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“ALL THE POSSIBILITIES” – WHAT A VETERINARY CAREER CAN OFFER



Seamus Hoey enjoys the puzzle-solving challenges inherent in diagnostic imaging work.

Seamus Hoey’s veterinary passions have taken the Louth man around the world and back to Ireland where he is now Assistant Professor in Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging at the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine

Seamus was born and raised in County Louth and wanted to be a vet since he was eight years old. He recalls: “I spent every summer with the local vet and, despite their best efforts to dissuade me, I followed my plan and obtained a place on the veterinary medicine programme in UCD.”

Summer adventures

Seamus enjoyed his time as an undergraduate student in UCD, spending summers in a variety of roles that helped him in “seeing all the possibilities that a degree in veterinary medicine can offer”. His student adventures included:

- raising yearlings on a stud farm in Kentucky;
- helping a farmer in Cork during lambing season;
- translating for English vets at yearling sales in France; and,
- working in charity small animal practice in England.

After graduating in 2007, he wanted to be a more expert equine vet, so he undertook an internship in Goulburn Valley Equine Hospital, in Shepparton, Victoria, Australia. “I really loved my time working there with mostly Standardbred horses.”

His interest in radiology was inspired by his time in Australia. “I enjoyed the puzzle-solving of imaging, where we used the information from the owner, physical examination, and the images to narrow down our list of differentials to ultimately improve the outcome for the animal and the owner.”

After his internship, Seamus was advised to go into small animal practice to be better prepared for a radiology residency, and so spent two years at Bundoora Veterinary Hospital, a referral hospital in Melbourne.

His globe-trotting continued when he was lucky enough to get a residency position at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. “I spent the next four years in Madison working and learning about small animal, exotic, equine, bovine, and camelid imaging. I sat and passed four board examinations, becoming a European and American specialist in radiology.”

Swiss sojourn

In 2014, he completed his programme and took up a position at the University of Zurich in Switzerland. “I really

enjoyed helping to train the residents in large and small animal radiology, facilitating orthopaedic research in horses, dogs and cats using CT and MRI. In Switzerland, a lot of farmers insure their cattle and so you may see cattle being airlifted from a mountain via helicopter before being brought for advanced imaging to the Zurich veterinary school. The University also runs the veterinary team at the Zurich Zoo. The experiences were great and helped to improve my skills.

“In 2016, I returned to Ireland and UCD as an Assistant Professor in veterinary diagnostic imaging. I love seeing the moment where a student understands a concept that will help them in the future to be more confident in their work.” Recently, Seamus obtained funding for teaching exchanges between the veterinary schools in UCD and the University of Namibia.

Further specialisation

“I undertook further specialisation in 2022 to become an American specialist in equine imaging, and in 2024, thanks to colleagues in UCD, Clinic na gCapall, the Irish Equine Centre, very kind stud farms, and the University of Montreal, I obtained my PhD on imaging developmental disease in young horses, showing that ultrasound can be used in the field to screen these diseases.

“At the moment, I am Programme Director for the European and American specialisation programmes in imaging in UCD. I help the doctoral students in preparing for their examinations and their research programmes. I like the collegiate nature of the research that we do in UCD, both within the veterinary school and within UCD, as well as internationally with veterinary schools in Europe and North America. I am a teleradiologist for VetCT and a board member of Volunteers in Veterinary Assistance, where we work with small-scale livestock farmers in the developing world to improve livestock husbandry, health, and welfare.” Seamus adds: “I feel lucky to be a vet, to have the diverse opportunities inherent within the profession, to get to do research that may help an animal and their owner, and to be able to engage with my colleagues as they train for their careers.”