1. **Can you be a veterinary technician while going to school to become a veterinarian?**

Yes, I highly recommend obtaining a kennel technician/veterinary assistant (part-time or full-time) job before you start vet school. It's important to learn basic terminology, observe daily tasks and it is so important to start forming relationships/getting your name out there.

If you have zero experience

-You will start at the bottom (doing laundry, cleaning, re-stocking, etc.)
The goal is to form relationships with doctors/techs, gain trust, show initiative and you will move up.

2. What did you major in while in college?

-2012 Attended Cuesta college in San Luis Obispo (I majored in Early Childhood Education while completing all of my G.E.) Graduated in 2014
-2014 Enrolled in the 22 month long course at Carrington College. Graduated in 2016.
-Enrolled at Chico State in Fall of 2016 (majored in Animal Science) and graduated in December 2017.

*Regrets
-huge course loads (20-24 units a semester) to obtain my B.S. as fast as I could
-did not join any clubs
-did not form any relationships with professors

Becoming an RVT (a couple different way)
This is the route I went:

- You want to find a program approved by California Veterinary Medical Board and you want it to be accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Fully accredited veterinary technology programs

Typically (22-24 months long)

California State Polytechnic University-Pomona
Carrington College-Citrus Heights Campus- WHERE I WENT
Carrington College-Pleasant Hill
Carrington College-Sacramento
Carrington College-San Jose
Carrington College-San Leandro
Carrington College-Stockton
Cosumnes River College
Foothill College
Los Angeles Pierce College

Mount San Antonio College
Pima Medical Institute-Chula Vista
Platt College-Alhambra
Platt College-Ontario
Platt College-Riverside
San Joaquin Valley College

Once you have complete an accredited program:

Registered Veterinary Technician License Application

Required Fees:

- Application Fee: $350 (non-refundable)
- Initial License Fee: $350

Requirements for Approved School:

(Carrington College had all of this prepared once I completed the courses and everyone was fingerprinted at the school)

- Photograph (similar to a passport photograph)
- Official Transcript or photocopy of the diploma (if applicable and AVMA/California approved school applicant)
- License Verification/Letter of Good Standing sent **directly** to California from another state, U.S. territory or Canadian province (if applicable for AVMA/California approved school applicant)*
- Fingerprint clearances from the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) please complete the Live Scan Form and submit it to the Board. For Live Scan locations, click here.
- United States issued Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number

Once you are approved- Schedule your test! Do NOT wait.

*Once you are an RVT you have to renew your license every 2 years and pay a fee of $350 dollars.You also have to complete 20 hours of continuing education (CE HOURS)

-**There are conferences all over the world, online seminars, etc. Do you research.**

Here is one that is coming up!

Non-Member Pricing

Veterinarian VECCS/IVECCS Bundle – $240 ($75 IVECCS Virtual Member Registration Fee + $165 Online Membership Fee)
Veterinarian IVECCS Registration Only – $250

Intern/Resident & First Year Grad Bundle – $130 ($40 IVECCS Virtual Member Registration Fee + $90 Online Membership Fee)
Intern/Resident & First Year Grad IVECCS Registration Only – $150

Technician Bundle – $110 ($40 IVECCS Virtual Member Registration Fee + $70 Online Membership Fee)
Technician IVECCS Registration Only – $150

Practice Manager Bundle – $110 ($40 IVECCS Virtual Member Registration Fee + $70 Online Membership Fee)
Practice Manager IVECCS Registration Only – $150

Student Vet/Tech Bundle – $50
Student Vet/Tech IVECCS Registration Only – $50
(These are both $50, but with the bundle you will become a member of VECCS for a year and be registered for IVECCS 2020 Virtual Experience)

*__**For tax purposes- Keep all receipts from scrub purchases, work shoes, CE programs, license renewals.**__

5. Salaries vary by location and experience and they can definitely be negotiated!

When I was working in the Roseville area at a 24 hour emergency facility- My first job, not a lot of experience, not licensed yet, **full-time** working three 12 hour graveyard shifts.
(I had the option to work a lot of overtime and be on call)
-yearly salary $35-40,000

I am currently working in the Chico area at an 8-5 General practice. I am **part-time** working three 10 hours shifts. More experience, licensed. (not a lot of overtime and not on call)
-yearly salary $25,000-30,000

__**If you want to make more money**__- Get as much experience as you can!

Become a practice manager, a pharmaceutical/pet food representative (Merck, Zoetis, Purina, Hills, Royal Canin), sales/maintenance on lab equipment (Idexx, Antech, Heska

6. Veterinary Technicians and Veterinarians

A relationship based on TRUST. It is an RVT's job to communicate clearly, document everything, be HONEST, ask questions when needed and to work efficiently.

