AVS/BVA Student Market Research Results 2020

Sponsored by Vets4Pets
Contents

- Project background, methodology and profiles
- Cost of being a vet student
- EMS placements
- Career aspirations
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Engagement with AVS and BVA
Survey takes place every 4 years (since 1996)

65 questions, majority same as 2016

965 completed responses
- good representation across all nine universities and core years 1-5

Online survey methodology, live in November/December 2019
- Promoted to students via BVA emails, AVS rep emails and social media
- Sponsored by Vets4Pets
Profile of respondents

Base: 964, all students (one declined to give university).

Q1. Which veterinary school do you attend?
- Surrey: 10%
- RVC: 13%
- Nottingham: 11%
- Liverpool: 16%
- Glasgow: 10%
- Edinburgh: 9%
- Dublin: 7%
- Cambridge: 9%
- Bristol: 15%

Q4. For funding purposes, which of the following applies to you?
Gender of respondents - % of total

- Female: 16.0%
- Male: 83.0%
- Prefer not to say: 0.9%
- Prefer to self-describe: 0.3%

Ethnicity

- 8% of home students are non-white (92% white)
- 42% of overseas students are non-white (58% white)

Taken from the Summary of findings from 2019 Survey of the Veterinary Profession

**ETHNIC BACKGROUND**

- Respondents from Black and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds

  **NOW:** 3.5%
  **2014:** 2%
The cost of being a vet student in 2020
How much do vet students pay for their studies?

Tuition fees for academic year 2019-20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International students</th>
<th>Home students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£0-£8,999</td>
<td>£0-£8,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£9,000</td>
<td>£9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£9,001-£9,250</td>
<td>£9,001-£9,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Average £9,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£9,251+</td>
<td>£9,251+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average £26,600
Average £9,250

A majority of students (64%) fund their tuition fees via loans – similar to 2016.

Proportion funded by parents/family has increased to almost a quarter (24%).

Base: Home-769, International-168. Q6. How much are your tuition fees this academic year 2019-20 in pounds?
Almost half of students feel they don’t have enough to live on

Funds received compared to living expenses

**International students**
- I usually have more than I need: 19%
- It is about right: 62%
- I usually have less than I need: 19%

**Home students**
- I usually have more than I need: 8%
- It is about right: 39%
- I usually have less than I need: 53%

**All students**
- I usually have more than I need: 10%
- It is about right: 43%
- I usually have less than I need: 46%

The average shortfall is: £2,000 per year

Base: 965, All students. Q9. When considering the amount of money you receive per year, how does this compare with your living expenses? Q10. What is the estimated shortfall per year between your available funds, including any maintenance grants/loans, and your actual living expenses?
Main funding sources for maintenance/living expenses this year are:

- SLC (Student Loans Company)
- Parental/family donation
- Personal savings

A third also have a part-time job to help fund their living expenses

Average SLC loans: Loan of £4000+ (v. 53% in 2016)

How do vet students fund their living expenses?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLC</th>
<th>Family donation</th>
<th>Savings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

up 8% since 2016

35% Home
24% International

(Base: 965, All students. Q7. How have you funded your maintenance / living expenses this academic year? (Please select ALL that apply))
Overall levels of debt for vet students

Base: SLC-557, Parents/family-336, other sources-70, total borrowed-571: home students only. Q15a-d. Approximately, how much have you borrowed from each of the following sources, up to and including this academic year of your veterinary studies? (Please round to the nearest pound.) Figures represent the average (median) for anyone with debt.
How do students feel about EMS placement?
What’s important when choosing EMS placements?

### Opportunity for practical experience is key:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important elements when choosing EMS</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Fairly important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hands-on experience offered:</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness of staff to teach:</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost (e.g. for travel, accommodation etc):</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location (e.g. close to college/home):</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of practice (e.g. specialism, range of experience):</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of equipment:</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BUT, in reality, only 40% feel they have had sufficient opportunity (all or most of the time) to undertake tasks on EMS placements.

Top 3 barriers when considering EMS placements:
- **Cost**: 37%
- Location: 17%
- Distance to travel to placement: 14%

Base: 766, those who are on/have been on clinical placement. Q23. How important are the following when choosing where to do your EMS?
Q24. What is the biggest barrier you face when considering your EMS placements?
Satisfaction with EMS structure

Over three quarters are satisfied with EMS structure and system BUT satisfaction down 7% compared to 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not satisfied</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, 71% do feel EMS allows them to **explore a broad range of careers** in veterinary medicine.

Base: 846, those who are on/have been on EMS placement. Q21. How satisfied are you with the EMS system and structure at your vet school?
How much does a two week EMS placement cost?

