



SIAST

SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF
APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Veterinary Technology Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Why should I consider the Veterinary Technology program for my education? What sets this program apart from other programs?*

People who consider this profession have a deep love and respect for animals and a desire to provide them and their owners with the best care possible. Veterinary Technology (VT) is a two-year diploma program. It is the same program that in other provinces is called Animal Health Technology (AHT). The curriculum for the VT/AHT programs varies across provinces, but by the end of each program the graduate has covered the same materials and skills. As a VT student you will learn all aspects of animal medical and surgical nursing care including taking samples, running laboratory tests, taking radiographs, performing anesthetic and surgical prep, doing maintenance and monitoring recovery of patients, dispensing medications according to doctors' orders and performing cleaning and sanitation of the clinic (including clinic rooms, equipment, instruments and kennels).

The SIAST Veterinary Technology program differs because students complete their last semester at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) located on the University of Saskatchewan Campus. Students are taught by many of the same professionals that teach the university veterinary students. Your time on campus will include clinical rotations in large and small animal anesthesiology, surgical and intensive care nursing, large animal medicine and field service and training in diagnostic imaging. In addition, you will complete two separate five-week practicums at private clinics or other facilities (away from the WCVM) in the middle of the fourth semester.

2. *How is this program accredited (officially recognized as meeting set standards)?*

The VT program is accredited by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), the national accrediting body for Animal Health and Veterinary Technology diploma programs. Graduates write a national exam at the end of their second year and must pass it to become a Registered Veterinary Technologist (RVT) with the provincial association (Saskatchewan Association of Veterinary Technologists [SAVT]) In order to work in Saskatchewan. Once registered with the SAVT, your credentials are transferrable across all the provinces in Canada (see www.savt.ca).

3. ***Is SIAST easier than university?***

Some students who already hold university degrees find the SIAST workload more demanding. Remember: the skills needed to be employed in this field are delivered in only two years (73 academic weeks). The course schedule is set and runs more similarly to that of a job or high school rather than that of a university.

Expect seven hours of instruction every weekday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with a break for lunch. Expect related homework in the evenings and weekends in order to keep pace. Your instructors know who you are and you are expected to attend all lectures, laboratories and clinical assignments, including some Saturdays.

4. **What are the admission requirements?**

- Grade 12 with a minimum of 70% in each of the following subjects:
 - Biology 30
 - Chemistry 30
 - 30-level Mathematics
- A combined average of 70% in English Language Arts A30 and English Language Arts B30
- An [English Language Requirement](#)
- 60 hours of documented veterinarian-supervised volunteer or work experience
- Mandatory orientation session

5. ***Are there any additional requirements following acceptance into the program?***

Students are required to have a clear pair of safety glasses for the science labs and two clean knee-length long-sleeved white lab coats, textbooks and ancillary materials are required for courses, including a dissection kit, stethoscope, two pair of dark green or blue long-sleeved coveralls and rubber boots. In addition, the rabies prophylaxis immunization series is required before or upon entry into the program. It is strongly recommended that the usual vaccinations such as tetanus are also up to date. The first week of classes, students will order name tags that must be worn to all labs and at all clinical sites.

6. ***Where will the program be offered?***

The first three semesters are located at SIAST Kelsey Campus in Saskatoon. The fourth semester occurs at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine on the University of Saskatchewan Campus. In addition, there are off-campus labs and/or clinical rotations to which students must either carpool or take the bus. The two five-week external practicums may be located outside of Saskatoon, in which case students are responsible for their own transportation and living arrangements.

7. How many seats will be available?

The annual intake is 24 students.

8. Will you be considering out-of-province applicants to the program?

We consider all qualified applicants.

9. Will you be considering international applicants to the program?

We consider all qualified applicants. Proficiency in written and spoken English and a working knowledge of scientific English and medical terminology are required. Selected applicants must write the Accuplacer English and Math tests.

10. Will there be designated seats for Aboriginal students?

We have designated seats for Aboriginal students.

11. If I have a disability, what type of support services will be available to me?

Applicants with a professionally diagnosed and documented disability need to meet with the equity counsellor prior to entry into the VT program. At this meeting possible program accommodations will be discussed (including a partial load, an extension to your studies, etc.) and the results relayed to the program head.

In cases where a disability is suspected during the course of studies, the student will be referred to the equity counsellor for assessment and accommodation. The referral and assessment may take extended periods of time to complete and will delay possible implementation of accommodations, so applicants with a suspected but as yet undiagnosed learning problem should make an appointment to see a counsellor to move the diagnosis and testing process along before registration.

