Research Placement Opportunity
2027-2028

Organisation's Contact Details:

Dartmoor Zoological Society
Sparkwell, Plymouth, PL7 5DG
01752 837645
www.dartmoorzoo.org.uk

Name and Job Title of Main Contact:

Louise Cox – Research and Welfare Officer

Organisation's main activity:

Hidden on the borders of the Dartmoor National Park, Dartmoor Zoo boasts a wonderful 33 acres of woodland, celebrating a wide range of exotic and native animals, including the biggest variety of big cats in the Southwest of England. Dartmoor Zoological Society is a charity which aims to promote the conservation, care and breeding of wildlife and endangered species. We encourage and develop public interest and awareness of the importance of ensuring the survival of species and diversity of life.

We achieve this through operating the zoo in a unique way. Not only do we educate public visitors through talks and educational literature, but we have an extensive education programme for schools, colleges and placements for children ranging from pre-school age through to university undergraduates. We are continuously undertaking research onsite to improve our animal welfare, whilst also sharing this knowledge with other animal charities and organisations around the country. We promote the charity through our social media channels, of which we have over 100,000 followers. We also host a range of events from fundraising days to corporate away days and weddings.

Brief Job Description – duties and responsibilities:

Dartmoor Zoological Society is seeking placement students for the role of 'voluntary research assistant' for the 2027-28 academic year. Candidates must be undertaking an animal or zoo-related degree, environmental science or psychology degree, be highly motivated and forward thinking.

In return you will gain experience within a BIAZA and WAZA accredited zoo research department, receiving regular tutorials from professional zoo staff.

The main responsibilities for this role include:

- Assisting the research department and representing the zoo in a positive, forward-thinking manner that will enable the department to be highly productive.
- To conduct, analyse and write up at least one research project whilst at the zoo with the guidance of the Research and Welfare Officer.
- To be trained to collect data for any ongoing research projects currently being carried out by the research department.
- Collect behavioural data on our aged animals for ongoing welfare monitoring.
- To present your research to staff at Dartmoor Zoo.
- You may have the opportunity to represent Dartmoor Zoo at relevant zoo conferences and present your research findings.

Current and previous research topics include nutritional studies, assessing the impact of visitor talks on animal behaviour, evaluating auditory enrichment for otters and birds and assessing the impact of enclosure moves.

Salary / Remuneration – Living / Travel allowance:

Reimbursement for work expenses only. Volunteers are provided polo tops and fleeces and a package of benefits including 40% discount on our catering provision.

How many placement slots are available: 2

Length of placements available: 9-10 months, depending on course requirements.

Start Date: September 2027

Application Procedure:

Please submit a CV and covering letter to research@dartmoorzoo.co.uk

Closing Date for applications:

6th December 2026

Proposed Interview Date

Week beginning 4th January (in person or online available).