

Sophie Adcock – 2019 Alumni

Hi, I'm Sophie and I am currently just over halfway through my veterinary degree (which is crazy!). I started at Spalding High School in 2012 as a Year 7 student and continued until Year 13 in 2019. For A Levels I took biology, chemistry and geography (and core maths). Biology and chemistry were required for studying veterinary medicine at university and I chose geography as I really enjoyed it at GCSE and was interested in continuing to study it.

I'm one of those cliché people who has basically always dreamed of being a vet, but this was definitely confirmed by my 2 weeks of work experience at a small animal vet practice in Year 10. Since then, I was set on getting into university to study veterinary medicine. Therefore, I started my research very early, but this was useful as I identified that work experience was an important requirement prior to applying to vet school.

I have just finished my third year at the University of Nottingham studying veterinary medicine and surgery, and I've just found out that I achieved a 1st in my first degree (BVMedSci) and I'm looking forward to the graduation ceremony for that this summer before continuing with my degree for the next two years. I preferred Nottingham vet school as I loved the environment of the campus and community of the staff and students, as well as the teaching style, which I felt would suit me better than the other vet schools. There are currently only 9 vet schools in the UK (8 when I applied), I went on open days to 5 of them (as I had already ruled out 3 due to distance or grade requirements). I applied to Nottingham, Liverpool, Surrey, and Royal Veterinary College in London. I was invited to interviews at Nottingham, Liverpool, and Surrey, and I received offers from Nottingham and Liverpool, although my Liverpool offer was deferred for the following year. From my time at Nottingham at open days, interview and offer holder days I knew it was the vet school for me, so it was a no brainer for it to be my firm choice.

The veterinary degree at the University of Nottingham is taught at the Sutton Bonington campus, 12 miles out of city of Nottingham in the countryside. This allows us to have a purpose-built vet school with plenty of space for all our animals!



I have loved the first three years of the course and the teaching style at Nottingham definitely complements me as it is clinically relevant and practical from the outset, ranging from dissection, models and live animals. Teaching has been based on the body systems and we have mainly covered the normal anatomy and physiology of the key domestic species, with some animal husbandry placements in the summer holidays. In third year, I

also got the opportunity to carry out a research project into the safety and benefits of the use of a canine cardiac drug in cats.

This summer is packed with clinical placements at different vet environments which I am using to learn more skills and figure out which aspect of veterinary I most enjoy and want to pursue my career in (although I will be qualifying competent in all species, so I don't need to make this decision just yet luckily!). I am really looking forward to starting fourth year in September as it will be much more clinical and will make me feel much more like a vet!



My key advice for anyone thinking of studying veterinary medicine would be:

- Make sure that veterinary is for you, there are lots of alternative animal degrees and veterinary is not for everyone who loves animals, work experience placements are the best way of doing this!
- The application process is a lot of hoops to jump through - application forms, interviews etc, so make sure you're committed, but it is definitely worth it!
- Go on all the open days - it's a 5-year course so make sure you pick the right university and environment for you. Talk to students at open days and ask lots of questions
- Veterinary medicine is a very competitive course and it's not unusual to not get into vet school first time or to only get one offer and that is okay! There are alternative routes, and you only need one place anyway.
- Before interviews make sure you are familiar with your personal statement and current veterinary/animal issues (e.g., short-nosed dogs). Especially practise portraying your passion for the course, take every available opportunity to practise interviews.
- The workload for this degree is intense and a lot higher than other courses (full working days) but you can make time for other things, and this is a necessity to enjoy yourself at university and give yourself a break.