



Job Focus - Veterinarian

Holly Grayton

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HOW MANY WEEKS A YEAR DO YOU WORK?

Our practice is largely Equine Sports Medicine, and therefore our busiest time of year tends to be in the summer, and our down time is in the winter. In our practice, technologists tend to work 48-50 weeks per year, while the veterinarians may work closer to 40-48 weeks per year.

WHAT ARE THE WORK HOURS LIKE?

During the summer show season we work on average 60 - 90 hours per week. During the winter we average closer to 40-60 hours per week.

WHAT IS THE PAY RANGE?

Pay range varies greatly based on location, type of practice, and specialty training.

For a technologist, I would estimate the pay range to be \$32,000 - \$45,000 per year.

Pay range varies for veterinarians as well. The Alberta Veterinary Medical Association estimates average range for associates (not owners) to be \$83,000-\$95,000 per year.

WHAT DOES A PERSON NEED TO DO TO BECOME A VET TECH/VET?

In Alberta, you must be a Registered Animal Health Technologist to work in a full scope of practice in a veterinary setting. This requires you to complete a 2-4 year Technologist program, as well as pass the Veterinary Technician National Exam.

Veterinarians must complete at least two years of university studies, often a Bachelor of Science, followed by a four-year Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) program and pass the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE).

WHAT ARE THE POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES TO BEING A VET TECH/VET?

Vet Tech: Veterinary Technology is a wonderful career that you can really make into your own. The options of what you can do with a vet tech certification are nearly endless, especially when you start to look at different areas in which you could specialize. As I was interested in research and rehabilitation, this was definitely a selling point for me. While we are all in this business because we like animals (which is a positive on its own), it is a people business too! Getting to know our clients and their animals has been a very fulfilling part of the job for me.

The negatives that come along with the job is that you have to be willing to go hard and give it your all every day. If you do not love it, it is difficult to work sun up to sun down, while maintaining a very high level. Compassion fatigue is something else that can occur often in medical careers, so it is important to look after yourself, as well as your patients and their owners.



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Veterinarian: I enjoy the ability to work with horses every day. Each day brings a new challenge with each appointment, never knowing exactly what is going to walk in the door; a puzzle to solve. I also appreciate the relationships I get to build with every client. Over the years a number of them have become close friends, which makes this job a lot of fun. Because of the great equine facilities around, we have the ability to work indoors as well as outdoors, making the job a bit nicer with our sometimes temperamental weather in Alberta. The negative to be a veterinarian, if you want to call it that, is the commitment to the job. It can be long days and nights with appointments and emergencies, and is not for everyone.