

How to survive BVSc2!

Disclaimer: This is a compilation of advice, tips and tricks from current 2nd 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 2nd year vet students?

Go to lectures. Do not watch from home. You do not get much from it at home

Go to lectures! Dance whenever you have the chance! Dilution is the solution! (Ie keep that sweet balance in your life going)

GO TO EVERY LECTURE!!! don't fall behind or you'll make yourself so stressed it's not worth it. seriously. i wish i went to every lecture last year. don't rely on the recordings !

Keep up with structure and function Kura clouds and go to labs! Ask questions at each station and write down things that sound important even if that aren't in the lab guide
If you get stuck in biostats ask the lecturer for help, they can't do anything the day before the assignment!
Past exam papers are your best friend

Coming from someone who didn't go to any lectures in second year - GO TO THEM. Even if that's all you do, you will honestly feel so much better. You'll actually know what's going on. Yes you still need to study to get the really good grades but I promise if you go to lectures you will form better habits and have a solid foundation of knowledge.

Also speaking of bad habits, keeping yourself healthy is vital to longevity in vet school. I really struggled last year because my routine was non-existent, my eating patterns were all over the place and my sleeping was inconsistent. This year I get up at the same time everyday, give myself enough time to cook a healthy and filling breakfast, I pack myself a well balanced lunch the night before and I attend every lecture. TREAT IT LIKE A 9-5 JOB. This will become even more important as you carry on through vet school and the workload increases significantly

Enjoy the freedom of 2nd year

Remember - you're not JUST a vet student!

Remember your anatomies and structure and functions. It will be extremely helpful in 3rd year.

If you miss a lecture, still go to the next!

Write good anatomy notes so you have something to reference for 3rd/4th year

Balance. Don't spend all your time studying. If you do, you're doing it wrong.

Do not sleep on really grilling down your anatomy. You will thank yourself so hard when you start radiology next year.

If you're like me and you tend to get into unmotivated ruts where the days go by and you feel like an unproductive slug, just tell yourself to do 5 minutes of something. 5 minutes of that assignment, or 5 minutes of that lecture you didn't go to today. Crash course videos on youtube are also super helpful for concepts that seem complicated or hard to understand from the lectures alone.

Go to class and keep on top of assignments but don't over do it!! Pretty manageable workload, enjoy your evenings and weekends. Plan some fun stuff to do on weekends and holidays, always good having stuff to look forward to!

- keep up with work (try not to get behind)
- utilise your class reps for questions to lecturers
- utilise your class page for sharing of notes and fun resources

Enjoy chilling out as much as you can, don't do more work than you need to. Get out of pre vet a plus mindset and have fun.

Actually try long term learn things vs memorise just for tests, this is the chilliest year and you need a lot of the info for 3rd year so help out your future self so they don't have to relearn it all

Make sure you're taking good notes that are organised in a way that works for you - you will need them later! Try and learn as much of the content - especially anatomy and infectious diseases (sem 2) - as you can. It will help you to have a good grasp of these topics when you get to third year!

Don't let anyone that may bully, belittle or patronise you get you down, remember that you deserve to be here

Have fun and enjoy 2nd year as it gets very full on in the following years!

This is your year to relax slightly so make the most of it! Important to stay on top of work but appreciate the quiet time while you have it

1. Don't fall behind on lectures! Once you miss one, then two, and before you know it, you've got 26 lectures to catch up on and the exam is next week :) 2. Take good notes for Structure & Function; you'll use them heaps for this and future years.

Try to relax and enjoy this year. You worked hard to make it into vet last year, and second year is manageable so enjoy vet school and be proud of yourself! Try and make it to all the fun vet school events :)

Keep making friends - you'll enjoy classes and non class events more when you know everyone

Keep up to date with your courses, it'll save your butt from burnouts and mental exhaustion towards the end of semesters!

Make the most of 2nd year. It will probably be your easiest year in the degree and there is more to being a vet than just studying!!!!

While having a good routine is important, please look after your health. It shouldn't be something you sacrifice. I got seriously sick from second semester onwards and it made everything so much more difficult.

