

Facts & Figures

Employment of male and female graduates of US veterinary medical colleges, 2002

- ▶ Among graduates who received employment offers, 92.2% of males and 86.1% of females accepted an offer.
- ▶ Mean starting salary among year-2002 graduates of US veterinary medical schools was \$39,995 for females and \$41,172 for males.

Employment, starting salaries, benefits, and educational indebtedness of male and female graduates were determined from the 2002 AVMA survey of graduating veterinary medical students. Responses were received from 1,772 of 2,243 graduates. The survey response rate was 79.0%; 72.6% of the respondents were female, and 27.4% were male.

Employment Preferences, Offers, and Acceptances

At the time of the survey, all but 3.0% of graduating veterinarians were seeking employment in veterinary medicine. Graduates were asked to indicate the top 3 employment types they were seeking. Employment in the private sector was the first choice of 73.0% of the graduates. A position in an advanced study program was sought by 23.9% of the graduates. Only 2.5% of graduates were seeking employment in public or corporate sectors.

Overall, 90.8% of the graduates who were seeking employment received at least 1 offer of employment. Mean number of offers among those who received offers was 2.6. Offers were accepted by 87.7% of the graduates who received them. All but 10.3% of those who accepted an offer matched their first choice for employment type, and only 3.6% had to settle for an employment type that was not among their top 3 choices. Equine practice appeared to be the most competitive employment choice; nevertheless, 76.6% of graduates seeking employment in an equine practice found such employment. Among graduates who were seeking employment but had not received an employment offer at the time of the survey, 46.9% were seeking employment in small animal exclusive practices, 13.1% in mixed animal practices, 21.3% in small animal predominant practices, and 7.0% in equine practices.

A higher percentage of male graduates (95.6%) received at least 1 offer of employment, compared with female graduates (89.8%). Male graduates also received more offers than female graduates; among those who received offers, the mean number of offers per graduate was 3.0 for males and 2.4 for females. Among male graduates with employment offers, 67.0% had more than 1 offer, and 29.8% had 4 offers or more. Among

female graduates with employment offers, 63.8% had more than 1 offer, and 18.2% had 4 offers or more (Table 1).

Among graduates who received offers, 92.2% of males and 86.1% of females accepted an offer of employment. Among these graduates, 2.9% of males indicated they would be self-employed, compared with 0.9% of females. Almost all graduates (98.2%) who accepted employment expected to work full-time. Similar percentages of male and female graduates expected to work full-time (99.5 vs 97.7%, respectively).

The distribution of graduates by type of employment accepted was determined (Table 2). Among female graduates, 40.0% accepted an offer from a small animal exclusive practice, 25.4% accepted a position in an advanced study program, and 12.5% accepted an offer from a small animal predominant practice. Among male graduates, 33.4% found employment in a small animal exclusive practice, 23.3% were accepted into an advanced study program, and 12.5% accepted an offer from a mixed animal practice. Equine practice was only a small source of employment for new graduates. Among all graduates

Table 1—Employment offers received by female and male veterinary medical college graduates in 2002

No. of offers	Female (No. [%])	Male (No. [%])
1	326 (36.2)	116 (33.0)
2	251 (27.9)	64 (18.2)
3	159 (17.7)	67 (19.0)
≥ 4	164 (18.2)	105 (29.8)
Total	900 (100)	352 (100)

Table 2—Employment of female and male veterinary medical college graduates in 2002

Employment type	Female (No. [%])	Male (No. [%])
Large animal exclusive	15 (1.6)	24 (5.8)
Large animal predominant	12 (1.3)	28 (6.7)
Mixed animal	94 (9.9)	52 (12.5)
Small animal exclusive	380 (40.0)	139 (33.4)
Small animal predominant	119 (12.5)	41 (9.9)
Equine	37 (3.9)	17 (4.1)
University	5 (0.5)	5 (1.2)
Uniformed services	13 (1.4)	6 (1.4)
State or local government	0 (0)	0 (0)
Federal government	5 (0.5)	2 (0.5)
Industry or commercial	2 (0.2)	1 (0.2)
Not-for-profit	1 (0.1)	0 (0)
Advanced study	241 (25.4)	97 (23.3)
Unknown	4 (0.4)	0 (0)
Other	21 (2.2)	4 (1.0)
Total	949 (100)	416 (100)

who accepted an offer, 3.9% of females and 4.1% of males found employment in an equine practice.

Base Starting Salary and Additional Compensation

Graduates who accepted an offer of employment were asked to indicate the base starting salary they expected to receive. The mean starting salary in 2002 was \$39,995 for females and \$41,172 for males. The mean salary for graduates accepting an offer in private practice was \$45,893 for females and \$47,307 for males. Among female graduates, salaries ranged from \$32,345 for equine practice to \$47,757 for small animal exclusive practice (Fig 1). Among male graduates, salaries ranged from \$38,471 for equine practice to \$51,952 for large animal exclusive practice.

Among graduates who accepted an offer of employment, 53.7% of female graduates and 62.0% of male graduates indicated they would be eligible to earn compensation in addition to their base salary. Eligible female graduates expected to earn mean additional income of \$5,746. Eligible male graduates expected to earn mean additional income of \$6,584. In the private sector, mean additional income was \$5,968 for females and \$6,975 for males.

