

Veterinary Technology Diploma

Frequently Asked Questions

The Veterinary Technology Diploma program (VTEC) is now available in two formats: you can choose to study either full-time (in-person) or part-time (hybrid).

- In the full-time in-person cohort, you'll graduate in just two years (4 semesters + practicum).
- In the three-year (9 semester) part time hybrid cohort, almost all courses will be online during the Fall and Winter semesters (September to April). Each year, mostly during the summer semesters, you'll be on campus for 2-3 weeks for in-person condensed lab courses where you'll be taught the practical skills required to become a veterinary technologist. You will be required to work in a small animal or mixed Veterinary Hospital for at least 4 of the 9 semesters.

Q: When is your next information session?

A: Dates and times for information sessions are found [HERE](#). They are usually held monthly September to June. Information Sessions are mostly held online through Zoom with some in-person information sessions.

Q: Can I take some courses in the on-campus stream and some in the part time online hybrid stream?

A: No. You must decide when you apply which cohort you are applying for: the in-person, on campus, two-year option, or, the hybrid part-time, three-year option.

There is a strict maximum of 30 student in each cohort. The differences in teaching methods mean that many of the courses in the part time option are structured and sequenced differently than the full time, on-campus option and therefore even if there were space, it will be difficult to match up courses to switch between the part time and full-time cohort (or vice versa).

Q: I missed the deadline for application submission, or I am still upgrading my courses. Can I still be offered one of 30 seats for this September?

A: You are very unlikely to get a seat in the on-campus program after the January deadline because our full-time cohort is always fully subscribed. However, seats may be available in the new (starting 2024) part-time hybrid option. If you submit an application after the January deadline, please indicate if you only wish to be waitlisted for the full-time option or if you would like to be considered for the part-time hybrid cohort.

Q: I have worked in a vet hospital for several years, but I never took chemistry, biology or math in high school. Do I really have to take this to be admitted?

A: Yes, you do. The prerequisite courses are in place to ensure you can be successful in the program and successfully write the VTNE's (veterinary technologist national board exam). There is a lot of theory that requires some basic background in the sciences, including math to calculate dosages, etc.

Q: Is my work experience acceptable for the minimum 80 hours of veterinary volunteer/work experience that is required for admission?

A: All applicants must spend 80 hours working in a veterinary hospital or clinic, observing or working with an RVT (Registered Veterinary Technologist) and/or DVM (veterinarian) so that the Task Observation Form (TOF) can be completed. Hours and TOF must be signed off by a veterinarian, RVT, or hospital manager.

Please log ALL animal related work experience e.g. volunteer work in rescues, shelters or with wildlife, work

experience at a dog daycare, boarding facility or pet store, farm work, horse riding etc. The more work experience hours and the wider the variety of work experiences you have, the stronger your application to the VTEC program will be.

Q: What are my chances of being accepted into the VTEC diploma program? Is it “first come, first served”?

A: Typically we use a “Preferential Admissions” process which means we don’t take the first 30 students that apply. The applicants that register and submit their completed applications before the application deadline are reviewed and “scored” from all the components of the application. Seats are offered to the top 30 candidates based on those scores.

NOTE for the first year of the part-time hybrid option (2024) fully qualified applicants will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Q: What is reviewed in the preferential admissions process?

A: Criteria that is reviewed for scoring is:

- required high school courses and grades
- additional post-secondary courses, certifications or degrees (please submit transcripts for ALL post-secondary academic qualifications, completed undergraduate courses, etc)
- short answer questionnaire
- reference letters
- veterinary hospital work experience hours (80 hours required)
- other animal work experience or volunteer hours (optional, but the more the better)

Q: Is there a waitlist for applicants?

A: Yes, there is a waitlist for applicants that do not receive the first seat offers. If a spot becomes available, the waitlist contacts are contacted.

If you are waitlisted for the on campus full time VTEC diploma option, you may get offered a spot for the part-time hybrid VTEC diploma option (if there is space available). If you are waitlisted for the part-time hybrid VTEC program option and do not get offered a seat, please let admissions know if you wish to be considered for the following year’s student intake.

Q: Do I need to re-apply if I am not accepted the first time?

A: You can apply for the following year using the same documents, but you must let the Registrar’s office know that you intend to do this.

A: If you do not get offered a seat in either the part time or full time VTEC cohort, and wish to reapply the following year, we strongly recommend you take the time to obtain additional work experience by applying for a job as a veterinary assistant in a veterinary hospital. Or consider taking a Veterinary Office Assistant certificate program (typically 6 months). These are offered at many BC Colleges including [Douglas College](#). If you improve your application in this way, you will need to re-submit new documents to the Registrar’s Office.

Q: What is the salary range for VTs?

A: Starting salary can be approximately \$22 - \$28/hour but varies depending on where you work (general practice, emergency, specialty medicine etc). Specialty practice RVTs can make considerably more.

Q: How do I become a registered veterinary technologist after I graduate?

A: Upon successful completion of the Douglas College VTEC Program, graduates are eligible to write the Veterinary Technologist National Exam (VTNE). Once this exam is successfully written, you can apply to your provincial veterinary technologist association. Once accepted you will be a [registered veterinary technologist](#) (RVT). Most Douglas VTEC students will be eligible for funding to cover the cost of writing the VTNE.

Q: What is an essential skill?

