

## 'FULL ON' FIVE-YEAR DEGREE

Hi; my name is Neve. Over my life time there have been a few CICS articles about my hearing journey. I am now 18 and have almost completed my first year of Vet School at the University of Nottingham, so it's time for an update.

I went to Mary Hare for secondary school and completed 6th form last summer getting ABB grades in Biology, Chemistry and English Literature. This met my contextual offer for the University of Nottingham Veterinary School, so last September I was off and settling myself into the Halls of Residence on the Sutton Bonnington campus just south of Nottingham, where the Vet School is based.

Mary Hare were incredibly supportive in helping me achieve my University offers. They gave me interview coaching, supported me by reviewing my personal statement and once I had the offers guided me through applying for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). They helped me to understand what equipment and support was available, but also allowed me to make the final decisions on what would suit me best for my course and my preferences.

For the first application you need to focus on getting a lot of the equipment which you'll need throughout the whole course, so I used it to get a laptop, printer, iPad, etc, as well as some specialist items like note taking software. Due to the nature of my course I also ordered a digital stethoscope which enables me to hear and monitor heart rate and breathing function through my phone and via bluetooth to my processors.

When I had finished my A Levels I went home for the summer, enjoyed a welcome break from revision and studying, and used the time to do as many show jumping competitions as I could on my horse Zula. I also took part in a couple of stay-away horse shows. As I had previously passed my driving test I was lucky enough to get my first car which has given me a great deal of independence.

I also got myself a part-time job at the local pub. Working there has been great for me as it has given me a lot of confidence about interacting with customers in a noisy environment, and has provided me with lots of social interaction not only with the other staff but even with a few of the 'regulars'.

Once I moved in at University it was straight into a regular routine of lectures and briefings. Although we had a 'freshers' week it was filled with lots of sessions every day and certainly made us all realise that doing Veterinary Medicine is a 'full on' five year degree with lectures and practical sessions every day! During 'freshers' week I took the opportunity to join the University Vet Society which put on weekly seminars and also arranged an excellent Winter Ball that I thoroughly enjoyed.

I have also joined the climbing club which I attend weekly, and we use a bouldering wall on campus to practice climbs which brings opportunities to socialise with others. Since I have been at Nottingham I have made some good friends who are all super supportive as they will repeat information for me if required, especially during practical sessions where wearing the microphone is not feasible.

Because I do sometimes struggle in noisy pubs and night clubs, going out a lot is not my thing but I do have a small group of friends who I get on well with. Also as I don't go out as much as other students do I have saved myself quite a lot of money!

At times the course learning can be hard but it's really rewarding, especially when I manage to understand a new concept. Just the language for Veterinary Medicine could be a whole degree course in itself, with the amount of terminology there is to learn! It helps talking with friends and



working in small groups to go over topics when I don't understand something. Having contacts with older years' students is also very helpful as they know what's it is like to be in your position and can often give good tips to get through the course. The University runs a scheme called 'Big Vet, Little Vet' and the 3rd year student I was paired up with through this has been very helpful and supportive.

Through my DSA support I have been provided with note takers. However they do seem to change regularly and some are better than others, but having notes taken for me does make it a lot easier to focus and concentrate on the lectures. The acoustics in the main lecture hall are good but one issue I have experienced is that within our 150 undergraduate cohort there are a couple of other students with hearing impairments and they have different radio aids to me. This means that it is sometimes difficult to tune into the lecturer as my radio aids do not always work.

I decided back in Year 7 that I would love to be a Vet. Since then this has been my focus and it really helped motivate me to work hard for my GCSE's and A levels. I was really fortunate to be at Mary Hare and get the level of support they were able to provide. I feel very pleased to now finally be on a Veterinary Medicine course and on my way to becoming a Vet.

As part of the course students need to go out and get work experience so for the last two weeks I have been working on a farm lambing. This has been great experience with me pulling a number of lambs on my own and really getting to experience what it's like to work on a farm.

Over the summer (after I have finished my first year exams) I have six more weeks of work experience, working on a dairy farm, working in cat rescue centre and helping out at our local Riding School for the Disabled (where it all started for me).

Having been born profoundly deaf and having cochlear implants, I hope I am becoming a role model for cochlear implanted children, to show that if you put your mind to it you can achieve your dreams!