12. I'm missing a high-school prerequisite. Is there an equivalent course that I can take?

If you are missing a high-school prerequisite, you have a few options for completing the course requirement. You can either pursue studies through the high-school system (www.saskschoolboards.ca) or you can complete the high-school equivalent at SIAST or the University of Regina or Saskatchewan. The following are guides to what the course equivalents are:

High School pre-req. courses	U of S* equivalents
BIOLOGY 30	BIOL110.6* (check U of S website for updated course codes)
CHEMISTRY 30	CHEM 112.3
ENGLISH A and ENGLISH B 30	ENG 110.6
MATH LEVEL 30	MATH 100.6

High School pre-req. courses	U of R* equivalents
BIOLOGY 30	BIO 100
CHEMISTRY 30	Students can take CHEM 100 if they do not presently have CHEM 30 OR if the CHEM 30 grade is below 70% OR if CHEM 30 was taken more than five years ago
ENGLISH A30 and ENGLISH B 30	ENG 100
Any Level 30 Math is accepted	
MATH LEVEL A30	AMTH 001 (non-credit) OR Math 101 (credit)
MATH LEVEL B30	AMTH 002 (non-credit) OR Math 101 (credit)
MATH LEVEL C30	AMTH 003 (non-credit) OR Math 101 (credit)

*Courses from other universities or colleges will be evaluated individually for equivalency.

Students who are missing either the Math or the English prerequisite may write the Accuplacer test at SIAST to achieve the necessary standing.

13. **What does FQFA (First Qualified / First Admitted) mean?**

When we determine that you meet the program's admission requirements, you will be offered admission based on the date you fully qualify for the program. The earlier you provide the appropriate documents and information that qualify you for admission to the next intake, the earlier you might begin your studies. Your application, once qualified, is always considered for the next intake.

14. *Where do I apply?*

SIAST Kelsey Campus (Saskatoon)
Phone: (306) 933-5555
Fax: (306) 933-7226
Email: RegServ.Kelsey@siast.sk.ca
Toll Free: 1-866-goSIAST (467-4278)
[Online Admissions Login](#)

15. *What is the application fee?*

There is a \$50 non-refundable application fee.

16. *Can I apply if I am still in high school?*

- a. Current high-school students who are enrolled in the grade level that will qualify them for admission to the Veterinary Technology program may apply on or after September 1 each year (First Qualified / First Admitted programs). Why do we say this when applications are accepted year round?
- b. High-school students or persons taking Basic Education upgrading should apply as soon as they are enrolled in the courses that will qualify them for the program. SIAST accepts interim statements of marks and confirmations of registration as conditional qualifications for programs.

17. *What is the application deadline?*

- a. Programs using the FQFA process receive applications year round and maintain an application pool for each academic year. The cut off date for the current intake is Aug. 1 of each year.

18. *When will I know if I am accepted into the program?*

You will be notified by mail regarding the status of your application. The first round of acceptances is sent in early December; however, if there are seats still available in the program or if seats become available, you may be notified at any time prior to the start date of the program.

19. *I've received my offer of admission. Now what do I do?*

Congratulations! To hold your seat in the program, a deposit of \$300 or a letter from your sponsoring agent is required within 30 days of the date on your

acceptance letter. This fee can be paid in person at any of the four SIAST campus Registration Service offices or by phone if paying with Visa or MasterCard.

20. *When is the first intake and in what month will classes start?*

Classes start on the last Monday before Labour Day; in 2011 this is August 29.

21. *How long is the program?*

Veterinary Technology is a two-year program comprising a total of 73 weeks. The first year is 36 weeks and the second year 37 weeks long, with a break in the middle of the fourth semester for two 5-week practicums with a one-week semester break.

22. *I am transferring from another post-secondary institution. Will I be eligible for transfer credits?*

Transfer credits are possible depending on whether the contents of the courses are similar enough to those of the SIAST courses and occur within five years of entry to the Veterinary Technology program. Transfer credit requests are processed during the first week of classes and must always be accompanied by an original transcript from the post-secondary institution.

23. *Can I work part-time while going to school?*

Expect to be in classrooms and labs for seven hours every weekday. Many courses also require an additional two to three hours of homework in the evenings as well as on weekends. For these reasons, it is strongly suggested that students have their finances in place before they start studying in order to avoid having to work while going to school.

