

# How to survive BVSc3!

Disclaimer: This is a compilation of advice, tips and tricks from current 3rd year vet students, there may be some conflicting responses, but remember what works for one person, may not work for another! All the best for the year ahead, look after yourself and your peers.

## What advice would you give to current third years?

- You're all in the same boat! You'll all feel like you were two weeks behind from the second day of semester 1! Just keep showing up to lectures. Figure out what works for you and stick to it! Flash cards are useful, there's heaps already made on Quizlet. Share your notes with people, and ask them to share with you - even if it doesn't help you specifically learn a topic, it may help you find a useful way to make your own notes.
- For production animals and CAMST make a google shared doc with a friend - divide and conquer!
- Utilise a "to do" list and don't get behind, Make summaries
- Focus on learning outcomes when writing notes
- Don't miss class ! The thing that saved me was going in everyday and sitting in lecturers meant I didn't get behind and kept up with all the workload
- It's a slippery slope once you start missing lectures because more just keep coming x
- Past papers are huge, they always re use some questions. Easy marks so do all the past papers you can.
- have faith in yourself. lecturers are nice & will help you if you ask. everything will fall into place before exams so don't stress.
- DON'T GET BEHIND - it's harder to learn 5 lectures at once then when they are spread out over a semester
- Attend live lectures if you can, and set a routine for yourself, the 8am start is tough, but committing to going into Uni everyday makes it a bit easier! I find it so much harder to watch recorded lectures because I can just stop and start, then get distracted lol. Don't stress about knowing every little detail for everything, get your head around the basic principles, and stick to learning objectives!
- Do not fall behind! Follow those learning objectives, and keep reviewing. Leaving things for the last minute in 3rd year is a great way to crash and burn, so aim to break things up in more manageable chunks wherever possible. Flashcards are really helpful for parasitology and pathology especially.
- Focus on learning outcomes for everything!
- learn the big concepts & basic definitions - everything will fall into place
- weekly kahoot quizzes with your study group. make it fun!!

- My main advice is DO NOT GET BEHIND ON LECTURES, It will take so long to catch up and you will drown
- Focus on what the lecturer focused on and use the LOs to make sense of things.
- Get together as a group, ask each other questions and challenge your ability to retrieve that information
- Just remember that if you put in the effort you will most likely pass
- For me the most important thing to study is to plan ahead. Make lists of all of the lectures/labs/practicals to be covered so you can see your progress. Also you won't always have time to do it all and sometimes you won't do as well as you would have liked. Don't forget you are only human and there is only so much you can do. Employers don't give a crud about grades.
- Your classmates are your greatest asset. Share notes and ask mentors for notes and the good karma will go around. A lot of what I use to study is what people post on the Facebook page or conglomerates of past students notes from other years. Study guides are usually more important than the lectures so when in doubt and out of time turn to the study guide and it may be helpful to take 10 extra minutes at the end of each set of lectures to write out answers to learning objectives so they are all ready to go by the end of the semester
- organise notes into learning outcomes so that they're ready for exam revision, then those weeks that nothing is due for a while I literally did no uni work on weekends and did bare minimum on weekdays (just made sure I had done the learning outcomes for each week and obvs watched each lecture and done the required course work) then knuckling down about 2 weeks before a test or exam and studying for that topic - but also don't recommend skipping lectures to study for a test bc then u just get really behind
- honestly take advantage of weekends when nothing is due and having a social life. You don't need to be studying hard for 12 weeks straight. Set your notes up so when it comes to exam study they're laid out ready to go. Don't bother trying to memories anything for exams when it's like 8 weeks out
- I definitely recommend taking breaks when you really need them because otherwise it's really hard to see through the terrible glaze over your eyes. The learning objectives are there for every topic and are generally good enough (beware of bacteriology though ) to study from in a pinch if you find yourself lost or behind in a subject. And the Kuracloud case studies, especially for Pathology, are excellent for figuring out what to expect for exams. They're also useful for learning the material generally, but you know.. sometimes learning for exams rather than for the sake of learning becomes a defence mechanism.
- Best tip: PRIORITISE. Pathology is a much kinder subject, so learn it well early and you'll be able to do well--the material builds on itself pretty well so it's easier to follow. CAMST and clinical studies are really rough and you're probably going to have to put a lot of time and energy into them. Production? It's a sneaky subject because sometimes it feels like pure common sense, and then it kicks you in your ass because you let it slide. Don't do that. Don't let it slide. And parasitology is fairly kind, but don't leave memorising your parasites to the last minute... Make some flashcards or class Kahoots!
- Get tight with your classmates. Blow up the class group chat when you need help. Share study resources always!!

