

Employment Prospects by Year of Graduation

Table 1 - Have you done any veterinary work since qualifying?

	Year qualified				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Yes	99.09%	98.84%	98.85%	97.83%	95.37%
No	0.91%	1.16%	1.15%	2.17%	4.63%
N =	219	258	260	323	324

Participants in the RCVS survey were asked to specify whether they have managed to find work within the veterinary sector since qualifying as a veterinary surgeon. As Table 1 demonstrates, the proportion of respondents from each year group who have undertaken some form of veterinary work after leaving university has been decreasing very slightly since 2008, although the percentage who have not yet done any veterinary work is still very low in 2012 (under 5%).

Respondents who answered 'Yes' (N = 1354) to the preceding question, were then asked to provide further details about the nature of this position, the ease at which they found work, and whether or not they have remained within this post.

Table 2 - From when you started actively looking for work, how long did it take you to find your first position?

Time to find position (months)	Year qualified				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Less than 1	7.51%	7.48%	10.59%	10.19%	9.54%
1 - 3	77.00%	65.75%	61.18%	64.65%	61.84%
3 - 6	11.27%	20.87%	20.00%	17.83%	23.03%
6 - 12	3.29%	5.51%	6.27%	7.01%	5.59%
Over 12	0.94%	0.39%	1.96%	0.32%	0%
N =	213	254	255	314	304

The responses detailed in Table 2 show that it seems to have become slightly harder to find a first position from 2009 onwards. This shift occurred between the proportion of respondents who were able to acquire their first veterinary position 1 – 3 months after graduating, and those who were able to find work 3 – 6 months after graduating.

Table 3 - Did this first veterinary position meet your needs? (e.g. in terms of pay, location and type of work)

	Year qualified				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Yes - the work met all my needs	34.88%	36.86%	30.86%	30.89%	35.71%
Yes - the work met most of my needs	53.02%	49.80%	53.91%	52.55%	52.27%
No - the work did not meet my needs	12.09%	13.33%	15.23%	16.56%	12.01%
N =	215	255	256	314	308

Respondents who had acquired employment within the veterinary sector after leaving university were then asked to specify whether this work met their emotional, personal, financial and professional needs. The results provided in Table 3 indicate that there has been no substantial variation year on year in respondent's perceptions of how well their first position fulfilled these requirements, with the vast majority from each year group (i.e. over 80% in each instance) stating that the work was at least partially adequate in this sense.

Table 4 - Most important reason first position did not meet needs

Reason did not meet needs	Year qualified				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
The position was too lowly paid	7.69%	11.76%	15.38%	5.88%	2.78%
I did not receive enough professional support from my employers and colleagues	65.38%	50.00%	46.15%	52.94%	52.78%
I did not receive enough emotional/social support from my employers and colleagues	7.69%	11.76%	7.69%	3.92%	5.56%
I was not able to work the hours that I wanted	0%	0%	0%	3.92%	0%
The position was not in the location that I wanted	0%	5.88%	10.26%	9.80%	0%
The position was not in the type of clinical practice that I wanted	3.85%	0%	7.69%	7.84%	13.89%
There were not enough development opportunities	3.85%	11.76%	5.13%	9.80%	8.33%
Other	11.54%	8.82%	7.69%	5.88%	16.67%
N =	26	34	39	51	36

Respondents who answered 'No' to the preceding question (N = 189) were then asked to identify the most important reason why this first veterinary position did not satisfactorily meet their needs. A consistent reason provided by respondents across year groups (see Table 4) was that they did not receive enough professional support from employers and colleagues while working within this post, although this is less marked in 2009-12 than in 2008. Since 2008-09, there has been a rise in the percentage of people whose first job was not in their preferred area of practice, and a higher percentage of graduates from 2009 onwards felt there was a lack of development opportunities.

Table 5 - Was this first position paid or unpaid?

	Year qualified				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Paid	98.14%	95.28%	97.24%	96.13%	94.12%
Unpaid	1.86%	4.72%	2.76%	3.87%	5.88%
N =	215	254	254	310	306

The results provided in Table 5 suggest that there has been a slight, albeit variable, increase in the proportion of respondents since 2008 whose first position within the veterinary sector was unpaid. The overwhelming majority of respondents, however, are still managing to acquire paid veterinary work after graduating from university.

Table 6 - Was this first position within your preferred location?

	Year qualified				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Yes	58.14%	55.51%	50.39%	54.78%	56.35%
No	21.86%	22.05%	25.00%	25.16%	20.52%
N/A - I did not mind where I worked	20.00%	22.44%	24.61%	20.06%	23.13%
N =	215	254	256	314	307

The year in which respondents graduated does not appear to be associated with their ability to find work within the location that they wanted; over 50% of the respondents from each year group stated that the first veterinary position they acquired was in their preferred location.

Table 7 - Are you still in this first position?