Actual or expected expenditure per two week EMS placement – 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PRE-CLINICAL</th>
<th>CLINICAL (SMALL ANIMAL)</th>
<th>CLINICAL (FARM/EQUINE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical: &gt;£100</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical: £1-100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical: £101-200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical: £201-300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical: £301+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clinical: >£100 for 23% on small animal, 33% on equine/farm

Base: 965. Q28. Approximately how much have you spent (or do you expect to spend) per two week pre-clinical, clinical (small animal) and clinical (farm/equine) EMS placement this academic year? (Please take into consideration all costs including travel, accommodation and living expenses).
How to improve EMS

A majority feel the solution would be to have fewer than the current 38 weeks of EMS to complete:

Suggestions to improve EMS experience 2020

- Fewer weeks to complete over the entire degree: 28% (2016), 26% (2020)
- Greater diversity of placements: 12% (2016), 18% (2020)
- Shorter length of each individual placement: 7% (2016), 11% (2020)
- Longer length of each individual placement: 5% (2016), 9% (2020)
- More weeks to complete over the entire degree: 15% (2016), 19% (2020)
- Undecided: 15% (2016), 19% (2020)
- Other: 15% (2016), 17% (2020)
- Nothing would improve my experience: 8% (2016), 12% (2020)

Base: 2016-1512, 2020-846. Q26. Which of the following would improve your EMS experience? (Please tick ALL that apply.)
Students’ career aspirations
Are universities preparing vet students for their careers?

In the main, **YES.** Almost identical results to 2016.

If course is preparing students for their career – 2020, by university

- **78%** Yes
- **17%** No
- **5%** Undecided

What else could universities provide?

- More work/practical experience (43%)
- Opportunities to specialise (42%)
- Additional optional modules (41%)

**Base:** 965. Q32. Do you feel your university course is adequately preparing you for your career?
Students’ intentions after graduating

Area students intend to go into after graduation

- Small animal practice: 23% (1st year), 49% (5th year)
- Mixed practice: 26% (1st year), 22% (5th year)
- Large animal: 8% (1st year), 12% (5th year)
- Equine or small animal/equine: 8% (1st year), 12% (5th year)
- Other clinical practice: 7% (1st year), 3% (5th year)
- Another role in the profession which is outside of practice: 3% (1st year), 1% (5th year)
- A role outside of the veterinary profession: 1% (1st year), 1% (5th year)
- Undecided: 18% (1st year), 9% (5th year)

Intend to go into a role in practice: 79% (1st year), 90% (5th year)

Base: 965, all students. Q35. When you graduate, what area do you intend to go into?
Student welfare
Mental health and wellbeing issues at university

92% Opted to answer questions on mental health and wellbeing.

Only 18% said they hadn’t experienced any issues.

Feeling overwhelmed 68%
Anxiety 52%
Depression 35%
Insomnia 22%
Eating disorders 12%
Obsessive compulsive disorder 7%
Other mental health issues 4%
Prefer not to say 1%

Main triggers consistent with 2016:
- Their studies
- Lack of free time
- Financial worries

Base: 886. Q44. Which of the following, if any, do you currently suffer from or have you suffered from whilst at university? (Please tick ALL that apply.)
Support available to you

Pastoral support team at your vet school

Your Vet School’s VetSoc
How engaged are students with AVS & BVA?
Satisfaction levels are high for member benefits BUT so also is lack of awareness/usage

AVS Member Benefits

- JAVS (online journal) 93%
- EMS guides 91%
- AVS Congress 90%
- AVS website 90%
- AVS social media channels 90%
- Student representation 87%
- Welfare initiatives 87%
- IVSA exchanges 84%
- AVS Sports Weekend 81%
- EMS grants 67%

Base: 965. Q56. How satisfied are you with the following AVS membership benefits?
**Extent to which AVS fulfils its mission**

**Very positive view from students**: over three quarters feel AVS fulfils its mission

**AVS mission**: ‘to holistically support veterinary students through their studies, represent their views and interests and engage them in the wider issues facing the profession’

**AVS mission: Extent to which it is fulfilled 2016 versus 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Completely</th>
<th>To some extent</th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2016</strong></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2020</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24 Base: 2016-1457, 2020-965, all students. Q57. To what extent do you feel AVS fulfils this mission?
Views on BVA membership

Why be a student member?

EMS insurance

Main reason for 40-50% of BVA student members

76% are BVA student members

- World-class journals and guides
- BVA legal helpline
- Free personal accident insurance as a graduate
- BVA new graduate guide
- Free webinars from The Webinar Vet
- Graduate representation
- Young Vet of the Year Award
- VDS videos on topics such as handling complaints and personal resilience
- Access to exclusive partner discounts

Worth £921 p/a

Note: topics representing >5% of coded responses detailed in the table.

Summary and conclusions
Conclusions

**Average tuition fees**
- Almost two thirds fund the fees via loans
- Family also plays a big part in funding of fees: 46% of international v 19% of home students

**As in 2016, almost half feel they have less money than they need for living expenses**
- Average shortfall is £2,000
- Main funding sources for living expenses are: SLC, family donation, personal savings

**Part-time jobs are on the increase for vet students**
- Big increase in proportion who work part-time to help fund all their costs – 50% in 2020, 38% in 2016, 25% in 2012

**Overall student debt stands at £70,000 for 5th year students**
- Average debt for 1st years is £16,650

**Over three quarters of students feel their university is preparing them for their career**
- Additional suggestions include: more hands-on experience, opportunities to specialise and additional optional modules

**AVS/BVA membership**
- EMS insurance is the main reason for BVA student membership
- Over three quarters believe AVS fulfils its mission, completely or to some extent