- GO TO EVERY LECTURE. All of them. If you're sick, watch them online at the time they happen. It's really not worth getting behind, you won't \*really\* have time to catch up. Even if you don't fully understand the lecture, still attend, and take whatever notes you can. You might find study techniques that worked for you in 1st + 2nd year don't work now because you don't have enough time. 3rd year is all about efficiency! That being said, don't stress too much about it all - it's definitely manageable - we all did it and so can you! You'll find some courses (parasitology, pathology, production) are taught better than others (cough, CAMST). Use this to your advantage! Also some courses (parasitology, pathology) are marked much more kindly than others, and you'll probably find your grades will be better than you expected. Also look up the course code on quizlet and use other people's quizlets to study - I did this as there is hardly any time to make your own flashcards!
- treat it like a job, work 8am-5pm and then give yourself the night off, it's not possible to be studying 24/7 even though the workload is high
- Not gonna lie, 3rd year is rough. The volume of information is astronomical. Just don't get behind on lectures or kura clouds and you should survive OK. Lean on your classmates for notes and study guides and constantly communicate with lecturers on whether things are not working for you early on so you don't get screwed up in a panic just before exams. Slow and steady wins the race.
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- Treat it like a 9-5 job - actually have time off from study when you get home! If personal circumstances/life gets in the way and makes study more difficult, talk to your course or year coordinator asap because they are super lovely and helpful and they will make your life easier as long as you keep them in the loop! Share study resources with your classmates, we had a google drive which was great. Try and find a study group and try to stay on top of content as it comes (easier said than done lol). Definitely don't hesitate to apply for impaired performance if you need to, even if something seems minor - the worst they can do is say no so you may as well apply Try to enjoy it lol, 3rd year is a lot but you start to feel like you are learning proper vet stuff and it's actually really cool
- As much as people say it's horrible it's actually bearable and enjoyable if you stay on top of your shit. I didn't spend every weekend/ night studying and passed well. Don't let it ruin your life or give yourself anxiety. Enjoy it and have a balanced life.
- It's actually really freaking cool. You will learn so much this year that you'll wonder what you spent 1st and 2nd year doing! It's been the best year of vet so far. And you can do it. 1. Keep up with class. That doesn't mean you have to go to every class in person or can't skip days of uni. It just means you should have everything done by the end of the week. 2. Don't do it alone. Your friends are your saviours. It takes a village to raise a baby vet!

## Words of wisdom for specific courses

### Pathology

- Use the photos from the path in notes!
- Pathology lecturers are amazing, always happy to help out.
- Appreciate how well the other courses are taught, especially path!
- Pathology is great if you stay on top of things and do all the practice cases/quizzes etc.
- Pathology, parasitology - don't worry you will be fine.

### CAMST/Clinical Studies

- CAMST SUCKED. Pharmacology sucks, I didn't learn a single thing in pharmacology (but still somehow managed to pass the year) - this is a general trend of pharmacology and has been for many many years - you will meet vets out in practice who had Paul Chambers teaching them 30 years ago... Paul hasn't changed his slides in about that long too....So I guess you'll somehow come out at the end of 5th year with enough pharmacology knowledge to practice as a vet, but it probably won't be because of your third year pharmacology lectures with Paul Chambers. For anaesthesia, Vicki is not good at simplifying things and so she gives you an overwhelming amount of information and resources that you feel like you can't even begin to take in, just try to identify and focus on the key points as much as possible. Participate in the radiology 'labs' and have a go at interpreting them - Paul may seem kinda intimidating, but he's kinda just super dry and actually funny and will work through it with you if you are unsure of things - in saying that PRACTICE WRITING out xray interpretations, because that's how it will be examined.
- Keep on top of camst !!!
- learn pharmacology from youtube & textbooks.
- Don't stress too much about pharmacology - it's not taught very well, and other topics/courses cover some basics anyway over 3rd and 4th year. I would recommend trying to get the basic sedative/anaesthesia/pain relief drug classes sorted as I still forget which drug is in which class - this would help me better understand its mode of action and clinical effects, rather than thinking about each one individually - especially for antibiotics too! Tables may be a good way of collating your notes - eg mechanism of action, therapeutic effects vs side effects, indications vs contraindications, common drug brands etc
- Learn to accept that clinical is going to be an absolute shit show but at least you are all suffering together especially during study week when 90% of people in the library are your classmates. If you have a friend in the year above I highly recommend getting their notes to even just to look through (I made a few word docs answering a lot of the learning outcomes

