First-year student diary

With her first term at vet school almost complete, Rosie Perrett recharges her batteries catching up with friends, and finds out about the formative exams she will be taking in January.

Apparently we’re incredibly close to Christmas . . . already. I have no idea where the term has gone; it feels like it was only yesterday that I was moving in, and now we’re organising secret Santa.

Last month, I took advantage of spending a weekend in Manchester with close friends from Swansea. I definitely needed the weekend off and it helped to recharge my batteries ready for the second half of term. My friends have diverged into different sectors since finishing their degrees; two are studying medicine, one is studying for a postgraduate certificate in education, and two have managed to secure biological jobs. My best friend decided she needed a complete break from education, and is swapping our English weather for the snowy heights of Canada. It brought me back to reality – you can get so caught up in the day-to-day working life that you forget that so much more is going on in the wider world.

This month, anatomy has taken a firm hold on the timetable. In my head anatomy seemed to be the ultimate vet student ‘thing’, where the basic principles of veterinary science are grounded, before you start associating anatomy with diseases, radiographs and medicines. I was really looking forward to it; in reality it was rather daunting and, initially, I was even unsure if I was in the right lectures. I would describe it as like learning a brand new language, which has never been a strength of mine – I struggled with French at the best of times. I know I was very naive going into those first few lectures but, having read back over the notes and with the help of some extra material, I’m starting to understand the different bones, tendons, ligaments, muscles and joints, albeit slowly. As a result, I was recently able to hold a conversation about forelimb anatomy with my medical friend, where we began comparing and contrasting what we’d learnt. Is that sad?

Most recently, we’ve been introduced to the exam system, and I’m conscious with each one having a different layout. This is to help us link subjects and, ultimately, help us to think the way a vet would. We were shown an example of how one particular exam would be laid out; to be honest, it terrified me – not only the question itself, but the whole exam thing. I’ve never been one for exams, but this first set of January exams is formative so, hopefully, they will help me to prepare more effectively for the summative exams in the summer term.

This month has without doubt been a lot of hard work, but I feel I’ve come so far already. That said, Christmas is definitely what I’m working towards now.

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