

# What's it like to work abroad as a vet ?

**Ed Taylor BVMS MRCVS, managing director of [TheVetService.com](http://TheVetService.com), writes about the benefits and challenges of working abroad**

As veterinarians, you have the privilege of being able to use your skills all around the world in a variety of different capacities. Your training can open many doors for you, as your clinical and non-clinical skills are in high demand as well as transferable. Taking the leap and heading off to work abroad is an exciting but also daunting prospect, and something you will want to give plenty of consideration to. Talking to others who live, or have lived, abroad is the best way to find out what it's really like, but it's also important to do plenty of your own research.

## WHAT DO VETS LOVE ABOUT WORKING ABROAD?

### Clinical and career progression opportunities

There are many exciting opportunities overseas, especially when it comes to working with wild and exotic species. So, for many veterinarians, working abroad is a gateway to the next stage of their career.

If you have a particular interest in marine life, zoo medicine, or wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, you will likely have come across a number of overseas opportunities. There are numerous internships, volunteer opportunities, and placements that could provide you with the experience you need and the platform to take your career forwards. These positions are highly competitive but will open doors for you, and sometimes lead to permanent roles at the end.



**Ed Taylor.**

### Work-life balance

For many veterinarians, one of the biggest reasons for moving abroad to work is the attraction of a better work-life balance. Whether that's being able to enjoy a warm climate, or having easy access to your hobbies and interests, the quality of life

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certainly can be better in other parts of the world. And it's no myth – vets who work abroad always say that they have more free time to enjoy their hobbies and interests outside work, as well as recognise that it has benefited their mental health. They also say that having time and space to enjoy activities outside of work has helped them build a social life and meet new people.

### Caseload

Most veterinarians working in developed countries will say that the caseload is actually pretty similar to what you are used to in your home country. Training standards for veterinarians are very similar, as well as facilities and client expectations.

However, in certain parts of the world you will see more variety when it comes to the species you work with, and the cases you see. For example, you won't see many snake bites in the UK, but you'll see plenty in Australia and the US. Vets who work abroad really enjoy these varied clinical challenges, and always say that it makes their days at work more exciting and interesting.

### Opportunities to make a difference

Many veterinarians who have worked abroad say that one of the greatest benefits is the feeling of reward and satisfaction, knowing that you have been able to use your skills to make a difference. Whether it's working on wildlife rehabilitation projects, conservation, or vaccination and neutering projects, there are plenty of ways vets can make a positive difference to both animal and human communities around the world!

### Money

Although you may not have chosen this career path for the

financial reward, most people have ideas about the lifestyle they want for themselves or that they want to provide for their families. Opportunities may not always be available to buy into a partnership or open your own clinic. And overseas, the wage packages and benefits on offer can be very attractive, and, when coupled with the appeal of a great work-life balance and opportunities for career progression, it makes for the perfect combination of reasons to move.

Many veterinarians who have chosen to work overseas say that they have been able to maintain the lifestyle they desire or provide better for their families as a result of opportunities that weren't available to them at home.

### WHAT ARE THE DOWNSIDES OF WORKING ABROAD?

It may seem glamorous and appealing to live and work overseas. But it can have its drawbacks too.

Working abroad involves a lot of paperwork, not just before you go, but when you get there too. As a foreign national working in another country, you will need to think about how long your visa lasts, what it allows you to do, and when you will need to renew it. Staying organised is key when it comes to making sure you are allowed to continue to live and work in your new home.

The majority of veterinarians head to English-speaking countries, but for many, language and culture barriers can be challenging to navigate at times. And when it comes to building a social life and meeting new people, it can take time to settle in and build that support network.

Vets who work abroad say it's essential to remember the costs involved in moving overseas – flights, visas, and accommodation will all need to be paid for before you go. Although most say that their new employers were able to assist with many of these costs, you do need to have some money saved as well.

### CONCLUSION

There are a myriad of opportunities out there all around the globe, in both clinical and non-clinical roles. And heading off to work overseas in one of these roles could provide you with opportunities to learn new skills, pursue your dream to work with a particular species, or move your career forward. And although there can be a lot of organisation and paperwork involved in moving abroad, vets who have done so always cherish the benefits of a better work-life balance, the opportunities to explore new places and cultures, and the people they have met along the way.

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