



Government
Veterinary Surgeons

Getting Experience in UK Government: A guide for veterinary students



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- Defra
- Animal Health
- Meat Hygiene Service
- Veterinary Medicines Directorate
- Veterinary Laboratories Agency
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland

Front picture: Vet undertaking TB Testing taken by James Parry (Animal Health).

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Contents

Foreword by Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer	2
GVS – Our Role in Government	3
GVS – Supporting Veterinary Internship & EMS opportunities in government	5
Defra’s Internship programme	7
Types of Experience available with Government departments	8
Internship at Veterinary Medicines Directorate	9
VLA and veterinary undergraduate EMS placements	10
Do you want to find out what the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) does?	11
Extra Mural Studies at Animal Health	12
EMS Opportunities at DARDNI	14

Foreword by Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer



I'm delighted to launch this first edition of the GVS EMS and Internship guide for veterinary students.

Government departments have a long history of providing support for veterinary learning but there is a greater need than ever for veterinary students to understand their role in global veterinary medicine. EMS offers that opportunity.

A greater understanding of the role that the veterinarian plays, whether in government, in practice or in research, in both animal welfare and disease control will be enormously helpful to the new graduate. Key areas include:

- The global network of veterinary expertise which supports improvements in public health, animal disease control and assurance of the food chain.
- Support and educating animal keepers in relation to animal welfare and notifiable disease awareness and reporting.
- Veterinarians in human health research.
- Environmental protection, whether through responsible use of medicines, appropriate disposal of clinical and animal waste, well managed biosecurity measures or guardianship of biodiversity.

The purpose of this guide is to encourage more students, through the UK veterinary schools, to gain access to these exciting areas of work either through government department EMS or internship programmes or through experience working with Official Veterinarians in the field or with research based organisations. There are many opportunities and I hope you take advantage of them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alick Simmons'.

Alick Simmons
Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer



GVS – Our Role in Government

Introduction

The Government Veterinary Surgeons (GVS) network brings together vets working across all government departments and agencies, which employ veterinary surgeons headed by the UK's Chief Veterinary Officer who also acts as Head of Profession for all vets in government.

The diverse work of government vets ranges from providing veterinary advice on disease prevention and control, promotion of animal welfare, assurance of food quality, regulation of veterinary medicine and providing support for human health and security.

The GVS network forms part of the following government departments and agencies:

- Animal Health
- Central Science Laboratories (CSL)
- Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Department for International Development (DfID)
- Food Standards Agency (FSA)
- Home Office (HO)



GVS Members and other European colleagues participate in the GVS 2007 Conference hosted by Glasgow Veterinary School in 2007.

- Meat Hygiene Service (MHS)
- Ministry of Defence (MoD)
- Scottish Government
- Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA)
- Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)
- Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)
- The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland (DARDNI) also contributes to the activities of the GVS.

Please visit www.defra.gov.uk/gvs

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GVS – Supporting Veterinary Internship & EMS opportunities in government.

The Government Veterinary Surgeons (GVS) network is made up of all government departments and agencies which employ vets across the UK.

We can offer either Extra Mural Studies or Internship opportunities which will enable you to gain an overview of the diverse range of roles in government. Short-term research and project opportunities may also be available with particular parts of government throughout the year.

You will be able to receive hands-on experience through field based work with Animal Health and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland or you may want to gain greater insight into disease diagnosis and cutting edge innovation by undertaking EMS with the Veterinary Laboratories Agency.

Please note that it may not be possible for government to offer a place to all students wishing to undertake EMS in government.



Veterinary interns gain greater awareness of the veterinary role in policy making and research by working directly with experts in key areas of government.

As a guide veterinary students should be in their fourth year of study and have completed their farm EMS before applying for a period of EMS in government.

Students undertaking EMS or internships in government will need to be prepared to undertake necessary security checks and may need to complete health checks for some organisations.

If you would like to include experience within a government organisation as part of your veterinary training please e-mail gvs@DEFRA.GSI.GOV.UK to discuss possible options and placements.

