



Marine Mammal Internship

The internship begins with an orientation program, which is inclusive of all departments at Dolphin Quest, to provide the intern with a comprehensive understanding of our company, our mission, our program and our expectations of them. The Marine Mammal Internship allows our interns to accomplish a multitude of goals during their time with us, depending on their personal progression.

Goals for Marine Mammal Interns

The goals for the Marine Mammal Internship were developed to match the mission, vision, and values of our company. It is our belief that these goals will be transferable to any marine facility or organization that the intern chooses for their future. To that end, the goals for the Marine Mammal Interns include, but are not limited to:

- Learning to provide unique and innovative experiences for our guests with our dolphins
- Developing skills to interact with guests and promote marine stewardship
- Cultivating a work environment of trust and respect for every individual
- Learning the importance of character and integrity in a professional environment
- Learning to communicate openly and honestly
- Developing creativity
- Providing an opportunity for personal and professional growth
- Having lots of fun and enjoying themselves at work
- Experiencing and learning about animal health and well-being
- Becoming global stewards
- Developing a strong sense of professionalism
- Learning to deliver sensational service

Marine Mammal Internship – Areas of Focus

Health and Care of our Animals

Interns will assist marine mammal specialists in the overall daily care of the dolphins, which will include daily food prep, habitat maintenance, health assessments, feeding, enriching, and possibly training. A mentor system is used wherein marine mammal specialists are paired with each intern and teach them skills using successive



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approximations. The interns learn training theory by shadowing and observing our marine mammal specialists demonstrating the practical application. After sufficiently shadowing our specialists, the interns will get opportunities for supervised practical application with the dolphins. Each progression is critiqued and signed off by a marine mammal specialist before the intern advances to the next level. The timing of the progression will be based on the individual's competencies and skills, but could follow as such:

- Learn, understand, and perform proper animal diet preparation
- Learn correct operation of facility resources
- Learn to identify the animal collection
- Understand animal compatibility
- Learn how to feed
- Learn how to perform the dolphin daily assessment and reason for performing routine daily checkups
- Build knowledge of husbandry behavior and criteria
- Continue to study and learn behavior signals for each animal
- Practice with single animal stationing and feeds
- Assist marine mammal specialist with behavioral training goals
- Backup assistance during an Encounter Program
- Practice program delivery to program participants
- Assess guests' and animals' needs in delivering a program and assist with program coordination and animal separation

Education, Conservation and Global Stewardship

Interns will develop interpretive skills that will help them connect with guests and provide information using an approach that makes the information relevant to the guest. Basic information will be provided during orientation. From there, the interns will assist with Quest Engagement, which provides the opportunity to have one-on-one conversations with visitors regarding dolphins, other marine animals, the marine environment, and conservation. In addition, interns will learn to deliver informal presentations to guests visiting our site. Interns may have the opportunity to assist in teaching various children's programs. These programs are based on fun, educational activities that include information about marine life and conservation.

Sensational Service



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During orientation, interns participate in a discussion on what is meant by sensational service, why it is important, techniques for delivering sensational service, and an explanation of our fifteen “Customer Service Standards”.

Professionalism and Teamwork

Throughout the internship program, interns are held accountable for skills such as open and honest communication, working as a team, developing mutual trust and respect, the importance of character and integrity, and a strong sense of professionalism and proper behavior in a work environment. The goal is to help interns succeed professionally in any chosen field.

Additional learning opportunities

Interns will spend about 60% of their time working on the marine mammal team, and about 40% of their time with guest services working with the photography and education teams.

Dolphin Quest Lecture Series

Throughout their time here, our interns participate in the Dolphin Quest Lecture Series (DQLS) to gain a comprehensive knowledge of our company, Bottlenose dolphins, and behavioral training theory. There are 9 modules with corresponding quizzes that are written and approved by the Dolphin Quest Community that our interns are expected to participate in. Interns must achieve a score of 80% or higher on each quiz to constitute a passing grade. There may be a comprehensive final exam at the end of the internship, up to the intern coordinator’s discretion. Many interns can receive college credit for completion of the DQLS.