



VETERINARY BUSINESS  
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

## **Business Certificate with Honors Portfolio**

Spring 2023

All required documents can be found on the 'Business Certificate > BCP Honors Application' tab on the Honors Portfolio dashboard on myVBMA.biz. there may be supplemental documents available for some portions.

Please contact your Regional Leader or the National Business Certificate Director at [businesscertificate@vbma.biz](mailto:businesscertificate@vbma.biz) with questions.

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## BCP HONORS PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION PROCESS:

**Spring 2023 Portfolios are due April 1st, 2023.**

**All portfolios must be submitted through the myVBMA Portfolio Dashboard.**

**When submitting through the Portfolio Dashboard, the name listed on your account will be the name printed on your certificate.**

A screenshot and link to your LinkedIn profile and professional picture(s) should be copied and pasted into this file. Your resume should be included in this file (hint, save as a jpeg and insert into your word document before saving as a PDF if you are having trouble with formatting)

In order to submit your Honors Portfolio, **you must have already completed the 32 hours** of Business Certificate credits required for the Business Certificate with Honors. You may begin the portfolio at any time, but it may only be submitted after 32 hours have been completed.

If you are having issues submitting, contact the Business Certificate Director at [BusinessCertificate@vbma.biz](mailto:BusinessCertificate@vbma.biz).

Portfolios are then sent out to be evaluated by a professional in your field of interest (or as close as we can find). Expected return time of submissions is variable due to volume of submissions and evaluator availability. Return times of at least 12 weeks should be expected.

When you receive your evaluation, you must pass each section with an “acceptable” or above in order to pass the portfolio.

- If you receive a passing score Congratulations! A follow up survey will be sent for your feedback and upon completion you will be a Business Certificate with Honors Graduate!
- If you don't pass a couple sections DON'T FRET! You can use your evaluators feedback to improve those sections and resubmit your portfolio at your earliest convenience. We are here to work with you to achieve your Honors Certificate!

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## IMPORTANT SUBMISSION DETAILS:

**REMINDER:** It is recommended portfolios be submitted during your third year or before to allow time for evaluator review. Portfolios submitted during fourth year will be accepted, but we cannot guarantee time for resubmission of portfolios that do not initially pass during the session before your graduation! You must pass before graduating – no portfolios or revisions will be accepted after you graduate.

**UPDATED SPRING 2019:** Incomplete submissions will not be re-accepted until the next submission cycle. This includes submissions with poor spelling and grammar. Any submission that exhibits little to no effort will not be accepted. Complete submissions that require edits per the evaluator will continue to be accepted on a rolling basis. Only 3 submissions are permitted: this includes the first submission and 2 resubmissions with corrections if needed. Any questions should be directed to the National Business Certificate Director at [BusinessCertificate@vbma.biz](mailto:BusinessCertificate@vbma.biz).

### PLEASE NOTE:

Honors Portfolio Evaluators are working professionals that volunteer their time to review submissions, and many review multiple portfolios each cycle. Please allow *at least* 12 weeks to receive feedback.

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*Professional Development*

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1. CAREER ASPIRATIONS

- Using your choice of a bulleted list, outline, or paragraph form (150-word limit), please describe your ideal job and location (ex. Practice on dogs, cats, and small animal exotics in a five-person practice in a suburban area of California). For the purpose of this portfolio, please assume you are referencing this job for all future prompts and speaking to your prospective employer.

2. RESUME

- Complete a thorough resume. Please make the resume tailored to your ideal career described above. Do NOT copy your resume from undergrad or your scholarship resume.
- Resume Resources:
  - <https://vinfoundation.org/resources/new-veterinary-graduate-survival-manual/resumes/>
  - <https://www.dvm360.com/view/how-to-build-the-perfect-resume>

Resume vs CV:

Remember, a resume focuses on the highlights. Resumes longer than 1-2 pages will not be accepted.

3. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Being prepared for interview questions will help you ace the interview and leave a lasting impression! From the list of common interview questions, answer a minimum of six questions (three questions are required, the other three you may choose from the list of electives). Please answer these questions using your choice of a bulleted list, outline, or paragraph form. Assume that this is a single interview, and the interviewer has heard the answers to any previous questions. Ensure that your answers are clear and tailored to the prospective career described above in 'Career Aspirations'. (100-300 word range per question)

**You have options: Clearly state in your portfolio which you are choosing.**

○ Required:

1. Tell me about yourself
2. How does your involvement as a member of VBMA make you a better hire?
3. What do you consider your greatest strength and your greatest weakness?

○ Elective:

1. What are you looking for in a job? Where do you see yourself in 2 years? In 5 years?
2. Tell me about a time you had to work with someone that was different from you and how you handled that situation.
3. What do you expect from your technical staff? (Client education, catheter placement, designated techs v. floating etc.) How do you view their role in the clinic?
4. What's the hardest thing you've ever done? Describe the effect of that event.
5. Wellbeing has become an increasing area of importance in veterinary medicine, how do you plan to integrate this into your new position?
6. What does diversity, inclusion, and belonging mean to you? How do you incorporate this principle in your work?

7. Tell me about a time when you took on a leadership role. What does being a leader mean to you?
8. If you have a client who is unable to pay for services, how would you handle that situation?
9. Tell me about what makes you different from other prospective employees?
10. Optional: For ONE elective question, you can propose and answer your own question so long as it is a relevant interview question for your area of focus.

#### 4. QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYER

- Please come up with three questions that you believe will be important for you to ask prospective employers and explain why you chose those questions. Consider asking about ethical issues, mentorship and what that would look like, the possibility of the option to buy-in to a practice at a later date, what it is like to live in the area, culture of the practice/workplace, turnover rate, scheduling priorities, staff meetings and educational events, what new technology/equipment they have recently purchased, what is a typical day, how do they judge success, etc. Use open-ended questions. Remember it is imperative to demonstrate you have done some research into the business you are applying to work for, and this section is an ideal area to incorporate this.

#### 5. CONFLICT RESOLUTION SCENARIO

- Conflict is an inherent part of a workplace dynamic. Please select one of the following scenarios and describe how you would respond (100-300 words). Propose a solution for the conflict at hand. Note: you may respond to any of these scenarios, it doesn't necessarily have to be what you are interested in, as many of these scenarios happen in multiple veterinary careers.

**You have options: Clearly state in your portfolio which you are choosing.**

- Option 1: You have been working at a practice for 6 months. You create a plan to work up a disease in a dog. An experienced technician questions your plan and does not want to go into the room to collect the samples you requested. How would you address this conflict?
- Option 2: You join a practice right after graduation. The only other doctor is the experienced owner. While out on a call with him, you notice that he addresses an illness in a way that you disagree with. You learned a different procedure for the illness in school and feel that this is the better way to proceed in this case. How do you discuss this with the doctor?
- Option 3: You are a new veterinarian at a rural veterinary hospital. As the newest veterinarian to this practice, you are on call frequently, usually 2-3 times a week. Veterinarians on call are frequently called out at least once during their on-call shift. This is significantly impacting your ability to do things outside of work, leave town for vacation, etc. Please describe how you would bring up your concerns with your boss.
- Option 4: Your new laboratory assistant/technician has been late three times this week and is slacking on the work you have asked them to do. Please describe how you would bring this up with them and propose a plan for moving forward.
- Option 5: Your client is frustrated about the price of the service you are recommending and disagrees with your plan for their pet. They begin arguing with the staff they are talking with. Please describe how you will address this situation.

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*Professionalism and Value Proposition*

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6. LINKEDIN

- Demonstrate use of professional social media by creating a LinkedIn account at [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com), include a screenshot of your entire profile page and a link to your profile with your Honors portfolio. Prospective employers should be able to look here to get a sense of your professional life and accomplishments. Feel free to add attributes that may not have been covered on your resume.