An essential skill is a skill that is required for a student to learn, practice, and successfully attempt on a live animal in order to successfully graduate. These skills are mandated by our governing body, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), which approves our VTNE Accreditation.

Q: Costs

A: Detailed costs are available on the Douglas College website – specifically the [tuition fee charts](#) [100 and 200 level courses].

If you take the 3 year part-time option, you will be taking 6-8 credits per semester, ~\$1000 to \$1240 /semester, PLUS a VTEC specific program fee of ~\$220 /semester (x9 semesters).

If you take the 2 year full-time on campus option, you will be taking 14-16 credits per semester (\$1950- \$2200/ semester) plus a VTEC specific program fee of \$550/ semester (x4 semesters).

The VTEC program may also include addition costs such as laboratory equipment, rabies vaccination fee, required textbooks, proctoring fees (for online courses only).

Student loans: although part time and full-time students are eligible for loans to cover the expenses associated with their program of study (including tuition fees), they typically have different eligibility for living expense support (depending on family income, where you live and dependents). Be sure to check your [student loan eligibility](#) for part-time and full-time programs using the [BC student aid online calculator](#).

FAQ for Part-time Hybrid Option ONLY**Q: Am I required to complete any of my education *on campus* at Douglas College?**

A: Yes, you will be on campus for 3 weeks in each of the 3 years of the program (David Lam campus, Coquitlam, BC.). The first week on campus will be in February of the first year, all remaining weeks will be in the summer semester (May to July). These are mandatory condensed lab courses where you will learn and practice your practical essential skills required for graduation.

Q: Am I required to work in a veterinary clinic during my time in the part-time hybrid VTEC program?

A: Yes. There are 4 Clinical Placement courses for which you will be required to work in a veterinary hospital/ clinic, in the fall and winter semesters of the second and third year. Each student is required to complete a minimum of 120 hours work for each of these 4 courses – we recommend 2-3 days/ week of work.

It is not a requirement to work in a veterinary clinic during the first year of the program, however, it may help with your studies, and will allow you to establish the productive mentor-mentee relationships that you will need for your second and third year clinical placement courses.



Q: What if I quit, lose my job, or must take a leave of absence from my mentoring veterinary clinic?

A: You will need to reach out to your VTEC program co-ordinator and each situation will be assessed individually. We will work with you and your clinic to help support you, however, the program requirements must still be fulfilled to proceed in the program.

Q: Does Douglas College set up the clinic placements for part-time hybrid students?

A: No. It is the student's responsibility to arrange a clinic placement, however if you cannot find a suitable placement we can put you in contact with local veterinary industry managers looking to hire VTEC students. It is important that the student discuss and confirm the clinical placement mentorship requirements with the clinic that they are interested in working with. It will be beneficial to work at the hospital/ clinic before it is required in the second year to ensure it is a "good fit" for both the student and the clinic.

Q: What are the requirements for a clinic to be able to host me as a part-time hybrid VTEC student?

A: The clinic must be a CVBC/CVMA approved full-service small animal (or mixed animal) veterinary hospital or clinic and must agree to host the student for a minimum of 120 hours per semester (starting in the fall semester of second year).

The host veterinary hospital / clinic must have a DVM or RVT (with a minimum two years clinical experience) available & willing to supervise and mentor the student. These mentors will be the student's clinical supervisors and will work with the students to help them completing their learning outcomes, assignments, and video evaluations on live animals. Students can have more than one clinical supervisor.

Q: What is the expectation of the clinical supervisors and the clinic?

A: If the student is working in a clinic in their first year, clinic participation in their education is not required (although support is appreciated).

The student must have a DVM or RVT (with a minimum two years clinical experience) supervising and mentoring them during their Clinical Placement courses in years two and three. Students can have more than one clinical supervisor; however all supervisors must be listed on the Clinic Affiliation Agreement.

The clinical supervisors are not required to teach or deliver any lessons. The students receive a course outline and are responsible for reviewing it with their supervisor so that they are aware of the course topics that they are learning, equipment required and essential skills that they must complete in order to successfully complete their courses. Students are responsible for discussing the essential skills assignments with the clinical supervisor, and the supervisor should assist the student in finding suitable patients, ensuring the student is prepared for the skills assessment, watching the student complete the skill, giving the student feedback and signing any relevant paperwork that needs to be submitted to the College with the essential skill evaluation photos/ videos.

As a clinical supervisor, it is important that you are aware of your student's practical skills progress throughout the semester. It is the student's responsibility to arrange time to discuss any questions with you and to schedule their evaluations in a timely manner. A course semester schedule will be provided on the first day of classes to allow the student's time for proper planning and time management for assignment completion. The supervisor needs to ensure the student has access to required equipment, will give permission for the student to use that equipment, will help provide access to patients (with owner consent) and directly supervise the student for all invasive procedures on live animals.



Q: Where/how do I write my exams?

A: You will write your midterms and final exams online through a monitored online invigilation program. These exams should be completed outside of your scheduled work hours. It is the student's responsibility to inform their employer of these dates.

Q: Where do I get my exotic and large animal experience?

A: Students will complete their exotic and large animal essential skills during the condensed three week on-campus labs in the final semester of the program in the summer of the 3rd year of the program.

Questions? Email the VTEC Program coordinator Dr Jenny Wakeling vtec@douglascollege.ca