

# Facts & Figures

## Employment of female and male graduates of US veterinary medical schools and colleges, 2008

- Mean starting salary among graduates who accepted full-time positions was \$51,321 for males and \$47,330 for females.
- Mean debt among those with debt was \$115,059 for males and \$121,006 for females.

Graduating veterinary students were surveyed in 2008 to obtain information regarding their employment choices, starting salaries and benefits, and educational indebtedness (Appendix). Responses were received from 2,363 graduates from all 28 US veterinary schools and colleges for a response rate of 95.4%. Of the 2,357 respondents who indicated their gender, 76.9% (1,813) were female and 23.1% (544) were male. Base sizes fluctuated throughout data analyses because some respondents did not answer all questions and one of the veterinary schools<sup>a</sup> used a different survey instrument.

### Employment Preferences, Offers, and Acceptances

At the time of the survey, 96.4% (2,277/2,363) of graduating veterinarians were seeking employment or advanced education in veterinary medicine. With the exception of graduates from 1 school, those seeking employment were asked to indicate their top 3 employment preferences. Employment in the private sector was the first choice of most (67.0% [1,450/2,163]) graduates. A position in an advanced study program was sought by 29.4% (n = 635), 3.3% (71) were seeking employment in the public or corporate sectors, and 0.3% (7) indicated some other type of employment.

Overall, 89.8% (1,945/2,165) of graduates who were seeking employment received at least 1 employment offer. The mean number of employment offers received was 2.5 among those receiving offers.

At the time of the survey, 93.9% (475/506) of male graduates and 88.6% (1,465/1,654) of female graduates had received at least 1 offer of employment. Among those who received offers, the mean number of offers per graduate was 3.2 for males and 2.3 for females. Among male graduates with employment offers, 69.9% had > 1 offer and 28.6% had ≥ 4 offers (Table 1). Among female graduates with employment offers, 54.0% had > 1 offer and 15.9% had ≥ 4 offers.

Employment offers were accepted by 76.5% (1,743/2,279) of graduates who received offers. Of

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the 1,645 graduates who reported their employment preferences, 83.7% (1,377) took up their first choice of employment, whereas 5.7% (93) accepted an offer for an employment type that was not among their top 3 choices.

Among graduates who received offers, 81.7% (429/525) of males and 75.0% (1,311/1,749) of females accepted an offer of employment. Among those graduates entering private practice, 2.5% (7/275) of males indicated that they would be self-employed, compared with 1.7% (12/710) of females. Almost all graduates (97.6%) who accepted offers expected to work full-time. A similar percentage of male and female graduates expected to work full-time (98.8% vs 97.3%).

The distribution of graduates by type of employment accepted was determined (Table 2). Of male graduates, 33.0% entered employment in an advanced study program, 27.5% entered exclusively small animal practice, and 13.5% entered mixed animal practice. Of the female graduates, 42.2% entered an advanced study program, 32.8% entered exclusively small animal practice, and 8.1% entered predominantly small animal practice.

### Base Starting Salaries and Additional Compensation

Graduates who accepted an offer of employment were asked to indicate the base starting salary they expected to receive. Mean full-time starting salary in 2008 was \$51,321 for males and \$47,330 for females. Excluding salaries for advanced study programs, the mean full-time starting salary in 2008 was \$62,385 for males and \$61,337 for females. Mean full-time starting salary for graduates who accepted an offer in private practice was \$62,079 for males and \$61,294 for females (Figure 1). Among male graduates, salaries for full-time private practice ranged from \$46,529 for equine practice to \$66,266 for exclusively small animal practice. Among female graduates, salaries for full-time private practice ranged from \$39,503 for equine practice to \$64,318 for exclusively small animal practice.

Table 1—Distribution of numbers of offers of employment received by female (n = 1,432) and male (469) graduates of US veterinary medical schools and colleges in 2008.