For more information about EMS and Internships in government you can also visit our website at www.gvs.gov.uk

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Through the GVS-UVS Liaison group, staff in both the UK vet schools and in government aim to keep teaching in the growing area of veterinary public health relevant and up-to-date.



Defra's Internship programme

Defra provides a co-ordination point for internships by supporting a small number of internships each year in collaboration with the Meat Hygiene Service, the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, the Veterinary Laboratories Agency, the Food Standards Agency, the Department for International Development and the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This will enable students to see how Vets contribute to animal health and welfare policy, the control of veterinary medicines, protection of human health and the production of safer food on an international or national level

Students are required to maintain a diary and produce a reflective written and oral presentation on completion of their internship for the host department.

Students can set their own learning objectives as part of their study.

Examples of some of the previous Learning Objectives include:

1. Define the role of key animal health organisations and The relationships between them.
2. Understand the devolution of governments in the UK, their processes for renewal/ amendment of legislation.
3. What are the processes required for updating UK/GB contingency plans?
4. How does International Animal Health analyse surveys and create risk assessments for exotic diseases?
5. How does epidemiological modelling of Avian Influenza predict spread if the disease enters the country?
6. Form a risk assessment for endemic TB and the use of lay people to carry out testing.

There are three main types of experience available with Government departments.

EMS – Extra-Mural Studies

This experience forms part of the curriculum requirement in relation to work-based experience for veterinary students in the UK. Agencies are only able to accept fourth year students on EMS placement.

Internships

Internships are intended for veterinary students undertaking intercalated or early post-graduate degrees in infectious diseases, veterinary public health or related studies. Final year students will also be considered for internship places. Students can only be accepted if they have been nominated by their Director of Studies (or equivalent) and will be formally supervised for a set period – usually one month.

Research projects

A small number of supervised student research project places may be available from time to time. These may be projects initiated by students on intercalated degree programmes or in early post-graduate fields or may be projects made available for students to contribute to by the host department. Research project

opportunities may be based with policy or field areas. Please note these are intended as supervised student projects only and do not attract any additional funding.

Benefits of experience in Government include; Providing students with an opportunity for networking across other government departments and establishing contacts for the future as well as exploring new areas of work.

Increasing awareness across the profession of the nature of government veterinary roles and responsibilities, thereby creating a knowledge sharing environment.



Networking provides an opportunity to establish contacts

The VMD can provide a small number of internships for veterinary students to work alongside a veterinary assessor and associated team to provide an insight into their work.



Internship at VMD

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate is responsible for the protection of public health, animal health, and the environment, and the promotion of animal welfare by assuring the safety, quality and efficacy of veterinary medicines in the UK.

The VMD employs a number of staff with Veterinary backgrounds who are involved in assessing data for new veterinary medicines. Assessors work as part of a small team considering the scientific data and provide an assessment report which is discussed with other scientists, to decide whether or not the benefit/risk balance is favourable.

The VMD can provide a small number of internships for veterinary students to work alongside a veterinary assessor and associated team to provide an insight into their work.

Students should note that this work is document based, and does not offer any field experience of working with animals or laboratory work.

Initial contact should be made through; **VMD, Training and Liaison Unit, Woodham Lane, New Haw, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 3LS**

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The VLA Regional Laboratories offer EMS placements to veterinary undergraduate students.

VLA and veterinary undergraduate EMS placements.

VLA provides all sectors of the animal health industry with animal disease surveillance, diagnostic services and veterinary scientific research through a regional network of 16 veterinary laboratories; 12 Regional Laboratories (RLs) in England, one in Scotland, two in Wales, and a central research and diagnostic facility near Weybridge in Surrey. Through these laboratories the Agency offers diagnostic testing, advice and support to veterinary surgeons in practice for the diagnosis, control and prevention of disease in farm animals.

The RLs welcome undergraduate veterinary students and in recent times have provided approximately 120 EMS placements each year.

