

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH-EPIDEMIOLOGY (VPHE) AND DOCTOR OF VETERINARY MEDICINE (VTMD) COMBINED DEGREE PROGRAM

This combined degree program allows students to simultaneously complete both degrees in less than 4.5 years, providing training for the next leaders in veterinary preventive medicine and public health.

Program Requirements

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Master of Science in Veterinary Public Health-Epidemiology

Program Requirements

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Student's Advisory Committee

After receiving admission to graduate studies, students will consult with the graduate program concerning selection of a chair and members (if applicable) for an advisory committee representative of the student's field(s) of study and research.

The student's advisory committee for the Master of Science degree will consist of no fewer than three members of the graduate faculty, representative of the student's fields of study and research. The chair or the co-chair of the advisory committee must be from the student's major department (or intercollegiate faculty, if applicable), and at least one or more of the members must have an appointment to a department other than the student's major department. The outside member for students in an interdisciplinary program must have an appointment to a department different from the chair of the student's committee. The chair, in consultation with the student, will select the remainder of the advisory committee. The student will interview each prospective committee member to determine whether he or she is willing to serve.

Only members of the Graduate Committee Faculty located on Texas A&M University campuses may serve as chair of a student's advisory committee. Other members of the Graduate Committee Faculty – including those located outside the university or off-campus (if permitted by program, department, and college/school policy) – may serve as a co-chair or member.

The advisory committee as a group – and as individual members – are responsible for advising the student on academic matters. The duties

include responsibility for approving the student's proposed degree plan; research proposal (if applicable); thesis (if applicable); and conducting examinations (if required). The advisory committee members' approval of a degree plan indicates their willingness to accept the responsibility for guiding and directing the entire academic program of the student and for initiating all academic actions concerning the student. Additionally, in the case of academic deficiency, the advisory committee is responsible for initiating recommendations to the Graduate and Professional School.

The chair of the advisory committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student's degree program, has the responsibility for calling meetings at any time considered desirable.

If the chair of the student's advisory committee is unavailable for an extended period of time in any academic period during which the student is involved in activities relating to an internship, thesis or professional paper – and is registered for courses such as 684, 691, 692, or 693 – the Department Head or intercollegiate faculty Chair may appoint an alternate advisory committee chair during the interim period.

If the chair of a student's advisory committee is on an approved leave of absence – and the student is near completion of the degree and wants the chair to continue to serve in this role – a written request must be submitted to the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School, by the Department Head or intercollegiate faculty Chair, that the faculty member who is on an approved leave of absence be allowed to continue to serve as chair of the advisory committee – without a co-chair – for up to one year. The request must confirm that the faculty member is able to engage in the required duties as chair during the leave of absence. Extensions beyond the one-year period (if necessary) may be granted with additional approval of the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School.

If the chair of a student's advisory committee voluntarily separates from the university, and the student is nearing completion of the degree, the chair may continue to serve in this role – at the student's request – for up to one year. Two options are available:

- The chair may continue, with a co-chair, without additional approval by the Graduate and Professional School. The student must select a current member of the Graduate Committee Faculty – from the student's academic program and located near the Texas A&M University campus site – to serve as co-chair of the advisory committee.
- The chair may continue, without a co-chair, with approval by the Graduate and Professional School. A written request must be submitted to the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School by the Department Head or intercollegiate faculty Chair to allow the faculty member to continue as chair, without a co-chair, of the advisory committee.

For both options, extensions beyond the one-year period (if necessary) may be granted with approval of the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School.

Although individual advisory committee members may be replaced by petition for valid reasons, all members of a student committee cannot resign *en masse*.

Degree Plan

Students, in consultation with the advisory committee, will develop a proposed degree plan. The degree plan must be created, submitted, and approved through the online Document Processing Submission System (<http://ogsdps.tamu.edu/>) (DPSS). The degree plan must be submitted

prior to the deadline imposed by the student's college or school and approved by the Graduate and Professional School no later than 90 days prior to the date of the final oral examination or thesis defense. Students must select the appropriate program option when submitting a proposed degree plan.