Do many extracurricular activities during 2nd year as u will get very busy in 3rd year

Go to all your classes! It stops you from falling behind, plus it helps you to stay feeling involved and motivated when you're around your peers everyday.

enjoy the content as much as you can. The first sem is a breeze so try and get your stuff together and don't waste your free time coz you wont get more of it in the later years,

Try to talk to as many people in your class as possible, especially if you struggle with making friends. It can be hard but just keep putting yourself out there and eventually you'll meet some cool people that will make your time in vet school so much better.

Wisdom from specific courses

Infectious disease

Keep on top of infectious disease. Especially bacteriology. Learn as you go.

Don't get behind in infectious disease, make sure you understand the concepts. Larissa is AMAZING!!! She will help with anything you are stuck on so make the most of that

Using flow diagrams for infectious diseases really helps understanding connections and categorising

For the love of passing exams, if you are given any kind of practice quizzes or access to past exams, repeat them as many times as you can before your actual tests (looking at 227.225 immunology with Laryssa).

virology is a lot, i found organising the viruses in trees to be easiest

Make flashcard or a group to discuss and remember bacteriology/virology

Do not cram infectious diseases - get yourself organised and make sure you understand concepts as you go. Also use the quizzes on stream as exam questions will draw from this. Past exams for production are your best friend.

For infectious diseases use all of the revision material as it becomes available (i.e do quizzes after each lecture, don't leave them until study week) and don't hesitate to book a meeting with Laryssa if you have any concepts that you've missed

Don't worry about infectious diseases, the lecturers are good and it's usually the class everyone does the best in even though it seems hard initially

For infectious diseases, go to or watch every lecture live as a lot of content is covered in each one and getting behind makes it difficult to catch up! Use the recommended textbooks when you're in the library studying, they help a lot. Work together as a class with flash cards and things for these exams, they have a lot of content to learn

Make sure u do the past exams for infectious disease!

For virology, brain storms were the best and going over past questions. Magda likes to reduce, reuse and recycle so practice questions will be a life saver. For animal production, focus on learning objectives. Summary pages were amazing this year.

Infectious Diseases - don't worry, everything will make sense eventually! I found that if I didn't understand the basics covered in the first 1 or 2 lectures of a topic I would struggle to understand anything else after, so if you're confused go back to those and make sure you understand them.

Animal production

Study past papers, ask your mentors for notes. If you still have to do biostats, make sure you communicate with each other and reps as a class so you can extend due dates etc if needed !!

For the animal production final, do as many past paper questions as you can, and make sure you can answer all the LO's after each lecture.

if you still have to do that horrible biostats assignment in 2nd sem with matthieu - don't even worry about it because you can write complete bullshit and still get an A- (speaking from experience)

Bio stats sucks but everyone ended up doing really well in both assignments despite thinking it's gibberish.

Stay on top of everything - especially in production. Come exam time there is a lot of content for production so try and learn it well as you go!

Power through biostatistics (it's only the assignment)

Animal production - get your calving assignment done early and don't leave till last minute. While your on calving placement make sure to ask your farmer if you can use their MINDA login rather than the Massey one as it turns into a shit Storm when everyone is trying to use it and they get the login wrong and the account gets locked. Penny won't thank you if she has to unlock it.

Some people find Penny a little scary, she's actually not. She's very practical, and great to deal with one on one if you have questions. Just make sure you go to her having at least tried to work through it first.

The course that'll take you by surprise is animal production 1 and 2 and it's pretty much all memorisation so take good notes! The genetics portion is it's own little devil, and cannot stress enough that you need to actually attend as the recording will not show Rau's tiny writing on the whiteboard that you'll need to look back on!!

Structure and Function

Good notes for structure and function are a lifesaver. Also, I recommend going through the anatomy lab guides at least twice in a week. I tried to answer as much as I could (from previous years notes and also the kuraclouds) of the labs before attending so that I had actually encountered the language prior to going, which made labs much more efficient and enjoyable. Ask lots of questions in the labs too!! And then a day or two prior to the quick quizzes on Friday, go over the labs again. Write out your answers again but better

Go to lectures - I hate to admit it but you do learn more. You'll thank yourself when it comes to exam time.