24. *How much are tuition and other fees?*

Current tuition and fees for programs can be found on our [Payment of Tuition and Fees](#) page.

25. *Where can I buy my books and other materials?*

To view the online bookstore, go to the SIAST home page www.gosiast.com and select "Online Bookstore." Next select the campus (Kelsey Bookstore), then from

there you can view book lists and/or buy textbooks. Or you can go to www.siastr.sk.ca/bookstore and select the campus then decide to buy textbooks or view book lists. Also, students can call the bookstore call centre at 1-866-569-8398 and be “walked through” the steps of online purchase.

26. *Are scholarships and bursaries available?*

Scholarships are provided to SIAST students thanks to the support of many individuals and groups: alumni, students, faculty, staff, businesses, organizations and foundations.

Please see the SIAST website or contact the [Donor and Alumni Relations Office](#) at any SIAST campus for further information.

27. *What is the Veterinary Technology program about?*

This program will train you in the skills and knowledge needed to work in a veterinary clinic, an animal production facility, research, education or sales. There are no animal-holding facilities at Kelsey Campus so the program offers a wide variety of lectures, labs and experiences in the first three semesters before shifting to the WCVM in semester four. The program will include tours to animal facilities, rotations in local veterinary practices, Saturday vaccination clinics at the WCVM, seminars and guest speakers. In addition to learning from experienced veterinary technologists, interns, residents and specialists at the WCVM, there are two required practicum experiences: one will occur in a small animal practice and the other in a different type of facility (e.g., a mixed or large animal practice, research facility or zoo).

28. *What can I expect to do in the career?*

Expect to be devoted to your patients and clients and to strive to provide them with the best medical and surgical care possible. Animal health is a service profession and a clinic’s success is based on satisfied clients, hygienic surroundings and staff committed to personal responsibility and attention to detail. You will work as a team member with good organizational skills and a high level of professionalism. You will be responsible for: maintaining clinic hygiene and cleanliness; stocking exam rooms and the pharmacy; ensuring instruments are washed, packaged and sterilized before the next surgical procedure; producing accurate laboratory results and diagnostic-quality radiographs; accurately following treatment protocols; maintaining records and monitoring patient recovery after a procedure. There is no task, large or small, that should escape your attention. The veterinarian will rely on you to be self-directed, to follow safety regulations and to always put the patient first. You must remain calm and composed in the face of an emergency, whether it

is performing triage or giving comfort to a distraught owner. You are expected to be competent in many areas.

29. Where am I likely to find employment?

Around 95% of new graduates take their first job in a private clinic. This gives valuable experience should you decide to next work at a larger specialty practice or at a teaching hospital such as the Western College of Veterinary Medicine. It is even possible (if you plan on finishing a degree) to teach at a college or institute where there is an Animal Health or Veterinary Technology diploma program. There are also opportunities to specialize in a post-diploma discipline such as animal emergency medicine, anesthesiology or dentistry. A few students also decide to go back to university in order to apply for entry to train as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.

Some graduates go into research in facilities such as the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization, where they might work on finding vaccines for animal and human diseases. As well, work can be found in the pet pharmaceutical, pet product or pet food industries.

There also is work available in many related fields for which a diploma is not necessary but does give you more credibility and firmer background knowledge: the local or provincial SPCA; pet stores; grooming and kennel and boarding facilities; dog training centers; livestock handling and production facilities.

30. What is a realistic salary range to expect?

According to the 2010 Saskatchewan Association of Veterinary Technologists wage survey, the most common starting wage for a graduate in Saskatchewan was between \$13.00 to \$14.00 / hour, with the overall range for all technologists from \$10.50 to 28.00 / hour (please see www.savt.ca). Technologists who work in practices in Regina or Saskatoon and for large private firms generally earn more than their counterparts elsewhere in the province. For more information on this career please see Saskatchewan Job Futures Animal Health Technologists 3213: <http://www.saskjobfutures.ca/index.cfm?event=page.profile&nocs=3213>

31. In what part of the province would I most likely be employed?

It may be difficult to find a job in Saskatoon upon graduation due to the presence of WCVM and SIAST students in this city, but there are jobs available in many parts of Saskatchewan. Provincially, both human and veterinary medicine share a similar challenge: recruiting clinic staff for practices in smaller centres.

32. Can I work in other parts of Canada?

Our graduates are eligible for jobs in provinces across Canada (please see www.savt.ca) and in some states in the USA (please see www.navta.net for requirements for specific states).