

Certificate in Shelter Medicine

The Maddie's Certificate in Shelter Medicine provides students with an immersive experience in Shelter Medicine that results in veterinarians who are practice-ready to work in animal shelters. The Certificate is an internationally recognized credential that documents intensive study and expertise in this discipline.

Shelter Medicine is a new specialty area of veterinary practice recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AMVA) and credentialed by the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners (ABVP). There are approximately 10,000 animal shelters in the USA, each of which desires the services of a veterinarian who is skilled and knowledgeable about this new area of veterinary practice.

Animal shelters take in more than 6 million cats and dogs every year in the US. Students in the Certificate will learn how to care for these animals as individuals and as a population via an immersive, hands-on experience in all aspects of shelter practice, including population medicine, behavior assessment and modification, zoonotic and species-specific infectious disease control, facilities management, sanitation, animal welfare, cruelty investigations, ethics, cultural diversity, public policy, and shelter consultations. Students will apply the standards of care for high-quality/high-volume spay-neuter practice, including selection of patients, anesthetic monitoring, surgical procedures, surgical record keeping, multi-modal pain management, and post-operative recovery. Students will also use Fear Free techniques while participating in individual animal preventive care, diagnosis, treatments, and surgical procedures common to the practice of shelter medicine.

Nationally, there is a shortage of veterinarians adequately trained in the clinical, managerial, and legal issues in Shelter Medicine. Similarly, there is a shortage of veterinarians skilled in high-quality high-volume spay/neuter, which is an essential component for reducing the number of unwanted pets. This is a transitional time for the animal welfare field as growing demand for animal-friendly solutions is challenging traditional sheltering paradigms, and skilled veterinarians are needed to lead this transition.

However, the Certificate is not just for students who plan for careers in shelters. Every private practitioner will see shelter pets in their practices when brought in by local shelters, nonprofit rescue groups, and foster families for medical care. Shelter pets are now the most common source of new pets in the US, with potential adopters able to select from the 6 million dogs and cats that find themselves in the shelter system each year.

Students who complete the requirements for the Maddie's Certificate in Shelter Medicine will:

1. Know the critical role played by veterinarians in protecting the health and welfare of sheltered dogs and cats.
2. Recognize and respond to compromised physical and behavioral health of sheltered animals.
3. Develop skills in high-quality, high-volume surgical sterilization techniques.
4. Use the Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters as a guide to best practices for Shelter Medicine.

Requirements

The 15-credit certificate program requires 3 online courses (9 credits), 2 externships (4 credits), and 1 clerkship (2 credits). There are also elective courses available in disaster medicine, veterinary forensic medicine, shelter consultation, and other topics. Students are required to join the Association of Shelter Veterinarians and to enroll in the discussion group in which shelter medicine issues are discussed and to subscribe to several shelter blogs.

The ideal path for Certificate completion is shown in the table below. The schedule can be adapted for students who discover their passion for Shelter Medicine later in their curriculum. However that will require completion of rigorous online courses during externships or clinical rotations, which can be more difficult to manage.

Required Shelter Medicine Certificate Courses (15 credits)

Course #	Title	Credits	When Offered
VEM 5321	Integrating Veterinary Medicine with Shelter Systems (Online)	3	Summer semester; suggested enrollment between freshman and sophomore year
VEM 5320	Shelter Animal Behavior and Welfare (Online)	3	Spring semester; suggested enrollment in junior spring semester
VEM 5381	Shelter Animal Physical Health (Online)	3	Fall semester; suggested enrollment in senior fall semester
VEM 5892	Shelter Medicine Externship	2	Variable; usually in the summer between junior and senior year
VEM 5892	Spay/Neuter Externship	2	Variable; usually in the summer between junior and senior year
VEM 5890 OR VEM 5891 OR VEM 5863 OR VEM 5864	Consultations in Shelter Animal Medicine Clerkship (5890) OR Veterinary Community Outreach Clerkship (5891) OR Shelter Practice Clerkship OR Sterilization/Population Management Clerkship	2	Junior and senior clinical rotations 5890: variable several times a year 5891: year-round 5863: year-round 5864: year-round

Required Shelter Medicine Extracurricular Activities

Participation in professional discussion groups and shelter management blogs provides early and real-time exposure to the field of Shelter Medicine and opportunities to connect with other students, residents, interns, faculty, and working professionals who share an interest in Shelter

Medicine. In addition, these activities help students build a professional network that will support their career following graduation. Students will join the Association of Shelter Veterinarians member discussion forum www.sheltervet.org/join-or-renew (student dues are \$10 per year). Required blog enrollments are included in individual course assignments.

Certificate Completion Procedures

1. Students interested in learning more about Shelter Medicine should complete the online information form at <http://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/certificate-programs/on-campus-certificate/> prior to enrolling in the first course. This is not a commitment to complete the Certificate, but is an informal contact list that provides students with regular updates about opportunities and advances in Shelter Medicine. Students typically join the group early in vet school when they discover their interest in Shelter Medicine but before they decide to complete the full Certificate. Joining the group also assures that students planning to earn the Certificate will have access to advising from faculty and staff to plan for successful completion and for staff to track completion of certificate assignments.
2. Maintain good academic standing.
3. Complete the required courses and activities.
4. Meet with the Shelter Medicine Student Services Coordinator once each semester to review progress for the certificate.
5. The Shelter Medicine program will maintain a record of each student's progress and will report completed certificates to the UF Registrar, which will mail the official certificates following graduation. Students completing the Certificate program will be recognized during the commencement ceremony.
6. Although participation in Certificate activities occurs throughout all four years of veterinary school, students must officially apply to receive the Maddie's Professional Certificate in Shelter Medicine with UF Admissions during fall of their senior year at <http://www.admissions.ufl.edu/apply/more>. Student will receive an email with more instructions during this semester.
7. Complete a Certificate program evaluation survey in the spring of the senior year.

Certificate Program Contact Information
Certificate Program Faculty Coordinator: Dr. Cynda Crawford Office location: SAH 348 Email: crawfordc@ufl.edu Office phone: 352-273-8723
Shelter Medicine Student Services Coordinator: Kim Richmond Office location: VS-3 Email: sheltermedicine@vetmed.ufl.edu Office phone: 352-294-4509