UP- SAAMBR Aquatic Internship

2025 | 2026

Scope:

Building on the University of Pretoria Faculty of Veterinary Science's mandate to pioneer where there is need, to offer solutions to local and global challenges and to grow thinkers and veterinary world-changers, the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Veterinary Science and the South African Association for Marine Biological Research (SAAMBR) are proud to offer our collaborative one-year rotating Aquatic Internship in Aquaculture and Aquatic Veterinary Medicine.

This first-of-its-kind internship on the African continent encompasses teaching and mentorship through the Onderstepoort Aquatic Veterinary Health Unit, Department of Paraclinical Sciences, the SAAMBR Animal Health Department, and private aquatic practice (African Aquatic Veterinary Services), with optional inclusion for the student of a variety of other aquatic experiences. Interns are offered opportunity to gain hands-on and research experience in the Aquatic Health Unit programs, research and daily activities at Ushaka Marine world , engage with industry and aquaculture farmers, experience day- to- day aquatic private practice in South Africa and assist in the ongoing ground-breaking work within the scope of aquatic veterinary medicine inclusive of participation in and contribution to the University of Pretoria Aquatic Animal Health Program's training courses, and internal Faculty/SAAMBR and/or contract research programs.

Purpose:

The need for skilled aquatic veterinary capacity and day -one competency in aquatic animal health in Africa is overwhelming, but globally current curricula struggle to accommodate additional subjects and material to meet this need. By definition, and through sound training

in basic case approach, qualified South African veterinarians are already able to readily master the basics of working up a clinical case or population health challenge. However, significant differences exist between aquatic and terrestrial animals. With a hands-on approach, the internship will give the candidates the opportunity to learn, research, be supported and mentored and eventually take on responsibility for cases, under the eye of the attending aquatic veterinarians.

Overview:

The aquatic internship program forms the first year of a two- year postgraduate research MSc degree.

The internship program is designed with two standard components:

- **Five months based at the UP Aquatic Veterinary Health unit, on-farm aquaculture experiences and private aquatic clinical practice** (inclusive of optional periods at the DFFE Marine Laboratory and Lesotho Highland trout farms)

  The period spent at UP, aquaculture farms, and private practice offers veterinary experience and training in the areas of aquaculture and mariculture, koi and ornamental aquatic medicine, imaging and surgery, aquatic disease surveillance and biosecurity, pathology and histopathology, zebrafish research facility health, teaching and training, community outreach, research and regional aquatic health contributions.

  Optional time at the DFFE Marine Laboratory-Sea-point would offer students additional exposure to: research aquarium health management and biosecurity, molluscan shellfish disease surveillance and laboratory processing of aquatic samples.

  The optional period spent at the Lesotho Highlands commercial trout farms offers hands-on experience, mentorship, and exposure to various aspects of aquaculture veterinary medicine on one of two of the largest trout farms in Lesotho. The intern will have the chance to work alongside experienced professionals, participate in a variety of farm procedures alongside the farm health manager, and engage in shadowing activity with the veterinary staff. This offers opportunity to gain practical veterinary and business experience in commercial trout aquaculture systems.

- **Five months at SAAMBR**
  The period at SAAMBR offers experience in marine aquatic animal medicine, clinical pathology, marine mammals, diagnostic imaging, life support systems management and water quality assessments, fish husbandry, quarantine, reproduction, nutrition, behaviour, welfare, as well as aspects of conservation medicine.

The internship is structured to fulfil the first year of a postgraduate research MSc degree through the faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria. The student's research topic will be selected to align with both industry needs and candidate interest within the field of aquatic veterinary medicine. The student is expected to register for the MSc degree and complete the compulsory VM Research methodology modules within the internship year, and use the first year's internship experience to guide the research topic selection.

The student will spend the first two weeks split between Onderstepoort and Ushaka to allow for basic orientation within each facility and offer a taste of the year ahead.

All parties sharing responsibilities for the internship program will ensure that the candidate is mentored, taught and involved in real time work situations and effort is taken to expose them to as broad and realistic aquatic work experience as possible, with increasing responsibility as the year progresses. The ten month program will be planned and structured personally in discussion with the selected candidate.

In addition, the year's program and exposure offers the candidate an ideal opportunity to register for and complete other part time online study opportunities.

Minimum requirements:

- BVSc-degree or BVMCh or equivalent professional veterinary qualification
- Registration/Authorisation as a Veterinarian with the SAVC
- Acknowledged clinical expertise
- Adequate subject knowledge necessary for the post
- Computer skills for presentation, word- processing and spread-sheets
- Appropriate language and communication skills
- Good interpersonal skills
- Valid working visa (where relevant)

Recommendations:

- A publication or draft of a case or research material in the aquatic field
- Experience in clinical aquatic medicine
- Commitment to further academic development

Responsibilities:

General work-related responsibilities:

The candidate is expected to be committed, timeous, responsible, and enthusiastic.

The candidate is responsible for his/her accommodation, travel to and from work.

While at SAAMBR, the candidate will be supplied with a SAAMBR uniform. Time at SAAMBR will include a rotational on-call support service for the facility at the discretion of the attending veterinarians.

Together with the Onderstepoort Aquatic Club (OPAC) fish room management team, the candidate will assist with day-to day running of the fish room unit, mitigating any problems and assisting with its development and growth. This includes, but is not limited to monitoring, water testing, general tank husbandry, aquatic unit research projects and other initiatives.

The candidate will assist with contributing to UP aquatic training programs and modules during the year, for farmers, hobbyists, para-veterinarians and veterinarians and assist with any contract research projects' design and implementation.

The candidate will serve as a representative of both UP and SAAMBR, as well as veterinary aquatic health in Africa.

