

What are vet school interviews like?

Aurora Stottler Stanford Alum, 2016



My name is Aurora Stottler, and I graduated from Stanford University with a B.S. in Biology in 2016.

I am a member of UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, class of 2021. In the vet school application process, I visited 9 schools.

Iowa State was an early interview for me, in mid-October. I drove in the night before and spent some time exploring main campus and the vet school area.



Iowa State Main Campus



Iowa Vet School

Iowa State - continued

Iowa state had a group of morning interviewees and a group of evening interviewees on that day. For my morning group, I was there from about 8-12. We heard from faculty, welcoming us, and then we split into hour long sessions of either q&as with students, vet school tours (by students), or the interview, and rotated between these groups. During the tour and Q&A, I got to ask any questions I had, and hear about the vet school and life in Ames. Most vet students live together in a trailer park a few minutes walk from campus, so the community is very tight-knit. The campus was beautiful, and the vet school had great new facilities. In addition, each student gets a laptop that has the lectures on it.

Iowa State - continued

The interview was a behavioral style. It is designed to test critical thinking, the ability to see different perspectives, the ability to communicate, and general character. The interviewee is asked to describe a time when he or she faced a particular situation or showed a specific character trait. This is a closed file interview, so the interviewers do not know anything about the students.

Ames is a small, college town. It is fairly close to Des Moines but is very rural. It also gets very cold in the winter; I suggest California and other warmer-state applicants take a look at the weather in December in Ames.



Main Campus

Western University Health Sciences

The interview day started with an address by the Dean, as well as an explanation on Western's selection process (they try to build a very diverse class). Afterwards, we were split into groups going between interviews and tours (by vet students).

Western is in a more urban neighborhood, although much less busy than LA. It feels more like the suburbs, but there are some dangerous areas nearby. Unlike many other vet schools, Western does not have undergraduates but it does have other professional schools. Similar to Iowa, Western had a morning group and an evening group. I was there from about 1-5.



Western U's Vet School

Western U - continued

The interviews were behavioral like Iowa, and asked similar questions. However, we rotated between a few groups of interviewers for a “mini-MMI.”

Each set of interviewers asked a couple of questions. This is also closed file. Western is known for its PBL, or Problem Based Learning, style of instruction. While the students do attend some lectures, there is a strong focus on learning through cases. Because this is new for many students, we had a chance to try out a mini-PBL with Western students, in small groups, with pizza.

Western sends students out to other schools and hospitals for the third and fourth years of practical experience, so its more urban environment does not affect students interested in farm animal medicine.



UC Davis

UC Davis has one of the more intense formats of interview, the MMI. MMI stands for “multiple mini interview.” This interview consists of ten 10 minute stations, for a total of 100 minutes. Students rotate through stations, each with a different interviewer. Students get to choose an interview date and time given about a week of options, and the daily schedule depends on what time is chosen.

Students must sign a non-disclosure agreement prior to the interview to maintain the integrity of the questions. Interviewees are scored numerically based on how they perform at each station. Each station is independent, so my advice would be to try not to let difficulties at one station affect the next. After the interview, we went on tours of the vet school and small and large animal hospitals. One fun feature is that Davis has a kitten colony, which is a room with lots of kittens for vet students to practice handling, and can visit at any time. After the tour, we went to an information session about the school, followed by a pizza party with students where we could ask any questions we had and get to know everyone. Davis does force students to track large or small animal after 2nd year.



Kansas State Main Campus

Kansas State is located in the very rural Manhattan, which is a nice college town. They have many new facilities, and some still in construction but due to open soon. I flew into the tiny Manhattan, KS airport just a few minutes from the school. Kansas State offered shuttles both from the airport to nearby hotels and from hotels to the vet school for interviews. On interview weekend, there was a big pizza party for applicants interviewing both Saturday and Sunday. This served as an information session on Kansas State and a panel with current vet students.



Kansas State Main Campus

Kansas State - continued

Before and after the interview, we chatted with vet students in the greeting room. The interview was open file, although the interviewers couldn't see everything about you (for example, I believe they could see GPAs but not individual grades). This was a more traditional style of interview, rather than behavioral.

After the interview, we got a very in-depth tour of the vet school and hospitals. All the students were very friendly and personable, and I felt a great sense of community within the vet school. The students seemed to have a very good sense of balance. Kansas State also has a lot of great research opportunities. Manhattan is small, but is pretty modern and has anything you would need.



University of Tennessee

UT is located in the town of Knoxville, about 3 hours East of Nashville. It is a college town, with plenty of UT pride! Knoxville has its own zoo as well as a big cat sanctuary nearby, making UT a great choice for students interested in zoo medicine.



University of
Tennessee
Teaching
Hospital



Large Animal Hospital

University of Tennessee - continued

On interview day, before my interview I had the chance to talk to current vet students as well as other interviewees. The interviewing panel includes a current 4th year student, as well as professors or veterinarians from the community. The interview lasted about 30 minutes, with time to ask questions or express any last thoughts at the end. After the interview, there was an information session about the school.

Interviewees at this time would also double check their entrance requirements, and have an opportunity to clear up any classes that may or may not meet requirements. I stayed after my interview and spent time in the greeting area talking to current students and professors. UT does not have a strong research focus; instead, they pride themselves on faculty that has time and energy to spend on students. The students raved about the great access they have to faculty, and the strong community within the vet school.