- Here are some ideas to get you started:
- <https://www.linkedin.com/business/sales/blog/profile-best-practices/17-steps-to-a-better-linkedin-profile-in-2017>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/a554351/how-do-i-create-a-good-linkedin-profile-?lang=en>

Think of this as a professional Facebook. It is common practice for prospective employers and clients both to Google veterinarians. A LinkedIn profile is one way to highlight your professional life and accomplishments. Accounts with no connections and no details will not receive a passing score.

7. PROFESSIONAL EMAIL ADDRESS

- Create a professional email account that will remain with you after graduation. Gmail provides a reliable service, and we recommend creating an account such as [firstname.lastname@gmail.com](mailto:firstname.lastname@gmail.com) or [namedvm@gmail.com](mailto:namedvm@gmail.com). Although some employers provide you with emails, it is important to have an email account that will stay with you throughout job changes. **\*\*NOTE: This email will be used for communication about your Honors Portfolio, please make sure you are also checking this email\*\***

8. PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

- Submit one professional photograph. Your photograph does not need to be taken by a professional, however you do need to look professional. You should be wearing business casual clothing, at the minimum, and you should have a professional background. If appropriately done, animals are welcome in some photos as well.

9. VALUE TO EMPLOYER AND PRACTICE PROFITABILITY

- Our goal is for all BCP graduates to be valuable additions to their place of employment. Describe something unique about yourself or a skill that you have that will increase profitability of your company. (100-300 word range)

Potential employers want to know why they should hire you over your colleagues and what you can offer to the business. It is important that you be prepared to verbalize what makes you stand out in the job market and how you can contribute to the practice.

10. SWOT ANALYSIS

- An important part of leadership is identifying strengths and weaknesses of a company and preparing for opportunities and threats. Identifying these things

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within yourself is also valuable. For this section, you will perform a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis on yourself. Include 3-4 bullet points per category. For more information on a SWOT analysis, please refer to the following resources:

- <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/5543-personal-swot-analysis.html>
- <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/swot-analysis-guide>
- <https://slidemodel.com/personal-swot-analysis-quick-guide/>

Fill out the following SWOT analysis and answer the question at the bottom. Please upload the completed form to myVBMA.biz

[SWOT Analysis Template](#)

**\*\*Hint:** Strengths and weaknesses are internal, while opportunities and threats are external. Keep this in mind as you are filling out your own SWOT analysis.

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*Finance*

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## 11. LOAN REPAYMENT OPTIONS

**You have options: Clearly state in your portfolio which you are choosing.**

- Option 1: Briefly describe TWO loan repayment options available to you and discuss the relative pros and cons of each. How does your financial situation make one advantageous over the other? [If you do not feel comfortable discussing your personal finances you may discuss as an average veterinary student (\$185,000 educational debt, starting salary of \$95,000, single income household, living in a suburb)]. However, be sure to consider this personally as it relates your own finances.] (100-300 word range)
- Option 2: If you already know which option you want to choose, describe what option you have selected and what led you to decide this was the best choice for you. Please calculate what your first payment would be assuming your first salary is \$95,000 in the state of your choosing (or, if you know your salary or believe the area in which you will practice to have a different average and would like to use that, feel free to do so). If you do not feel comfortable discussing your personal loans, please use the average educational debt of \$185,000. Consider using the student loan simulator provided by the United States Federal Student Aid Office (<https://studentaid.gov/loan-simulator/>), VIN (<https://www.vin.com/studentdebtcenter/default.aspx?pld=14352&id=75780140>), or any other loan calculator. Please report the monthly payment amount in your response.

Many veterinary students graduate with a high student debt load. Of those individuals, at least 20% will be over \$200,000 in debt.

## 12. PROFIT AND LOSS MODULE

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- Complete the [Profit and Loss Module](#) Google Form and upload a URL link of your response summary page to myVBMA.biz.

