

VT229 Sophomore Clinical Externships

Instructions and Time Line - 2011

Step One:

In January, Dr. Bassert will meet with the sophomore class to discuss Sophomore Clinical Externships. This meeting will occur either as a stand-alone meeting specific for discussing externships or at the end of a sophomore class such as VT211 Animal Medicine. The meeting date and time will be posted on the Externship Bulletin Board. If you are unable to attend the meeting, please be sure to contact Dr. Bassert via e-mail to let her know that:

- a. You cannot attend the meeting and
- b. You ARE planning to complete your externships in the summer or fall.
Be sure to go on-line to acquire a sign-up sheet and a list of Core Sites.

During the meeting, students will be given a list of Core sites and asked to do the following:

1. Go to www.manorvettech.com/vt229 and explore the course website. It is not password protected.
2. Examine the Core Site List and think about which veterinary practices are of interest to you.
3. Consider the following questions:
 - In which types of practices would I like to work after graduation?
 - Do I want to work with companion animals? Equine? Exotic species? Food animal?
 - Do I want a large practice with many employees or a small practice with a small veterinary health care team?
 - Do I want a fast paced practice or a slower practiced one? Routine practice or Emergency and specialty practice?
 - What do I see myself doing in 2 years? 5 years? How can I use the externships to prepare me for that time?
4. Perhaps you want to use your externships to find answers to these questions, in which case you will want to spend time at two, completely different sites.
5. Take time to drive by the practices and look at the facility; look on-line at the practice's websites; meet with Dr. Bassert if you have questions; talk to your instructors and other students about the various sites; consider what would work best for you. Do Not set up interviews and tours of the sites at this time.
6. Complete the *Student Goals for Externship* form. Think carefully about what you want to accomplish during your externship. In what specific skills do you want more practice?

What types of cases do you want to see? Make sure this form is neat and grammatically correct. You may want to have it proofed by someone else. You will be turning copies of this form in to your site supervisor and to Dr. Bassert.

7. Complete the sign-up sheet by writing your first (1), second (2) and third (3) choices by the names of the practices in which you are interested. Perhaps you are confident that you want one general practice and one specialty & emergency practice. If this is the case, please note this in the margin of the sign-up form. You may have a particular practice in mind for an elective site. In this case, you will want to fill in the name, address, phone number and other contact information of the practice on the sign-up form.
8. Do the best you can in completing the form. It is OK if you are not absolutely sure.
9. **Make a Xerox copy of your externship goals form and staple it to your sign-up sheet before turning them in to Dr. Bassert.** Forms may be placed in the IN-BOX or on Dr. Bassert's chair or slid under the office door if the VT Office is not open.

Be sure to turn the two forms (sign-up sheet and goals) in BEFORE the deadline.

10. Rules to be aware of:

- a. You must complete the entire 12 weeks of externships either in the summer OR in the fall. You cannot do half in the summer and half in the fall.
- b. All students must start and stop their externships at the same time in synch with the rotation dates. Like musical chairs, everyone must change sites at the same time (ie. between rotation 1 and rotation 2). Refer to the syllabus for the dates of the externship rotations.
- c. If you live very far away, you may complete your externships near your home. If you are moving to another state, you may complete externships outside of Pennsylvania. All sites not listed on the core site list must be pre-approved by Dr. Bassert.
- d. Elective sites must be pre-approved by Dr. Bassert.
- e. Dr. Bassert will approve most sites in which:
 - You work directly under the supervision of a credentialed veterinary technician or a veterinarian,
 - Critical minimal safety and biohaz standards are met, and in which
 - You will be trained to perform nursing procedures (as opposed to husbandry skills or restraint only or observation only sites).

Step Two:

1. You will have about three weeks in which to research externship sites and complete the sign-up sheet.
2. After the deadline for turning in the sign-up sheets, Dr. Bassert will prepare a schedule. Each student will be assigned to two of the three sites that they signed up for. **You must complete the sites in the order in which they are assigned.** If more students sign up for a particular site than it can accommodate, Dr. Bassert will flip a coin or draw names out of

a hat to establish which student(s) will be assigned to the site. With large class sizes, students may be assigned to practices that they did not sign up for.

