

Veterinary Assistant (VETA)

Program Description

The Veterinary Assistant (VETA) program is a collaborative educational program being offered through a partnership between Skagit Valley College and the Northwest Career & Technical Academy (Academy). The Academy occupies a new building on the SVC campus and opened its doors to students September 2010. The Academy specializes in hands-on professional-technical training taught by industry professionals in a variety of program areas. The Veterinary Assistant program is a three-quarter (two semester) certificate designed to provide entry-level skills and education to students interested in pursuing a career in the field of animal science. The Academy provides the classroom and practicum site for this program. This is a full-year program (Sept.-June) with courses scheduled sequentially. Students attend classes for 2.5 hours per day Monday – Friday. Students may enter this program Fall Quarter only. Class Hours: Students may choose either an a.m. or p.m. section, i.e., 8:00a.m.-10:30a.m. daily or 11:30 – 2:00 p.m. daily.

The Veterinary Assistant program prepares students to be a valuable member of the veterinary support team while assisting the Licensed Veterinary Technician and/or the Veterinarian in all aspects of patient care. The Veterinary Assistant program includes classroom theory and practicum experiences. In the classroom lab, students will receive hands-on experience with animals. Program content requires the application of basic math, technical reading, and communications skills. Students must also submit evidence of a tetanus immunization. Students need to be aware that some practicum sites may require a drug screening test prior to placement. Criminal convictions may restrict or prevent student employment in this industry.

Veterinary Assistants work in a variety of settings including private veterinary clinics, animal shelters, humane societies, laboratories, large animal facilities, wildlife rehabilitation centers, grooming shops, stables, boarding kennels, farms, aquariums, zoos, and animal parks. Veterinary Assistants provide surgical and nursing care to animals in clinics as well as field settings. The duties may include basic patient care and supportive nursing, client education and customer service, laboratory procedures, kennel and clinic maintenance. In some work environments assistants may bathe, groom, exercise or otherwise care for pets and other animals such as dogs, cats, ornamental fish or birds, livestock, zoo animals, or mice in research facilities. Assistants may clean and disinfect cages and work areas, and sterilize laboratory and surgical equipment. They may provide routine

post-operative care, administer medication orally or topically, or prepare samples for laboratory examination under the supervision of veterinary or laboratory animal technologists or technicians, veterinarians, or scientists. They may keep records of feedings, treatments, and animals received or discharged.

Veterinary Assistant positions are listed as an “in-demand” occupation for the Northwest Region which includes Whatcom, Skagit and Island counties. According to the “National Industry-Occupation Employment Matrix,” (a publication of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics) demand for professional Veterinary Assistants will rise 16% by 2016. Pet owners are increasingly taking advantage of veterinary services, spurring employment growth for Veterinary Assistants. The companion pet population—which drives employment of animal caretakers in kennels, grooming shops, animal shelters, and veterinary clinics and hospitals—is also expected to increase. Pet owners are expected to increasingly take advantage of grooming services, daily and overnight boarding services, training services, and veterinary services, resulting in more jobs for animal care and service workers. Source: Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.ocouha.com)

Entry into the Program

Please apply to the Admissions Office. Students may enter the program Fall quarter. For more information, contact the Department Chair or the Admissions Office.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

VETERINARY ASSISTANT CERTIFICATE (32 CREDITS)

First Year					
Fall	Cr	Winter	Cr	Spring	Cr
VETA 101	2	VETA 103	2	VETA 111	4
VETA 107	3	VETA 105	2	VETA 112	3
VETA 110	2	VETA 108	2	VETA 115	2
OFTEC 162	3	VETA 109	2	or VETA 199	
or OFTEC 122		VETA 113	2	VETA 114	2
				SOSC 113	1
Total	1010		Total	12

Program Certificates

Students must maintain a minimum C grade or above in all required courses.

VETERINARY FUNDAMENTALS (28 CREDITS)

Required courses: VETA 101, 103, 105, 107, 108, 109, 110, 112, 113, 114, 115 (or 2 credits of 199), and SOSC 113.

Course Descriptions

VETA 101 Introduction to Veterinary Technology (2)

Introduction to the veterinary assistant profession. Learn about the history of veterinary technology, career opportunities, education requirements and the role and responsibilities of the veterinary assistant as part of the veterinary health team. WA State laws, regulations and medical ethics that govern veterinary operations and their employees will be discussed. Overview of husbandry terms for selected species including breed identification.