	Year qualified				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Yes	18.60%	21.18%	33.59%	47.77%	81.82%
No	81.40%	78.82%	66.41%	52.23%	18.18%
N =	215	255	256	314	308

When respondents were asked whether or not they are still working within their first position the results were as expected, with a greater proportion of more recent graduates still working within this post (see Table 7). Respondents who answered 'No' to this question (N = 774) were asked for additional details concerning how long they had remained within their first job, why their employment had been terminated and whether or not they had found other veterinary work since leaving.

Table 8 - How long did you stay in this first position?

Time in position (Months)	Year qualified				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
less than 1 month	0.00%	0.00%	1.78%	0.00%	1.85%
1 - 3	4.02%	9.00%	7.69%	15.85%	42.59%
3 - 6	8.05%	7.50%	9.47%	14.63%	29.63%
6 - 12	21.84%	20.50%	31.36%	37.80%	24.07%
12 - 18	20.11%	21.00%	28.40%	25.00%	1.85%
18 - 24	16.67%	16.50%	13.61%	6.71%	0.00%
24 - 48	27.59%	25.50%	7.69%	0.00%	0.00%
over 48	1.72%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
N =	174	200	169	164	54

In addressing the first of these points, the results provided in Table 8 show that, in some instances, respondent's answers to this question differed markedly between year groups.

From 2011 onwards there is a substantial increase in the proportion of respondents who left their first position after a relatively short period. This increase is particularly marked in 2012; over 40% of respondents who graduated in 2012 had left their first veterinary position within at least 3 months of starting work, a rise of 27% on the previous year.

A tentative indication as to why respondents are increasingly leaving their first job after just a couple months may be derived from Table 9, which provides a breakdown of the reasons respondents gave for their employment being terminated. This question was free response, with respondents able to state as many reasons as were applicable. In 2012, the second most popular reason respondents provided in explaining why they left their first veterinary position was that this post was temporary. As such, part of the rise in the proportion of graduates working within their first position for a limited period could be due to the fact that a greater number are now acquiring short term contracts.

We can therefore glean from the results presented above that while recently qualified veterinary surgeons are not finding it any more difficult to acquire veterinary work after leaving university, the nature of these positions appears to be changing, perhaps due to the limited availability of long-term contracts.

The results presented within Table 9 also indicate that recent qualifiers are increasingly citing poor management as one of the main reasons why they left their first position.

Table 9 - Why did you leave this first position?

Reason left position (% of total number of responses)	Year qualified				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
General job dissatisfaction	6.78	2.58	6.90	7.31	7.04
Poor management	15.68	15.50	18.10	19.18	25.35
Workload	6.36	5.54	8.19	5.94	7.04
Long hours	5.93	9.59	5.60	5.94	8.45
Salary	5.51	6.64	5.17	3.65	0.00
Training/career progression	5.08	7.01	5.17	5.48	7.04
Sacked/made redundant	1.69	0.74	3.02	2.28	0.00
Temporary position	11.86	9.23	15.09	15.98	21.13
Unpaid role/volunteer	0.00	1.85	1.29	1.83	5.63
Change in speciality/role/more challenging role & opportunity	18.22	14.39	10.78	11.42	7.04
Wanted to travel/work abroad	3.81	4.43	1.72	3.20	4.23
Illness/injury	0.85	0.00	1.72	1.83	1.41
Further education/study/research	3.39	3.32	3.45	3.65	0.00
Location reasons	11.44	14.76	11.64	12.33	4.23
Personal reasons	1.69	1.85	0.43	0.46	0.00
Not relevant/other comment	1.69	2.58	1.72	1.83	1.41
Total number of responses	236	271	232	219	71

Table 10 - Since leaving this first position, have you found other veterinary work?

	Year qualified				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Yes	96.57%	97.51%	98.22%	95.73%	85.19%
No	3.43%	2.49%	1.78%	4.27%	14.81%
N =	175	201	169	164	54

Aside from respondents who qualified in 2012, who have had less time to find other veterinary work since leaving their first position, there does not appear to be any substantial variation in respondent's ability to acquire further employment within the veterinary sector based upon their year of graduation.

Employment Prospects by Gender

Table 11 - Gender of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Male	256	18.20
Female	1147	81.80
N =	1403	100.00

81.80% of the registered veterinary surgeons who responded to this survey were female, while 18.20% were male. These proportions roughly reflect the composition of the student population currently attending, as well as graduating from, one of the UK's seven RCVS accredited veterinary schools. Figures attained from the most recent RCVS annual report, for instance, show that of those students attending a veterinary degree course in 2011-2012 (N = 4,578), 76.93% were female, while 23.06% were male. Similar proportions can be observed in the number of students who graduated with a veterinary degree in 2011: 79.23% of which were female, and 20.76% of which were male.

Table 12 - Have you done any veterinary work since qualifying?

	Male	Female
Yes	99.22%	97.56%
No	0.78%	2.44%
N =	256	1146

The results presented in Table 12 suggest that males found it slightly easier to find some form of veterinary work after leaving university than females, but the difference is very small; the vast majority of both genders have found veterinary work.

