

# So, You Want To Be A Veterinary Pharmacy Resident...

A veterinary pharmacy residency is a unique type of pharmacy residency; however, many of the things you would do to prepare for a typical pharmacy residency still apply such as gaining teaching, research and leadership experience during pharmacy school. However, for a veterinary pharmacy residency you want your application materials to have a veterinary theme. Below are ideas from past and current residents that can help make an application stand out.

## Pre-Pharmacy School

- Volunteer at an animal shelter.
  - This may not have a direct pharmacy relation, but it will provide animal handling experience.
  - Most shelters have a vet on staff so you could ask about shadowing them.
- Shadow a local vet or two (or three)
- Shadow at a local zoo (some offer cool summer programs)
- On the FDA website sign up to receive CVM updates.
  - These are short emails that provide current news on veterinary concerns. Often these topics are drug related.
  - <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/NewsEvents/CVMUpdates/default.htm>
- If your school offers any animal science courses that deal with A&P or drug therapy, see if you can take any of those

## Pharmacy School Years 1-2

- Everything from the pre-pharmacy list
- Join the Society of Veterinary Hospital Pharmacists (SVHP) and watch the listserv for interesting information.
  - <http://svhp.org/>
- Join the American College of Veterinary Pharmacists (ACVP)
  - <http://vetmeds.org/>
- Join the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP)
  - <http://www.aacp.org/Pages/Default.aspx>
- Start a student ACVP organization at your pharmacy school and get involved in the various student opportunities with this organization.
- Sign up to get an SVHP mentor



- Learn compounding
  - If your school offers an elective take it. If not, or in addition, take a compounding intro and vet compounding course offered by various CE companies (ACA, LP3 and PCCA are three companies that offer veterinary specific courses).
- Take a vet pharmacy elective.
  - Some pharmacy schools offer these.
  - The University of Florida has an online elective that students from other schools can take. This elective focuses on dogs and cats.
- Attend the SVHP annual meeting.
  - It's 3 days in June and the location varies.
  - It's a lot of fun and if you are seriously considering a residency you will definitely want to go at a minimum the summer before you apply. Veterinary pharmacy is a small world, and it's a great place to network with people that may be your future colleagues.
- Attend the ACVP annual meeting.
  - Less residency options, but still good for networking and learning
- If you can make projects/presentations vet pharmacy related, do it.
- Do research that can be related to veterinary medicine, compounding, and/or teaching
- Publish on something vet pharmacy, compounding, and/or teaching related
- Work as an intern at a compounding pharmacy (a veterinary one would be a bonus).
- Work as a vet assistant, kennel person, or client services representative at a local vet clinic/hospital.
- Connect with a local poison control center and volunteer.
  - They get a number of calls about animals
- Find teaching opportunities (even if they are not veterinary related)
- Develop relationships with people that would be great references
- Give a presentation to a 4-H club, high school students, etc. on a veterinary pharmacy type topic, such as drug administration, toxicities, using drugs in food animals, drugs in horse showing, or other topics that might be of interest to the specific group.
  - **Caution:** have your presentation info verified by someone who knows veterinary medicine (such as a vet or vet pharmacist) before you give it. Bonus – the person you have review your content could become a good reference in the future.
- Start a veterinary drug resources collection.
  - This would include Plumb's Handbook of Veterinary Drugs (there is a book, online version and an app). Students can get the online version and app for a discounted rate.
  - Other good options include Saunderson's Handbook of Veterinary Drugs and various veterinary pharmacology books.



## Pharmacy School Years 3-4

- Everything from the Pharmacy School Years 1-2 list
- Look into the AACP Walmart Scholar's program and see if there is a professor at your school that would be willing to be your mentor for it
- Look into ACA/ACVP Scholarships:
  - ACA/ACVP
    - **Willie Osborn Student Scholarship for Entrepreneurism** – \$500 cash award plus travel expenses to attend an ACA or ACVP Conference
    - **George Malmberg Student Scholarship for Compounding Excellence** – covers tuition and travel expenses for an ACA compounding training course
    - **Pharmacists Mutual | ACA Foundation Community Pharmacy Scholarship** – \$2,500 scholarship will be awarded at the ACA | ACVP Annual Conference & Expo or another ACA or ACVP Conference
  - APC (Formerly IACP):
    - Foundation and Pharmacists Mutual Compounding Scholarship
    - Foundation Fund-the-Future
    - Foundation Student Writing Competition
- Select relevant clinical rotations – make as many rotations as possible fit the below categories
  - **Veterinary:** Options include a vet pharmacy rotation that is already set up through your school, contacting a veterinary teaching hospital pharmacist to ask about the possibility of setting up a rotation (most vet hospital pharmacies take APPE students), contact a local vet about setting up a rotation (pharmacy students are typically allowed at least 1 rotation that is not supervised by a pharmacist), contact a zoo about setting up a rotation
    - You will need at least one of these to be competitive
    - Ideally do a rotation at one of the sites with a residency during the fall which serves as a working interview
  - **Compounding:** Veterinary pharmacy involves a lot of compounding so you will likely get this during veterinary rotations. However, a compounding specific rotation could be beneficial if you feel you are lacking experience in this area
  - **Teaching:** There is a lot of opportunity for teaching during a veterinary pharmacy residency. Doing an academic rotation can help prepare you for this aspect.
  - **Regulatory:** Veterinary pharmacy is often a grey area when it comes to regulatory compliance. Therefore, learning more about this topic through a rotation with a regulatory group (such as the FDA) can provide beneficial perspective.



## Attributes of Successful Residents

- Willingness to relocate and likely work in areas of the country with veterinary teaching hospitals
- Problem-solving skills
- A passion to innovate, and explore new and unique opportunities
- Willingness to take the “path less traveled” and embrace areas of pharmacy practice that are less defined

## For more information:

- Visit the [veterinary pharmacy residency webpage](https://vetmed.illinois.edu/hospital/veterinary-teaching-hospital/veterinary-specialties/medication-dispensing/veterinary-pharmacy-resident/) at <https://vetmed.illinois.edu/hospital/veterinary-teaching-hospital/veterinary-specialties/medication-dispensing/veterinary-pharmacy-resident/>
- Contact **Dr. Lauren Forsythe** at [lforsyth@illinois.edu](mailto:lforsyth@illinois.edu), 217-300-8507



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