- Cry about CAMST but also share resources with each other.
- CAMST - attend all the lectures, don't freak out if you have no idea what's going on, you can still pass the course. They give you a lot of information in this course - my advice would be focus on the learning objectives and take simple notes on those. It's better to understand the concepts than the full huge amount of info they give you.

#### **For clinical:**

- Anaesthesia - the kuraclouds are probably the most useful aspect because a lot of the time she ran out of time to finish lectures. That being said, if you don't understand something Vicki is an angel who will gladly take time out of her day to explain something to you, especially at the end of labs.
- Pharmacology: there is no prepping you for this, just learn the cases and what drugs you use for which situations I guess
- Surgery is a monster but Lee is pretty good at pointing out what you need to know
- Orthopaedics is scary but the study guide is reasonably useful, I also watched the lectures multiple times and found that helped me remember the content
- Imaging, Paul is scary but just learn his lists that he provides and you will be able to get most of the points even if you feel like you have no clue what's going on
- Horse content: I probably failed this section so can't help soz xxx

#### **Farm animals**

- Population Health was pretty good, just stay on top of it, because it can be sneaky and be a lot of information to cover if you cram!
- a lot of past exams are usually helpful and Stuart will give you good hints at what's gonna be tested
- Stay on top of the farm and make a calendar relating to important events.
- Production - you do need to learn what they're telling you even if you favour small animals! Take good, concise notes you can refer back to.

#### **Infectious diseases**

- Make flash cards for parasites lab every week! Future you will thank you
- Make a worm family tree to help you keep track of all the little suckers

- Parasitology can seem quite overwhelming, but it is not too bad once you break down which host and organ worms reside in (at least for the ID component)
- For semester 1 parasitology I drew a giant banner with different animal species on it and made sticky notes for each parasite so that I could play "pin the worm on the commonly affected anatomical area of the commonly affected species" with my mates.
- Parasitology I would draw them out and make 1 page summaries on them. I found drawing them and their main features really helpful as I could mentally picture what the worm looked like simplistically, so when I saw the real worm, I could remember drawing it and its name. Great for the ID tests
- As you get through the semester you'll find it actually gets a lot easier. There's a lot of locations that only have one Parasite - eg pig kidney or whatever so I found it easy to memorise most by what animal and organ it was. I made a table in word doc
- Make stupid analogies. Staph sounds like staff (like a wizard's staff) which has a blobby jewel at the end. Draw silly cartoons (like mummified lambs with a cat pooping out a strawberry for toxoplasma). make mnemonics.
- Focus on key parasites for parasitology i.e. look at the learning objectives for both the lectures and the practical ID test. For the ID test, list all the parasites with their location and species. Mark off species that are unique for that species/location combo (i.e. you can get it right without even looking at the picture). Make flashcards with those species combo. For the others, make flashcards with their combo, but also with their images as well as characteristics (e.g. length). USE IAN'S PICTURES IN YOUR FLASHCARDS - they are the same as those he shows you in the test.
- Focus more study time on things you aren't as good at. Don't worry if you don't get as good of a grade as you hoped so long as you pass. Ask teachers and classmates for help early on. Make lots of silly notes/drawings/quizlets to help yourself integrate and remember information. Example: Big Butt Bug = Bovicola (parasitology)

### Note taking tips

- Upload slides to one note and write what lecturers say next to them (unless they read off the slides)
- sort lecture information into learning objectives, and then consolidate and simplify that information as much as possible! I download past exam papers and sort the questions out into the different topics within that paper and then answer them - it helps me identify and recognise key concepts the lecturers want you to know, and there are honestly so many questions that are reused and recycled. Start tables for all the diseases you are going to start learning about, include boxes for history/signalment/clinical signs, cause/aetiology/pathogenesis, diagnosis/pathology, Treatment/Prevention/prognosis, and pictures/radiographs. You can sort these tables into species specific diseases and then, order them based on body system affected etc.... This will help you in 4th and 5th year too!

