Thank you for your interest in joining the outstanding group of people who volunteer as part of the Seymour Center’s School Programs teaching crew. Our team of volunteers and interns brings the wonder and importance of marine science to life for thousands of students every year. We hope you’ll join us!

What is an internship? The Seymour Center’s School Programs Internship is an opportunity to gain experience teaching and interpreting marine science to visiting K-12 and Community College school groups. Interns also take on additional responsibilities for special projects and various clerical tasks essential to program operations.

What would I be doing as a school intern? Teams of multi-generational volunteers, interns, and staff work together to teach hands-on, marine science activity stations as part of thematic Discovery Labs to small groups of students (8 children max. per small group) in a classroom setting. Interns also lead interpretive tours for students (up to 20) to visit areas of the marine lab (including the marine mammal overlook, blue whale skeleton, invertebrate and shark touch pools, or elephant seal natural history and research station.) Tour stops and activities depend on grade level of the class attending. Interns work with all grade levels (K-12 through community college) and are required to help lead tours when teaching Discovery Labs. School interns also lead Reserved School Tours, an alternate program option for classes not participating in Discovery Labs. Read about Discovery Lab and Tours and Reserved School Tours at: http://seymourcenter.ucsc.edu/learn/students-teachers/ways-to-visit/

How is being an intern different than being a volunteer? Interns are volunteers, but typically work more hours on-site (6 or more hours per week). Other school volunteers typically work 2.75 hours per week. Because interns work more hours, they become more deeply involved in the daily functioning and responsibilities of school programs and special projects at the Seymour Center.

Benefits: Learn about local marine life and scientific research. Gain experience in public speaking, teaching, and interpreting marine science and research. Develop excellent group management skills for working with K-12 students. Regular enrichment lectures and field trips are offered to active volunteers/interns throughout the year. Opportunity to volunteer with summer marine science camps for youth.

Requirements: Responsible, reliable, and punctual with a positive attitude. Enjoy working with K-12 and college students. Desire to learn and communicate marine science and research to youth through hands-on activities and engaging interpretation. Ability to manage a group of schoolchildren. Ability to walk 1/3 mile, lift buckets of seawater for holding live marine animals. Enjoy working cooperatively with a team of other volunteers (ages 18-80), interns, and staff. Minimum 18 years of age. Experience working with K-12 youth preferred, but not required.

How do I become trained as a school intern? Each year we accept a limited number of new volunteers and interns to help teach our programs. We typically interview and select this group at the beginning of the school year when we hold our School Volunteer Training series. This is a series of half-day training sessions that take place in late September/early October.

As the school year progresses, we sometimes accept new volunteers and interns in December and/or February if additional assistance is needed. To train and prepare volunteers and interns coming onboard mid-school year, we require they watch a series of training videos recorded from the fall school volunteer training sessions. Training materials to help you prepare for all programs and tours is provided to all new volunteers and interns as well as coaching and mentoring from staff and veteran volunteers. Most training for interns coming onboard mid-year is “on the job,” therefore these folks need to be self-starters, willing to jump in and learn by doing from the outset.

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Minimum commitment: Teaching & Project Interns are expected to volunteer for a minimum of two quarters, preferably three (i.e. six or more months). Preference will be given to interns who commit to the entire school year. The total number of hours an intern needs to work depends on whether the intern wants to volunteer for credit (see below) or experience. Interns need to be available at least one day per week (Tuesday-Friday) from 8:15 AM – 1:15 PM for teaching. In addition to teaching and preparation time at home, interns are expected to schedule at least two additional hours per week to assist with administrative projects and/or to help lead Reserved School Tours, depending on need. Students are able to switch shifts on a quarterly basis to accommodate class schedules. Vacations can be covered by swapping shifts with other school volunteers or by arranging subs. 

NOTE: Seymour Center programs run through UCSC finals each quarter, as well as through a portion of winter break, and the entire spring break. Interns must arrange subs if they are unable to be present during these times.

Can I receive credit for interning? Interns can either work simply to gain experience and build a resume, or they can also arrange for credit if enrolled in a university or college. Non-credit internships have more flexibility. Interning for credit requires additional written work (see requirements below) because the student will receive an official evaluation and grade from their faculty sponsor for the course.

What are the requirements for credit? To receive 5 units of credit, interns must complete 150 hours of internship-related work (including training, prep time, reflective journaling, midterm, final analytical paper, special projects). The 150 hours is usually completed over the course of multiple quarters, and credit is given in the final quarter of the internship. Students must arrange a faculty sponsor for the internship. Preference is given to interns who commit to volunteering for one or more intern shifts over three consecutive quarters. Commitment to volunteering for at least two consecutive quarters is required. Days and shifts can be adjusted each quarter to work with students’ course schedules. 2-unit internships are also available requiring a total of 80 hours of work over the quarter.

What kind of credit would I be receiving? UCSC’s Environmental Studies offers an excellent internship program that provides additional support and guidance while you earn credit.

I am interested in a School Programs Internship. How do I apply? First, submit a volunteer application that can be downloaded from our website: http://seymourcenter.ucsc.edu/get-involved/internships/

Please include the following information either on your application or a separate sheet of paper:

1) Your major and expected graduation date.
2) Your availability Monday-Friday.
3) Are you interested in receiving credit? If so, 5 units (150 hours) or 2 units (80 hours)?

Send your application and supplemental information to:

Seymour Center Volunteer Services
Attn: School Programs Internships
100 Shaffer Road
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

E-mail: volunteers@ucsc.edu
FAX: (831) 459-1221

Applications will be reviewed, and selected candidates will be contacted for interviews as positions become available.