

ASPCA Veterinary Forensic Science Center Externship Program

Description of Elective Experience:

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (“ASPCA”) is pleased to offer an externship opportunity for 3rd and 4th year veterinary students where they will spend two to four weeks at the ASPCA Veterinary Forensic Science Center (AVFSC) in Gainesville, Florida. The AVFSC is the nation’s first and only multidisciplinary forensic laboratory in the United States dedicated to animal cruelty casework involving companion and other domestic animals. The unpaid externship offers students a chance to experience the many different and unique challenges faced by veterinarians working in forensic medicine and anti-cruelty management. Our externship is offered to students who receive course credit or who are fulfilling degree requirements based on their successful participation in the externship. This externship promotes the application of forensic sciences to veterinary medicine to aid in the understanding, prevention, and prosecution of animal cruelty.

At the AVFSC, we receive deceased animals from agencies nationwide and assist them in performing forensic necropsies, skeletal analysis, and evidence collection. Additionally, our national response casework may require field deployment both within and out of state to assist with a range of large-scale alleged animal cruelty/neglect cases, such as animal hoarding, dogfighting, cockfighting, and inadequate breeding operations. The ASPCA complies with federal, state, and local travel restrictions and health advisories, and all externs will be required to comply with the ASPCA’s protocols, including its health and safety protocols.

No previous experience with veterinary forensic medicine or animal cruelty case management is necessary.

Institutional and Education Resources – staffing, equipment, etc.:

This unpaid externship is managed by the ASPCA’s Veterinary Forensic Science’s Team, currently staffed by 3 forensic veterinarians, a veterinary forensic assistant, and a forensic analyst. In addition to office and conference space, our facility is equipped with radiology capabilities, necropsy and dry laboratories, mobile response vehicles, and evidence storage.

Student Responsibilities – what is expected of students in terms of hours, days of the week, shadowing or actual support:

Externs are expected to be present for a 40-hour week, Monday through Friday, for the duration of the externship. During this time the externs will be exposed to basic concepts of forensic veterinary medicine. The externs will participate in the intake of new cases submitted by law enforcement. Additionally, the externs will assist with forensic necropsies, practice writing forensic reports, practice photography, process their own mock cruelty case, and ride along with a local animal cruelty investigator. At the end of the rotation, each extern is required to present a 40-minute lecture on the topic of their choice related to veterinary forensic sciences. Several learning modules, journal articles, and other materials specifically focused on veterinary forensics will be made available to the externs.

Additionally, the externs may participate in any national deployments that arise. Deployment support may include crime scene investigation, evaluation of live victims of animal cruelty and possibly attending a criminal trial. Although externs will be required to cover housing, transportation to and from Gainesville, and other out-of-pocket expenses while in

Gainesville, in the event that an extern deploys with the ASPCA, all transportation and housing directly related to case deployment will be paid for by the ASPCA.

For further information, please contact:

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