- Google docs is my fave, easy to use, share and search within.
- learning outcome table during the lecture (condense the time you spend going over material)
- I do summary notes leading up to tests/exams - rewriting shortened notes helps me to process the info better, and pick out the important concepts, rather than just memorising everything! Also past papers are great study, as they often recycle or have similar style questions (based on the lecturer).
- I found RemNote really great for third year as it was an absolute breeze to make flashcards while writing my notes, and easy to keep the whole shitshow organised.
- Only take notes for stuff that isn't on the slides. Read the pathology study guide ahead of time if you can, so you know what's in there as well.
- Keep all your notes somewhere accessible because you WILL be referring back to them! - I like to use OneNote and write down anything extra the lecturer is saying next to the slide. This seriously cuts back on time spent converting lectures to notes, as you can just study off the slides and notes you wrote. At the same time, you can answer the learning objectives or make a summary table. I find it's best to do these things within the lecture itself or shortly afterwards to reduce the amount of time you're spending studying outside of lectures. - main advice: try to trim down your study time as much as possible. don't do unnecessary extra work/study making flashcards etc if you don't need to. take concise notes on the day of the lecture and go back to them when you're studying for the exam.
- make use of the pathology study guides when doing your own notes as the study guides are super helpful
- Don't type out what lecture slides say. ANNOTATE
- Play to your strengths and lean on other classmates for help in areas where you lack as much finesse. Some people have mad art skills that help visualise the info, but that isn't me. The shared google drive really saved me this year.
- There's so much content!! If your note taking style takes a lot of time, you might want to change it up. I just took notes onto lecture slides, then would make some summary mind maps for study
- I didn't take notes unless I specifically wanted to for a module. Anki cards, summary pages, mindmaps & group study worked better for me than copy and paste.

### 3rd/4th year placement advice!

- For those not aware, this is 6 weeks of placements in vet clinics (yay!) between half way through 3rd year and half way through 4th year that you are required to complete in your breaks/summer. There are certain requirements such as 2 weeks at a production animal clinic (or clinic doing largies work), a certain number of weeks in NZ, and 2 weeks at a clinic that offers after-hours. You can do a maximum of 2 weeks at one

clinic/company. (You will be given info about this at some stage, !) Other than that, it's a great opportunity to see practice, ask lots of questions, get stuck in and develop some practical skills.

- Do it all in the summer, don't do it in the breaks during the year you'll need them !!
- If the placement is more specialised, definitely take time to revise the relevant content you have been taught.
- you still a bebe, it's ok to make mistakes. Ask what the clinician expects of you/wants you to do and allow them to show you how they do even the easiest of tasks.
- I would recommend taking some short notes on some interesting techniques/cases/advice, I had periods where there wasn't much happening, so this would have been a good way to fill in some time. I regret not doing this, and have forgotten some good pieces of advice already, however I wouldn't stress about getting everything down :)
- If you want to do a placement in Palmerston North, book WAY in advance.
- Don't do placements in the mid semester break of semester 2 bvsc3. Use your break to study for the mid semester exams. They have them the first and second week back after the break and when they are teaching new content over that period it's super hard to fit in study time.
- Get stuck in, introduce yourself to everyone, ask about things you can help with ("how do you clean your cages/instruments? Anything you want me to do?"). Do research on the day when you can, or ahead of time if you have an interesting surgery. Talk to newer grads about what support they got in their first few years and how they're feeling. Talk to older vets about what they find the most important things to remember in their practice. Get involved with talking to clients when appropriate (i.e. do not speculate about medical stuff, but ask them about their animals) as this is a people-focused job and social skills are also important to develop while on placement. When driving on large/equine placements, vibe check the vet and strike the right balance between too much talking and not enough!
- Write down the cases you see and how the vets handled them. Very useful info! And try get 'stuck in' as much as possible - ask to do injections, draw up drugs, listen to chest sounds etc as much as possible.
- go to a variety of places but also go to places you are interested in
- Book placements ASAP if you have specific goals. Spots fill up quickly. Do NOT ask questions of the vets during farm calls in front of clients, ONLY when you're away from clients and in private. Take on feedback from vets during placement. It's also a good time to start practising technical skills we haven't had a chance to work on yet in school.
- Ask lots of questions, be clear about what you have and haven't learnt yet. Maybe have a list of skills that you want to try out, eg taking bloods, placing a catheter etc, and let them know early in your placement that you would like the opportunity to practise those specific things. Always bring baking/treats for the staff as a thank you 😊 Also make sure they know to send the paperwork directly to Massey!
- Do all over summer and apply for benefits or student allowance for placements. Because money is tight.