Table 13 - From when you started actively looking for work, how long did it take you to find your first position?

Time to find position (months)	Male	Female
Less than 1	11.60%	8.66%
1 - 3	74.80%	63.27%
3 - 6	10.40%	21.12%
6 - 12	2.80%	6.23%
over 12	0.40%	0.72%
N =	250	1108

The speed at which respondents were able to find work after qualifying as veterinary surgeons did differ slightly between genders. Around 10% more male respondents were able to find veterinary work 1 – 3 months after qualifying, for instance, in comparison with their female counterparts (see Table 13). These proportions are roughly reversed for respondents who took around 3 – 6 months to acquire employment, suggesting that it took female respondents slightly longer overall to attain veterinary work.

Table 14 - Did this first veterinary position meet your needs? (e.g. in terms of pay, location and type of work)

	Male	Female
Yes - the work met all my needs	42.06%	31.87%
Yes - the work met most of my needs	49.21%	53.14%
No - the work did not meet my needs	8.73%	14.99%
N =	252	1114

When respondents were asked to specify whether the first veterinary position they attained met all of their financial, emotional, professional and personal needs, the answers they provided differed between genders. 42.06% of males believed that this first position met all of their requirements, in comparison with 31.87% of females (a difference of 10%), while almost twice as many females said the work did not meet their needs.

Table 15 - Most important reason first position did not meet needs

Reason did not meet needs	Male	Female
The position was too lowly paid	9.09%	8.48%
I did not receive enough professional support from my employers and colleagues	59.09%	52.12%
I did not receive enough emotional/social support from my employers and colleagues	0.00%	7.88%
I was not able to work the hours that I wanted	4.55%	0.61%
The position was not in the location that I wanted	0.00%	6.67%
The position was not in the type of clinical practice that I wanted	9.09%	6.67%
There were not enough development opportunities	4.55%	8.48%
Other	13.64%	9.09%
N =	22	165

In identifying the most important reason why they felt that their first veterinary position did not meet their needs (N = 189), respondent's answers did not appear to vary considerably by gender, apart from the issue of not receiving enough support; males were more likely to cite lack of professional support than females (59% compared to 52%), while no males cited a lack of emotional compared to 8% of females. A slightly higher percentage of females took an unpaid first position (see Table 16), but the percentages are small for both genders and low pay is the top reason for leaving for less than 10% of both males and females.

Table 16 - Was this first position paid or unpaid?

	Male	Female
Paid	97.20%	95.75%
Unpaid	2.80%	4.25%
N =	250	1107

Gender does not appear to be strongly tied to respondent's ability to find work within the location that they wanted (although a slightly larger proportion of males did not mind which location they worked in) and whether or not they are still in this position (see Tables 17 and 18).

Table 17 - Was this first position within your preferred location?

	Male	Female
Yes	51.59%	55.76%
No	18.65%	23.83%
Not applicable - I did not mind where I worked	29.76%	20.41%
N =	252	1112

Table 18 - Are you still in this first position?

	Male	Female
Yes	44.44%	43.18%
No	55.56%	56.82%
N =	252	1114

For respondents who have left their first veterinary position (N = 774), there were some gender differences with regard to how long they stayed within this post, with 25% of females staying less than 6 months compared to 14% of males (see Table 19). There were also some differences in the reasons they provided for leaving (see Table 20), with women being more likely to cite issues around the job experience (poor management, workload, long hours) and men issues around their career (salary, training/career progression, more challenging opportunity, further study). However, the proportions of both male and female respondents

who have managed to find subsequent veterinary work after leaving their first position are almost identical (see Table 21).

Table 19 - How long did you stay in this first position?

Time in position (Months)	Male	Female
less than 1 month	1.44%	0.32%
1 - 3	7.91%	12.40%
3 - 6	5.04%	12.40%
6 - 12	33.09%	25.91%
12 - 18	23.02%	21.62%
18 - 24	14.39%	12.24%
24 - 48	15.11%	14.63%
over 48	0.00%	0.48%
N =	139	629

Table 20 - Why did you leave this first position?

Reason left position (% of total number of responses)	Male	Female
General job dissatisfaction	5.92	5.75
Poor management	11.24	18.41
Workload	4.73	6.90
Long hours	3.55	7.71
Salary	8.28	4.37
Training/career progression	8.88	5.52
Sacked/made redundant	0.59	1.96
Temporary position	10.65	13.35
Unpaid role/volunteer	0.00	1.84
Change in speciality/role/more challenging role & opportunity	15.98	12.66
Wanted to travel/work abroad	4.73	3.11
Illness/injury	1.78	0.58
Further education/study/research	6.51	2.53
Location reasons	11.24	12.20
Personal reasons	2.37	0.92
Not relevant/other comment	3.55	2.19
Total number of responses	169	869

Table 21 - Since leaving this first position, have you found other veterinary work?

	Male	Female
Yes	96.40%	96.20%
No	3.60%	3.80%
N =	139	631