The Internship at Ocean State Veterinary Specialists

The internship at Ocean State Veterinary Specialists participates in the annual VIRMP match program. However, there are positions available for graduates who are graduating in the fall or winter, and able to start their program in October or February. This is a unique opportunity for these students, as other internship programs typically start in June.

The Facility:

Ocean State Veterinary Specialists is a privately owned, 24-hour hospital providing emergency and specialty referral services to the state of Rhode Island as well as parts of Massachusetts and Connecticut. The hospital is approximately 26,000sf, including three surgery suites with advanced equipment for both soft tissue and orthopedic surgeries including laparoscopy equipment. Endoscopy equipment includes a digital video monitor. Radiology equipment includes digital radiography and a high resolution ultrasound machine, a CT scanner, Fluoroscopy, and full time, on-site MRI. The fully-equipped intensive care unit includes oxygen cages, mechanical ventilators, telemetric electrocardiography, defibrillator, pulse oximetry, and blood pressure monitors. In house diagnostic equipment includes blood gas and electrolyte monitors, and CBC, chemistry and coagulation analyzers. Advanced therapeutics are available including transfusion products, parenteral nutrition, peritoneal dialysis, and radioactive iodine therapy. The lack of corporate influence allows medicine to dictate what we do, not profit. And we strive to keep our fees as affordable as possible, and help as many pets and their families as possible.

The Staff:

The staff includes specialists in internal medicine, surgery, radiology, oncology, neurology, emergency/critical care, cardiology, ophthalmology, avian/exotic medicine and clinical pathology. There are three criticalists, and approximately twenty full-time, internship trained and experienced emergency doctors, who are a vital source of support for the interns, especially on nights and weekends. There are 2-3 residents in Emergency/Critical Care and two Surgery residents.

The support staff includes highly trained technicians, many of whom are certified and several also have specialty certifications. The ICU technicians are capable of placing central catheters, performing advanced patient monitoring, trouble-shooting ventilator cases, etc.

The Internship:

The 12 1/2 month internship has an emphasis on emergency medicine and critical care. The intern will spend approximately 60% of his/her time on emergency or inpatient shifts. During these shifts the intern will have access to specialists and experienced emergency doctors for consultation. Extensive daily case rounds ensure that the intern has the opportunity to learn from each case he/she sees as well as cases being managed by other doctors. The intern will also spend time on surgery, internal medicine, and elective rotations. In addition to case rounds, there are weekly didactic rounds for the interns presented by the various specialists. The intern is expected to participate in the teaching of technicians and visiting student externs. The internship is designed to expose the participant to the various specialties, allowing the intern to develop a special interest to pursue in a residency, but also providing a broad education in high quality medicine and surgery which will be valuable in any type of future practice. Previous interns have routinely expressed that they felt very well prepared for the jobs they went into because of their OSVS experience. The internship is designed to prepare doctors for residency, emergency work, and high quality private practices.
East Greenwich is in the middle of the state of Rhode Island on the west shore of Narragansett Bay. It is close to scenic Newport and coastal beaches, and approximately one hour from Boston. For further information please contact Dr. Justine Johnson at jjohnson@osvs.net, and visit our website at www.osvs.com.

**The Details:**

-Schedule: The interns rotate through a schedule that includes medicine, surgery, elective time (for other specialties), and varying emergency rotations. Elective rotations can include Ophthalmology, Radiology, Oncology, Neurology, Avian/ExoticsCardiology, Clinical Pathology, and Community Practice (in a local low-income clinic). On elective weeks, the intern works 4 days with the specialists, and one weekend day of ER. When on emergency weeks, the intern may be on a primary receiving shift and seeing emergency cases, or may be on a mainly inpatient management shift working with patients that presented to the emergency service. The interns do work overnight shifts as part of the emergency rotations, but they are paired with an experienced emergency doctor.

The interns work 5 days a week, with a guaranteed 2 days off a week. These two days are not always together, and there is only one full weekend off 8 week period. On days off, the intern has no clinical responsibility, and need only come in if there is a pre-planned didactic event. The interns get two weeks of vacation, but must work two of the major holidays (i.e. Thanksgiving, Christmas, or New Years) and most of the minor holidays.

-The intern must be prepared to be in the hospital from 10 to 13 hours a day when on emergency weeks. This is typical. Pets cannot come to the hospital during normal shifts, so necessary arrangements should be made for them.

-Primary Case Management Responsibility: Interns are expected to function as doctors from the first day after orientation. They are the primary doctor on their cases, and handle all of the client communications, medical record keeping, etc. They are able to seek advice and support from numerous sources, but ultimately the decisions on their cases are theirs. Students anticipating applying for this internship should take full advantage of their clinical year of veterinary school to “practice” being a doctor so they are ready.

-Skills: The typical intern will have had the opportunity to gain most of the skills needed to be able to practice general medicine or emergency medicine, and have a strong foundation to prepare them to be residents in any discipline. Skills that will definitely be mastered include: patient stabilization, CPR, thoracentesis, abdominocentesis, AFAST/TFAST, wound management, tracheal wash, bone marrow aspirate/biopsy, basic soft tissue surgeries, and much more.

-Compensation/Benefits: OSVS provides one of the most generous compensation packages available for interns. The salary is $48,000 a year, with ample opportunity to pick up extra shifts for additional compensation. Health insurance is completely paid for by the hospital, as are all state licensing and DEA fees, state VMA membership, and liability insurance. Interns also get two weeks of paid vacation.

****Please visit our website: www.osvs.com ****
Why do an internship?

We understand that many students will be graduating with significant debt, and will have spent their entire remembered life in school – it is understandable to want to go out into practice and start your professional life. There are also an increasing number of mentors in the profession who are steering students away from internship if they are not planning to pursue a residency.

Here at OSVS, we have had an internship in place for almost 20 years. All of our emergency doctors completed an internship (it is a requirement) and many completed our internship. The unanimous opinion of both the specialists here and the emergency doctors is that the transformation that happens in a doctor’s skill set, confidence, knowledge, and communication skills over the course of a high quality one-year internship is extraordinary. Graduates of the internship are highly sought after by respected specialty hospitals and general practices.

There is some research suggesting that the earning potential of someone doing an internship may not be significantly higher than for someone who goes straight into practice. Our experience has been that the offers that our internship graduates get are higher than average starting salaries. But earning potential is not the only reason to pursue internship. We all know that stress and burnout are serious problems in our profession. Quality of life is not measured only in hours of time off and money earned, but also in job satisfaction, self-confidence and a feeling of self-worth. Our doctors consistently tell us that they feel they are the best doctors they can be because of the internship and time spent in this hospital. They know that they can figure out what is wrong with a pet, and counsel the pet owner through all necessary decisions with confidence, clarity, and good judgement. They no longer feel the anxiety one has when feeling unprepared to deal with what might come through the door. Our interns manage a very high caseload, but with the supervision and guidance of a team of truly exceptional doctors. They are ready to thrive in whatever professional position they take on.

An internship is required for virtually all residency programs. While a student may not plan to pursue a residency, having that door open for them in the future can provide a needed life change opportunity. Pursuing an internship after years of practice can be difficult. While a year may seem like a long time to commit, it is a transformative year, and will set you up for decades of practice as a truly great doctor. We encourage any interested students to speak with current and former interns to get their take on the value of this training opportunity.