

Position Statement: Student Surgical Experiences

(Updated November 2020)

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians encourages veterinary students to take advantage of opportunities to participate in spay-neuter events both within the United States and abroad. Students are cautioned, however, to participate only in those programs that meet “The Association of Shelter Veterinarians’ Veterinary Medical Care Guidelines for Spay-Neuter Programs,”¹ and only to the extent that is appropriate for their level of education. For example, only students who have participated in surgical skills laboratories and demonstrated basic competencies in surgical anatomy and aseptic technique should actively assist in or perform surgery. Students who have not participated in surgical skills training, including a hands-on assessment of their skills, should limit their role to that of an assistant. Students performing any type of direct animal care must be directly supervised by designated, on-site, veterinarians. Students should not participate in surgical programs that are not in compliance with local veterinary practice regulations. Pre-veterinary students and veterinary technicians must not perform surgeries.

References

¹Griffin, B, Bushby PA, McCobb E, et al. (2016) The Association of Shelter Veterinarians 2016 veterinary medical care guidelines for spay-neuter programs. J Am Vet Med Assoc, 249 (2), 165-188.