Additional coursework may be added to the approved degree plan by petition through DPSS, if deemed necessary by the advisory committee, to correct deficiencies in the student's academic preparation. No changes can be made to the degree plan once the student's Final Examination Request or Final Examination Exemption Request is approved by the Graduate and Professional School.

Coursework included on the degree plan is subject to the requirements and restrictions detailed in the Credit Requirements and Limitations on Credits and Coursework sections in each degree program page.

Degree program time limits apply to courses listed on a degree plan. Details are available on the Time Limits section in each degree program page.

Credit Requirements

A minimum of 36 semester credit hours of approved coursework is required for the Master of Science non-thesis option degree.

This program does not offer a thesis option.

Ordinarily, students will devote the major portion of their time on work in one or two closely related fields. Other work will be in supporting fields of interest. When in combined program with the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree, 6 credit hours will be double counted to complete the combined degree program.

Limitations on Credits and Coursework

Credit-hour requirements are subject to the following limitations:

1. To receive a graduate degree from Texas A&M University, students must earn one-third or more of the credits through the institution's own direct instruction. These limitations also apply to joint degree programs.
2. Transfer credits may be used toward meeting the credit hour requirements under the following limitations:
 - The maximum number of credit hours which may be considered for transfer credit is the greater of 12 credit hours or one-third (1/3) of the total hours of a degree plan.
 - Graduate and/or upper-level undergraduate courses taken in residence at an accredited United States or international institution (recognized by the Office of Admissions), with a final grade of B or greater, may be considered for transfer credit if – at the time the courses were completed – the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution.
 - An official transcript from the institution at which the transfer coursework was taken must be sent directly to the Office of Admissions. Coursework credit submitted for transfer from any institution must be shown in semester credit hours or equated to semester credit hours.
 - Up to 1 hour of credit may be obtained for each five-day week of coursework for graduate courses of three weeks' duration or less taken at other institutions. Each week of coursework must include at least 15 contact hours.

- Grades for courses completed at other institutions are not included in computing the GPA.
 - Coursework in which no formal grades were given, or in which grades other than A or B were earned (for example, CR, P, S, U, H, etc.), is not accepted for transfer credit.
 - Courses completed at Texas A&M University and appearing on the degree plan with grades of D, F, or U may not be absolved by transfer work.
 - Except for officially approved cooperative doctoral programs, credit for thesis or dissertation research – or the equivalent – is not transferrable.
 - Courses used toward a degree at another institution may not be applied for transferred graduate credit.
 - Courses used toward a certificate, but not applied to an awarded degree, may be considered for transfer.
 - If the course to be transferred was taken for a certificate or prior to the conferral of a degree at the transfer institution, a letter from the registrar at that institution stating that the course was not applied for credit toward the degree must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School.
 - A student who has earned 12 credit hours of graduate credit in residence at Texas A&M University may be authorized to transfer courses in excess of the limits upon the advice of the advisory committee and with the approval of the Graduate and Professional School.
3. The maximum number of credit hours taken in post-baccalaureate non-degree (G6) classification at Texas A&M University which may be considered for application to the degree plan is 12.
 4. Only grades of A, B, C, and S are acceptable for graduate credit.
 5. Graduate courses on a degree plan may not be taken on an S/U basis except for 681 (Seminar), 684 (Professional Internship), 690 (Theory of Research), 691 (Research), 692 (Professional Study), 693 (Professional Study), 695 (Frontiers in Research), 697 (Methods), 791 (Doctoral Capstone), or SOPH 680 (Public Health Capstone).
 6. A student pursuing a non-thesis option Master's degree may not enroll in 691 (Research) courses for any reason. Under special circumstances, however, students in a non-thesis Master of Arts or Master of Science degree program may request use of 691 hours on the degree plan under the following conditions:
 - The Department Head or intercollegiate faculty Chair (if applicable) for the program may approve an exception for a student who changes to a non-thesis option MA or MS degree program from a PhD (after at least one year of studies) or a thesis option MA or MS degree.
 - If approved, a maximum of 8 credit hours in combination of 685 (Directed Studies) and 691 may be used.
 - Colleges/schools, departments, and interdisciplinary degree programs may establish additional requirements.
 7. A maximum of 12 credit hours may be used, in any combination, of the following:
 - No more than 8 credit hours in a combination of 684, 691 (if permitted), or SOPH 680.
 - No more than 8 credit hours of 684 for thesis option Master's degrees.
 - No more than 3 credit hours of 684 for non-thesis option Master's degrees.

