

# How to survive BVSc1!

Disclaimer: This is a compilation of advice, tips and tricks from current 1st 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 the new 1st year vet students?

- Stay on top of your work, but don't stress about the grades as much
- Go to get started. It will make all the difference. And don't try to hide with the people you already know. You have so many opportunities to make new friends and learn from other people's experiences. Don't be afraid to take new opportunities that come your way either. They may be scary at the time but it will be so worth it down the track. Also if you're struggling with courses make study groups!!
- Congratulations on getting in!!
- Have fun and don't stress too much this semester
- Enjoy and take this semester to recover from the trauma of pre vet ;) Congrats for getting in. Enjoy Structure and Function. It's the basis of the future courses so it will be easier if you learn it now and you will be rewarded in the next few years!! Make friends and get to know vet school staff and be proud of yourself
- Enjoy not competing anymore, spend time with your classmates and collaborate now you can! Studying together is awesome. Get stuck in to all the vet school events
- Congrats on getting in! I heard selection was extra hard this year, so you should be proud of yourself!
- Make the most of Hills Vetstart! For those introverts out there, yes, you will be so socially drained after the first day, but still, push forward and engage with the activities as much as you can, because those bonding moments will be so valuable for you. Try to get to know as many of your classmates as possible because during lectures you won't get the same opportunity.
- Your classmates are your whanau now. You will be with them for another 4 and a half years. It's important to work together and leave any competitive attitude behind. Your class will become your best resource for getting through each semester as you progress through the degree.
- Congrats on getting in!! Enjoy yourself, try and go to as many social things as possible so you get to know your class and make new friends. Try and enjoy the semester but also stay on top of your work because this semester sets really great foundations for the second year.
- Everyone else is just as scared as you are! You are all in the same boat :)
- Massive congrats for getting through! I know it can get stressful, and it's hard to get out of the pre-vet

mindset, but remember to have fun and make the most of it, it's a super fun year! Remember that your classmates are there to help, you're not alone!!

- Go to in-person lectures!!! Even if you're behind! If you feel as though you learn better online or missed something they'll be accessible, but the accountability you get from going in-person is invaluable, and also helps with your memory/retention of information
- Can't say it enough, keep up with your lectures! Best thing is to show up to class and just get it done and over with. Keep your notes organized for them and you'll thank yourself later!
- Study hard but don't forget to have fun you're in now take a breather and remember you will only be 1st year at uni once!
- Try your best but remember looking after yourself is more important. if you need a break take a break and if you need a day off you can make it work
- Be social and active ! Don't hide in your room and be a hermit. Drink, party, have fun, it's important to be social as well as study.
- Really stay on top of your work. focus on what is important, don't stress out over things you can't change, learn to time manage! ask if you don't understand anything. get to know your class.

### Words of wisdom for specific courses

#### Biochemistry:

- For biochemistry make sure you understand each topic/lecture, so go through it! because it will just keep getting added on to and if you don't keep up it can be easy to fall behind
- Go to all lectures and try to get the point of it. Don't get hung up on every detail. Do all the quizzes on stream as they prepare you well for the tests. Don't be an illusionist and think you will get an A+ in this as hardly anyone manages BUT you can do ok and don't worry it's not as bad as people say.
- Biochem- understand the concepts! Use flow charts and keep a document with all the reaction mechanisms. Do the quizzes on stream! Some of the questions are similar to the ones in the test!
- Biochem will be very overwhelming when you first start but stay on top of lectures. I recommend basing your notes off of what they're talking about in lectures rather than the lecture slides bc they can be a bit overwhelming.
- Biochem is a nightmare but just keep pushing and you'll get there :)
- Biochem is hard but if you try relate it to some of the anatomy lessons in structure and function it will help

