



**Ontario Veterinary College Health Sciences Centre  
Guelph, Ontario  
Year 2 Practicum**

Practicum dates: September 2024 – April 2025

**Please provide a description of the practicum site and student activities:**

Veterinary social work is a specialized field that focuses on supporting the human components of veterinary medicine and animal welfare. Professionals in this field provide support and assistance to individuals and families facing the emotional, psychological, and social challenges associated with pet parenting, animal welfare, and the veterinary care process.

The veterinary social work student placement the University of Guelph Ontario Veterinary College and Health Sciences Centre (OVC HSC) offers a unique opportunity for students pursuing a career in social work to gain invaluable experience in the specialized field of veterinary social work. This placement provides a dynamic learning environment where students can apply their social work skills to support both pet parents and veterinary professionals, contributing to the well-being of animals and their human companions.

Responsibilities:

1. **Client Support:** Work closely with pet parents and their families, providing emotional support, counseling, and guidance to help them cope with the challenges of pet illness, end-of-life decisions, and grief. Assist in creating care plans that consider the emotional and social aspects of veterinary care.
2. **Education and Outreach:** Develop and deliver educational programs and resources related to pet loss and bereavement, the human-animal bond, veterinary mental health, and other relevant topics. Engage in community outreach initiatives to promote awareness of veterinary social work and its importance.
3. **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Collaborate with the veterinary care team, including veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and other healthcare professionals, to ensure a

holistic approach to animal care that considers the emotional and psychological needs of pet parents.

4. **Documentation:** Maintain detailed and confidential records of client interactions and interventions, adhering to all ethical and legal standards of social work practice.
5. **Research and Program Development:** Assist in ongoing projects related to veterinary social work and contribute to the development of new programs or services that enhance the hospital's capacity to address the emotional needs of clients and wellness of staff.

If you are a social work student passionate about the human-animal bond and eager to make a meaningful impact, we encourage you to apply for this student placement opportunity in veterinary social work at OVC HSC. Join us in providing compassionate support to pet parents and enhancing the overall veterinary care experience.

**Practicum Requirements:**

- Police Reference/Vulnerable Sector Check
- Comfort working with the population being served
- Comprehensive report writing and documentation

**Fields(s) of Study appropriate for this Practicum:**

- Mental Health and Health

**Does your practicum require any previous experience? If yes, please specify.**

While prior experience is not mandatory, certain qualities can enhance your suitability for this practicum. Valued assets include experience in providing individual counseling services, foundational knowledge in grief and loss, and exposure to a human hospital setting. Students with counseling backgrounds may find their skills transferable to supporting pet parents facing emotional challenges. A foundational understanding of grief and loss is advantageous in navigating the emotional complexities of pet illnesses and end-of-life decisions. Experience in a human hospital setting fosters transferable skills, such as interdisciplinary collaboration and

client support, which are beneficial in the veterinary hospital context. Regardless of prior experience, a genuine passion for the human-animal bond, adaptability, and strong communication skills are essential for success in this unique and enriching placement.

**Please indicate whether this practicum will be in-person, remote or hybrid.**

This practicum will be majority in-person, however, in certain circumstances a student can do work remotely.

**Please indicate whether this practicum will involve direct work or a mix of direct and indirect.**

Direct

**Number of practicums offered: 1**

**Field Instructor(s)' name and credentials:**

Sarah Bernardi RSW, MSW

**Do you require a resume? Or resume and cover letter?:** Yes. Both

**Accessibility Considerations:**

- Will the student have access to a private space for notes or computer use? Yes
- Are there breaks between clients/patients/meetings? Yes
- Is the practicum considered fast-paced? Medium
- Is there a high noise level in the practicum? Medium
- Is the site wheelchair accessible? Yes
- What are the physical demands of the practicum? Being able to get around the hospital and be physically present in exam/staff rooms
- Are there any other accessibility considerations that potential applicants with disabilities should be aware of? Applicants should be aware that this setting is like a set up in a

human hospital. In this environment you can expect loud animals, potentially unpleasant smells, and bright lights.

Students registered with University of Toronto Accessibility Services may receive appropriate accommodations for practicum settings. To register:

<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/> or call 416-978-8060

**If you are interested in this practicum, please send a cover letter and resume to [miri.ben.dat@utoronto.ca](mailto:miri.ben.dat@utoronto.ca) by 4 pm on March 5, 2024. Applications will be forwarded on to the site.**