For each rotation the candidate will be given growing responsibility to manage cases and is expected to keep case logs, enter all medical records, clinical notes, procedures and prescriptions, post-mortem evaluations, diagnostic tests and results of cases into appropriate record databases, and research cases.

Clinical instruction of veterinary students and informal case presentations will form part of the intern's responsibilities.

External facility responsibilities

DFFE marine laboratory Sea-point:

If attending the above facility, the candidate will be expected to assist with projects and husbandry / biosecurity of animals kept at the aquarium. Secondly, they would accompany the field inspection team and participate in diseases surveillance activities (predominantly for molluscan shellfish). In doing this they will be exposed to current aquaculture industry / systems and different species. They would also be exposed to the laboratory processing of samples for both diagnostic and research purposes.

A desk and some lab bench space will be provided if needed. The interns will need to be self sufficient in terms of computer, Internet provision and IT support.

Aquavet Lesotho highlands commercial trout aquaponic facility:

This part of the internship is structured as a flexible 10-30 day rotation where the intern will remain in Lesotho on one or two farms over the period of the internship. The intern would be expected to dedicate themselves to the experience while on the farms in Lesotho. This means early starts varying 6-8am depending on the time of the year and 8+ hour days, with one break day within a two week period. The intern is expected to adhere to professional standards of conduct, including punctuality, respect for colleagues and clients, and confidentiality and approach each opportunity with curiosity, enthusiasm, and a willingness to learn. Interns are encouraged to take initiative in seeking learning opportunities, asking questions, and actively participating in all the farm/veterinary activities.

The intern needs to arrange their own transport to and from Bloemfontein. All transport and accommodation needs and costs between Bloemfontein and the farm/s. will be covered.

2025 Year program:

Starting rotation dates:

Monday 3rd February 2025 (first intake) or

Monday 7th July 2025 (second intake)

Completion date:

Friday 28th November 2025 (first intake)

Friday 3rd July 2026 (second intake)

Period	Venue	Supervisor
03.02.25- 14.02.25	ORIENTATION 1 week UP, 1 week Ushaka	Drs Gillian Taylor and Francois Lampen
17.02.25- 04.07.25 (first intake) 14.07.25- 28.11.25 (Second intake)	UP AQUATIC UNIT & AFRICAN AQUATIC VETERINARY SERVICES	Dr Gillian Taylor (Extra-ordinary lecturer UP, Certified Aquatic veterinarian)
	DFFE MARINE LAB. SEAPOINT (optional)	Dr Kevin Christison (Aquatic scientist)
	ON-FARM AQUACULTURE EXPERIENCE	Dr Gillian Taylor & affiliated aquaculture farms

07.07.25-28.11.25 (first intake) 09.02.26- 26.06.26 (second intake)	SAAMBR	Dr Francois Lampen (Chief Veterinarian)

Day to day program:

The period at SAAMBR includes rotational weekend on-call support service. Morning rounds start at 07h30. Duties continue until 16h30, with a 1 hour/15 minute lunch/tea break.

The period at UP is loosely structured and defined on a week to week basis according to case loads and activities.

Leave offered: 5 days leave per rotation

Anticipated key involvements and outcomes of the Internship:

- Hands-on work experience, apprenticeship and mentoring with goal to achieve Day-one competency and work-readiness in aquatic veterinary medicine
- UP/SAAMBR accredited certification
- Registration and consolidation towards a University of Pretoria postgraduate aquatic focused-research MSc degree
- Potential to qualify for a future international aquatic/zoo medicine residency program.
- Broad exposure to the world of aquatics and global aquatic community inclusive of key aquaculture species, aquaria and marine mammal health management, zebra-fish research facility health management, pet-fish, and Koi.
- Integration and involvement within current and relevant aquatic developments and projects within the hosting organizations, inclusive of aquaculture associations, aquatic ethics committees, lecturing, undergraduate student support and training, workshops and conferences etc.
- Work experience should meet the above objectives through acquisition of knowledge, skills and experience within the following key areas , through the year:
    1 The aquatic environment and life support systems
    2. Taxonomy, anatomy and physiology
    3. Aquatic animal husbandry and industry
    4. Pathobiology and epidemiology of aquatic animal diseases
    5. Diagnostics and treatment of aquatic animal diseases
    6. Clinical veterinary experience and client communications
    7. Public health, zoonoses, and food safety
    8. Legislation, regulation and policies
    9. Aquatic Welfare

10. Biosecurity, national and regional health

Financial support:

The all-inclusive stipend package for this internship position will be:

R50 000 per UP rotation (R10 000 per month) (UP, Dept. Paraclinical Sciences, Aquatic Unit)

R25 000 per SAAMBR rotation (R5 000 per month) (SAAMBR)

Application:

Applicants are requested to apply online, quoting the applicable reference number.

In Applying for this internship, please attach the following documentation:

- Self-evaluation letter
- A comprehensive CV
- Names, e-mail addresses and telephone details of three references whom we have permission to contact.

CLOSING DATE: 1st November 2024 (first intake), 1st April 2025 (second intake)

- New graduates are encouraged to apply
- No application will be considered after the closing date, or if it does not comply with at least the minimum requirements.

ENQUIRIES: Dr Gillian Taylor (gillian@aquaticvet.co.za) or Dr Francois Lampen (flampen@seaworld.co.za) for enquiries relating to the post content

MS MB Nyathela, bernice.nyathela@up.ac.za for application related enquiries

All candidates who comply with the requirements for appointment are invited to apply.

Should you not hear from the University of Pretoria by 30th November 2024 (first intake) or 30th April 2025 (second intake) please accept that your application has been unsuccessful.