

VET STUDENT SURGICAL TRAINING COURSE Handbook



WELCOME

Takuladnirani

First and foremost, **thank you** for your interest in volunteering with Veterinary Education Malawi (VEM).

We founded VEM in 2020 with the aim of improving the welfare of animals in Malawi, through the provision of veterinary education to Malawian veterinary and para-veterinary students. We provide free canine neutering for low income communities and donkey outreach clinics for farmers in rural areas.

For us, our time in Malawi has been a life changing experience and we hope you will feel the same. We cannot wait to meet you in beautiful Malawi, the warm heart of Africa.

Rebecca and Angus



Maggie, our VEM mascot

Rebecca and Angus, founders of VEM



About the founders of VEM

Rebecca is passionate about animal welfare and has completed an MSc in International Animal Welfare, Ethics and Law where she researched the link between gender equality and animal welfare. She works for Working Animals International as a veterinary advisor.

Angus is a veterinary surgeon with equine and mixed practice experience, he will be starting his equine surgical residency at Oakham Veterinary Hospital in July 2026. Aside from clinical work he is passionate about veterinary education and making equine practice interesting and accessible to all students.



About Malawi

- Affectionately known as **The Warm Heart of Africa** for its friendly and welcoming people
- **Population:** 22.8 million, median age 18
- **National language:** Chichewa, English
- **Number of languages spoken:** 16
- **National dish:** Nsima
- **Currency:** Malawian kwacha
- **Geography:** Landlocked country in Southern Africa, within the great rift valley which formed Lake Malawi, the third largest lake in Africa home to cichlid fish (only found here!)
- **Fifth poorest country in the world**



Our Current Projects

- International vet student surgical training course
- Equine teaching module at the vet school: Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR)
- Practical teaching at the para vet school: Natural Resources College (NRC)
- Malawian vet student bursary
- Research projects

Your payment for the international student surgical training course funds the clinics we run during your time with us. It also includes a donation to our other charitable projects. We are so grateful for your support, without you, we wouldn't be able to continue our other projects.

International Vet Student Surgical Training Course

- **Two week** surgical training course
- Six canine neutering (spays and castrates) days
- Four donkey outreach clinics
- The maximum number of students per course is four. You will always be taught by **two MRCVS vets** and vets from LSPCA may also join clinics.
- You might be joined on clinics by Malawian vet and para vet students, this is a great opportunity to learn about veterinary medicine across different cultures
- £1,500 for two weeks includes:
 - Airport transfers
 - Accommodation (at our partner organisation LSPCA)
 - Vegetarian lunches
 - 1:1 tuition for bitch spays
- A £750 non refundable deposit is required to secure your place. The final £750 is due two months before your start date

What to expect on canine neutering days

- Our clinics provide a free service for low-income communities and take place within the community.
- Each day we travel to the community where we will be running our clinic.
- Surgeries take place in our marquee
- You will perform between **four and six neuters each day**, this will always include at least one spay.
- You will learn field anaesthesia and anaesthetic monitoring

What to expect at donkey outreach clinics

- Each day we travel to rural communities
- You will learn:
 - Equine castration
 - Equine field anaesthesia
 - Wound management
 - Hoof care
 - Dentistry
 - Field laboratory techniques
 - Faecal worm egg counts
 - Paperfuge - used for spinning blood without electricity
 - Microscopy for blood borne parasites



SAMPLE ITINERARY



Here is an example itinerary for your two week stay with us. This is subject to change as the work we do can be dynamic, conditions can be unpredictable and unforeseen circumstances may require a change of plan!

Arrival day:

- We will pick you up from the airport where we will help you get cash and a SIM card
- We will take you to the supermarket to do a food shop
- There will be an induction where we will explain the plan for the weeks ahead and complete a safety briefing

Monday: Spay/neuter clinic.

Depart LSPCA at 8am to travel to our clinic location together. Return around 4pm

Tuesday: Spay/neuter clinic

Wednesday: Spay/neuter clinic

Thursday: Donkey outreach clinic

Expect an early start as the donkey clinic will be a little drive out of Lilongwe. Travel to Dowa, Dedza or Nkhoma. We will stop for lunch together and expect to return to LSPCA at 3 or 4pm.

Friday: Donkey outreach clinic

Weekend: Free Time!