Study hard for anatomy tests on Friday. Will help you retain knowledge for future years to come
Pre do anatomy labs in groups and then go into labs with questions
Maximise your learning in Structure Function
There is a wee bit of a step up in structure and function between semesters that needed a bit more work. Don't get caught out by this.
Structure and function - try to get your 5 quizzes at 80% as soon as possible. Enjoy the case studies, they are really helpful for understanding.
learn anatomy well it is important
Structure and Function - Go over the weekly case studies on your own afterwards and make sure you understand the whole thing and would be able to work through it on your own. They're great for studying and understanding a topic, and a lot of what is in the case studies is assessed in the weekly tests. Also make sure you actually attend the weekly labs and make the most of them.
Integrative
Perhaps think of integrative studies as a course that teaches you patience and resilience more than anything else. It's just easier that way.
Try and get involved in integrative studies otherwise it's just hell and don't be that guy that ditches half the lessons and leaves the group having to do their part.

Note taking tips
Hand write - if that's in a book or iPad. Not just type
I love using procreate on my iPad so I can draw/doodle/hand write notes and paste in relevant images from lectures
Don't spend too much time on notes, look up the course code on quizlet, so many ppl have made quizlets just to use those for study !
Anatomy database on stream is great to annotate stuff for structure and function
OneNote is literally the best thing to exist, utilise it. All your notes in one place!! Honestly it's hard but having pretty notes is not the most efficient use of your time, trust me. Nowadays I just copy and paste the lecture slides into one note and then I write my notes on or next to the slides during the lecture. It's interactive and it means you're not writing anything that's already on the lecture slides
Take good summary notes in lectures and I love mind maps! Help a lot for infectious diseases paper!

Look into a database note taker like obsidian, notability ok too, its prettier but not functionally as good
Good notes has a flashcard function so you can make your own.
Use flash cards as "active notes"! You're not going to read your 16-page document of the rewritten lecture slides during exam week.
Write and draw on lecture slides on OneNote then retype notes on Word.
Make flashcards, especially for bacteriology and virology.
Annotate in lectures to make sure you are listening to any important added information.
If you can afford it, an iPad is life changing for taking notes and I wish I had bought one way back in 1st year. After the lecture I would recommend writing up the learning outcomes
If you're an iPad person, GoodNotes is your friend. If you're on the fence about an iPad, I do recommend it.
Mind maps and summaries are great
active recall don't just copy slides onto a word doc
Draw out all the infectious diseases notes into flow charts
Keep "em organised in a way that works for you. Look at learning outcomes, be concise.
Annotating slides
Making quizlets out of notes/LO's was really helpful for revision later on
I recommend to type Structure & Function notes. There's just so much information to learn each week; time would be better spent learning and solidifying your notes rather than writing them out (and consequently having less time to study them).
Don't try write out all your notes, or just focus on writing out/having good anatomy notes
However works for you as long as you keep on top of it. For structure and function weekly tests you want notes you can quickly search to find relevant material
My tablet saves my life when it comes to annotating slides, so highly recommend one if it's available to you.
Focus on learning outcomes, rather than trying to learn everything.
Recommend writing beside the lecture slides during the lecture and then afterwards whether on the day or just when you are studying for exams make a summary using both the lecture notes and what you've added. I wouldn't recommend going over the lecture slides and summarising before lectures because this is both time consuming and you get very little out of it, because some concepts are hard to grasp without the information from the lecture.

Don't rewrite kuraclouds and lecture slides. It's a waste of time and you'll find yourself stressing about how little time you have to do everything. Get an app like OneNote and copy the lecture slides and kuracloud content into it so you have it handy in your notes. Then just add any extra notes or summarise next to it.

Extra advice

Have fun. 1st and 2nd year is your relax time so enjoy it

Try and stay confident even if you feel like you don't know anything (fake it till you make it). You will get treated WAY better if you don't let the vultures see your fear. Don't expect your hand to be held and remember that it's up to you to get what you want to get out of any learning experience.