### **Anatomy and physiology:**

- S&F pass this well and try to really remember as this is the basis for the next year!! And the better you know it in detail the better you'll do in second year and probably all along...
- Stay on top of physiology and chip away at it overtime so it doesn't all add up last minute before your Fri tests. If you study right for the tests, you will be grateful to not have an exam at the end of year for the course
- Anatomy and physiology- I suggest digital notes so you can quickly control F on an open book exam. Take solid notes on key concepts as you would be building on this knowledge in your coming years. I regret not spending more time understanding concepts, as now I'm having to relearn them this year!
- For anatomy and physiology just keep chipping away at it. It feels like a lot to take in and you may feel left behind but just keep preserving. You'll be shocked how much you will learn in such a short amount of time
- Make kuracloud your new bff for structure and function. Keep your notes up to date and organised for it as I use them pretty much every week for structure and function now as there's a lot of referencing that goes back to first year stuff!
- Include group work when learning anatomy/physiology; quizzing one another or explaining topics to someone else can be really helpful
- Anatomy and physiology can seem like a big workload, but just keep trucking, and do a little bit at a time, definitely don't try to do the whole week's content before the tests like I did!

### **Animal welfare:**

- Animal welfare- make the most of your practical and handling experience, again, this handling experience will be foundational knowledge when you learn how to perform physical exams next year.
- Animal behaviour and welfare is not as hard as you think it's going to be, they test you really nicely. Just make sure you prioritise your time efficiently.

### **Structure and function**

- Keep on top of your structure and function workload and try get the kuraclouds done by Tuesday/Wednesday so you can revise what you've learnt before the test on Friday

### **Note taking tips**

- If any of your tests are open book I 100% recommend compiling your notes into one document. Even if they aren't open book it gives you an easy place to search for stuff when revising

- Try as many different ways as possible to find what works best for you. I like handwriting things down after classes because it gets it into my brain better but it is also very time consuming
- Take great detailed notes of S&F you will be able to use those in second year and all along
- Figure out a place where you can add to your notes continuously over lectures and years. Your content in second year builds on your content in first year, so it is good to be able to integrate your notes
- I advocate for digital notes. So much easier for open book exams and looking back into the future. I use Onenotes as it is seamless across devices, has endless canvas and you are able to draw on it. If you are using Anki, make sure to stay on top of those flashcards! Try to simplify and summarise the lecture and kuracloud content, this will really help you understand and memorise the concepts.
- Ask previous years for their notes ;)
- Start taking amazing notes for physiology and anatomy (ideally together if they haven't been put together already). This will save your ass for second year as most of the structure function in second year is revising first year notes and adding on to them. Don't stress too much about the Friday tests. They want to see you succeed. If you have life things going on, talk to your course coordinator / year coordinators, they are a great help and can help you even more if they know what's going on for you 😊
- Your anatomy/physiology notes are not just for this semester, you'll use them for tests next year too, so don't skimp on them
- Grab yourself a tablet if you can or save for one. Made a big difference for me in structure and function but also general note taking where you can draw on the slides (I use one note)
- Write things out or draw them out in your own way so that you can understand it, don't copy notes word for word. Get an iPad!!
- Just use your laptop, find quizlet for closed book test revision. Use hand written notes and cover your walls in them for all open book tests.
- do summaries after every lecture if possible- really helps.

### Advice for studying for tests and exams

- Don't take yourself too seriously and burn yourself out. Work hard but don't let yourself stress too much! Your grades don't define what kind of vet you'll be from this point onwards
- I had a really weird study technique where I managed to fit each lecture onto a page of A4 paper in a book, hand written! This helped when it came to exams because all the key information from a topic

would be on one page. Not everyone studies the same though. But If in doubt. Pick C :)