Fringe Benefits

Graduates who accepted employment were asked to indicate the fringe benefits they received as part of their compensation package. All but 6.4% received at least 1 of 15 benefits (Fig 2). In 2002, medical/hospital insurance

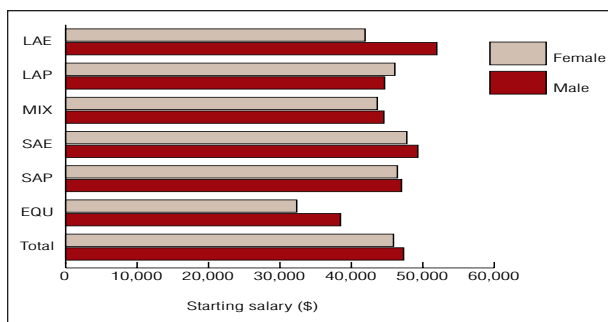


Figure 1—Annual starting salary of male and female veterinary medical college graduates who entered private practice, 2002. LAE = Large animal exclusive. LAP = Large animal predominant. MIX = Mixed animal. SAE = Small animal exclusive. SAP = Small animal predominant. EQU = Equine.

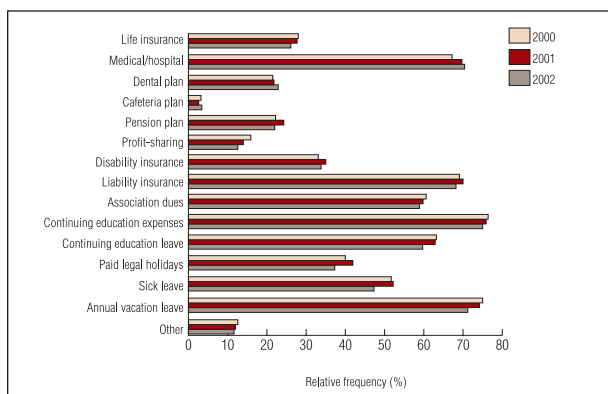


Figure 2—Comparison of benefits offered by employers to 2000, 2001, and 2002 graduates of US veterinary colleges.

was provided to 70.4% of graduates, and liability insurance premiums were paid for by employers for 68.2% of graduates. Annual vacation leave was received by 71.2% of graduates, paid legal holidays were received by 37.3%, and sick leave benefits were received by 47.3%; however, only 26.8% received all 3 of these benefits. A continuing education expense benefit was received by 75.0% of graduates; 59.7% received continuing education leave, and 55.8% received both continuing education expense and leave benefits. Life insurance was provided to 26.1% of graduates, and a pension benefit was provided to 22.0%.

The percentages of male and female graduates who received each of the benefits were comparable (Table 3). The largest difference between genders was for medical/hospital insurance; 66.6% of male graduates received this benefit, compared with 72.1% of female graduates. The most commonly received benefit was continuing education expenses; 75.9% of females and 72.8% of males received this benefit. Annual vacation leave was provided to 71.4% of female graduates and 70.7% of male graduates. Liability insurance was provided to 68.3% of female graduates and 68.0% of male graduates.

Educational Indebtedness

Most veterinary students have accumulated debt by the time they graduate. Among year-2002 graduates, only 12.4% of females and 14.1% of males did not incur any educational debt. Mean debt among those with debt was \$68,131 for males and \$74,423 for females. Among male graduates, 63.6% had a debt of \$50,000 or more. Among female graduates, 71.6% had debt of \$50,000 or more.

Graduate Characteristics

Male and female veterinary students were approximately the same age at graduation (Table 4). Mean age

Table 3—Fringe benefits received by female and male veterinary medical college graduates who accepted employment in 2002

Benefit	Female (No. [%])	Male (No. [%])
Life insurance	247 (26.0)	110 (26.4)
Medical or hospital insurance	684 (72.1)	277 (66.6)
Dental plan	219 (23.1)	93 (22.4)
Cafeteria plan	31 (3.3)	16 (3.9)
Pension plan	211 (22.2)	89 (21.4)
Profit-sharing	113 (11.9)	59 (14.2)
Disability insurance	311 (32.8)	150 (36.1)
Liability insurance	648 (68.3)	283 (68.0)
Association dues	557 (58.7)	246 (59.1)
Continuing education expenses	720 (75.9)	303 (72.8)
Continuing education leave	556 (58.6)	259 (62.3)
Paid legal holidays	352 (37.1)	157 (37.7)
Sick leave	445 (46.9)	201 (48.3)
Annual vacation leave	678 (71.4)	294 (70.7)
Other	108 (11.4)	51 (12.3)

Table 4—Personal characteristics of female and male veterinary medical college graduates in 2002

Characteristic	Female	Male	All
Mean age (y)	27.8	27.9	27.8
Marital status			
Single (%)	61.4	53.0	59.1
Married (%)	34.6	44.7	37.4
Divorced (%)	4.0	2.3	3.5
Widow or widower (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Graduates with children (%)	6.8	16.4	9.4

of year-2002 graduates was 27.9 years for males and 27.8 years for females. A majority of graduates were single and never married; 61.4% of females and 53.0% of males were in this category. A higher percentage of males were married, compared with females. A higher percentage of females were divorced, compared with males. One characteristic that distinguished graduates by gender

was the percentage with children; 16.4% of males, compared with just 6.8% of females, had at least 1 child.

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