



# **Houston Zoo**

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## **Non-Animal Care Internship Descriptions & Requirements**

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***\*Not all sections offer internships in each fall, spring, and summer session. Refer to the choices listed under “Areas of Interest” on the actual application (when open) to see which internships are available currently. Visit <https://www.houstonzoo.org/make-memories/adults/internships/> for timelines.***

#### TO APPLY

Internships are open to those 18 and older who are currently enrolled in college or are within one year of post-education graduation at application due date.

To be considered, please visit our website at <https://www.houstonzoo.org/make-memories/adults/internships/>. Application timelines and internship dates are posted online. *\*Regarding internship dates, individual schedules will fall between posted dates and may not necessarily last a full three months.*

Applicants must submit a resume, cover letter, and letter of recommendation as part of their online application. *Please note that if your school/scholarship requires any proof, credit, or additional projects for your internship, this must be discussed during the interview and before accepting a potential offer.*

For further information and inquiries, please contact the Volunteer Office at 713-533-6513 or via email at [volunteer@houstonzoo.org](mailto:volunteer@houstonzoo.org).

#### ABOUT THE ZOO & OUR INTERNSHIPS

The Houston Zoo has over 6,000 permanent residents (our animals) for whom we provide housing, meals, medical care, and training. The Zoo also serves more than 2.5 million guests each year who come to experience our incredible variety of animals and ecosystems, as well as attend special private and public events and entertainment. The Zoo aspires to connect communities with animals, inspiring action to save wildlife.

Extensive training plans will be provided specific to each department to ensure internships remain valuable to students and developing professionals. Interns will be integrated with their teams to cultivate important professional relationships and gain valuable hands-on experience. Further networking and continuing education opportunities will be available in addition to learning more about Zoo conservation initiatives worldwide.

## DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATIONS INTERNSHIP

The Houston Zoo's development team is seeking an intern interested in exploring a career in fundraising, donor relations, and communications. The development team supports the Zoo by ensuring that the Zoo's donors feel connected, inspired, and engaged in our joint effort to save animals in the wild. The communications intern will learn how to craft messaging that drives philanthropy by working on a variety of donor communications, fundraising campaigns, and events.

This unpaid position offers an opportunity for the applicant to have their work seen by the Zoo's wide audience and our most committed donors. As such, the ideal applicant will need to think creatively and possess exceptional writing abilities. Those applying for this position should feel comfortable handling multiple projects simultaneously in a fast-paced environment with a positive attitude and a sense of humor. Applicants will be required to adhere to policies that protect confidential information regarding donors and the Zoo's internal business operations.

The curriculum for this internship is designed to provide students the opportunity to learn the following:

- Writing and editing content for a variety of mediums including but not limited to email, direct mail, social media, and web
- Building multi-channel fundraising campaigns
- Working within the Zoo's donor database, The Raiser's Edge
- Working within the Zoo's online applications such as WordPress, Emma, and ThirdLight
- Stewarding donors using best practices such as thank you notes, phone calls, and storytelling
- Executing event communications and programming to drive attendance and revenue
- Assisting with donor event logistics
- Working with different departments such as marketing, public relations, graphics, and animal programs

### **PHYSICAL EFFORT AND ENVIRONMENT:**

This opportunity involves minimal physical exertion and will be mostly office based, except when assisting in the production of a special event. Walking, lifting, and time outside may be required on specific occasions in many weather conditions including heat, humidity, rain, cold, or dust. Interns will have some public contact requiring considerable interpersonal skills.

