

# **Alamo Feline Health Center Externship Program**

**Contact Information**

**Objectives**

**Practice Profile**

**Eligibility**

**Terms and Conditions**

**Participation Contract**

**Living Accommodations**

**Application**

## **1. Contact Information**

Address: Alamo Feline Health Center  
16201 San Pedro Avenue  
San Antonio, TX 78232

Phone: (210) 404-2287 (CATS)  
Fax: (210) 404-2285  
Web: [www.alamofeline.com](http://www.alamofeline.com)  
E-mail: [alamofelinehealthcenter@yahoo.com](mailto:alamofelinehealthcenter@yahoo.com)

Sponsors: Gary D. Norsworthy, DVM, DABVP (Feline)  
Lisa Durso , DVM, DABVP  
Amanda Whitman, DVM

Office Contact: Aimee Duffy, Practice Manager

## **2. Mission and Objectives**

It is our mission at Alamo Feline Health Center to give back to the veterinary profession by promoting educational opportunities for the young practitioners of tomorrow.

*It is our desire...*

To expose the student to the unique aspects of an all-feline practice environment.

To help the student build communication skills.

To help the student gain self-confidence.

To provide the student with practical experience which will assist him or her in career planning.

To facilitate the transition from the classroom to a clinical environment.

To familiarize the student with the dynamics of an all-feline caseload.

To help the student gain familiarity with the most common feline medical cases, surgical cases, and clinical skills required.

To expose the student to the ethical, legal, and financial aspects of private practice.

To provide the student experience in working with a team-oriented veterinary staff.

To help the student develop his or her interest in feline medicine and surgery.

To help the student improve his or her problem solving skills.

To help the student improve his or her knowledge base of feline medicine and surgery.

To help the student gain the habits of a professional.

To encourage the student to read current veterinary journals.

To provide an opportunity for the student to discuss current issues in feline medicine.

To provide the opportunity for practitioners to contribute to the development of future veterinarians and to foster the mentor relationship within the profession.

### 3. Practice Profile

Species: 100% Feline

Staff: 3 Veterinarians  
1 Practice Manager  
8 Veterinary Technicians  
3 Receptionists  
1 Kennel Technician

Practice Style: Computerized, with Tablet PCs  
Paperless Medical Records  
20% Referral Cases

Services Available: Radioactive I-131 Therapy  
Echocardiography  
Ultrasound and Radiology  
Laser Surgery  
Dentistry  
Luxury and Regular Boarding

Appointment Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 7:00am to 7:00pm  
Friday 7:00am to 6:00pm  
Saturday 8:00am to 12:00pm

Alamo Feline Health Center is a unique practice. **We are a primary care practice.** We see the routine and typical cases seen in other primary care practices. **We are a feline-only practice.** Our clients expect a higher level of care than they have received in the past. Overall, they expect to pay more for our services; however, they still expect our fees to be reasonable and only slightly higher than our colleagues. **We are a referral practice.** About 20% of our business is due to referral from San Antonio, Texas, and neighboring states. We occasionally have patients flown in from hundreds of miles away and often have clients drive 3-6 hours to get to our practice. We are able to do this because of Dr. Norsworthy's reputation and because we are equipped to perform many procedures that are out of the expertise of most practitioners. The variety of our case load makes this a very challenging and rewarding practice in which to extern.

#### **4. Eligibility**

Applicants must be third or fourth year veterinary students in good academic standing. Preference is given to individuals with an interest in feline specialty practice. Student externs must abide by the Terms and Conditions of the Externship Program, and must sign the Participation Contract.

Externship decisions are made based on meeting the eligibility requirements, availability of requested dates, and skills and qualifications based on application and referral letters.

An individual shall not be discriminated against because of race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, sexual preference, national origin, citizenship, marital status, disability, veteran status, or any other status or characteristic protected under applicable federal, state, or local laws.

## **5. Terms, Conditions, and Expectations**

Term: The term of each externship shall be an average of three weeks. Terms shall not exceed six weeks in length. A minimum of two weeks will be preferred. The student will spend approximately 45 to 50 hours per week performing extern activities.

Accommodations: The student will be responsible for furnishing his or her own transportation to San Antonio. A vehicle will not be provided during the extern's stay. However, living accommodations are available and may be procured with advanced notice.

Dress: The student will be expected to dress professionally. Wear comfortable shoes. Please bring a lab coat to wear. An extra lab coat to change in to is recommended. Scrub tops will be provided. No other equipment or supplies will be necessary.

