



Animal Care Specialist Intern: Primates

This internship supports Brookfield Zoo Chicago by assisting with the daily care and welfare of primates in Tropic World and Bramsen Tropical Forests. This hands-on experience is ideal for individuals pursuing careers in animal care, primatology, zoology, biology, conservation, or related fields.

Interns work closely with Animal Care Specialists to learn husbandry practices and the management of a wide variety of primates. As one of the largest indoor mixed-species exhibits in the world, Tropic World represents tropical rainforests of South America, Asia, and Africa and includes eight different animal runs housing numerous primate and mammal species. Species housed here include western lowland gorillas, white-cheeked gibbons, orangutans, spider monkeys, Colobus monkeys, and more. Interns serving a 12-week term will rotate through most areas of Tropic World and Bramsen Tropical Forests, assisting with habitat maintenance, diet preparation, routine animal observations, and daily guest interactions.

Through mentorship and assigned readings, interns gain practical experience in animal husbandry, mixed-species exhibit management, record keeping, diet preparation, and tropical rainforest conservation. Interns are introduced to positive reinforcement training and develop strong behavioral observation skills.

In addition to daily responsibilities, interns complete a supervised research or project-based assignment developed with their mentor. Interns work in a collaborative, fast-paced environment and are expected to demonstrate professionalism, adaptability, and a strong commitment to animal welfare.

This internship offers a comprehensive introduction to professional primate care and prepares participants for future careers in animal care and conservation.

AT A GLANCE

PAY RATE: Unpaid

HOURS/WEEK: Full Time (35+ hours/week)

COMMITMENT: 10-12 weeks

LOCATION: Onsite at Brookfield Zoo Chicago

PREREQUISITE: At least 1 year of college credit & experience

COLLEGE CREDIT: Available upon request



Position Details: Primates

Physical Requirements

Animal Care Specialist positions are physically demanding, and interns may be subjected to a variety of physical demands and environmental factors and exposures. Candidates must have the ability to perform essential functions with or without reasonable accommodations, such as:

- Ability to stand, walk, kneel, or squat for extended periods.
- Ability to lift up to 50 pounds regularly
- Comfort working outdoors in varying and extreme weather conditions, including inclement weather, extreme heat, and cold temperatures.

All interns, regardless of proximity to animals, must have an up to date TDAP (Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis) vaccination (booster within the last 10 years) and test negative for TB (Tuberculosis) within the last 12 months.

Scheduling Expectations

Brookfield Zoo Chicago operates 365 days a year. Schedules vary by position, but may include weekends, holidays, early mornings, and evenings. Successful interns exemplify a positive attitude, strong work ethic, an eagerness to learn, and an ability to work effectively both in a team and independently. Given the competitive landscape of professional animal care, candidates should be mindful of the following scheduling requirements:

- Must be willing to commit to 10-12 weeks in a term, not to exceed 480 total hours.
- Availability is required for the full internship term, including weekdays, weekends, holidays, early mornings, and evenings.
- Schedules may change based on animal and departmental needs, with advance notice provided whenever possible.
- Any anticipated scheduling conflicts should be disclosed during the interview process.

Preferred Qualifications

- Preference is given to those who have completed at least 2 years of college.
- Multilingual ability, Spanish fluency a plus.