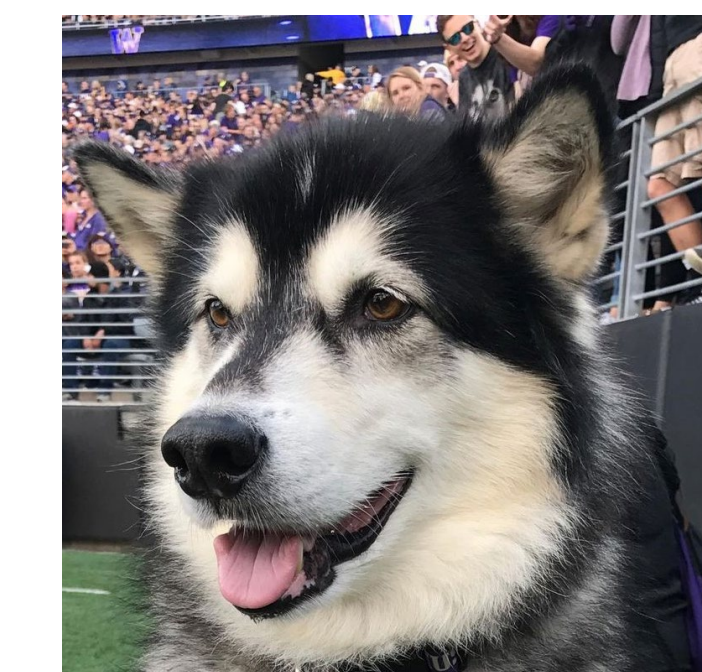




# Veterinary Education: Army Veterinary Care Specialists v Civilian Veterinary Technicians and Assistants



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## Abstract

- The US military is known for its global power, presence, and developing the personal and occupational skills of its service members. Individuals, whether they serve a few years or build a long-term career, eventually transition to the civilian workforce.
- However, some military occupations do not transition to the civilian sector due to differing military and civilian education levels. This can lead to veterans being unable to find work at the same level or occupation as their previous military job.
- I investigated the Army MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) 68T (Animal Care Specialist) and compared it to the civilian occupations of veterinary assistant and veterinary technician. I researched the education required for each occupation by interviewing workers and reviewing academic resources. I created and administered a knowledge test at one military clinic and two civilian clinics to compare results.
- Interview replies and online research revealed veterinary technicians receive the most comprehensive education, followed by 68Ts. Veterinary assistants do not require specialized education.
- On the knowledge test, the vet technicians scored the highest, the 68Ts scored second highest on average, and the vet assistants had the lowest average score.
- These results suggest that 68Ts receive more education than veterinary assistants but not as much as veterinary technicians and that the military education is insufficient to transition to a veterinary technician job.
- This study highlights the need for further exploration into the educational contrasts between military and civilian jobs, their impacts on transitioning service members, and possible solutions.

## Methods

- Establish communication w/ the JBLM vet clinic, Petzen Animal Wellness Center, and Gig Harbor Veterinary Hospital.
- Give questionnaire to administrators of clinics to learn what animals each clinic specializes in, the differences b/w vet technicians and assistants and where each role receives their training.
- Online research into academic institutions and their course curriculum and interviews w/ the workers.
- Created a knowledge test administer to the vet assistant and technicians at the various clinics, then grade and collect data. The test focused on canine information.

## Military Animal Care Specialist (68T)

Academic Institution: Medical Education and Training Campus

Program type: Certification Program

Program Length: 11 weeks

- **Animals: Dogs and horses**
- Anatomy and physiology
- Dental cleaning
- Physical examination
- Parasitology
- Pharmacology
- Emergency /specialized treatment
- Basic immunology/vaccinations
- Basic pathology
- Blood draws

## • Veterinary Assistant:

No specialized education needed. On the job training

## • Veterinary Technician

Academic Institution: PIMA Medical Institute

Program type: Associate's degree

Program length: 18 months

- **Animals: Small to large + exotic**
- Prerequisites (Biology and chemistry, communication, math applications, veterinary technology)
- Animal nutrition
- Diagnostic imaging
- Small animal nursing
- Anatomy and physiology
- Lab procedures/animal science
  - Vet pharmacology
- Dentistry techniques
- Surgical nursing and clinical surgery
- Exotic animal medicine and nursing
- Equine medicine and nursing
- Emergency Procedures
- Vet tech seminar and externship

