



## POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM Internship Program

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Thank you for your interest in the **Aquarium Internship** at the Point Defiance Aquarium. This internship is an in-depth program requiring a 32 to 40 hour per week commitment, for a minimum of 400 hours for 10-12 weeks (12 weeks for fall, winter and spring sessions and 10 weeks for the summer session). Interns must be flexible with their schedule, and have the ability to work weekdays, weekends and holidays. It is an unpaid position and with no housing provided. We will do everything possible to accommodate school requirements for those who can earn class credit.

As our internships are unpaid, interns are considered volunteers so the zoo does not provide any medical coverage for on or off the job injuries or incidents.

Intern positions are offered year round, up to two per quarter. Our schedule is as follows:

Spring internship: March/April/May  
Applications accepted until the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday in January

Summer internship: June/July/August  
Applications accepted until the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in February

Fall internship: September/October/November/December  
Applications accepted until 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in June

Winter internship: January/February/March  
Applications accepted until the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in October

Good luck,

Cathleen McConnell  
Education Specialist  
Internship Program Coordinator

Marc Duncan  
Intern Supervisor  
Aquariums



# POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM

## Aquarium Internship Position

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The Aquarium Internship is designed to provide participants with practical learning hands-on opportunities and knowledge in aquatic animal husbandry. In return, the intern makes a significant contribution to the daily operation of the North and South Pacific Aquariums.

The Aquariums at Point Defiance Zoo offers the most diverse display of live animals throughout the entire Point Defiance facility. This collection is made up of over 300 different species of fish and invertebrates, from various aquatic habitats along the Pacific Rim. The diversity of marine life at the aquarium provides for some unique challenges and opportunities for career oriented students in the field of marine biology.

This internship is designed to provide instruction in the following areas:

1. Animal Husbandry
  - General maintenance and care of marine fish and invertebrates systems
  - Animal observations
  - Record keeping
2. Nutrition and Diets
  - Diet preparation
  - Feeding techniques
3. Water Quality
  - Maintaining proper aquarium water quality parameters
  - Properties of natural seawater
  - Biological cycles in aquariums
4. Knowledge of Marine Fish and Invertebrates
  - Natural history
  - Behavior
  - Taxonomic relationships
5. Public Education/Exhibit Interpretation
  - Informal public presentations
  - Messaging



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## Aquarium Internship Assignments

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During your internship, you will be asked to complete the following tasks:

### Journal

Keep informal journals describing your daily activities and to record your thoughts and experiences, and any questions or concerns you would like to share with the staff. The internship supervisor will review your journal regularly to evaluate your progress.

### Monthly Meetings

Once a month you will meet with the Aquarium's intern supervisor. This will be an opportunity to evaluate how your internship is progressing, review your journal entries, and answer any questions.

### Daily Assignments

On a daily basis you will be responsible for assisting the staff with routine aquarium husbandry and maintenance. The assignments will consist of upkeep of visitor galleries, behind the scenes exhibit maintenance, food preparation, feeding of animal diets, and general in-house area chores.

### Personal Exhibit

During the internship, you will be assigned the responsibility of caring for one exhibit aquarium. Under the direction and guidance of the staff, you will learn proper techniques of cleaning, feeding and observing "your" exhibit.

### Personal Project

Depending on the requirements of your college or university and the number of credits you will be receiving for your internship, you will be asked to come up with a project to implement under the guidance of the aquarium staff. You will be required to submit a written proposal for your project no later than one week into the internship.

The following are suggestions:

- ◆ Develop a collection or exhibit plan for a potential new exhibit species and/or habitat.
- ◆ Create and carry out a research project on one of the following topics relating to the aquarium collection; animal behavior, water chemistry, fish pathology, aquaculture, or fish nutrition.
- ◆ Do an in-depth library research project on one aquarium species and provide staff with copies of the latest research literature.
- ◆ Create an interpretive presentation for the general public on one or more of the aquarium's exhibits.



## POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM Internship Application Process

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The internship program at Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium is designed to provide individuals with practical learning experience while gaining valuable knowledge related to her/his career goals. Applications for internship positions are evaluated on experience - professional and/or volunteer, academic achievement, interview success, and positions available.

To apply for an internship at Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium you must:

1. Be currently enrolled in, or have recently graduated from a college or university.
2. Have a minimum of one year of course work in a major field of study to be applied during the internship (e.g. biology, zoology, animal behavior, psychology, etc.)
3. Be capable of the physical abilities required to work with animals (i.e. lift 50 pounds, etc.)
4. Submit an application.
5. Submit a cover letter including your career goals.
6. Submit a resume.
7. Submit answers to application questions.
8. Submit two letters of recommendation from an advisor or supervisor. (These may be sent separately.)
9. Undergo a phone or on-site interview.
10. Commit to a minimum of 400 hours (32 –40 hours a week) for at least 10 weeks
11. Once selected, be willing to verify ability to swim.
12. Once selected, provide proof of a tetanus vaccination within the past 5 years.

**Please note:** Candidates may apply for multiple positions during one application period; however complete applications must be submitted for each position. Candidates may not apply for multiple seasons during one application period (applications will not be kept for future positions).

Please mail OR email completed application materials to:

[cathleen.mcconnell@pdza.org](mailto:cathleen.mcconnell@pdza.org)

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium  
Internship Program Coordinator  
Education Department  
5400 North Pearl Street  
Tacoma, WA 98407



Date received: \_\_\_\_\_

# POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM

## Aquarium Internship Application

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary Phone \_\_\_\_\_

College/University \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance/Graduation date \_\_\_\_\_ Major Field of study \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Professor sponsoring internship (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of credits received upon completion (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Courses and experience applicable to this internship:

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How did you learn of this internship? \_\_\_\_\_

**Desired season:**                      *Winter*              *Fall*              *Spring*              *Summer*

Dates available: \_\_\_\_\_

