



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF POPULATION HEALTH
College of Veterinary Medicine
Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study

SCWDS Externship – Overview and Commonly Asked Questions

What are the goals of the externship?

We aim to expose SCWDS externs to a variety of aspects of wildlife population health. This includes familiarization with (1) the role of veterinarians in maintenance of healthy, free-ranging wildlife populations; (2) the interfaces of wildlife management and health, public health, agricultural health, and environmental health; and (3) a variety of common (and uncommon) causes of morbidity and mortality among free-ranging wildlife. The treatment of individual wild animals for illness or injuries is **not** an aspect of this rotation.

What are the major activities of externs at SCWDS?

The majority of the externship is spent with the SCWDS Diagnostic Service, assisting in investigating causes of death in a variety of wildlife species, the majority of which are mammalian and avian. This includes activities such as performing necropsies, collecting and processing diagnostic samples, presenting cases at rounds, and writing portions of diagnostic reports. In the mornings/before necropsy, externs will also be expected to help prepare for necropsy (e.g. logging and unpacking specimens, appropriately labeling sample containers). During necropsy, externs will take detailed notes on their cases for their gross report write-ups. Externs will be responsible for their cases and should expect to read up on their cases and discuss what they have learned under the guidance of the service diagnosticians. In addition, all SCWDS externs perform an externship project focused on some aspect of wildlife health, in line with the mission of SCWDS and the interests of our state and federal agency partners (<https://vet.uga.edu/education/academic-departments/population-health/southeastern-cooperative-wildlife-disease-study/>). These may focus on a specific wildlife species or disease entity, or may involve research into an emerging wildlife disease. Topics are generally chosen soon after the extern's arrival and culminate in an oral presentation and written product at the end of the externship.

Externs are also encouraged to interact with SCWDS faculty, staff, and graduate students, as well as neighboring Dept. of Pathology, as motivated by their own professional interests and goals.

When is the best time to do a SCWDS externship?

The diagnostic service receives cases year-round, and case load is unpredictable but is generally highest in the summer and fall. We also look for opportunities for externs to get into the field on a variety of research and surveillance projects, which are more common during summer. However, these opportunities are intermittent and unpredictable.

How do I apply for a SCWDS externship?

The initial application should include a cover letter expressing your interest and why you think you would be a good fit for the externship, as well as current CV. These materials should be sent by email to Patricia Flaherty (*email: paf@uga.edu*).

How do I schedule my externship?

Scheduling is made with staff at SCWDS via Patricia Flaherty (*email: paf@uga.edu*). Scheduling is on a first-come, first-serve basis and generally fills up approximately one year ahead of time, although it is worth checking if your desired dates are within the next year, as sometimes openings are available at specific times. Please provide the inclusive dates (*not block numbers*) you would like to come, as well as several back-up dates if possible. Once you are scheduled at SCWDS, you will hear from the UGA externship coordinator, Ms. Sarah Jaworski (*email: sarah.jaworski@uga.edu*) who will provide additional guidance, including information exchange.

What is the minimum and maximum number of weeks allowed for the externship? Externships are a minimum of three weeks and maximum of 6 weeks.

At what stage of veterinary school training should the externship be scheduled?

The externship is targeted for veterinary students in their fourth/final year of training. In some cases, 3rd year externs may be accepted. It is greatly beneficial if you have had a pathology/necropsy clinical rotation at your institution prior to the externship.

Is it required that the externship be taken for credit at the home University of the applicant? Yes – this is a requirement based on liability reasons at the University of Georgia (UGA). At UGA, the externship is listed under Wildlife Population Health/SCWDS (POPH 5410).

Please visit <https://vet.uga.edu/education/academic-departments/population-health/southeastern-cooperative-wildlife-disease-study/scwds-externships/> for additional information regarding this program.