3. Students that turn in their sign-up sheets after the deadline are not guaranteed any of their choices. Conversely, students that turn in the sign-up sheet before the deadline will not be given preference. **It is strongly advised that you turn in your sheet before the deadline.**
4. In mid- to late- February, you will be given your externship assignments. Dr. Bassert will return to VT211 Animal Medicine class to distribute the assignments. If you are not taking VT211, you will want to be sure to see Dr. Bassert about site assignments.
5. Once you have been assigned to two sites, you are now at liberty to contact the sites to establish a tour and interview. Those students who are completing their externships in the summer will want to contact the sites as soon as possible.
6. The tour and interview is a time for you to see whether or not you like the practice. It is also a time for the site supervisor to decide whether or not you are the right person for their practice. **Refer to the handout on the externship website about interviewing and to your VT103 notes about interviewing skills. Be sure to take your resume, list of references and written externship goals with you to your interview. Sites will be expecting this and have rejected students who were not prepared or properly dress for the interview.**
7. You may decide that you like the site or you may decide that you do not like the site. Similarly, the supervisor may decide to accept you or not accept you. Sometimes sites are too busy to take a student during the rotation in which you want to go. **Thus, you must schedule the interviews as early as possible to give yourself enough time to find another site in the event that the site does not work out. Do not assume that a site has the room or the time to train you during your rotation.** If you call a site for a tour only a week or two before the rotation is to begin, you will most likely be rejected on the grounds that you procrastinated and did not plan ahead.
8. Do not tell the practice that you will complete your externship at their site if you are not sure. Wait at least one day after the interview before giving them your decision. **Once you give them your word that you will be attending their site, you MUST attend their site.** Be very clear with the practice about whether you are ruminating on the subject or that you will attend or that you will not attend their site so there is no confusion or hard feelings.
9. One word about communication with sites:
Veterinary practices are very busy. If you find that your supervisor does not return your phone message, call the practice's receptionist and ask for the supervisor's e-mail address so that the supervisor can get back to you at her convenience (day or night). If you still do not hear from your supervisor after about three weeks and e-mailing, contact Dr. Bassert and she will make contact on your behalf. Never be rude or impatient with the

receptionist. Sites have rejected externship applicants (even before the interview process began) because they were rude to the receptionists or other staff members

Step Three:

1. Dr. Bassert will assume that you will be attending the sites to which you were assigned unless you tell her otherwise. **If you are rejected from a site or if you decide not to attend a site to which you were assigned, you must notify Dr. Bassert as soon as possible so that you can be reassigned and so that the site can be made available to someone else.**
2. Once the sites are confirmed, you will want to prepare for the externship by doing the following:
Make sure you have:
 - All of the items requested by the practice...typically a watch, a name tag, clean, neat uniform, white shoes, dosimeter badge.
 - Reviewed anesthetic protocols and dosage calculation problems.
 - Contact your supervisor at least 2 weeks before you are scheduled to arrive to confirm your work schedule, dates and times of arrival and what you should bring with you on the first day.
3. Attend all on-campus meetings before and after your externship rotation.
During the last meeting, be sure to bring with you the following:
 - Your dosimeter badge
 - Completed site evaluations (one for each site)
 - Completed task check list
4. Register for VT229 (most students register for this course as a fall course). You cannot register for externships until all VT, math and science courses are completed with a C or better and that all core courses are completed with a D or better. You must have a minimum GPA of 2.2 before you can complete externships.
5. Register for any core liberal arts courses that have yet to be taken. The liberal arts course(s) may not conflict with the full-time externship schedule.
6. Prepare for graduation:
 - Ask for an unofficial copy of your transcript from the Registrar or the Program Assistant, Charmaine Hofmann. Compare your transcript to the VT curriculum sheet and make sure that all of the required courses for the Program have been completed and appear on your transcript. Make sure that transferred and exempted courses appear on your transcript. If not, follow up on it. You cannot graduate until all required courses appear on your transcript. You must have a C or better in all VT, math and science courses, and a D or better in all liberal arts courses.
 - Complete the application to graduate form (this will be done in one of the on-campus externship meetings).