The weekend is yours to spend as you wish, we can assist you with making fun plans for your time off, just ask!

Monday: Spay / neuter clinic

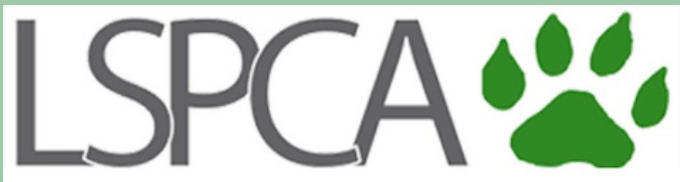
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Friday: Donkey outreach clinic





VEM : LSPCA partnership

- We have worked closely LSPCA since 2020
- Our international vet student surgical trianing course is run in collaboration with LSPCA
- The LSPCA was set up in 2008 with the help of RSPCA International and they have had a huge impact on the health and welfare of animals in Malawi since then.
- LSPCA is lead by Dr Tinotenda Razemba and Dr Madeline Nyamwanza
- Be sure to say hello to all of their other amazing team members who are doing great work for the animals of Malawi.

On site accomodation at LSPCA

- Accommodation is provided **on-site at the LSPCA**, in a new purpose built facility.
- There are two bedrooms with bunkbeds and students will be sharing a room with one other student
- The accommodation is basic but clean and comfortable
- **Mosquito nets** and **bedding** are provided, please bring a towel
- There is a **shared kitchen** with a fridge/freezer, a gas hob and cooking utensils.
- LSPCA is located in a safe area, there is always a guard on site and a nurse on duty each night
- LSPCA employs a 24hour security company
- Please note, there is no WIFI at the accomodation. We recommend getting a **Malawian SIM card** on arrival at the airport, we will help you do this. It is approximately £10 for 30GB. In our experience eSIMs do not work well in Malawi and are a lot more expensive.

Your room is available from Saturday afternoon prior to your project start date. You will need to vacate the room the Saturday morning following your final clinic day.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Health

- **We require proof of rabies vaccination.** This must have been administered within the last two years. If your primary course was longer than two years ago, we will require proof of a booster vaccination within the last two years. Alternatively, you can provide us with an adequate titre within the last three months.
- It is your responsibility see a **travel health practitioner** at least 3 months prior to travelling to Malawi, they will be able to advise you on what other vaccinations you require.
- Malawi is a high risk area for **malaria**, for this reason malaria prophylaxis is strongly recommended, please seek medical advice
- You must have your own **travel health insurance**. Please ensure this covers you for volunteering with animals abroad, emergency assistance and repatriation. We advise taking out this insurance prior to booking your flights.

Currency

- The Malawian Kwacha is a closed currency, so you will not be able to get cash out prior to arrival in the country.
- There are ATMs at the airport and around the city which we can take you to.
- Please notify your bank before travelling to prevent your account being locked.



Visa

- It is your responsibility to check your own visa requirements.
- For most countries a visa is required. We will provide you with an invitation letter which is required to apply for your tourist visa
- <https://evisa.gov.mw/>

Flights

- You are responsible for booking your own flights to and from Malawi
- Destination: Kamuzu International Airport, Lilongwe
- If you have questions regarding the timing of flights, do not hesitate to contact us.
- It is strongly advised that you take out travel insurance prior to booking your flights.

MORE IMPORTANT INFORMATION

What to pack

- We will provide you with one Veterinary Education Malawi t-shirt, please get in touch if you would like a cap or a water bottle!
- At clinics please wear long trousers
- Closed toe shoes / boots are required for donkey days
- **Don't forget:**
 - Hat
 - Suncream (this is VERY expensive in Malawi)
 - Light rain coat if coming in rainy season (November to March)
 - Jumper - mornings and evenings can be chilly
 - Mosquito repellent
 - Malaria prophylaxis
 - Water bottle (drinking water is provided on site at LSPCA)
 - A good book for down time



Free Time

- Evenings, Saturday and Sunday will be free for you to spend as you wish
- We can help you with making plans around Lilongwe, heading off to the lake or to one of the wildlife parks
- There are lots of good restaurants and cafes to sample in Lilongwe
- We will help you to arrange taxis with a reputable driver

Photo Gallery



THANK YOU

'ZIKOMO KWAMBIRI'

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us on: veterinaryeducationmalawi@gmail.com