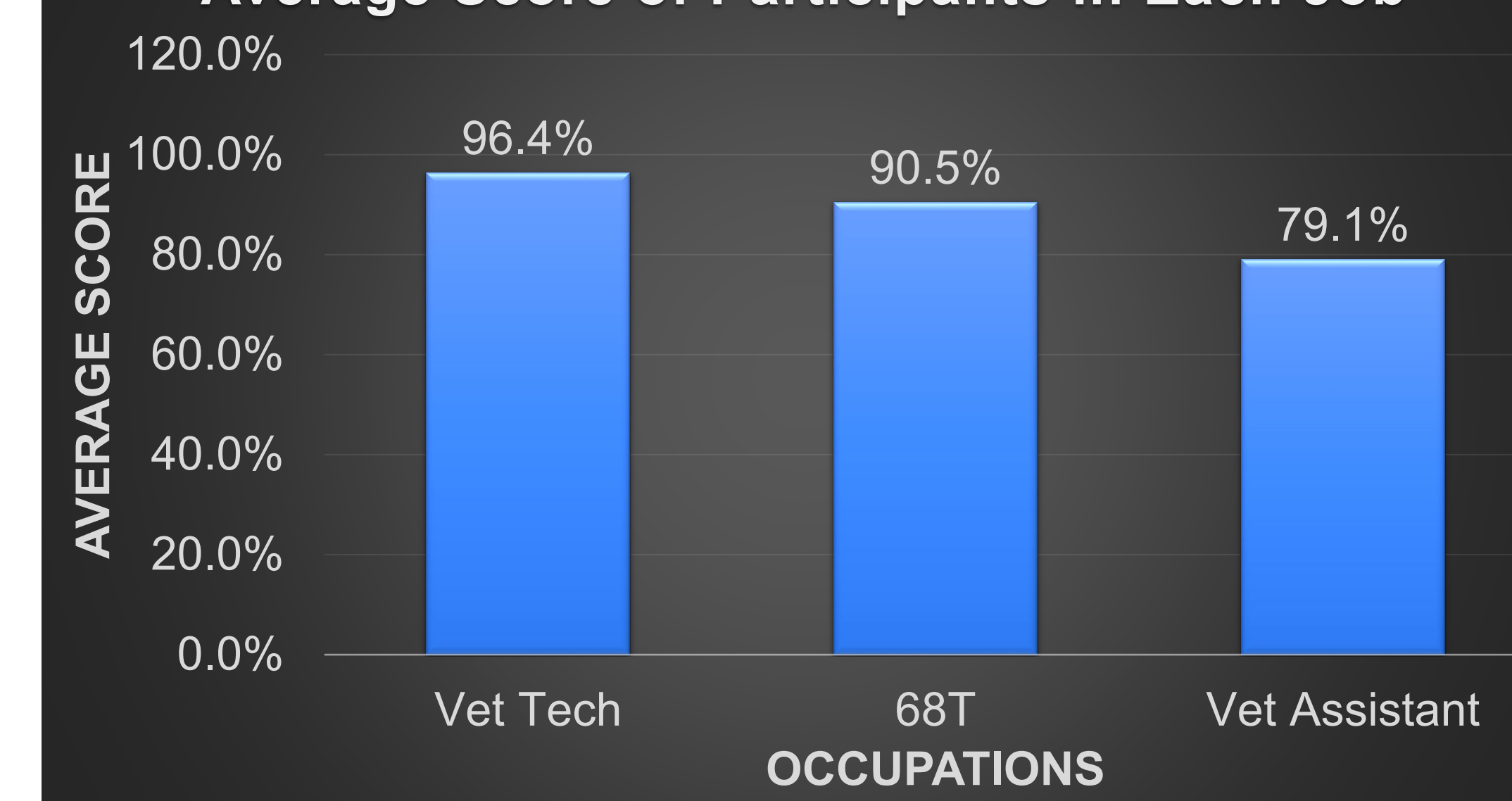
**Figure 1:** Diagram listing the different academic requirements and topics that each academic institutions cover.

## References:

Animal Care Specialist | U.S. Army. [www.goarmy.com](https://www.goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs/science-medicine/general-care/68t-animal-care-specialist). [accessed 2024 Jul 22]. <https://www.goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs/science-medicine/general-care/68t-animal-care-specialist>.

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**Average Score of Participants in Each Job**



**Figure 2:** Bar graph that displays the average scores between each of the different groups. The topics covered include dental cleaning, vital signs, vaccinations, injections, Lab sample collection, and emergency care.

## Preliminary Conclusion/Interpretation

Based on the education requirements for each occupation and the results of the test, an animal care specialist is more educated than a veterinary assistant but does not have the credentials or education required to be a veterinary technician. A veteran applying for the former may take a cut in salary or be turned down by civilian employers for being overqualified, while lacking the credentials to work as the latter. The veteran may need to find work in a different sector, which requires either more education or starting from the bottom of the work ladder. Future solutions may look toward how this possible scenario can be prevented.

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