- Talk to people in the years ahead and search on MUVSA for good clinics. - If you want to go to more places, there's no harm in going for just 1 week. I was told that it wasn't advised but I did four 1 week placements and that was perfect for me because I got to see more. But I was also really stoked to stay at another clinic for 2 weeks because I liked it and felt like part of the team there. - Be all the things, do all the washing and cleaning etc. when the time is right, but also know your worth. Ask to do things if they don't actively offer. - Just because you decide a clinic isn't for you, still be the best version of yourself. It's a small country ;) - Some of your classmates will travel far and wide for placements and some won't. Some people's parents pay their rent and some don't. Some people need to do all their placements around Palmy and some don't. Comparison is the killer of happiness :)
- Go to a clinic with both small and large animals, you may have come into vet school wanting to work with only small animals but may like the largies side too, keep options open

### **Other e.g. what did you do outside of study to keep you sane?**

- Part-time job and drinking my sorrows away
- Played hockey, tennis, running, and hanging out with friends! Make time for fun.
- Honestly not much I studied heaps to keep on top of things don't over commit yourself. Work is enough on top of study. But really try to make the time I didn't have and wish I had it was a very boring year.
- Exercise, sleep
- do something artsy and something active (exercise = brain juice). Doesn't have to be intense exercise either, even a walk is very refreshing. seduce your friend to come with you
- be kind to each other - its hard mahi and you're classmates might also need a reminder to take a break
- I did Thursdays at home. As an introvert, I found I got really overwhelmed spending all day every day surrounded by people and busy with uni. I really needed that time at home to regenerate. And I took Saturdays off! No work! Or really easy tasks only!
- This made my productivity so much better the rest of the week.
- I played football! Love the exercise and social aspect of it. Make sure you take time for yourself so you don't get burnt out!
- Have something that forces you to get away from the books. It'll make your time sitting in a chair more productive!
- Either have a dog or steal a dog and go for a walk. Seeing the sun and trees is so important when you spend most of your time indoors studying. Even just sitting on some grass for 10 minutes a day can do wonders.

- Meet up with classmates/friends (not to study) more often, exercise, cook, bake, sleep. I made myself a rule of no late-night study as it was too exhausting for me. You will be able to get through 3rd year, just like you got through 1st and 2nd year! You might even find it easier like I did due to knowing your classmates better and becoming better at studying. You got this!
- Snuggling my cat, walking my dog, reading & gaming.
- I literally only studied at uni - I'd stay until 4/5pm and as soon as I went home that was my time. Keep being social, exercise if you like that, keep living your life outside of uni!
- Rely on the people around you. As a class close to tests/ exams, share resources.
- Play a sport and go to the gym

### Words of inspiration that helped you get through

- Inspired Unemployed or Wednesday's We Drink Wine podcasts. Easy, light and funny. Good for bus rides to and from uni!
- spotify podcast called "Questions With Crocker" by Dr Tannetje Crocker- it covers all things from vet school to being a vet to running a clinic to personal experiences.
- C's get degrees, but you'll actually be using this stuff as a future vet so keep your notes tidy as you'll most likely need them later on
- Honestly my classmates got me through. Having the camaraderie helped me push through, knowing we're all in the same boat and we all managed to do it, getting through every test and assignment and practical and exam together!
- What do you call someone who graduated at the bottom of their class in med school? A doctor. Don't stress too much about grades, you got this!