Personal examples/tips-

- Do not call your doctor by their first name (no matter how close you are)-Only if they request it
- Be professional always- even if you hang out with your DVM outside of work
- Do NOT have FAVORITES (try your best to treat everyone the same even if you have a favorite technician or doctor)
- Obtaining history from a client-if you forgot to ask a question-BE HONEST and say you did not ask but you will find out the info needed. NEVER lie or come up with an excuse.
- To be efficient- why is the patient coming in? ask the right questions and manage your time wisely. A lot of DVM's only reserve 30 minutes for each appt. use it wisely.
- Protect your DVM at all costs-proper animal restraint is HUGE. If you are at all concerned- communicate, ask for help and use a muzzle/cat bag if necessary.
- Do not be afraid to question your DVM (politely of course) or to point out something that you are concerned about. DVM's should not be afraid to question their RVT's either.
- If you have a question-Always ask "is this a good time to ask you a question (and ALWAYS have the patients chart/all the info you need when asking)
- If you do not feel confident completing a task that a DVM has asked you, SAY IT! Or find a tech that can teach you!
- If there are ever any issues/concerns -they should be discussed in a private room at the end of the day.

7. If you are questioning yourself about going to vet school and you think you would be perfectly happy working as a vet

tech/gradually moving up in the field then do your research and choose which program works best for you and then APPLY.

*People will always criticize the decisions you make so only make this decision for yourself.

I will always hear:

-“Carrington wasn’t a real college”

-“You really want to pick up dog poop for a living”

-“Oh, you’re just a vet tech”

-“I wish I could play with animals all day”

Then I will receive phone calls/texts from those individuals asking for pet advice! (Definitely be prepared for that and be careful with the info you give)

11. What are your daily duties?

Make sure all boarded/hospitalized patients are taken care of(potty walks, treatments, food)

Make sure oxygen is turned on. If it’s a surgery day set up anesthesia machines, recovery cages, check in surgery patients, calculate drugs for each patient, make sure every patient is up to date on vaccines.

Look at the schedule and prepare for the day (make sure nothing critical/possible sedated procedures) are coming in at the end of the day.

Assign everyone’s position

Throughout the day we will perform digital x-rays, in house bloodwork/send out bloodwork (jugular venipuncture performed), a cystocentesis will be performed for every urine sample needed,

corneal eye stains, ear cleaning, toenail trims, anal gland expressions, Fine needle aspirates that need to be stained for cytology, blood pressure checks, blood glucose checks, Cytopoint injections, Proheart injections, etc.

12. What are the qualities a company typically looks for when hiring a vet tech?

-Physical strength-(Based on my experience)- lift/restrain animals up to 50 lbs. by yourself on a daily basis.
-Hands on Experience/Involvement (previous jobs/volunteer work
-They love letters of recommendation (Always ask for those wherever you work!
-They want to know how well you are at working with others, multi-tasking, how you would handle disgruntled clients, etc.

BE PREPARED FOR SCENARIO QUESTIONS

- There is a lot of gossip/drama in this field and word travels fast in smaller areas. I have heard of the term “hospital hopper”. If you have worked at a lot of clinics and you haven’t been at each of them for very long, be prepared for that question.

13. The most useful type of experience (my opinion)

Individuals with vet med experience: **Shadow a veterinarian**- you will most likely be volunteering your time. Reach out to a DVM (use friends, family, Facebook, etc.)

Individuals with no experience: **Shadow a technician.** Reach out to practice managers and let them know what you are seeking. Make a list of everything that makes you nervous/what you think you cannot do. Learn basic animal restraint!

***Vet assistant program**

- less expensive
- experience
- clinical rotation experience = getting hired

***This is a great idea BUT I will be completely honest, a lot of clinics like to hire people with little to no experience because they like to train you a certain way.**

*When first starting out, be prepared to work weekends

8.What can a college student do in order to make himself or herself the best candidate to be a vet tech?

-After you email your resume or submit anything online- walk into the clinic and just introduce yourself.

-First interview-dress professional, discuss job description, be honest about your skills, focus on discussing goals, timelines, pay/benefits, CE education, PTO, etc. (They really care about the working interview)
-At your working interview (show up early in scrubs)- Introduce yourself to everyone (not just the supervising tech), ASK QUESTIONS, offer to help with anything and everything (DO NOT BE A WALLFLOWER). - Do NOT just do laundry, clean, stock- help obtain a weight/temperature on the animal, draw up vaccines, learn proper restraint techniques, type on the computer with someone helping, etc.
-Be friendly, a team player, learn all aspects of the jobs, say thank you and do not be afraid to ask for feedback

-BE CONFIDENT (techs can be scary, vulgar, impatient, dramatic) Do NOT let this scare you. Know who you are, be safe, remember that you are learning, and provide the best care you can.

9. The hardest part of my job

- Not letting people ruin my day. Whether its clients that are being rude/demanding or coworkers that have major attitude/not willing to do their job. It is always okay to step away for a few minutes, take a deep breath, love one of your furry patients and move on.

10. My favorite part of my job

-Making a difference.

I am the dental technician at my job. I see patients that are not able to eat, they are losing weight and they are labeled as an “approach with caution”. We then realize that they have stage 4 periodontal disease and need certain or all teeth extracted. I then get to call and get updates post dental and hear how well they are doing. I have actually become Facebook friends with a lot of clients and they love tagging me in videos/pictures.

