

Externship Job Description

Position Title

- ❖ Veterinary Student Extern

Reports to

- ❖ Dr. Cindy Otto (Executive Director of the Penn Vet Working Dog Center. University of Pennsylvania College of Veterinarian Medicine Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine and on-site Veterinarian)

Approximate hours

- ❖ Week days 9am-5pm, contingent on medical emergencies
- ❖ Week day field trips with varying hours and possible weekend volunteer events

Overall job responsibility

- ❖ Primary: provide veterinary care for all on-site dogs, including preventative health, emergency care and daily husbandry as needed under the direction of Dr. Otto
- ❖ Secondary: assist with dog training and facility upkeep

Key duties

- ❖ Provide daily medical care for animals with new or ongoing health issues
 - Dr. Otto should always be consulted before finalizing therapy or with questions
 - 215-783-2018
 - Contacting a volunteer veterinarian is also appropriate
- ❖ Monitor/provide preventative health strategies: monthly parasite prevention, vaccinations, diet changes, physical therapy etc
- ❖ Ensure that the Animal Husbandry Area is clean and the medical cabinets organized
- ❖ Maintain complete records (all forms are the file folder in the Animal Husbandry Area)
 - Document each complete/partial examination on the **Physical Exam Sheet**
 - Document ongoing issues with a **Progress Sheet**
 - Communicate clearly with fosters regarding at-home-care with the **Foster Update Sheet**. Oral communication is also preferred, and may be done through an intermediary that will be present when the dog is picked up in the evening
 - Maintain the main treatment white board with ongoing medical conditions
- ❖ Communicate with all dog trainers/volunteers regarding possible medical limitations any dog may have and if/when any treatments should be done
- ❖ Assist with examining each dog once weekly in conjunction with local volunteer veterinarians
- ❖ Assist with dog training/potty walks as time allows, according to trainer instructions and current training level
- ❖ Assist dog trainers by video recording, taking written notes, setting up training exercises or serving as a hider in the rubble pile or during building searches
- ❖ Offer assistance on weekly scheduled field trips or weekend events as available

Qualities of a good extern

- ❖ Previous dog handling skills are not required but will be helpful
- ❖ Must be eager and willing to learn
- ❖ Ask questions, and be ready to listen to the answer!
- ❖ Keen observational skills are beneficial
 - This includes observing the dogs while training, but also watching more experienced handlers to learn from their body language and techniques
- ❖ Patience and emotional control are needed in front of impressionable dogs both to excite when appropriate and to restrain from handler frustration most importantly. The WDC strives to always make training a positive experience for the dog!
- ❖ Willing to follow instructions
 - This will ensure your personal safety and that of the dogs
 - This will also help provide continuity of training, which the dogs receive in part from dozens of different handlers over many months. Continuity and consistency are key!

Tips

- ❖ Be ready to toss out previous dog training experiences if necessary. The WDC has very specific goals and means of achieving those goals with each dog. Be eager to adapt to the WDC system in order to provide the best, most consistent training method for the dogs.
- ❖ Watch the Crate Games video early in the externship.
- ❖ Read “Low Stress: Handling, Restraint and Behavior Modification of Dogs and Cats” by Sophia Yin if possible, early in the externship.
- ❖ Take each opportunity to go on field trips or to after-hours events. These trips will help build the human relationships that will last well after the externship visit, and give a glimpse into the working dog world.

Sample day

Arrive at 9am and check-in with handlers/fosters regarding issues arising overnight or from any ongoing health concerns being monitored. Perform necessary morning treatments including for example: treating one dog for an ongoing ear infection (this includes a potty walk and a brief training session to teach the dog to accept ear medications), cleaning a small wound that occurred yesterday evening on another dog and getting a brief history on a dog that had loose stool overnight. Ensure that all physical exam sheets and progress sheets are filled out. Update the treatment white board in the main training room. This process can take anywhere from half an hour to a couple hours depending on the day and the number of sick dogs involved.

After completion of the morning’s medical treatments, seek out the dog trainers and see which ones need help for the day. Each day will usually consist of training sessions in the morning and afternoon, either in the outlying buildings or on the rubble pile, and often require 4-6+ people to accomplish. Offer to handle dogs, gather equipment, act as hider or record video or sheet information. Each job is vital, and contributes to the ability of the Working Dog Center to function as a training and research institution. Many shorter training sessions are also held in the

main blue-matted treatment room throughout the day and assistants are often needed. Other training occurs in the surrounding complex or at local field trip sites.

Lunch usually occurs around noon, but this is flexible. Also, always be ready to shift gears if a medical issue arises with one of the dogs as this is your primary duty. Injury can occur while training or problems may be noticed by volunteers throughout the day. Lastly, allow time in the afternoon for any treatments that need completion before the dogs are picked up by their fosters for the evening. Ensure that the fosters have medication and a Foster Update Sheet prepared for them to take home if necessary. Also, either speak with the fosters directly, or leave word regarding overnight therapy with a closing volunteer that can talk with the foster. Direct communication helps avoid errors and ensures the best medical care. Dogs usually get picked up around 4-7pm, with the police-trained dogs often leaving sooner. Plan your day to have treatments done with foster pick-up times in mind.

Once afternoon medical treatments are completed, potty walks and facility cleaning are often done at the end of the day between 4-7pm after training is complete.