Tufts



Tufts's Vet School, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, is located away from Tufts's main campus, in rural North Grafton, about 45 minutes outside of Boston. Tufts is a great program for those interested in both wildlife and research.

On interview day, students had several options for sessions to attend in the morning; some include financial aid presentations, and learning about Tufts's extensive research programs. We received a catered lunch, and had plenty of time to get to know fellow interviewees. After lunch, interviews began. Each person was assigned a particular time, and when not in an interview, we went on tours of the vet school and associated facilities. Interview day lasted from morning to late afternoon.



Penn

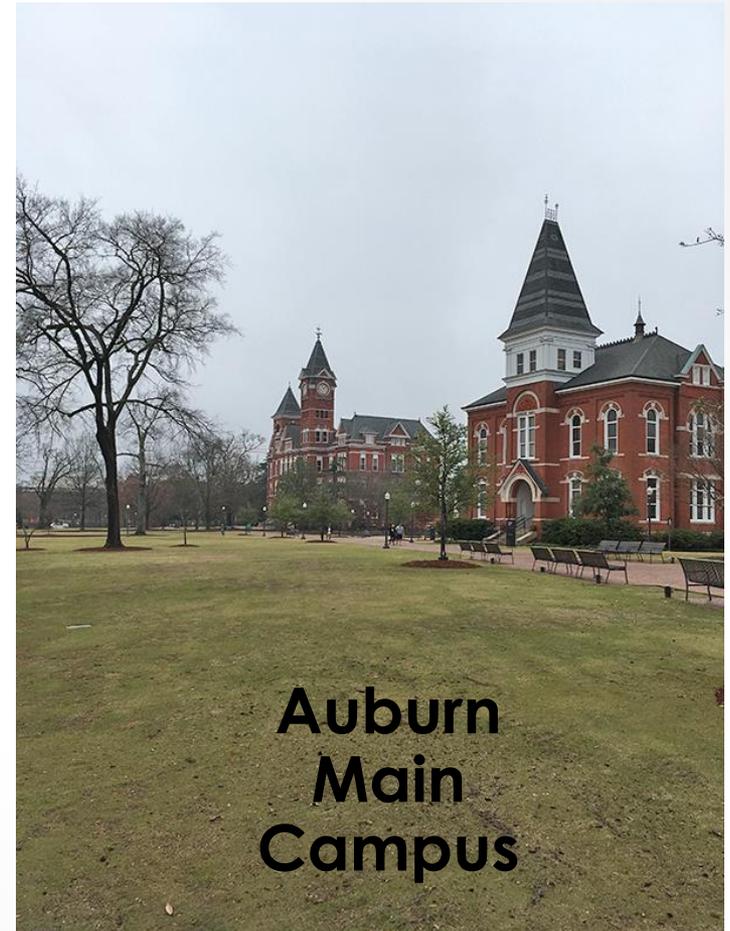
Penn, located in Philadelphia, is very much an urban campus. To ensure that students have ample opportunity to study large animal medicine, there is also a large animal hospital in New Bolton, about an hour outside of the city.

For my Penn interview, I went on large animal day. Most students interested in small animal medicine have a shorter interview day and do not visit the New Bolton center. For large animal day, I was there early in the morning through the evening. We began with a quick tour of the vet school and the small animal hospital, and then hopped on a bus to the New Bolton facilities. During the ride, we got to talk to current vet students and other applicants. Current vet students who interact with interviewees on interview day actually are involved in the admissions process, which Penn is very transparent about.

At New Bolton, we took a tour of the large animal hospital, and got to see current students working with the animals. We then toured the dairy, before heading inside for lunch before interviews began. Interviews were staggered throughout the afternoon, and when not interviewing, we talked to current students and asked any questions we might have. Once all interviews were finished, we were bused back to main campus.

Auburn is located in Auburn, Alabama, a college town. For my interview, I flew into the Atlanta airport and then made the hour and a half drive to Auburn.

Interview day spanned most of the morning. Based on my interview time, I first listened to several presentations on Auburn's program and financial concerns, before my 30 minute interview. After the interview, we were taken on a tour of the vet school and small and large animal hospitals. Auburn boasts one of the largest small animal hospitals in the country, and the facilities are beautiful and new.



Cornell is located in Ithaca, in upstate New York. It is a hilly town with a beautiful campus and lots of snow. I flew into the Ithaca airport, but I would recommend flying into a bigger airport, such as Syracuse, because weather often causes cancellations at the Ithaca airport in the winter months. I flew in late the night before the information day with no issues, but nearly everyone I talked to experienced delays or cancellations going into Ithaca.

Cornell does not include interviews as part of their application process, so at the beginning of January, applicants receive a decision: accepted, declined, or alternate. Throughout January and February, Cornell encourages accepted and alternate students to visit campus for an information day. There were several different options for students to choose from. While not required, information day is a really great way to get to know the school and the program.

Cornell (Info Day)



Vet School



Main Campus

Tips

- Research the school beforehand and have several questions prepared to ask the students and/or in your interviews.
- Prepare some topics to talk about from your experiences.
- When you visit a school, try to imagine what it would be like to attend the school and live in the town. Explore downtown, explore the campus, consider logistics of living in a certain place.
- Have fun! Despite the stress of interviewing, I had a blast exploring new cities and parts of the country I had never been before. Take advantage of the opportunity to travel somewhere new