14. Can being a vet tech be a long-term career plan?

Yes. But… It is a career that is physically/mentally demanding. You are on your feet 8-12 hours a day, you’re getting scratched/bitten frequently and clients are verbally abusing you everyday. At times it is frustrating, depressing and exhausting. You have to be tough and remember that you are an advocate for every pet’s health and well-being. Follow safety protocols, take care of yourself (take your lunch breaks, drink water, etc.) and do not be afraid to ask for help. This will be my 5th year and I know individuals that have been in this field for over 30 years. Physically, I cannot be a vet tech for that long, I plan on working my way up to a practice manager or become a pharmaceutical/food representative.

15. What drives me to keep working as a veterinary technician?

I know that I am compassionate and that I make a difference every day.

*I want to help every little old person that brings in their overweight dog with overgrown toenails (complimentary toenail trim plus senior discount) talk about getting them on an overweight management food.

*I want to inform the newlyweds with their new puppy that parvovirus is AWFUL and that is why they should pick up him up off the ground

*I want to hold “Fluffy” like a baby in a blanket after his surgery for 10 minutes because I know he is absolutely terrified and has never been away from his owner. Cages have heat pads or fluid bags that have been microwaved to keep them warm/comfortable.

*Jim, who is homeless, cannot afford to have his pets ashes returned to him so on my lunch break I will dip his paw-print in ink and make him a paw-print ink card that he can have forever.

*Every euthanasia, I offer the pet yummy food and place a heart cut out of vet wrap on the IV catheter port so the owner knows that we care and they can keep it if they would like.

*I have sent text messages/pictures off of my personal cell-phone to clients that would like to know how their pet is doing.

Those are all little things that make a huge difference to the client/patient and the day that I stop doing those “little things” is the day that I need to re-evaluate my mental health. Compassion fatigue is real and you need to have an outlet when you get home everyday.

16**. Most satisfying procedure**

Dental Prophylaxis-removing tartar/calculus and extracting abscessed teeth.

17. **Challenging time**

Not getting along with my DVM and feeling like an incompetent RVT. That took a toll on my mental health and it affected my relationship with my family/significant other. Built up anger made me turn into an ugly human being. That situation definitely made me stand up for myself, in a way it boosted my confidence and now I know that communication is everything. It’s not easy saying “that hurts my feelings” because you don’t want to come across as weak and it’s not easy telling someone you do not agree with the way they have been doing things when they have been doing it that way

for years. I overcame those fears and let everything off my chest and it actually made our relationship stronger.

18. Stressful day at work

If there is a major issue-I need to get it off my chest and I go to a private room with the individual that I need to address the problem with. I definitely go home and vent. My boyfriend is my best friend and when I get home I ask about his day and then ask him if he is prepared to hear about mine. After I am done venting, we each say something positive about the day, eat dinner/dessert together and then it is not discussed any further. Go to work the next morning with a positive attitude. Do not use sweets, alcohol, drugs as your crutch, you need to talk about things. Avoid talking to other coworkers about work-related issues.

19. Do you ever get emotionally attached to any patients?

Many! And the clients! It is not easy when you lose an "OG" client and that is why you have your coworkers to lean on when that happens. You know that you did your best and provided them with the love and care they needed. It is okay to get attached and form outside relationships. I have definitely pet sat for many clients and gone to houses to medicate pets when needed.

20. Altercation with clients- Happens all the time (verbal).

The second a client raises their voice or begins yelling on the phone "I will not be talked to that way, please call back and ask for my manager" If it is "our fault" I will go outside and ask how I can make the situation better. I have had to fire clients before and I have been threatened. (Be careful what you have on social media)

21. Vet-School?

I have thought about it but now that I have shadowed so many DVM's I have realized that it is not for me. I struggle with confidence and easily blame myself for things that I do not have

control over. I am happy assisting veterinarians but I do plan to move around in the field because I would like to make more money and not have such a physically demanding position.

22. How many teeth have you extracted from one dental? Longest dental?

27 teeth. Very bloody! Most of my dental take 1 hr- 1 hr and 30 minutes. The longest has been 2 hours.

RANDOM THINGS:

If you have the opportunity to do anything, DO IT! Draw blood, vaccinate any animal, talk on the phone, process bloodwork, etc. Do NOT be afraid to learn! And do NOT say you will do it later.

-If you don't identify as a "confident" person right now, it's okay, that will change!
-When you start a new job- DO NOT SETTLE- if you stop learning and they don't invest in you, MOVE ON.
-Stand by what you believe-do not let your place of work alter your values.
-Take care of yourself- it may sound cool to work overtime and show off your battle scares but in the long run-it's not worth it.
-Follow radiology safety protocol-WEAR THE GLOVES!!
-Wear goggles, masks and gloves when you do dentals
-Ask for help when lifting heavy animals
-Wear goggles when doing a toenail trim/using a dremel
-If you are not comfortable doing something by yourself-communicate!
-I will NOT vaccinate, intubate, or pre-medicate any animal by myself (for my safety and the animals) I have fellow technicians that will. It does not make them better than me.

-Always ask your coworkers and DVM's how they are doing
-Always think about how you can improve protocols