Sleep is most important!! Share your notes with friends. That's the only way we all passed as a class tbh. Ask for help when you need it, even your GP can help if you're struggling, your health is of utmost importance as the workload gets higher.

lots of questions on placements

Honestly my sanity was questionable during second year so not sure I have any feasible advice. If you genuinely feel like you're at a mental breaking point, I would take a break from uni and come back when you're refreshed. In reality I probably should have been looking back now.

Exercise, go out with your friends, make the most of having a bit more free time and enjoy the student life. Try and find some balance.

don't listen to your friends when they say they had such great pet doctors placements especially if they went to a different clinic to the one you're going to. lower your expectations ❤️

Make sure you have some down time, go sign up to be a dog walker or join spca desexing clinic as a leader

Make sure you're consciously doing something for your mental and physical health. Go to the gym to step away from the computer - even if its only for 30 minutes. Just do it for the refresh! It might seem like a "waste of time not studying" but it's more sustainable that way.

How you do anything is how you do everything! Think of farm placements as networking opportunities and give it your best shot. Make good connections and leave a good impression so you always have that door open if you ever need it later down the road (even if you're not into large animal practice, you never know who they will know!)

Baking, exercising, hanging out with friends, phone calling families.

Keep time aside for your friends! If you burn yourself out it won't help you study.

Try to keep up with your hobbies and social life!

Particularly nvc it gets better as you go on and learn more about what is wanted of you. Vets love questions and don't tolerate nasty behaviour.

Don't be afraid to post on MUVSA asking other students for placement recommendations.

Farmers often aren't used to having "novices" on farm, understand that they are usually used to working on their own or with the same small crew and not always great at giving instructions nor answering questions all the time. Be kind to them and smile, they are doing you a favour allowing you to learn on their property. Don't expect them to put you on a pedestal.

Take your farmer (and their staff) some baking - they'll love you for it.
Try to be as helpful as you can and if you are unsure just ask. If you can try to be proactive. With your calving placement you will get into a rhythm with calf feeding and so you will eventually know what they do and don't want. If you are at a loose end go and wash some calf feeders.
Get friendly with the farm staff, they will be your best friends and helpful if you find yourself stuck or unsure what to do.

stay organised and you can get everything done during the week and have the weekends for your own life

Farm placements are so fun. I went travelling with a friend over summer and we did a placement together. I would recommend doing it to anyone! Learn lots but also try and have a good time. Also, if you're having a bad experience on a farm; leave. It's not worth your time and the vet school is understanding.

Don't study 24/7, have some downtime while you can. Do placements with other students - more fun, invest in decent wet weather gear for calving.

Keep a study/life balance, the amount of work there is to do always felt way less overwhelming when I had some perspective and things to look forward to

Join a club/ work at a job/ do sports - INTENTIONALLY make time in your schedule (not study related) to give yourself moments of rest :)

Finding the right farm placement, make sure you go somewhere you know a student has been before and recommends it

Branch out with placements and go somewhere new for a good experience. Bake nice farmers some cookies to say thanks for having me! Spend time with your mates and try not to sweat the small stuff this year - you don't need A+ and 100% all the time anymore

Try get placements that take more than one student at a time, and if you can, find places that pay

The calving placement took a lot from us in semester two... wash your hands, and don't get sick!!

Be careful of biohazards during calving prac (wash ur hands & wipe ur phone!)

Study in groups or with people and take breaks to quiz each other on information, such an effective way to study!

studying in the library became a huge part of my routine, just being there put me in the right space of mind to be more productive than sitting at home

Having friends in your class that you can go to lectures or labs with is amazing and makes it so much easier to stay motivated. It can take a while to find a good group of mates but if you don't have any/many currently just keep putting yourself out there and eventually things will happen. Doing farm placements with friends or just other people from your class even if you don't know them is a great experience and an awesome way to make new friends/meet new people and make some good memories. TAKE THE CRYPTO ADVICE FOR CALVING SERIOUSLY (you'll be mad sad if you get it)

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!