

Bachelor of **Veterinary Medicine (MVB)**

A Strategic Proposal for Partnership and Investment



Competitive Call for a New Veterinary Medicine Programme in Ireland

In 2022, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) launched a competitive process to expand capacity in key healthcare disciplines, including Veterinary Medicine. South East Technological University (SETU) responded with a comprehensive Expression of Interest outlining its capability to design and deliver a new Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (MVB) programme. A multidisciplinary team from across SETU developed a detailed proposal including a programme rationale, evaluation of current and future capacity, curriculum design and accreditation frameworks, workforce planning, recruitment and retention strategies, project milestones, risk management, and sustainable budget planning. Following rigorous evaluation by a panel of national and international experts, the proposal was deemed viable in 2023. Subsequently, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science approved SETU as a new provider of Veterinary Medicine in Ireland in 2024. This milestone positions SETU as the second institution in the country to offer veterinary education, with the first intake of students planned for September 2026. The new programme represents a significant investment in higher education, veterinary science, and regional development, directly addressing the critical shortage of veterinary surgeons in Ireland and aligning with the Government's strategy to strengthen the national healthcare and agri-food workforce.



The MVB Programme at SETU

The Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (MVB) at SETU has been designed to meet both current and future needs of the veterinary profession in Ireland. Developed in consultation with veterinary practitioners across the full spectrum of the veterinary community, Teagasc Kildalton College, and international veterinary academics, the programme aligns with the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) and European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) accreditation requirements as well as One Health frameworks. A distinctive

feature of the SETU MVB is the Distributed Model of Clinical Education, where students gain practical experience in partner veterinary practices across the South-East and beyond. This approach provides an enriched clinical learning environment in a 'real-life setting', strengthens links between the university and local industry, and increases the likelihood of graduates remaining in the region post-qualification. The curriculum integrates evidence-based teaching with strong emphasis on mental health, business and research skills as well as professional identity



Strategic Alignment

The establishment of the MVB programme at SETU directly supports national, regional, and university priorities for workforce expansion, sustainability, and regional balance. Nationally, there is an urgent need to increase Ireland's capacity to educate veterinary professionals. In 2023, 321 new veterinary surgeons registered with the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI), but only 85 were trained in Ireland. With University College Dublin currently the sole provider of veterinary education, competition for places is intense, forcing many Irish students to pursue veterinary degrees abroad. Regionally, the South-East has a strong concentration of agricultural and equine enterprises but faces staff shortages in farm animal, equine, and companion animal veterinary practice. SETU's Connecting for Impact 2023–2028 strategy prioritises retaining students and skilled graduates within the region, strengthening healthcare, veterinary, and agri-food sectors. The new MVB degree will also advance SETU's ambition to become a Centre of Excellence and Innovation for health, animal welfare, and One Health education and research. The programme is fully aligned with Project Ireland 2040 and the Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, which promote balanced regional development, sustainability, and OneHealth or the integration of human, animal, and environmental health to address emerging challenges such as antimicrobial resistance and climate change.

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formation. SETU's established expertise in Agricultural Science, Animal Health, Food Science, Biosciences, and Healthcare provides a strong foundation for the programme's interdisciplinary approach. The MVB will help alleviate Ireland's veterinary workforce shortage, reduce the outflow of students to overseas institutions, and contribute to rural and regional sustainability through the development of a highly skilled, compassionate, and future-ready veterinary workforce.

Research and Innovation

SETU is very active in Veterinary-related research within the Pharmaceutical and Molecular Biotechnology Research Centre (PMBRC) and the Eco-Innovation Research Centre (EIRC). Since the establishment of the Department of Veterinary Medicine, SETU's veterinary related research has expanded with academic staff within the department actively engaged in veterinary scientific, clinical, education and OneHealth related research. The Department has developed strong research links with Veterinary Schools nationally and internationally, including University of Lancashire, University of Cambridge, University College Dublin as well as institutions such as Teagasc and Horse Sport Ireland. The expansion of the Department of Veterinary Medicine through the recruitment of further veterinary academic staff and associated collaborators will allow the development of further research themes and further research expansion.