### 13. FINANCIAL MODULE

- Complete the [Financial Module](#) Google Form and upload a URL link of your response summary page to myVBMA.biz

### 14. FINANCIAL LEADERSHIP – Complete **ONE** of the following scenarios.

**You have options: Clearly state in your portfolio which you are choosing.**

- Option 1: What materials would be needed prior to applying for a practice ownership loan? (Ex. personal financial statement and credit score, etc). Explain what is needed in order to apply for financing to purchase or build a practice. Specify which you are choosing between purchasing and building a practice.
- Option 2: How would you convince your employer that a new piece of equipment would be beneficial financially for the practice? Choose one thing (equipment, computer software, etc.), and explain how you would show how that new investment would help the business financially.
- Option 3: You are helping to set up the radius of service for an ambulatory practice. Discuss what factors influence this decision. What documents would help you make this decision?
- Option 4: Many grants are available to clinical and research veterinarians. Describe the process of applying for a grant (USDA grants, academic grants) and include what materials are typically required.
- Option 5: One of your staff members comes to you asking for a raise. Describe how you would determine if this request is something the business can support. Consider what business financial materials you would like to look at, as well as metrics for this employee.

### 15. SALARY SIMULATION

- Complete the [Salary Simulation](#) Google Form
- Answer the final prompt and upload a copy of that answer only to myVBMA
- Screenshot the completion page and upload it to myVBMA



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## REQUIRED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (must complete all 3)

### 1. Tell me about yourself.

#### TIPS:

- Your answer provides an indication of your degree of preparation, poise and self-confidence.
- Interviewers are interested in how/what led you to become interested in becoming a veterinarian.
- They'd like to know the number of siblings you have, how many and what types of animals you have owned as well as hobbies or other interests you have
- Most are interested in how many different locations you have lived as you grew up and whether you would be comfortable in a town or city like the one in which the practice resides.
- Interviewers seek to evaluate your ability to handle yourself under pressure in a social situation.
- Be sure to include what brought you to veterinary medicine and why you are passionate about the profession.

### 2. How does your involvement as a member of VBMA make you a better hire?

#### TIPS:

- What are some events you attended and what concrete skills do you now possess as a result, who are some people you met, and how have you grown as a result of the BCP?
- What are some things you learned that can be used to improve a practice or yourself within a practice/business? Focus on a tangible skill you now possess or an interest you developed which you hope to further hone.
- Remember that the VBMA has provided you with the groundwork upon which to build further education and practice suggestions to improve a business should be made with respect to the individuals who have developed that business.

### 3. What do you consider your greatest strength, and your greatest weakness?

#### TIPS:

- The employer wants to know that you have the ability to assess those areas in which you shine and those in which you are willing to grow and improve.
- We all have strengths and it is important to be able to notice yours and to communicate them humbly and effectively to an employer.
- State positive traits which would be highly valued in the job for which you are applying, and do not bring up weaknesses which would cause them to question your performance on the job.

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## Checklist

Use this checklist to ensure you have completed ALL aspects of the portfolio

- ☐ Career Aspirations (150 words)
- ☐ One Professional Photo
- ☐ LinkedIn
  - ☐ Screenshot
  - ☐ Link to your page
- ☐ Professional Email Address
- ☐ Resume (no longer than 2 pages)
- ☐ Interview Questions (6 questions total)
  - ☐ Three pre-selected Questions
  - ☐ Three elective Questions
- ☐ Value to Employer and Practice Profitability
  - ☐ Describe ONE thing unique about yourself or one skill you have that will benefit your area of employment
- ☐ Questions for Employer
  - ☐ Propose THREE questions for your employer
- ☐ Conflict Resolution
  - ☐ Select ONE of the five scenarios
- ☐ SWOT Analysis
  - ☐ Include 3-4 bullet points per category
- ☐ Loan Repayment Options
  - ☐ Describe TWO options or
  - ☐ Describe your selected option and calculate your monthly payment
- ☐ Financial Module
  - Complete the module and upload a URL link of your response summary to myVBMA
- ☐ Profit and Loss Module
  - ☐ Complete the module and upload a URL link of your response summary to myVBMA
- ☐ Financial Leadership

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- ☐ Choose ONE of the five options
- ☐ Salary Simulation
  - ☐ Complete the module and upload a screenshot of the completion page
  - ☐ Upload a copy of the final question to myVBMA