- No more than 8 credit hours of 685 (Directed Studies).
 - No more than 3 credit hours of 690 (Theory of Research).
 - No more than 3 credit hours of 695 (Frontiers in Research).
8. A maximum of 3 credit hours may be used toward the non-thesis option Master's degree, in any combination, of the following:
 - No more than 2 credit hours of 681 (Seminar).
 - No more than 3 credit hours of 684 (Professional Internship).
 - No more than 3 credit hours of 685 (Directed Studies).
 9. Certain zero-credit courses may be allowed for Master's degree programs:
 - A zero-credit 684 (Professional Internship) or 685 (Directed Studies) course is only allowed for non-thesis option Master's programs.
 - A zero-credit 681 (Seminar) course may be used for either thesis or non-thesis option Master's programs.
 - Other courses, including 691 (Research) hours, are not eligible for zero credit.
 10. No more than 25 percent of the total credit-hours required on the student's degree plan may be in any combination of 684, 685, 690, 691 (if permitted), and 695.
 11. A maximum of 9 hours of advanced undergraduate courses (300- or 400-level) may be considered for application to the degree plan.
 12. No more than 50 percent of the non-research coursework required for an in-person degree program may be completed through distance education courses.
 13. Continuing education or extension courses may not be used for graduate credit.

Some departments may have additional or more restrictive requirements. Exceptions will be permitted only in unusual cases and when petitioned by the student's advisory committee and approved by the Graduate and Professional School.

Final Examination

A final examination may be required for the non-thesis Master of Science in Veterinary Public Health-Epidemiology program.

A student must pass a final examination by dates announced each semester or summer term in the Graduate and Professional School Calendar (<https://grad.tamu.edu/knowledge-center/dates-and-deadlines/dates-and-deadlines/>). To be eligible to take the final examination, a student's GPA must be at least 3.000 for courses on the degree plan and for all courses completed at Texas A&M which are eligible to be applied to a graduate degree, and there must be no unabsolved grades of D, F or U for any course listed on the degree plan. To absolve a deficient grade, the student must repeat the course at Texas A&M University and achieve a grade of C or better. All coursework on the degree plan must have been completed with the exception of those hours for which the student is registered. For thesis-option students, an approved thesis proposal must be on file in the Graduate and Professional School according to published deadlines prior to the final examination or submission of the request for exemption from the final examination.

A request to schedule the final examination must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School *via* ARCS a minimum of 10 working days in advance of the scheduled date for the examination. The Graduate and Professional School must be notified in writing of any cancellations. A student may be given only one opportunity to repeat the

final examination for the master's degree and that must be within a time period that does not extend beyond the end of the next regular semester (summer terms are excluded).

The final exam cannot be held prior to the mid-point of the semester if questions on the exam are based on courses in which the student is currently enrolled. If a student has completed all required degree plan coursework, the student is not required to be registered for classes in the semester the final examination is administered (unless he/she holds an assistantship). For specific final examination requirements, students should check the requirements for the degree which they are pursuing.

A request to schedule the final examination must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School *via* ARCS a minimum of 10 working days in advance of the scheduled date for the examination. The Graduate and Professional School will be notified *via* ARCS of any cancellations. A student may be given only one opportunity to repeat the final examination for the master's degree and that must be within a time period that does not extend beyond the end of the next regular semester (Summer terms are excluded).

The examination is conducted by the student's advisory committee as finally constituted. The final examination covers and all work taken on the degree plan and – at the discretion of the student's advisory committee – may be written, or oral, or both. Persons other than members of the graduate faculty may, with mutual consent of the candidate and the advisory committee chair, attend final examinations for advanced degrees. Upon completion of the questioning of the candidate, all visitors must excuse themselves from the proceedings.