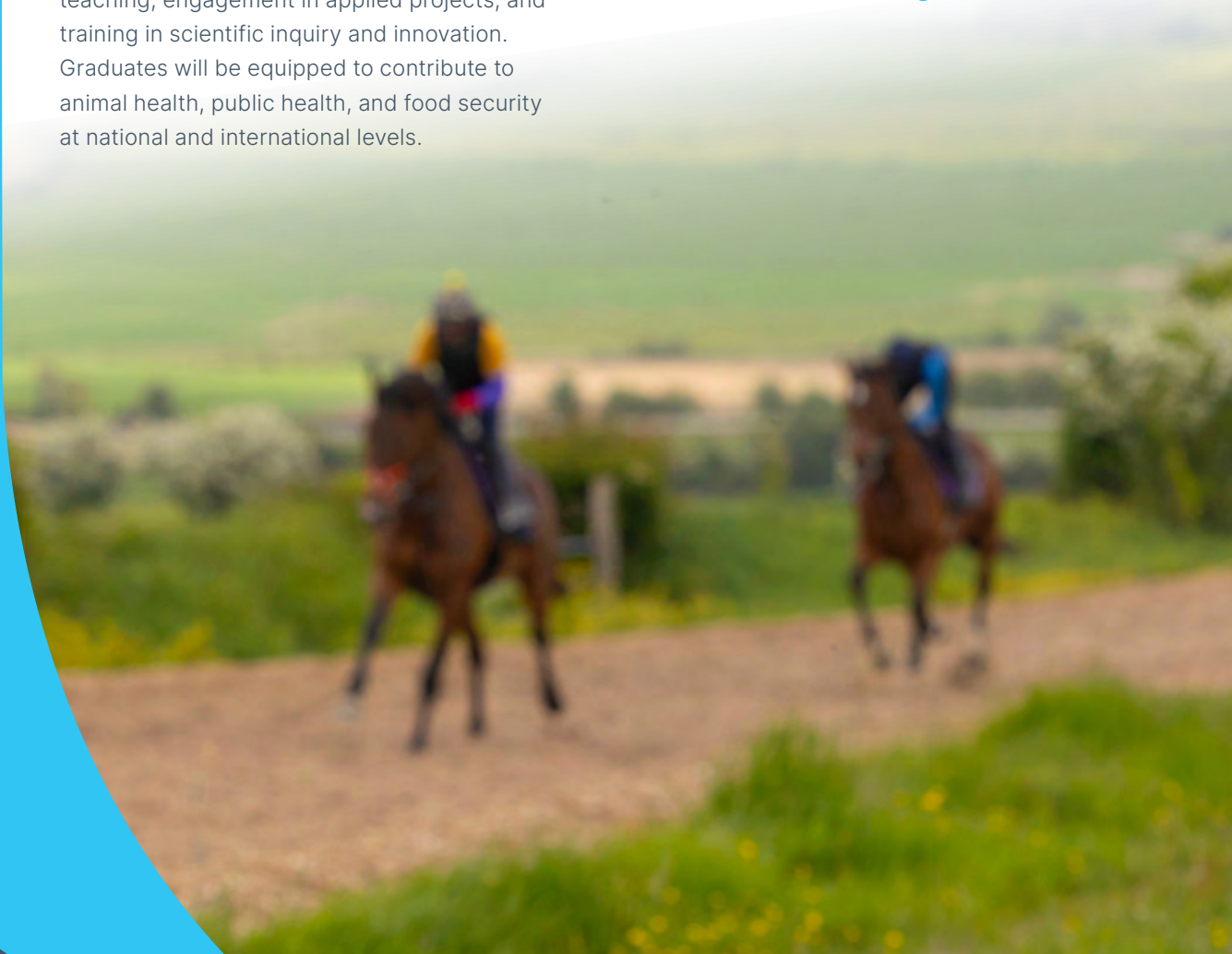
These multidisciplinary networks will ensure that MVB students benefit from research-led teaching, engagement in applied projects, and training in scientific inquiry and innovation. Graduates will be equipped to contribute to animal health, public health, and food security at national and international levels.

Sustainability and One Health

Sustainability and One Health principles are embedded across all years of the MVB programme. In alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the curriculum will explore the environmental impact of veterinary practice, sustainable livestock systems, eco-friendly pharmaceuticals and medical waste reduction, climate change and zoonotic disease emergence and access to veterinary care and global health equity.

These themes reflect SETU's commitment to educating veterinarians who understand the interconnection between animal, human, and environmental health and who can lead change towards more sustainable practice.

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EMS and Student Support

The programme integrates Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) as a key component of clinical and professional training. Students will undertake placements across farm, equine, small animal, public health, and research settings both within Ireland and internationally. These placements will take place outside of usual academic time in order to compliment the core MVB curriculum.

Recognising the financial strain EMS places on veterinary students, SETU is actively developing a Student Support Fund and bursary schemes through partnership engagement. These initiatives will ensure that all students, regardless of background, can fully participate in EMS and clinical learning experiences.