### **REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:**

- Interest in pursuing a career as a fundraiser or other professional at a non-profit
- Exhibit strong professionalism, communication, and writing skills
- Must be a self-starter and able to work independently
- Ability to multi-task and excel in a fast-paced environment
- Be flexible and have a positive "can-do" attitude even in a frustrating situation
- Strong working knowledge of Microsoft Office products particularly Word, Outlook, and Excel
- Previous experience in guest service is a plus
- Interns are required to complete a minimum of 200 hours in this position. Intern can choose their set days to work Monday through Friday (2 or 3 days per week, as preferred by the intern).
- Interns will be expected to wear their Zoo intern shirt during the week but may be asked to wear business casual for events

- Interns can expect to be scheduled to participate in event coordination on nights and weekends (there will only be a few of these events per intern season). Development events are typically held Thursday through Saturday evenings.
- Intern must compose and present an educational presentation at the end of the internship

# DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT EVENTS and DONOR RELATIONSHIPS INTERNSHIP

The Houston Zoo is seeking an intern interested in learning all aspects of the fundraising field. The Development team supports the Zoo by ensuring that the Zoo's donors feel connected, inspired and engaged in our joint effort to save animals in the wild. This team is responsible for fundraising for the Zoo's Centennial Campaign and annual operating budget. One of the ways that we do this is by managing the Zoo's two donor clubs, Flock and Asante, including all events and communications related to these groups. This team also manages the Zoo's two largest annual fundraising events, Zoo Ball and Conservation Gala.

Applicants interested in this unpaid position should be self-motivated, reliable, have strong professionalism and communication skills and be able to exhibit a positive attitude even when things change at the last minute. The curriculum for this internship is designed to provide students the opportunity to learn the following:

- Assisting with logistics for development donor club events and galas, including shadowing development staff during all aspects of event planning and preparation as well as working the actual event depending on the season of the internship
- Pre and post event work including gathering and preparing of event related supplies and other projects
- Aspects of the donor stewardship process including accompanying development staff on Asante behind the scenes tours to learn more about the inner workings of the Zoo as well as to observe the relationships between gift officers and donors
- How to maintain annual donor support through assisting development staff in sending donor club renewal notifications as well as in reaching out to prospective donors. This may include sending handwritten letters or making phone calls
- Shadow Development staff to learn how a donor database functions and to learn the importance of the gift entering and thank-you letter process

## **PHYSICAL EFFORT AND ENVIRONMENT:**

This opportunity involves minimal physical exertion and will be mostly office based, except when assisting in the production of a special event or shadowing Asante tours. Walking, lifting and time outside may be required on specific occasions in many weather conditions including heat, humidity, rain, cold, or dust. Due to the nature of this position, interns will have heavy public contact requiring considerable interpersonal skills.

## **REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:**

- Interest in pursuing a career as a fundraiser or other professional at a non-profit
- Exhibit strong professionalism, communication and writing skills
- Must be a self-starter and able to work independently
- Ability to multi-task and excel in a fast-paced environment
- Be flexible and have a positive "can-do" attitude even in a frustrating situation
- Strong working knowledge of Microsoft Office products particularly Word, Outlook and Excel
- Previous experience in guest service is a plus

- Interns are required to complete a minimum of 200 hours in this position. Intern can choose their set days to work Monday through Friday (2 or 3 days per week, as preferred by the intern)
- Interns will be expected to wear their Zoo intern shirt during the week but may be asked to wear business casual for events
- Interns can expect to be scheduled to participate in event coordination on nights and weekends (there will only be a few of these events per intern season). Development events are typically held Thursday through Saturday evenings.
- Intern must compose and present an educational presentation at the end of the internship

# EDUCATION EVALUATION INTERNSHIP

This internship offers a stipend to offset some expenses. The amount of the stipend will be discussed during the interview.

Participate in an internship with the Conservation Education Department! Our team supports the Zoo through programming for participants from birth through adulthood, inspiring empathy and appreciation for animals. Camp Zoofari is a fun and unique summer program for children ages 4-16 in a day camp setting. Interns will learn and apply techniques for evaluating camp participants to determine the extent that the program is meeting outcomes.

Applicants interested in the position should be detail oriented, dependable, positive, and exhibit excellent written communication skills. Candidates should have a passion for informal science education and evaluation.

The curriculum for this internship is designed to provide students the opportunity to learn and practice the following as it relates to evaluating informal science education:

- Foundations of conservation education
- Logic models and evaluation planning
- Evaluation techniques for assessing informal science programming for participants ages 4-16
- Performing data collection and analysis
- Preparing written evaluation reports
- Legal, ethical and other considerations in evaluation

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Throughout this internship, interns will:

- Read and further research articles on evaluation best practices, techniques and presentation of results.
- Review and revise camp logic model and evaluation plan.
- Perform pilot testing on two evaluation instruments and made modifications based on the pilots.
- Perform data collection during two weeks of camp on each age group.
- Analyze the data collected.
- Prepare an evaluation summary report and make recommendations for program changes and future evaluations through a formal presentation to the camp team.

## **PHYSICAL EFFORT AND ENVIRONMENT**

The position involves moderate physical activity. Interns will be walking and spending time outdoors, in all different weather conditions including heat, humidity, rain, cold, and/or dust. Interns may be asked to lift up to 40 lbs. Due to the nature of the program, interns will have heavy public contact requiring considerable interpersonal negotiation skills. Interns can expect to have interactions with campers, volunteers, and staff and Zoo guests.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

- Interns are required to complete a minimum 320 hour commitment (8 weeks) in this program
  - Must work in full day, full week increments, Monday – Friday (8 hr shift between 7 am – 6 pm) any 8 weeks during the 11-weeks summer from June 3-August 16.

- Interest in pursuing a career in formal or informal education, conservation education, or related field
- Applicants must currently be enrolled in a college institution or a recent graduate (within 1 year of application due date)
- Coursework in Education, Evaluation, Zoology, Biology, Statistics or related field preferred.
- This position requires considerable flexibility and patience. Candidates must also be able to work well both independently and cooperatively in a positive, team-oriented environment (which could include lead and non-lead guides, teen volunteers, other interns, and full-time staff).
- Intern must compose and present an educational presentation at the end of the internship

# HORTICULTURE TECHNICIAN INTERNSHIP

The Houston Zoo is seeking an intern interested in learning all aspects of the Horticulture field. The Horticulture team supports the Zoo by ensuring a beautiful landscape for both the animals and guests. This team provides regular management of the Zoo landscape as well as supplemental diet items for many animal species through our Browse program. Additionally, we are continuously designing and installing new gardens as the Zoo evolves. Other areas of responsibility are: exhibit maintenance, irrigation, greenhouse management, arboriculture, organic fertilization, and more.

This unpaid position offers an opportunity for the applicant to develop a wide variety of horticulture skills while working in a unique setting. The ideal applicant will be able to think creatively and possess problem solving abilities. Those applying for this position should feel comfortable handling garden tools of a wide variety, all of which can pose physical danger. Applicants will be held to a high standard of safety and care.

The curriculum for this internship is designed to provide students the opportunity to learn the following:

- Professional horticultural in and around animal exhibits
- Landscape design and planning
- Browse program plant care and delivery
- Chainsaw use
- Tree work and care
- Basics of irrigation
- Greenhouse care
- Basics of vegetable gardening

## **Physical Effort and Environment:**

This position involves a lot of walking and lifting. Time outdoors can be expected, in all different weather conditions including heat, humidity, rain, cold, or dust. It may also involve considerable physical exertion such as climbing, reaching, assuming awkward positions, repetitive motions, and lifting and/or moving of heavy objects (up to 25 pounds) on a regular basis. Due to the nature of this environment, interns will have some public contact requiring considerable communication and interpersonal skills.

Interns will utilize chain saws and will be required to meet all the following safety expectations:

- Wear proper PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) as instructed by a qualified staff member and under supervision of a qualified staff member
- When working at elevated heights, intern will abide by Zoo safety standards

Other safety expectations:

- Intern will follow all Zoo cart and gator safety standards while driving or riding in one.
- Intern will use gloves and other PPE while working with the horticulture team.
- Intern will make any allergies to bugs or plants known to the horticulture supervisor.

## **Requirements and Expectations:**

- Interest in pursuing a career as a horticulturist or other natural science-based career field.
  - Punctuality: intern will adhere to a weekly schedule and complete a minimum of 200 hours. Intern can choose their set days to work Monday through Friday (2 or 3 days per week) from 7 AM - 4 PM.
  - Must be flexible and a self-starter, willing to participate in a variety of projects to enhance the learning experience
- Compose and present an educational presentation at the end of their internship

# NATURALIST INTERNSHIP - Children's Zoo Swap Shop

Participate in an unpaid internship as a Naturalist in the Houston Zoo's Swap Shop! The Swap Shop is a part of the Children's Zoo that connects people of all ages to their backyard and the world around them. Naturalists are scientists who primarily study the way living things impact each other and the earth. Those considering a career as a Naturalist should have an interest in ecology, conservation, geography, or environmental science.

Candidates for this position should be self-motivated, dependable, positive and show an interest in pursuing a career in an Interpreter/Naturalist Field or Environmental Education. The internship is designed to provide students the opportunity to learn the following from our Naturalists on staff:

- Identification of natural items
- Positive and educational interaction with zoo guests
- Occasional animal handling of our ambassador animal collection
- Maintaining of small animal exhibits, such reptiles and amphibians

## **PHYSICAL EFFORT AND ENVIRONMENT:**

This opportunity involves interacting with the public and entering information into computers in the Swap Shop approximately 95% of the time. A small amount of time outdoors can be expected, in all different weather conditions including heat, humidity, rain, cold, or dust. It may also involve some physical exertion such as climbing, reaching, assuming awkward positions, repetitive motions, and lifting and/or moving of heavy objects (up to 50 pounds) on a regular basis. Due to the nature of this environment, interns will have a lot of public contact requiring considerable communication skills and the ability to present to the public.

## **REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:**

- Interns are required to complete a minimum 240-hour commitment; internship can go up to 400 hours if amenable to both parties.
- This internship is structured for a minimum of 24 hours/week. Applicants must be able to work any day of the week with at least one of the days being a weekend day.
- Shift times are 8:15 AM until 5:15 PM
- Compose and deliver an educational presentation at the end of the internship
- Ability to multi-task and excel in a fast-paced environment
- Ability to work independently while being an important part of the team
- Exhibit strong professionalism and communication skills
- Possess a desire to gain experience and knowledge working in an Interpreter/Naturalist or Environmental Education field; previous experience volunteering or working in this capacity is a plus
- Experience with Microsoft Office products (Access, Excel, and Word) is a plus
- Must provide a current negative TB test result prior to starting date
- Coursework in Interpreter/Naturalist or Environmental Education is preferred but not required.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS INTERNSHIP

The Houston Zoo is looking for an intern interested in learning all aspects of the public relations field. The intern who fills this position should expect to learn the field from top to bottom, and will complete this program ready to enter any fast-paced public relations position with excellent skills. It's essential that applicants to this position have exceptional communication skills, demonstrate creativity, and understand the importance of attending to even the smallest details.

Responsibilities include:

- Monitor all forms of media related to Houston Zoo exposure
- Schedule and coordinate animal TV appearances, photo shoots, and other media events in online database
- Participate in meetings and brainstorming sessions
- Write and edit press releases and official blog posts
- Create interview preparation materials
- Compile contact lists
- Search for press clippings
- Create or update databases
- Occasional weekend work is required for various media events
- Draft and schedule social media communications from Houston Zoo accounts
- Author weekly email newsletter content for audience of approximately 100,000 subscribers
- Performs other duties as requested

This internship is ideal for students majoring in Public Relations, Communications, Marketing or Journalism. This position requires strong writing skills and the creative drive to pursue captivating wildlife stories. Due to the public-facing nature of this position, applicants should note any experience or interest in digital content creation (written pieces, videography, photography).

### **PHYSICAL EFFORT AND ENVIRONMENT:**

In this opportunity, most time will be spent indoors with some time spent outside for special events, tours, and presentations. Requires the ability to make coordinated eye/hand movements within fairly fine tolerance and/or calibration demands; or the ability to make closely coordinated eye/hand movements on a patterned response space within moderate tolerance demands.

### **REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:**

- Proficient with Microsoft Office products
- Advanced writing abilities
- Creative mindset
- Previous public relations experience preferred
- Preferred junior or senior undergraduate status
- Requires heavy public contact requiring considerable interpersonal skill, extensive interaction with the public and with donors, members and the press requiring a high degree of appreciation of customer service
- Interns are required to complete a minimum 200-hour commitment
- Compose and present an educational presentation at the end of internship

# SPECIAL EVENTS INTERNSHIP

Acquire crucial practical entry-level experience by working with our Special Events Department! This is an unpaid internship that will allow students to gain hands-on experience planning logistics, coordinating setups, and working directly with clients. Interns will shadow the Special Event staff and be involved throughout the executing process including, but not limited to, contacting clients, preparing event spaces, meeting vendors, managing event volunteers and completing closing functions. In addition to that, interns will gain an understanding of the pre-planning phase and other administrative functions.

Candidates for this position should be detailed oriented, dependable, positive and show excellent communication skills. The curriculum for this internship is designed to provide students the opportunity to learn the following:

- Coordinating logistics for picnics, meetings, galas, and other private events
- Submitting all necessary paperwork
- Procuring supplies
- Securing venues
- Confirming catering orders, vendors, and entertainment
- Overseeing deliveries, setup, and execution of events

## **PHYSICAL EFFORT AND ENVIRONMENT:**

This opportunity involves minimal physical exertion, except when assisting with the production of a special event or promotion. A lot of walking, lifting and time outdoors can be expected, in all different weather conditions including heat, humidity, rain, cold, or dust, however, with the exceptions of major events, most opportunities are indoors. Due to the nature of this environment, interns will have heavy public contact requiring considerable interpersonal and negotiation skills. Interns can expect to have extensive interaction with guests, donor, vendors and co-promotional partners.

## **REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:**

- Interest in pursuing a career in event planning/management
- Excellent communication and writing skills
- Must be a self-starter
- Ability to multi-task and thrive in a fast-paced environment
- Effective project management skills
- Knowledge of research/analysis a plus
- Coursework in Marketing and/or Communications-related field is preferred but not required
- Experience or previous involvement in event planning, guest service or marketing is a plus
- Interns are required to complete a minimum 200 hour commitment, approximately 20-25 hours a week. A set schedule will be provided based on event schedule.
- Interns can expect to be scheduled to participate in event coordination on nights, weekends, holidays, etc.
- Compose an educational presentation at the end of internship

## SUSTAINABILITY – CONSERVATION

The Houston Zoo is inviting students to participate in an internship with the Conservation Department! Through strategic wildlife conservation partnerships, which work to conserve the wild counterparts of our ambassador animals at the Zoo, we provide success stories, actions, and inspiring messaging to advance the Zoo's mission. This is an unpaid opportunity that will allow students to gain experience with understanding the Zoo's role as a change agent in the wildlife conservation world and allow them to create professional relationships to grow their conservation network. Interns will be involved in the organization of Zoo activities and programs that engage Zoo staff in sustainability and conservation work. Internship will take place at the Houston Zoo with time split between the office and on-grounds.

