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Bristol Zoo Gardens, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 3HA

Tel: (0117) 974 7300 Fax: (0117) 973 6814

Website: www.bristolzoo.org.uk

Thank you for your enquiry about the veterinary externship programme. Bristol Zoo Gardens is a Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Approved Centre for Zoological Medicine, the only zoo with such status in the world, enabling veterinarians to study for the RCVS Certificate and Diploma in Zoo and Wildlife Medicine.

Please fill in the attached form below and return as soon as possible. Many such requests are received and places are limited so please give a number of possible dates you would be able to attend. You must be at least 16 years old. Zoo veterinary work is varied ranging from 'hands-on' clinical work and post-mortems to record keeping and collating data. You will be expected to assist with all areas. Neither expenses nor accommodation can be provided. We do not charge a fee for this externship but we have a fund for veterinary research that you may consider donating to. This will be used to further clinical research in aspects of zoo veterinary medicine. A fee of £50 per week is requested.

Please email **Kellie Wyatt** VN, Head Veterinary Nurse & Externship Coordinator on: kwyatt@bristolzoo.org.uk for a text version of this form to submit via email. Kellie can also be contacted on: (00 44) 0117 974 7340

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Head Of Veterinary Services

Please read the following article:

What do Zoo vets expect from students?

by Florian-Cecil Herold (2001) from EAZWV website

This is of course a question you can not answer in general words but there are some hints that I can give you after I have spoken with a couple of European Zoo vets, that perhaps make it easier for you to fulfil their expectations:

First contact: Even though e-mailing is a great and easy way of communication, a lot of Zoo vets like to be contacted the old fashioned way (snail-mail with or without prior phone-call), which is due to the fact that they get more e-mails that they can answer or sometimes even read. If you nevertheless do contact them via e-mail please do not send the same mail to different institutions (it may seem, as you are not interested in this special institution, but just to get any externship anywhere). Again it is not possible to state how long prior to your planned externship you should contact a zoo and the answers I got varied from 6 weeks to 1 year. Tell them in advance if you do not plan to come.

Knowledge

Most of the Zoo vets accept only students in their last year and all of them expect that you have gained experience in small and/or large animal clinics before your externship in a zoo. (You should not automatically expect to assist in a surgery during your short period of internship, but if you are lucky and can, it should not be the first time you do so) You should know the theoretical and practical basics of parasitology (especially examination of faeces), haematology and anaesthesia. AND you should never forget that tigers and lions are only cats as well as giraffes and elands are only ruminants and that most of their diseases occur in pets and livestock as well. But be aware of the differences in behaviour. If avoidable wild animals do not get handled, but the work is preventative. Therefore these internships might not give you the routine that an internship in a practice can give you. It was also stressed by veterinarians that the basics in systematics should be known.

Behaviour

Even though you will sooner or later become a vet, you should not expect to find yourself on the top end of the zoo hierarchy. You should not be arrogant towards keepers. You are not in the position to give keepers advice on the treatment of sick animals or treat them without knowledge of the veterinarian. You should be aware of the fact that they know much more about zoo animals than you do. There is quite a lot you can learn from them. Often diagnosis depends on their observations. In any case you should follow their orders. Even though you do your veterinary practice you should not deny doing keepers' work sometimes (it can help you - especially in the beginning - to get familiar with the habits of the institution). You should of course never ever go into any enclosure on your own. You should avoid criticising enclosures because you think they are not appropriate as well as habits of the institution, because you are definitely not in the position to do so. Zoo staff know the weak points of their zoo and have heard all the arguments against keeping animals in zoos. Discretion about your work should be kept while doing and after completion of the externship. Hygiene and short fingernails are seen as an essential. Some zoos might ask you to certify which vaccination you have or ask for a health check. If you are injured, tell this the veterinarian immediately. Dressing should be neat, but practical. Be polite and also on time in the morning. There might be a time at which the vets wish to work by themselves without giving you a certain task, try to use the time by studying or observing animal behaviour. As I mentioned above there is no general code of conduct that I can give you, but I hope the information given helps you to avoid mistakes and makes your externship a nice and remarkable event in your career as a vet student.

Veterinary Externship Application

Date of application
Name
Address
Phone and fax number, Email
Qualifications, Current position, state whether qualified vet or student (state school/college and year)
Dates requested (please give as many as possible and states year) and time period requested (min. 2 weeks)