They are predominantly those taking large animal electives and we prefer that students are in their clinical years so that they can gain most benefit from their time with us. Weybridge can also provide a limited number of EMS placements.

There can frequently be competition for the number of places available therefore you are advised to book early by writing to the Regional Veterinary Manager responsible for your preferred RL.

Students wishing to seek an EMS placement at Weybridge should write to the Events Organiser at Weybridge:
Personnel Department
VLA Weybridge, New Haw,
Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 3NB

Do you want to find out what The Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) does?

The MHS, an Executive Agency of the Food Standards Agency, is responsible for the protection of public health and animal health and welfare, on behalf of Defra, in fresh meat premises in Great Britain approved under Regulation (EC) 854/2004.

The MHS will be offering the opportunity for undergraduate and post-graduate veterinarians to shadow its vets across the organisation. You will be able to gain experience in three areas:

Field experience: You can learn and enjoy time with Official Veterinarians (OV), who are responsible for individual premises, and Lead Veterinarians (LV), responsible for an area. MHS OVs perform a wide range of duties, including ante-mortem and post-mortem of animals and the verification of plant operator's procedures for the hygienic production of meat. LVs are responsible for both veterinary compliance and technical management in a specific area.

Management experience:

You can also benefit from the experience of non veterinary aspects which are extremely important for any professional such as management of resources: people, money and time. All these are an integral part of any vet's job and the MHS is not an exception.

Policy development: Experience all the work involved in policy development in relation to animal welfare, public and animal health, including how MHS vets liaise with Government colleagues and other stakeholders; see how instructions and training are developed, communicated and delivered to more than 400 OVs throughout GB.



An MHS Official Veterinarian conducts an ante – mortem inspection

Extra Mural Studies at Animal Health

Animal Health is an Executive Agency of Government and we are primarily responsible for the control of certain animal diseases which may have serious implications for public and animal health. We implement and enforce specific national and European Union legislation relating to the control and eradication of notifiable diseases of animals, farmed animal welfare, the facilitation of international trade and the protection of endangered species.

We have Divisional offices located across Great Britain, but the majority of our work is done out on farm or at other places where animals are to be found – cattle markets for example. Our head office is in Worcester. We have dedicated field staff – vets, animal health officers and other inspectors – and we work closely with private vets and other experts who do work on our behalf acting for example as Official Veterinarians. Back in our offices our support staff do essential work, keeping the food and farming industry moving, for example organising the licensing for the export of animals

and animal products. We have field staff at ports and airports checking imported animals, and we have an office in Bristol where we license trade in endangered species for conservation purposes.

Animal Health can offer undergraduate students clinical Extra Mural Study (EMS) placements of 2 weeks duration in the Divisional offices. To optimise the time on placement with Animal Health, there are a range of activities to experience. Students should note it is unlikely that they will experience all the activities carried out in the organisation, as the workload across the Divisional offices will vary according to the industry and priorities found there. There are certain visits which may be deemed unsuitable for the student for legal or other reasons.

Initial contact should be made through Animal Health Human Resources – 01905 768792. Alternatively further information can be found at <http://defraweb/animalhealth/about-us/workforus/students.htm>



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The majority of our work is done out on farm

EMS Opportunities at DARDNI

The Veterinary Service of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland (DARD) welcomes veterinary students who wish to 'see practice' during the summer months. They may be involved in either Veterinary Public Health (meat hygiene) duties or field disease control and animal welfare issues. This experience shows students another facet of veterinary life and can lead them to think about employment in the public sector after graduation.

Indeed it may be the only real exposure to the world of meat hygiene that many of them will get.

DARD require that students have insurance cover in place which indemnifies DARD and those responsible for any premises the student may visit.

Initial contact should be made through the Northern Ireland CVO's secretary at telephone 028 9052 5565. www.dardni.gov.uk



Veterinary students may be involved in a range of activities.

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Other government departments which are part of GVS Network



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