No. of offers	Female		Male	
	No.	%	No.	%
1	659	46.0	141	30.1
2	312	21.8	97	20.7
3	233	16.3	97	20.7
≥ 4	228	15.9	134	28.6

Among graduates who accepted full-time employment, 57.5% (231/402) of male graduates and 46.9% (554/1,182) of female graduates indicated that they would be eligible to earn compensation in addition to their base salary. Eligible male graduates accepting full-time positions expected to earn a mean additional amount of \$9,457, whereas female graduates accepting full-time positions expected to earn a mean additional amount of \$8,219. In the private sector, mean additional compensation for full-time employment was \$10,033 for males and \$8,927 for females.

### Additional Benefits

Graduates who accepted employment were asked to indicate benefits in addition to salary that would be provided by their new employer. All but 8.1% (141/1,743)

Table 2—Distribution of employment types among new graduates of US veterinary medical schools and colleges in 2008 by gender.

Practice type	Female (1,311)		Male (429)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Large animal exclusive	20	1.5	24	5.6
Large animal predominant	15	1.1	32	7.5
Mixed animal	103	7.9	58	13.5
Small animal exclusive	430	32.8	118	27.5
Small animal predominant	106	8.1	26	6.1
Equine	40	3.1	17	4.0
University	3	0.2	1	0.2
Uniformed services	24	1.8	8	1.9
State or local government	2	0.2	0	0.0
Federal government	2	0.2	1	0.2
Industry or commercial	4	0.3	2	0.5
Not-for-profit	4	0.3	0	0.0
Advanced study (net)	554	42.2	141	33.0
MPH	3	0.2	2	0.5
MS	3	0.2	2	0.5
MPVM	1	0.1	2	0.5
PhD	11	0.8	2	0.5
Internship	498	38.0	123	28.7
Residency program	32	2.4	10	2.3
Other advanced study	6	0.5	0	0.0
Unknown	4	0.3	0	0.0

Values in parentheses are total number in category.

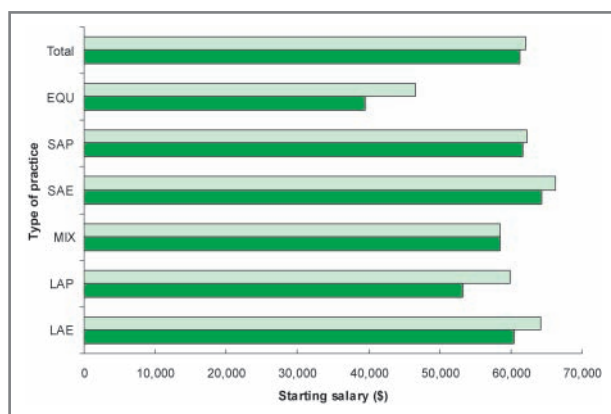


Figure 1—Mean full-time starting salary of new male (light green) and female (dark green) graduates of veterinary medical college entering private practice in 2008. EQU = Equine practice. SAP = Predominantly small animal. SAE = Exclusively small animal. MIX = Mixed animal. LAP = Predominantly large animal. LAE = Exclusively large animal.

received at least 1 benefit (Figure 2). In 2008, the compensation packages of more than half the graduates who accepted positions included payment of continuing education expenses (74.2%), medical-hospital insurance (66.9%), vacation leave (66.3%), liability insurance (64.3%), association dues (55.1%), and continuing education leave (53.3%).

Percentages of male and female graduates who received each of the benefits were comparable for many benefits (Table 3). With the exception of personal use of a vehicle, liability insurance was the benefit for which the biggest difference between genders was detected: 70.6% of male graduates received this benefit, compared with 62.2% of female graduates. The benefit cited most often by both genders was payment of continuing education expenses, which was reported by 75.5% of males and 73.8% of females.

