

## Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies - R(D)SVS

### Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) Information for Prospective Students

Extra-Mural Studies, or EMS, is a programme requirement of all the UK veterinary degree programmes mandated by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and written into UK law in the Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966). Students' EMS completions are assessed via feedback from placement providers, and via review of any personal EMS recording activities.

EMS is divided into **Animal Husbandry EMS (AHEMS)**, completed first, and **Clinical EMS (cEMS)**, completed in years 3-5 of the programme. EMS must be completed in this order, with **all AHEMS finished and signed off** before cEMS can begin.

The RCVS stipulates the number of weeks of each type of EMS which students must complete, which is currently 10 weeks of AHEMS and 20 weeks of cEMS. This document will focus on the requirements for AHEMS, as it is important to understand this before starting your BVM&S programme.

PLEASE BE AWARE that RCVS requirements may change, the above is correct at time of publication: please check their website for the latest information [here](#).

**EMS should predominantly be completed outside semester time, during vacation periods. Students cannot miss classes to complete any EMS.**

#### AHEMS Requirements at R(D)SVS

The R(D)SVS requires all students to complete their AHEMS **by the 31<sup>st</sup> July of their first GEP year / 31<sup>st</sup> July of year 2 of the 5 year programme.**

We recommend students spend at least some time during AHEMS with the following species: cattle, sheep, horses, dogs, cats, small mammals, pigs and poultry. At least 1 week of UK dairy experience and at least 1 week of UK lambing experience is recommended.

AHEMS should be completed in a husbandry setting rather than a veterinary clinic, focusing on the routine care of healthy animals. You must not undertake any veterinary clinical procedures whilst on AHEMS. During your AHEMS you will advance your work experience within the animal care sector, deepening your understanding of a wide range of species-specific husbandry requirements, allowing you to fully appreciate the care and health of the animals you will be looking after. For this reason, AHEMS should not be completed within a veterinary setting as the focus of these placements is not learning clinical skills or techniques.

#### Finding Placements

It is your responsibility to find suitable placements and submit the relevant paperwork to the EMS team in advance of each placement for approval. The R(D)SVS has resources to help you with this. We will explain the system to you when you start your BVM&S programme. You may choose to do your first EMS placement during the Christmas break of your first year. **Please do not try to arrange placements before you have started the course.**

#### What counts as an EMS week?

**An EMS week is defined as the normal working week of the unit.** A calendar week spans a seven-day period and an EMS week must represent the normal working week of the unit within that timeframe. This is likely to work out as

working 5 or 6 days out of 7, and around 40 hours per week as a guideline. You should have at least one day off per week. Note that working hours are likely to be longer for some species (e.g. when lambing).

Students cannot complete more than one week of EMS within a calendar week, regardless of the number of hours worked. Students are expected to take at least one rest day in any seven day period, and should take at least one day off between finishing one placement and starting another.

### **Financial cost of EMS**

Please note that **EMS is usually unpaid** and will occupy a significant amount of your holiday time, and as such does reduce your ability to take other paid employment during this time. We recommend that you carefully consider this when planning ahead for your course. Some bursaries are available, but must be applied for individually and there is no guarantee that you will be successful.

### **Placement Choice Guidelines**

AHEMS placements should always allow you to be involved in the day-to-day care (husbandry) of the animals. It is in your own interest to ensure that there will be enough husbandry experience available to keep you busy and interested to maximize the educational opportunity. Consideration could be given to how much hands-on work the provider typically requires at the time you plan to visit (e.g. there may be minimal handling of beef cattle at certain times of year, regardless of herd size) or if the placement has other students/volunteers attending, as the number of other people on site is likely to impact on your experience.

AHEMS placements should reflect the routine care needs of the animals living at the facility, and as such placements where animals are only attending for a short time or where the involvement you have with them is limited in scope would not be considered suitable. This means that we will not accept AHEMS placements at dog grooming parlours/dog day care/dog walking or cat cafes, for example.

### **Further Information**

We will go through all the EMS requirements and provide lots of opportunities for you to get help and advice once you have started your course, but if you have urgent questions in the meantime, please contact our EMS Administrators at [ems2admin@ed.ac.uk](mailto:ems2admin@ed.ac.uk). We endeavour to respond to all queries within 3 working days, but please note that response times may be longer during busy times.

You can view the RCVS guidance on EMS on their website [here](#).