- Do the stream quizzes. Go through all the app tests and quizzes as revision and learn from your mistakes!!
- Make a study timetable a few weeks before exams. If your anatomy exam is closed book, practice annotating and labelling diagrams. Flash cards help heaps!
- Stay on top of your lectures so you don't have to stress and cram close to the exam.
- Try not to do your kuracloud the day before the app test (coming from someone whos done this multiple times and always regrets it)
- Use your classmates when you get stuck. You will learn far more if you are teaching and learning together as a team
- Honestly still haven't mastered this... don't rely on stuff being open book is all i'd say. Make sure you learn the content properly as it will really help you in second year. Also practise questions and quizlets are always a go!
- writing things out and hanging them on your wall is super helpful and you take more of the info over time :)
- Start early! A little bit of study often is much more effective than a big cram :)
- I'm not sure if you'll have open book exams, but think about them all like closed book exams because once you hit 2nd year the joy of cramming and "control-F"ing your notes is over. Best to get the hang of it now! Make some friends, book a room in the library with a whiteboard, and learn together/test each other (this is probably the TOP advice I could give!!)
- Do your best but also remember you just have to pass, it's not prevet anymore!
- Use practice questions or make questions up to test yourself. Try to do the questions without looking at your books. rewriting your notes won't help as much
- Minimise other stresses (eg software you need to use, where to do it, good space to do it) so u can focus on the exam

## Other advice



- Make friends
- Just remember that you're in now. You don't need to compete with your classmates. These will be the people that you go into the profession with. Build good friendships and habits now. And don't be afraid of asking questions you think may be dumb on the farm. Get in there and get your hands dirty. You'll

benefit from it so much in the end

- Don't go 24/7 study mode because that can burn you out. Make sure you have other hobbies like exercising or just reading a book. Or hanging out with friends because a study break is always needed
- Start sorting out your farm placements asap and do some this summer already!! Also write your reports while you do the placement it will make it so much easier!!!
- Try and let go of the competitive mindset as soon as you can! It's okay to not get A+s anymore, spend this time enjoying your introduction to vet school and let go of any toxic prevet mindsets :) congrats!
- Placement: Start emailing farms ASAP, there are many students looking for placements and some farms are in high demand. Find placements by asking on the MUVSA page, going on trade me jobs or just googling "sheep farms" etc. Email a bunch of farms, because farmers are known to ignore emails and ghost people 🙄. Make the most of your time on the farm by asking lots of questions and getting stuck in. I'd recommend going with one friend so you can support each other whilst on placement, and also in case the farmer is a bit sus
- Work/life balance: It is totally possible to have a social life in the first year! Dedicate a block in your schedule to meet up with friends and family or for your hobby first and then work your study time around it. Remember your 4 walls of wellbeing: mental, social, physical and spiritual. If one of these walls is lacking then your whole house will collapse :)
- Make sure you put time aside for yourself everyday. It is so important to look after yourself.
- ENJOY YOURSELF!! First and second year is relatively chill, make sure you are doing things out of vet school for you. Because in years 3, 4 and 5 you won't be doing much of that. Organise your placements for one summer (i wish i did this), then you can have a whole summer off between second and third year! Have fun on placements and I'd recommend reaching out to the MUVSA page if you don't have good contacts or want to see if someone else has done a placement where you're going and if they had a good experience etc etc.
- Remind yourself that you're in, you aren't in pre vet anymore, you can relax a little!
- Personally, I found doing as many placements as possible over the summer break or between semesters worked best, as you often still have a lot of work to do during mid-semester breaks, and juggling this while doing a placement can be tricky
- You've made it into vet, and the competition is over.. make friends, help each other, share in your knowledge and support each other. Some people are really going to struggle with the content (and it might be you), so ask for help when you need it, recognize when your classmates are struggling, and don't forget to have 'you' time. Ps. 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th years aren't scary and are stoked to welcome you all. Say hi, make friends, and come to events so we can all bond!
- Go to vet happy hours! It's a super fun way to meet people in your year and other years out of the serious study environment!

- Farm placement advice: NEVER stand around with your hands in your pockets!! ALWAYS ask what you can do to help or where you'd be most useful! Ask to give things a go - farmers love to see the next generation interested in what they do!!
- Take a walk. sounds so basic but taking a break for a little walk will help clear your mind and allow you to focus better when you go back to studying
- Get placements organised early and try to do them with friends! Ask senior students for contacts. Also going into placements accept the fact you may know nothing and prepare to be pushed outside of your comfort zone.
- What kept me sane were definitely my friends. Make sure to take time off to do something fun, don't isolate yourself and get lost in the academic side. It's not worth it. for farm placements, really get involved if you can. It'll make it more enjoyable and you'll learn a lot.

### 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!