A positive vote by all members of the graduate committee with at most one dissension is required to pass a student on the final examination. If the chair is the sole member of the student's advisory committee, a positive vote – with no dissension – is required to pass a student on the final examination. Departments or interdisciplinary degree programs may have stricter requirements provided there is consistency within all degree programs within the department or interdisciplinary degree program.

The student's department will promptly report the results of the Final Examination to the Graduate and Professional School *via* the Academic Requirements Completion System (ARCS) within 10 working days of completion of the final examination. If an approved committee member substitution (one only) has been made, their approval must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School *via* ARCS.

If the program requires the advisory committee to include at least one external member – with an appointment to a department other than the student's major department – and the substitution is for the sole external member of the advisory committee, then the substitute must also be external to the student's major department. In extenuating circumstances, with approval of the Graduate and Professional School, an exception to this requirement may be granted.

All requirements for the non-thesis option Master of Science degree other than those specified above are the same as for the thesis option degree.

Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in Veterinary Medicine

The professional curriculum in veterinary medicine is a four-year program. During the first three years, classes are scheduled on a semester basis. The fourth-year curriculum consists of 14 weeks of basic core rotations and 34 weeks of elective clinical rotations or career alternative electives or externship. The fourth-year curriculum allows

students to choose a species directed career, i.e., equine, companion animal, rural/mixed animal, production, or a career alternative track.

Below is the degree plan for the MS/DVM combination program. While the individual degree programs require a total of 213 credit hours, this degree plan allows 6 hours of public health related coursework to apply for credit towards completion of both the Master of Science in Veterinary Public Health and Epidemiology and the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine professional degree.

Summer		Semester Credit Hours
STAT 651	Statistics in Research I	3
VIBS 633	Animal Diseases in Comparative Medicine	3
VIBS 608 or VIBS 685	Epidemiology Methods I or Directed Studies	4
Semester Credit Hours		10
First Year		
Fall		
VIBS 681	Seminar	1
VIBS 910	Small Animal Anatomy	4
VIBS 911	Histology	1.5
VIBS 936	Veterinarians in Society	1.5
VSCS 910	Integrated Animal Care I	3
VTPB 910	Veterinary Immunology	2
VTPP 910	Physiology I	6
VTPP 914	Professional & Clinical Skills I	3
Semester Credit Hours		22
Spring		
VIBS 681	Seminar	1
VIBS 912	Clinical Anatomy of Large Animals	3
VIBS 914	Professional & Clinical Skills II	3
VLCS 910	Integrated Animal Care II	2
VTPB 922	Pathology I	3
VTPB 925	Agents of Disease I	4
VTPP 912	Physiology II	5
Semester Credit Hours		21
Summer		
VIBS 608 or VIBS 685	Epidemiology Methods I (if not yet complete) or Directed Studies	4
VIBS 685	Directed Studies	3
Semester Credit Hours		7
Second Year		
Fall		
VIBS 681	Seminar	1
VIBS 928	Public Health, Epidemiology and Evidence-Based Medicine	3
VSCS 926	Professional and Clinical Skills III	3
VTPB 930	Agents of Disease II	4
VTPB 927	Clinical Laboratory Medicine-Clinical Pathology	5
VTPB 923	Pathology II	3
VTPP 924	Pharmacology	3