Programme Development Update

As part of SETU's internal programme evaluation process, an international external panel, including veterinary academics, practitioners, educators, and representatives from the wider academic and veterinary communities, reviewed and recommended the MVB programme in April 2025. The programme subsequently received approval from SETU's Academic Council in September 2025.

The newly appointed veterinary lecturing staff are currently in comprehensive module development, including the creation of detailed lesson plans, teaching resources, and innovative learning materials to ensure a high-quality educational experience for future students.

SETU continues to engage actively and regularly with the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) throughout the accreditation process to ensure full compliance with national and European professional standards. In parallel, the university is working closely with the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) to ensure adherence to all legislative and ethical requirements relating to the use of animals in teaching. The first intake of 40 students is planned for September 2026.



Infrastructure Update

The Department of Veterinary Medicine will share a new purpose-built facility with Department of Pharmacy at the University Enterprise Quarter in Waterford. A Veterinary Education Centre will also be built on Kildalton College campus. These buildings, scheduled for completion in 2028, will provide world-class clinical and general purpose laboratories, anatomy and pathology suites, clinical simulation areas, animal handling facilities, and collaborative learning spaces.

An interim infrastructure plan is in place for the first two student intakes (2026–2028), ensuring access to state-of-the-art animal handling and clinical teaching and clinical placement environments across SETU and Kildalton College campuses and partner practices.



Staff Update

To support the MVB development and delivery, SETU has recruited a highly experienced academic and technical team, including:

- **Dr Mary-Kate Burke**
MVB CertAVP PGCert(VPS) MMedEd FHEA, Head of Department of Veterinary Medicine
- **Dr Emma Corbett Coffey**
MVB CertAVP(GSAS) CertNCS(VPM), Lecturer in Veterinary Medicine (Small Animal)
- **Dr Eilidh Thomson**
BVMS DVMS DipECAR, Lecturer in Veterinary Medicine (Farm Animal)
- **Dr Monalyza Cadori Goncalves**
DVM MSc PhD, Lecturer in Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology
- **Dr Khizar Hiyat**
DVM MSc PgCert (Vet Ed) PhD, Lecturer in Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology
- **Dr Aine Rowe**
MVB DVMS DipECEIM, Lecturer in Veterinary Medicine (Equine)
- **Dr Siobhan Walsh**
BAgrSci MSc PhD, Lecturer in Animal Science and Veterinary Research and Partnerships Lead
- **Jane Millington**
RVN, Veterinary Technical Officer

Recruitment of additional staff will continue through 2026 and 2027 to support the first and second cohort and expand the Department's research capacity.

**SETU welcomes
collaboration with
industry, professional
bodies, philanthropies,
and community partners.**

Opportunities for Partnership

The establishment of the MVB at SETU presents transformative partnership opportunities to support education, research, innovation, and student welfare in the veterinary sector. SETU welcomes collaboration with industry, professional bodies, philanthropies, and community partners.

GOLD TIER OPPORTUNITIES

- **Veterinary Education Wing Sponsorship**
Support for the expansion of the new Veterinary and Pharmacy building, enhancing intake capacity from 40 to 80 students annually and establishing advanced teaching and simulation facilities. Estimated cost: €9.5M (potential phased contribution over 5 years).
- **Student Hub and Interprofessional Learning Space**
Creation of a 300m² collaborative learning and wellbeing hub, promoting peer learning and inclusion. Estimated cost: €2.85M.
- **Digital Simulation and Surgical Skills Suite**
Sponsorship of an advanced veterinary education simulation centre using AR/VR and haptic technologies. Estimated cost: €500,000-€750,000.
- **Research Chair in Veterinary Science**
Support for a senior academic post to lead research in One Health, animal welfare, or clinical innovation. Estimated cost: €120,000 per annum for 5 years.

SILVER TIER OPPORTUNITIES

- **EMS Bursaries and Access Scholarships for students from underrepresented backgrounds.**
- **Masters and PhD Scholarships co-funded with industry to drive veterinary and One Health research.**
- **Support for Interprofessional Learning Networks across SETU's health and life sciences disciplines.**

BRONZE TIER OPPORTUNITIES

- **Veterinary student placement opportunities across clinical, research, and industry settings.**
- **Public engagement initiatives in animal welfare and One Health.**
- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD) collaboration and support.**
- **Guest lectures and professional mentoring by partners.**
- **Collaborative undergraduate research projects and innovation challenges.**

The SETU Department of Veterinary Medicine are open to discussing other philanthropic and collaborative opportunities.



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