific knowledge and skills needed as a veterinary professional as part of the scientific foundations part of the course. Students also take the Preparing for the Veterinary Profession course. This is an introduction to the ethical, social and professional responsibilities of the profession.

During third year, students will specialise as part of the science section of the course.

During the last three years students will have lectures, practicals, group work in directed learning sessions, seminars, discussions and tutorials. They will also have practical clinical classes as this is the clinical part of the course. They will not have any lectures in the sixth year of the course.

The final sixth year is the professional part of the course that focuses on clinical teaching.

At Part II, in addition to lectures, students undertake a dissertation, based on literature review or laboratory project work.

Students are also expected to undertake placements.

Progress is continually reviewed by your supervisors and your Director of Studies.

Assessment

Please list below summative assessments for the course and how they meet the learning outcomes listed above. Ensure these are aligned with your course regulations ([Statutes and Ordinances](#)).

Assessment	Learning Outcome
<p>The examination for each subject of VetST 1A and 1B is divided into three sections. Sections I and II are assessed for both the Tripos and the 2nd Vet MB. Section III is assessed for the Tripos only. In some subjects the section I and II papers are combined into a single paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section I is a theory paper and is assessed either by MCQ or short notes.• Section II is a practical or data handling paper and is usually assessed by MCQ or short notes.• Section III is an essay paper.	<p>Assessment will focus on the following key learning outcomes:</p> <p><u>First two years</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding of the basic principles and processes of biomedical science.• Been introduced to common forms of disease and the contribution made by biomedical science to understanding their basis.• Become aware of the standards of competence, care, conduct and responsibilities expected of a member of the veterinary profession.• An understanding of how normal structure and function and physiological processes apply in domestic species.• Begun to develop observational and deductive skills in associating molecular and cellular events with the outcomes of disease.• Acquired basic laboratory manipulative skills and begun to develop skills in analysis and interpretation of experimental data.• Acquired basic information technology skills in searching for and retrieving information.• Begun to develop skills in oral and written communication and in learning through curiosity.• Begun to develop skills in listening to and dealing with clients.• Become enabled to progress to clinical training.

Progression and Career Destinations

Please describe the opportunities for the students' personal and professional development (including transferable and employability skills). Please include information relating to successful graduates' prospects for employment.

Preparation for employment is provided in the opportunities for acquisition of relevant and transferable skills outlined above.

Students will graduate with the clinical skills and scientific understanding required to enter practice and other areas of veterinary work.

Many of graduates enhance their clinical skills by getting further professional qualifications in a variety of clinical disciplines.

This course also gives students the knowledge they need to enter other areas of veterinary work or biomedical science.

Students will also be able to and understand and respond to the rapid progress being made in veterinary science.

For example, there are opportunities to enter:

- research in universities
- research council institutes
- private companies

Students can also start a career with:

- government agencies
- animal charities, such as RSPCA and PDSA
- pharmaceutical companies
- academic clinical post