Electives ¹		2
Semester Credit Hours		24
Spring		
VIBS 681	Seminar	1
VIBS 948	Didactic Electives in Veterinary Anatomy (21st Century Global One Health)	1
VLCS 924	Diagnostic Imaging & Interpretation I	2
VLCS 926	Professional & Clinical Skills IV	3
VLCS 948	Large Animal Medicine and Surgery Elective (Veterinarians Impacting Their Community)	1
VMID 944	Integrated Animal Care III - Elements of Care	4
VSCS 930	Principles of Anesthesia & Analgesia	3
VSCS 932	Principles of Surgery	2
VTPB 932	Organ Dysfunction: Recognition, Diagnostics and Supportive Care	4
Semester Credit Hours		21
Summer		
ENTO 689	Special Topics in... (One Health Outbreak Investigation)	3
VIBS 615	Food Hygiene	4
VIBS 689	Special Topics in... (Capstone Experience)	2
Semester Credit Hours		9
Third Year		
Fall		
VLCS 956	Large Animal Diagnostics & Therapeutics I	3.5
VLCS 925	Diagnostic Imaging & Interpretation II	2
VMID 935	Surgery	5
VSCS 934	Professional & Clinical Skills V	3
VSCS 956	Small Animal Diagnostics & Therapeutics I	4.5
Select one of the following:		2
VLCS 958	Career-Focus Tracking I - Food Animal	
VLCS 959	Clinical Focus-Tracking I - Equine	
VSCS 958	Clinical Focus-Tracking I - Companion Animal	
Career Selective ²		4
Semester Credit Hours		24
Spring		
VLCS 957	Large Animal Diagnostics & Therapeutics II	3.5
VMID 964	Clinical Experience	3
VMID 966	Professional and Clinical Skills VI	4
VSCS 957	Small Animal Diagnostics & Therapeutics II	4.5
Select one of the following:		2
VLCS 960	Clinical Focus-Tracking II - Equine	
VLCS 961	Career-Focus Tracking II - Food Animal	
VSCS 960	Clinical Focus-Tracking II - Companion Animal	
Career Selective ²		2
Public Health Selective (VIBS 988)		2
Semester Credit Hours		21

Fourth Year

Clinical Track: Alternative ³	48
Semester Credit Hours	48
Total Semester Credit Hours	207

¹ Select 2 elective courses during this semester from VIBS 948 (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/search/?P=VIBS%20948>), VLCS 948 (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/search/?P=VLCS%20948>), VSCS 948 (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/search/?P=VSCS%20948>), VTPB 948 (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/search/?P=VTPB%20948>), and VTPP 948 (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/search/?P=VTPP%20948>).

² Select from courses highlighting veterinary career options in public health and public policy, research, business and practice, lab animal medicine, exotics/zoo/wildlife, and avian/reptiles/pocket pets during this semester including VIBS 988 (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/search/?P=VIBS%20988>), VLCS 988 (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/search/?P=VLCS%20988>), VMID 988 (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/search/?P=VMID%20988>), VSCS 988 (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/search/?P=VSCS%20988>), and VTPB 988 (<https://catalog.tamu.edu/search/?P=VTPB%20988>).

³ See student program manager for a complete list of courses for the Alternative Track.

Fourth Year

The fourth-year curriculum consists of 14 weeks of basic core rotations and 34 weeks of elective clinical rotations or career alternative electives and externships for a total of 48 credit hours. The fourth-year curriculum allows students to choose a species directed career, i.e., equine, companion animal, rural/mixed animal, production, or a career alternative track.

Basic Core Rotations

Anesthesiology (3 weeks)

Diagnostic Imaging (3 weeks)

Radiology (2 weeks)

Laboratory Services (2 weeks)

- Diagnostics

Houston SPCA (2 weeks)

- Animal Welfare and Shelter Medicine

Primary Care Medicine (4 weeks)

Available Rotations¹

Small Animal Medicine

- Dermatology
- Critical Care
- Emergency
- Dentistry
- Cardiology
- Oncology
- Internal Medicine
- Neurology/Neurosurgery
- Zoological Medicine and Surgery

Small Animal Surgery

- Orthopedic
- Soft Tissue
- Ophthalmology

Large Animal Hospital

- Food Animal Medicine and Surgery/Ambulatory
- Equine Medicine
- Equine Community Practice and Field Services
- Equine Sports Medicine and Imaging
- Equine Soft Tissue Surgery
- Equine Orthopedic Surgery
- Equine Theriogenology
- Small Ruminant
- TDCJ (Texas Department of Criminal Justice)
- VERO Dairy Production
- VERO Rural
- VERO Cow-Calf Palpation
- VERO Feedlot Production

Alternative Career Electives

Externship

Vacation

¹ All rotations are two weeks in length.