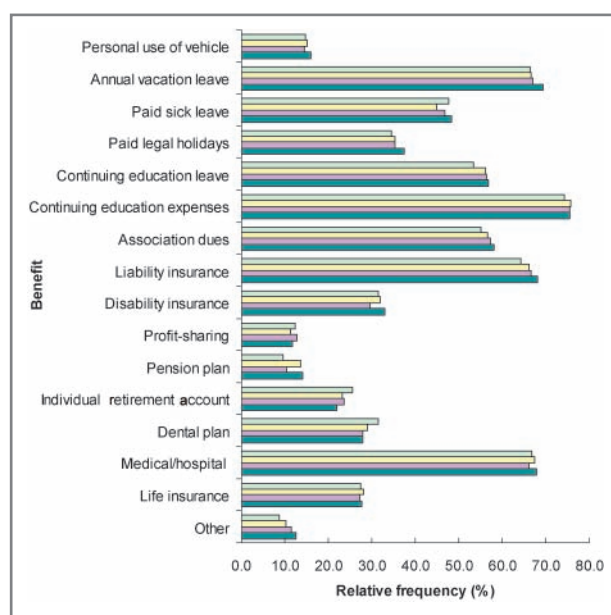


Figure 2—Comparison of frequencies of benefits offered by employers to new graduates of US veterinary medical schools and colleges in 2005 (light green), 2006 (yellow), 2007 (purple), and 2008 (turquoise).

Table 3—Distribution of employment-related benefits received by new graduates of US veterinary medical schools and colleges in 2008 by gender.

Benefits	Female		Male	
	No.	%	No.	%
Life insurance	345	26.3	135	31.5
Medical/hospital insurance	879	67.0	286	66.7
Dental plan	428	32.6	119	27.7
Individual retirement account (IRA)	309	23.6	133	31.0
Pension plan	109	8.3	56	13.1
Profit-sharing	147	11.2	65	15.2
Disability insurance	391	29.8	156	36.4
Liability insurance	816	62.2	303	70.6
Association dues	704	53.7	254	59.2
Continuing education expenses	967	73.8	324	75.5
Continuing education leave	674	51.4	253	59.0
Paid legal holidays	440	33.6	160	37.3
Sick leave	608	46.4	221	51.5
Annual vacation leave	870	66.4	285	66.4
Personal use of vehicle	150	11.4	105	24.5
Other	119	9.1	34	7.9

## Educational Indebtedness

Most veterinary students had accumulated substantial debt by the time they graduated in 2008. Among the graduates who reported their debt, only 8.7% (47/538) of males and 9.7% (175/1,808) of females did not incur any educational debt. Mean debt among those with debt was \$115,059 for males and \$121,006 for females. Median debt was \$110,000 for males and \$120,000 for females. Among those with debt, 28.7% of males had a debt  $\geq$  \$140,000, whereas 34.7% of female graduates had debt  $\geq$  \$140,000.

## Graduate Characteristics

Male and female veterinary students were approximately the same age at graduation (mean, 28.0 years for males and 27.9 years for females; **Table 4**). Most graduates were single and had never married; 59.8% (314/525) of men and 63.6% (1,089/1,743) of women were in this category. A slightly higher percentage of males were married (38.5%), compared with the percentage of married females (32.1%). One characteristic that distinguished graduates by gender was the percentage with children: 14.9% of males had at least 1 child, compared with 7.0% of females.

Table 4—Demographics of new graduates of US veterinary medical schools and colleges in 2008 by gender.

Characteristic	Female	Male	All
Mean age (y)	27.9	28.0	27.9
Marital status			
Single (%)	63.6	59.8	62.7
Married (%)	32.1	38.5	33.6
Divorced (%)	4.3	1.7	3.7
Graduates with children (%)	7.0	14.9	8.9

- a. Respondents from the University of California (n = 114) did not answer all questions because that university used a different survey instrument.

## Appendix

Schools and colleges of veterinary medicine that participated in the 2008 AVMA survey of new graduates.

Veterinary school	Response rate of graduating class (%)
Auburn University	100
Colorado State University	76
Cornell Veterinary College	100
Iowa State University	91
Kansas State University	90
Louisiana State University	100
Michigan State University	93
Mississippi State University	100
North Carolina State University	100
The Ohio State University	96
Oklahoma State University	100
Oregon State University	95
Purdue University	100
Texas A&M University	100
Tufts University	95
Tuskegee University	100
University of California	100
University of Florida	100
University of Georgia	100
University of Illinois	95
University of Minnesota	98
University of Missouri	98
University of Pennsylvania	84
University of Tennessee	98
University of Wisconsin	85
Virginia Tech and University of Maryland	100
Washington State University	97
Western University	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>