



ONTARIO VETERINARY COLLEGE
Department of Pathobiology

April 21, 2015

Dear Prospective Applicant:

Thank you for your enquiry regarding our postgraduate program in Zoological Medicine and Pathology, offered jointly by the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) and the Toronto Zoo, with funding provided by the Toronto Zoo. A single position will be open in this program in **September 2015**, with applications being assessed as of **June 1, 2015**.

This 3-year program combines clinical residency experience with formal graduate education and a research project in order to fulfil the requirements for a Doctor of Veterinary Science degree. It meets the eligibility requirement for examination by the American College of Zoological Medicine and is accredited by the ACZM. The six graduates of our program who have taken the ACZM Diploma examinations have been successful on the first attempt. Eligibility for American College of Veterinary Pathology boards would require a further period of residency in that discipline. One of our graduates is a Diplomate of the ACVP.

Graduation from the program involves successful completion of a minimum of 2.5 formal or applied course credits (about 0.5 credits/course); passing a comprehensive written and oral examination on the general field of zoological medicine and pathology at the end of the second year; satisfactory proficiency in the clinical medicine and applied pathology of zoological species; and, at the conclusion, defence of a thesis describing the results of an applied research project carried out over the 3-year period.

We believe this program to be rigorous but very worthwhile. Our objective is to graduate a broadly based zoo and wildlife veterinarian, with the capacity to contribute fully to the scientific activities expected in a modern zoo or wildlife management agency. A summary of graduates of the OVC-Toronto Zoo Program in Zoological Medicine is available on the application website.

Residents registered in this program initially spend 8 months (2 semesters) based at OVC in Guelph, taking course work and getting applied experience in areas that may include wildlife diseases, epidemiology, aquatic animal (mainly fish) diseases and general veterinary pathology. Some residents have also taken courses in reproductive biology, anesthesiology, and conservation biology. During this period, one day per week is spent at the Zoo (110 km from Guelph). An academic advisor will be selected from faculty in the Department of Pathobiology.

During the second phase, residents are based at the Zoo for 28 months, working in all aspects of the Zoo veterinary program, with increasing responsibility, under the supervision of the Zoo's three veterinarians, two of whom are Diplomates of the ACZM. Dr. Chris Dutton, Senior Veterinarian is assisted by Dr. Simon Hollamby and Dr Pauline

Delnatte, who is herself a graduate of the program. In addition to participation in clinical work, the residents have primary responsibility for necropsies at the zoo. Follow-up interpretation of histopathology, and case integration, is completed by spending one day a week at Guelph working in consultation with faculty in the wildlife diseases and comparative pathology area. The Toronto Zoo (<http://www.torontozoo.com/>) houses over 5,500 specimens of over 450 species, including fish and invertebrates, displayed in a zoogeographic pattern in extensive outdoor and enclosed exhibits on a 700 acre site. Specialists in nutrition and reproduction complement the animal keepers, curators and veterinary staff who work at the Zoo.

The research project is determined and carried out under the supervision of a committee of advisers, and may involve discrete periods devoted to the project at the zoo or the OVC over the 3-year period, or a more diffuse time commitment to the research, as appropriate. One to 3 refereed publications typically ensue from the thesis research. Case reports or other investigations are often published as well.

During the Guelph phase of the program students live in Guelph, while during the Zoo phase they live near the zoo, in eastern Toronto. It is not practical to live at one site for the entire program due to the length of the commute. Certain educational opportunities may require the student to be available for short periods of field work away from their regular base. The working days may be long, especially on the day away from the location of residence, making care for demanding pets difficult.

Two residencies run in parallel, with time of admission staggered. As a result, there is always a resident based at the zoo, and the junior resident overlaps at the zoo with the senior resident. This optimizes opportunities for learning in the clinical environment.

Competition is keen for this residency, with an international field of well-qualified applicants. Candidates must possess a DVM or equivalent degree and be admissible to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Guelph (minimum second class honours or "B" standing; = GPA > ~3.00). Subsequent selection is based on references, plus the candidate's own letter supporting the application, indicating his/her background, experience, motivation and objectives. Specific zoo/wildlife experience is not essential in the background of the candidate, though it may be a factor in a comparative assessment. At least one year's experience in general veterinary practice is an asset, and in that sense, new graduates are at a disadvantage in their application. A small number of top candidates may be interviewed by internet or telephone since we are not in a position to support the costs of travel from a distance for interview purposes. Other factors being equal, Canadian citizens and landed immigrants will receive preference, but we have accepted candidates from a variety of countries around the world.

The stipend is similar to that of DVSc students in comparable graduate programs at OVC, currently C\$37,000 in the first year, with an increment in subsequent years. Tuition and compulsory fees (currently about \$10,827/year for Canadians and landed immigrants, and \$22,533/year for visa students) must be borne by the resident. Actual stipends and updated predicted costs will be made available when the position is offered. The resident must purchase and insure a motor vehicle; however, the costs of once weekly commutes between the Zoo and the University are fully subsidized. The cost of living in the Toronto-Guelph area is relatively high. We must make it clear that visa students are severely strained financially due to the differential tuition rate charged by the

University of Guelph, Ontario health insurance premiums, and potentially by car insurance rates. Although there are a number of international students registered for graduate programs at the Ontario Veterinary College, and one of our current residents is a visa student, students without a financial cushion to help support them through the program will find it extremely difficult to make ends meet. Working at a second job to supplement income is not feasible.

Residents are required to pass a veterinary licencing examination on Ontario law/regulations, administered by the College of Veterinarians of Ontario (CVO), the licensing body for veterinarians in this province. Residents are normally registered with an Educational Licence, which does not permit private practice. Applicants need not be National Examining Board (NEB) certified to qualify for this position; hence graduates of schools not accredited by the American and Canadian Veterinary Medical Associations may apply. Those with NEB accreditation may choose to obtain full registration to practice. CVO examination fees and registration fees after the first two semesters are the responsibility of the resident.

The application package for this program, with detailed application instructions and forms for referee assessments, should be down-loaded from:

<http://ovc.uoguelph.ca/pathobiology/opportunities/graduate>

DO NOT use the official on-line application for graduate students on the University of Guelph graduate application page. Please note particularly the **very short timeline** for receipt of applications for the current position and the special processes outlined for submission of official documents.

Application dossiers will be evaluated by a committee comprised of university and zoo personnel. All applicants will be informed of the outcome as soon after our decision as possible. If the successful applicant is not a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant, he or she must complete Canadian immigration and registration formalities between the time of selection and the deadline for registration.

If you have further questions about the program, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Dale Smith (Program Coordinator) by email at dalesmit@uoguelph.ca, or Mrs Donna Kangas (Graduate Program Assistant) at pathgrad@uoguelph.ca by email or by telephone at (519) 824-4120, extension 54725. For general information on the Ontario Veterinary College or the University of Guelph, please consult their respective web pages at <http://www.ovc.uoguelph.ca/> and <http://www.uoguelph.ca/>.

Sincerely,



Dale A Smith DVM DVSc
Professor Avian/Exotic, Wildlife and Zoo Medicine and Pathology
Honorary Pathologist, Toronto Zoo
Assistant Director, Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative