

## **VETERINARY STUDENT EXTERNSHIP IN ZOO AND WILDLIFE PATHOLOGY**

Externships in the WCS Pathology Department offer hands-on experience in the daily operations of the WCS Pathology Department. Our department provides full pathology services for the Bronx Zoo, Central Park Zoo, Queens Zoo, and Prospect Park Zoo, and we partner with the WCS Aquatic Health Department to provide pathology services for the New York Aquarium. The caseload is high and exceptionally diverse, drawing from zoological collections as well as local wildlife.

Our service is based at the WCS Wildlife Health Center (at the Bronx Zoo) and includes on-site histology and molecular laboratories. The team includes three full-time, ACVP board-certified staff pathologists, a pathology resident or fellow, a molecular scientist, and a team of necropsy, histology, and molecular biology technicians. We work closely with our team of clinical veterinarians, residents and technicians, as well as other hospital and animal care staff, to support the health of our WCS collections.

Externships are focused primarily on training in necropsy examinations and the description, diagnosis, and interpretation of gross lesions in a wide variety of species including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish. Externs participate in all aspects of necropsy service, from set-up to clean-up, with direct oversight from the on-duty pathologist. Exceptions include cases of enhanced zoonotic disease risk, as determined by the on-duty pathologist, for which students may observe but not actively participate in necropsies. There are opportunities for study of cytologic specimens and histopathology. Students participate in daily hospital rounds, weekly morbidity/mortality rounds, and weekly histopathology rounds. Externs are invited to complete and present an externship project – such as an in-depth case presentation, a review of a particular disease process, or a summary of morbidity/mortality in a particular species – depending on their interests.

Anticipated learning outcomes include:

- Developing proficiency in gross necropsy examination including considerations for species variations, zoonotic concerns, and sampling for ancillary diagnostic tests;
- Enhancing knowledge of anatomy and pathology of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish, as applicable to cases and fostered by self-study;
- Improving ability to identify and describe gross lesions, formulating differential diagnoses, and composition of complete gross pathology reports;
- Participation in all aspects of sample archiving, tissue processing for histopathology, and sample submission for ancillary diagnostic testing.

Externs are expected to participate fully during department working hours (Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-5:30 pm daily), and may also have opportunities to participate in after-hours or weekend activities. Clothing, footwear, and personal protective equipment for work in the necropsy laboratory are provided. The Wildlife Health Center is accessible by public transportation, and parking is available for students who plan to drive.

Students must be in their junior or senior year of veterinary school and must have completed a pathology rotation (or similar experience) prior to the start of their externship. Housing and transportation to and from the zoo are not provided. Students must be able to provide documentation of authorization to work in the US. WCS cannot sponsor visas or work authorization.

To apply, please complete the online externship application form. Required components include (1) a current CV; (2) a statement of interest outlining your career goals and motivation for pursuing this externship; (3) proposed date ranges for a four-week externship; (4) names and contact information for three references (letters not required). For fullest consideration, please submit application materials by October 31 of the academic year prior to that of the desired externship. For example, applications for the 2027-2028 academic year should be received by October 31, 2026. Applications received after this deadline may still be considered if space is available.

### **Policy on health documentation**

Although not required as a condition of participation, we highly recommend participants in this program have an up-to-date TB test and current vaccinations for rabies, tetanus, and COVID. If documentation of these tests/vaccinations is not provided, there will be limitations in participants' ability to fully take part in the necropsy examinations.

### **Policy on WCS agreements with educational institutions**

The Wildlife Conservation Society's (WCS's) Zoological Health Program has agreements with several universities that allow their students to participate in our Externship Programs on an ongoing basis. However, as of 17 November 2022, the WCS made a decision not to enter into new externship, internship, placement, training or similar agreements. Before applying for an externship with the WCS, please confirm that your school is among those with a pre-existing agreement for externship participation. You can do this by checking with your school or contacting Meredith Barton ([mbarton@wcs.org](mailto:mbarton@wcs.org)) for confirmation that an agreement is in effect. Note that students can still participate in the externship even if their school does not have a pre-existing participation agreement, but only if the school does not require a written agreement. Confirmation of either a pre-existing agreement or confirmation that the school does not require one are required in advance of extern application submission. Failure to provide confirmation may make you ineligible to participate in the externship program.

Externs who successfully complete the externship are eligible to receive a small stipend of \$675 to support their participation.

We look forward to receiving your application.