

## Dr. Stokes' Tips for Veterinary School Interviews

- Dress & Manners
  - Demonstrate utmost professionalism in appearance (clothes, hair, jewelry)
  - Maintain professional demeanor no matter what happens – don't get rattled even if a member tries. This doesn't happen often, but if they do try to shake you, maintain a smile and an ease about you.
- Introductions
  - Be confident – not over-confident
  - Shake hands
  - Eye contact with each member of panel – especially while they introduce themselves
  - Show interest in what they are saying during their introductions
- “Tell Us About Yourself”
  - Take up to 2 minutes to talk about yourself
  - Look at your resume and essays for veterinary school to build an outline
  - Think about what you would want to hear from applicants if you were on the other side of the table
    - Where are you from? What is your background?
    - What are some of your important accomplishments in school and outside of school? Were you a leader? Community involvement? International interests? Are you well-rounded?
    - Do you know what you are getting into? i.e. Experience in clinics/vet school, family background in vet practice? Do you know the stress of vet school and practice?
    - Why do you want to be a veterinarian? i.e. “Moment in time” when you knew this was the profession for you? Always knew? Recent decision based on education/personal strengths? What draws you to this career choice?
    - Have you demonstrated dedication to get to this point? i.e. Didn't get in last year so I completed A, B, & C to better prepare myself and improve my chances this year. Took some time to earn some savings to cut down on dependence on loans.
    - What are your goals? i.e. Know you want to do a residency? Plan to move back to hometown to work in practice you “grew up” in? Interested in research combined with veterinary medicine? Don't know – open to options (excellent choice by the way – it may be too early to know).
    - ENDING MUST BE STRONG!!! Tell them that you are prepared based on education/experience, you are confident in your ability to handle the pressures of vet school, and that you are eager to join the profession.
- Fielding Questions
  - It is ok to take a second to think of your answer before you start talking.
  - Repeat the question if you are unsure of what they are asking.
  - Be honest, but answer in a professional manner. Give some good information on why you feel a certain way about a topic. i.e. Animals in research – Say what your opinion is, then explain what you know about animal care and use guidelines, explain benefits/drawbacks of animals in research – then repeat what your stance is. This demonstrates that you are making an educated, well-thought out decision on the topic. This aspect of your answer is more important than if you agree or disagree with the controversial topic at hand!
  - Do not put yourself in a corner – taking a second to think before answering and being professional in your answer should prevent this.
  - Prep-work – take some time to think about what some hot topics might be. i.e. What is in the news? Maybe visit the USDA web-site to see what is important. If you say you are interested in cattle – you might be asked about a current hot topic that is in the public news often regarding cattle. No one expects you to be an expert or a veterinarian yet, but being familiar with what is in the public eye isn't a bad idea.
  - Prep-work – find out how much it will cost you to complete veterinary school. How will you pay tuition and living expenses?
  - Married with kids? Getting married? How will you balance your life with school?
  - Reminder from above - if a member of the panels tries to shake you up, maintain your composure! Keep a gentle smile, take a second's break, and respond very professionally. You'll have to do this daily with some of your future clients – this is just practice and demonstrates your maturity!!
- Ask Questions
  - Have a couple of genuine questions prepared in case you have time. Asking about one of your interview member's field is a good option if it ties into your interests.
  - Don't just talk to talk.
- Wrapping It Up
  - Thank each member of the interview panel.
  - Shake hands again and leave them with a sense of confidence, professionalism, and enthusiasm.