

## **UAF Externship Opportunities 2025-2026**

The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) is offering veterinary medicine externships for matriculating veterinary students from other colleges (in their final or next to final clinical year). Students may work in conjunction with local (Fairbanks, Alaska) Alaska state agencies, the lead veterinarian of the Yukon Quest, rural veterinarians, state agencies and veterinary research faculty at UAF.

Through this program, students will be exposed to the unique aspects of veterinary medicine in Alaska. From modern clinics with new equipment (digital x-ray, ultrasound, endoscopy, etc.), to spay and neuter opportunities in rural communities (off the road system), these externships promise to be valuable to any student thinking of practicing in Alaska, or students who want a unique cultural experience.

In order to participate, you must recognize that Alaska is remote, specialists are not often available, and particularly in the bush, incomes are low and the standard of care may be lower than what you have experienced in a referral institution.

Visits are limited to six weeks (with no more than four weeks on one service). Requests for extension will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Demonstrated competence and proficiency in both spoken and written English language skills are required to facilitate the educational process and client communications.

We are accepting applications from veterinary students to participate in this program. The veterinarian in charge of the specific externship experience that students apply for will make final selections. Students from all tracks are encouraged to apply.

**Application Instructions** - Please attach your current curriculum vitae or resume and a one-page essay describing your interest in the program, how it will benefit you and describe what skills and perspective you can bring to Alaska. All students must provide two references from current mentors or faculty. Applications must be submitted to [uaf-vet-med@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-vet-med@alaska.edu).

Colorado students send your application to Krista Pfeiffer at [Krista.Pfeiffer@colostate.edu](mailto:Krista.Pfeiffer@colostate.edu) and copy [uaf-vet-med@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-vet-med@alaska.edu).

To be accepted, students must have written approval from their home University and two letters of reference from faculty in their department.

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**Sled Dog Externships** – offered both in Alaska and the lower 48 (Wyoming)  
*Application Deadline for Dog Sled Externships: **August 1, 2025** – selections completed September 2025.*

#### Alaskan sled dog races (CB300 and YQA550)

Both of these races take place in the middle of the Alaskan winter. It can get **very cold**. Temperatures of - **40° F are common, temperatures of -50° to -60° F** are not unheard of. You will be expected to work **outside** in these temperatures, **day or night**. The CB300 and YQA run 24 hours a day, 7 days a week until all teams have finished. The veterinary teams live out of suitcases for the entirety of the race and are prepared to move at a moments notice. Be prepared to go several days without indoor plumbing, a warm bed or a shower. There are checkpoints where you will be sleeping on the floor of a gymnasium, in a running car, an Arctic oven tent, or in the cab of a fire truck. The ability to work well in a small team while sleep deprived is a must!

**Copper Basin 300 Sled Dog Race** ([www.cb300.com](http://www.cb300.com)) - Up to 2 students working with the Veterinarian in Charge (Dr. Cristina “Nina” Hansen DVM PhD) and with trail veterinarians.

- Week 1 - January 5, 2026: Orientation and training, drive to Glennallen (1/8/25), pre-race vet checks (1/9), race start on 1/10/26
- Week 2 - January 11, 2026: on the trail of the race. Teams will finish 1/11-12, 2026. Finish banquet evening of 1/13. Drive back to Fairbanks 1/14. Race wrap up 1/15-16.

**Yukon Quest 550 Alaska** ([www.yukonquestalaska.com](http://www.yukonquestalaska.com)) – Up to 2 students working with the Veterinarian in Charge and trail veterinarians. Exact race dates are still TBD, but usually takes place approximately the last week in January/first week of February.

- Week 1: Orientation and training, pre-race meetings, pre-race vet checks. Race starts.
- Week 2: On the trail of the race! Teams will finish, finish banquet.

The Stage Stop Sled Dog Race is the largest annual sled dog race in the lower 48 states. The race is a Stage Stop format much like the Tour de France. The race starts in Jackson, Wyoming and makes stops in several Wyoming communities and finishes in Driggs, Idaho. There are 8 daily stage races of 30-35 miles in length over 9 days and the fastest teams average 18 miles/hour. Mushers may choose up to 10 of a 14-dog pool to run each stage. This is a fast-paced sled dog race. Race veterinarians are skilled in orthopedic palpation and are required to have advanced sports medicine training.

**Wyoming Stage Stop** sled dog race (<https://www.wyomingstagestop.org/>) - Up to 2 students working with lead veterinarian (Dr. Veronica Devall DVM DACVSMR) and 3 other seasoned race veterinarians for the duration of the race. Exact externship dates are still TBD, but will fall approximately January 26, 2026 – February 8, 2026

- Week 1 Orientation and training, pre-race vet checks, ceremonial start
- Week 2 Stage races begin at scheduled sites. Race ends, finish banquet.

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### Small Animal Practice Externship

Aurora Animal Clinic, Dr. Barbara Cole DVM, CCRP: Caring and compassionate full service small animal practice with emphasis on rehabilitation and sports medicine. Available for up to 2 externs during a 4-week period during the summer of 2026. Student will get exposure to various aspects of small animal private practice including diagnostic imaging, general and orthopedic surgeries, internal medicine cases, wellness exams, rehabilitation, chemotherapy, etc. This is a busy clinic that works with the Department of Veterinary Medicine at UAF. Housing options are available if needed. Any questions about this rotation should be directed to [bcole@auroraanimal.com](mailto:bcole@auroraanimal.com).

### Marine Animal Health Externship

*Application Deadline for Marine Animal Health Externships: **Application period CLOSED for 2025-2026***

Dr. Hollmen's laboratory at the Alaska SeaLife Center: This opportunity will occur in Seward, Alaska, a world-class marine animal research and rehabilitation facility. The extern will learn about research centering on the One Health concept by participating in projects relating marine animal health and conservation in the Arctic, in the context of ecosystem health. Student opportunities involve laboratory research using physiological, molecular, and biochemical methods, animal health, and may involve an opportunity to participate in field investigations on marine ecology and disease epidemiology. The student will be able to shadow and may participate in veterinary procedures with the Alaska SeaLife Center veterinary team as schedule allows.

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