Applicants interested in this position should be detail oriented, dependable, positive and exhibit excellent communication skills. Candidates should have a passion for sustainability issues and a desire to gain practical knowledge of sustainability efforts within a conservation organization. The curriculum for this internship is designed to provide students the opportunity to learn the following conservation principles:

- Saving animals in the wild through sustainability practices
- Conservation in zoos and in the wild
- Conservation messaging to various audiences
- Inspiring action in Houston Zoo audiences
- Partnerships with local and international wildlife conservation organizations
- Wildlife saving campaigns and behavior change programs

### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Assist with sustainability and conservation programing
- Provide sustainability and conservation enhancement support through research, evaluation and monitoring of programming, interacting with public on grounds, and assisting with events
- Participate in any of the following: baseline data collection, identifying sources of waste and inefficiencies and recommending and implementing solutions
- Assist with managing and analyzing sustainability performance data, including energy performance and efficiency and lifecycle cost/supply chain analysis

### **PHYSICAL EFFORT AND ENVIRONMENT:**

This opportunity involves moderate physical activity. Walking and lots of time outside may be required for specific projects, in all different weather conditions including heat, humidity, rain, cold, or dust. It may also involve considerable physical exertion such as reaching, repetitive motions, and lifting and/or moving heavy objects (up to 50 lbs.). Due to the nature of this environment, interns will have heavy public contact requiring considerable interpersonal and negotiation skills, extensive interaction with the public, some donors and members.

### **REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:**

- 2nd, 3rd, or 4th year college students working toward a sustainability/conservation related career in a wildlife, environmental, communication, or education-related field. A recent college graduate with this focus will also be considered.
- Must be comfortable presenting programs to all audiences and in offsite community events
- Creative skills to transform wildlife conservation and sustainability material into entertaining, inspiring programs
- Ability to conduct research, compile, and analyze data
- Passion for sustainability, conservation, and wildlife

- Availability to commit to at least 200 hours, 3 days/week, 8 hours/day, occasional evening/weekends
- Strong working knowledge of Microsoft Office products particularly, Outlook, Excel and PowerPoint
- Must possess a strong knowledge and understanding of current sustainability trends and best practices
- Exhibit excellent oral communication and writing skills
- Must be a self-starter
- Ability to multi-task and excel in a fast-paced environment
- Effective project management skills essential
- Ability to conduct research and compile large amounts of data
- Life Cycle Analysis skills preferred
- Must be comfortable with public speaking

# WATER QUALITY

Advance your practical chemistry and life support systems knowledge by working with the Water Quality Department! This internship is designed to give students an in-depth understanding of water quality and various types of filtration within animal habitats throughout the Zoo. Work will also occur in the laboratory.

Your primary responsibilities will include helping staff maintain water quality in animal habitats and the water play area within the Zoo. No direct animal contact takes place in this role.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Learn proper sampling techniques and collect daily samples from various exhibits housing marine and terrestrial mammals, aquatic birds and fishes
- Analyze salt and fresh water aquatic animal systems areas daily
- Learn about filtration and disinfection and why different systems are used with different animals
- Operate analytical equipment, including:
  - pH
  - Oxidation/reduction potential
  - Nitrogenous waste and phosphate
  - Alkalinity and hardness
  - Dissolved oxygen
  - Conductivity
  - Turbidity

## **PHYSICAL EFFORT AND ENVIRONMENT:**

This opportunity involves a lot of walking, lifting, getting wet and dirty, and having FUN! Time outdoors can be expected, in all different weather conditions including heat, humidity, rain, cold, or dust. It may also involve considerable physical exertion such as climbing, reaching, assuming awkward positions, repetitive motions, and lifting and/or moving of heavy objects (up to 50 pounds) on a regular basis. Due to the nature of this environment, interns will have some public contact requiring considerable communication skills.

## **REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:**

- Minimum grade point average of 3.0
- Junior, senior, or recent college graduate (no more than 1-year post graduation)
- Chemistry major, or a solid foundation in applied chemistry fields
  - Completed coursework in organic chemistry, analytical chemistry and instrumentation - home aquarium experience is a plus
- Proficiency with Windows XP, Microsoft Word and Excel
- Ability to interact in a positive manner with Houston Zoo staff and guests
- Ability to lift 50 pounds
- Must be able to work on weekdays between 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Interns are required to complete a minimum 200-hour commitment
- Compose an educational presentation at the end of internship