VETA 103 Veterinary Medical Terminology (2)

Overview of veterinary-related medical terminology covering terms of anatomical topography, organ systems and disease, nursing records, pharmaceuticals, emergency and surgical procedures, and common patient descriptions.

VETA 105 Veterinary Anatomy & Physiology I (2)

Basic overview of cross species anatomy and physiology as it relates to veterinary science. Covers terminology as it relates to the anatomical topography and function of the basic cell structure of animals, including an overview of skeletal anatomy and physiology. Introduction to all the major animal body systems including the integument and muscular systems, the respiratory and cardiovascular systems, the hemolymphatic, gastrointestinal, endocrine, reproductive, urinary and nervous systems.

VETA 107 Veterinary Nursing/Patient Management I (3)

Learn how to safely and effectively obtain patient data that will allow accurate evaluation of the patient with minimum stress and maximum safety. Introduction to animal restraint, record charting, interview a client, pharmacology, and physical examination. Students will complete a Healthcare Provider CPR certification.

VETA 108 Veterinary Nursing/Patient Management II (2)

Continuation of VETA 107. Continue to practice accurate evaluation of the patient with minimum stress and maximum safety. Introduction to pharmacology, anesthesia, surgery, surgical patient management, including pre-operative techniques, aseptic technique, resuscitation, and physical examination. Students will complete a 7-hour HIV-AIDS certification and work individually and in small groups to develop skills associated with using medical instruments and conducting surgical procedures. Prerequisite: VETA 107.

VETA 109 Veterinary Math (2)

Covers the necessary concepts involved in mathematics used in veterinary medicine. Includes dosage calculations, metric conversions, percentages, ratios, medical terminology, medication categories and medical abbreviations. Review the registration for "Veterinary Medical Clerk" requirements.

VETA 110 Veterinary Assistant Practicum I (2)

Through field trips, visit various veterinary work settings to explore typical work assignments, analyze work climates, expand and observe possible future work opportunities. In the classroom and laboratory, further develop skills and knowledge through hands-on practice of patient management strategies, surgical techniques, and laboratory procedures. Practicum will continue in VETA 113.

VETA 111 Veterinary Clinical Procedures (4)

Introduction to veterinary clinical procedures related to parasitology, hematology, urinalysis, and diagnostic imaging. Covers laboratory safety, zoonosis, the role of veterinary assistants in the veterinary clinical laboratory, proper use and care of microscopes, and working individually and in small groups to develop laboratory skills. Prerequisite: VETA 103 and 105.

VETA 112 Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology II (3)

Continuation of VETA 105. Students will continue studying animal anatomy and physiology as it relates to selected species including diseases that affect the integument and muscular systems, the respiratory and cardiovascular systems, the hemolymphatic, gastrointestinal, endocrine, reproductive, urinary and nervous systems. Canine, feline, equine and avian anatomy and physiology will be reviewed. Prerequisite: VETA 105

VETA 113 Veterinary Assistant Practicum II (2)

Continuation of VETA 110. Introduction to the handling and care of horses. Focuses on performing basic handling, restraint and nursing skills with an emphasis on equine behavior. Apply principles learned about equine health care. Students will participate in a two-day, off site, workshop led by local equine industry experts. Prerequisite: VETA 110.

VETA 114 Veterinary Business Essentials (2)

Learn the business aspects of the veterinary practice as it relates to the role of Veterinary Assistants in the clinic environment. Leadership skills, communication skills, business etiquette, and stress management will be discussed. Covers medical records management, scheduling clients, pet insurance, taking inventory and the basics of financial accounting as it relates to client billing. Prerequisite: VETA 101 and 103.

VETA 115 Veterinary Assistant Practicum III (2)

Continuation of VETA 113. Focuses on normal canine, feline, equine and avian behavior. Apply

principles of operant conditioning and positive reinforcement methods for animal training. Topics include causes of behavioral problems in companion animals, stages of development in young animals, socialization methods, crate training, and elimination training methods for dogs and cats. Prerequisite: VETA 113.

VETA 199 Cooperative Education Experience (2)

Supervised work experience in the field. Includes a weekly seminar. Prerequisite: Instructor permission required.