Confidentiality: The student will respect the confidentiality between the veterinarian and the client. Students will be allowed to view medical records and take photographs and notes to encourage retention and learning. These materials are for personal use only. Distribution is not allowed. Any breach in the confidentiality policy can lead to immediate dismissal and will be reported to the Dean's Office and to the student's clinical advisor.

Conduct: The student will conduct him/herself in an ethical and professional manner at all times. Please see the list of expectations that follows.

Harassment: AFHC seeks to assure that we maintain a workplace free from sexual harassment and intimidation. AFHC does not tolerate the sexual harassment of any employee or non-employee by any other employee or non-employee for any reason.

We also do not tolerate harassment of our employees or non-employees that is related to an individual's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, citizenship status, age, or disability. Harassment is not tolerated by employees or non-employees.

If you feel that you are being harassed, you should make your feelings known to the Practice Manager within forty-eight (48) hours of the occurrence. The matter will be investigated immediately and, where appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken.

Violation of either of these harassment policies by an extern shall subject that extern to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate discharge from externship. Violators of this policy are subject to expulsion from AFHC facilities when harassment occurs on AFHC premises and may be reported to the appropriate authority for civil or criminal action.

### Drug and Alcohol Free Policy:

Alamo Feline Health Center subscribes to the philosophy of a drug and alcohol free workplace. The purpose of this policy is to govern the administration of a screening process to test and control the unauthorized use of controlled substances and alcohol among all personnel at AFHC. It is our intent to insure a safe and productive environment for all employees, externs, and the public we serve.

**It is the policy of AFHC to prohibit in the workplace the unlawful possession, use, dispensation, distribution, or manufacture of controlled substances and/or non-medical alcohol. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of externship. Depending upon the circumstances, other action, including notification of appropriate law enforcement agencies, may be taken against any violator of this policy. As a condition of the externship, externs must comply with this policy and notify management within five (5) calendar days of a conviction for any criminal drug and/or alcohol violation. Failure to do so will subject the extern to immediate termination of externship.**

*DRUG & ALCOHOL TESTING REASONS:*

Drug and alcohol testing will be performed at the expense of AFHC for the following reasons:

Reasonable Cause/Suspicion: "Reasonable Cause" drug and/or alcohol tests are performed when AFHC or its authorized representative(s) has evidence or reasonable suspicion to believe that a policy violation has occurred or after an employee or extern has been injured. The sponsor's determination that reasonable suspicion exists to require a person to test must be based on specific, contemporaneous, articulable supervisory observations concerning the appearance, behavior, speech, or body odors of the person to be tested. Observations may include indications of the chronic and/or withdrawal effects of controlled substances or unusual behavior not characteristic of the individual in question.

Testing of Externs: In circumstances where facts are sufficient to constitute a reasonable suspicion that one or more employees and/or externs are using certain controlled substances, AFHC shall have the right to require the employee(s) and/or the extern to submit without delay to testing as required by this policy. AFHC shall also have the right to require all externs to submit to drug testing with no prior notice and without due cause.

*DRUG & ALCOHOL TESTING METHODS:* Sample testing may involve the extern providing a urine specimen, blood sample, breath analyzer test or participation in other medical tests. A certified laboratory will perform the testing under controlled conditions with trained personnel. At the time of the drug screening, the extern will be informed of the testing procedure. The extern will be requested to sign a consent release form acknowledging their understanding of the test, authorizing the diagnostic procedure, and releasing the test results to AFHC. Positive test specimens will automatically be retested using a more accurate testing method. If the second test confirms the positive test result, the extern will be subject to immediate termination of externship.

A finding of the presence of a drug or drugs or their metabolites in the sample tested at a level at or above the threshold detection levels, and having been retested and verified by a Medical Review Officer as having no valid medical reason, or a finding of the mere presence of alcohol in the sample tested will constitute a positive test result. Any detection of alcohol above 0.05% is considered to be a positive result.

Refusal of an extern to submit to drug or alcohol testing according to the terms of this policy will be considered a refusal to test and treated as though the test result was positive. It will be cause for immediate termination of externship due to violation of AFHC's Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy.

## DEFINITIONS:

**Drug:** any chemical substance that produces or has the potential to produce physical, mental, emotional or behavioral change in the user.

**Controlled Substance (Illegal Drug):** any drug or derivative thereof which the use, possession, sale, transfer, attempted sale or transfer, manufacture or storage of is illegal or regulated under any federal, state or local law or regulation, and any other drug, including (but not limited to a prescription drug) use for any reason other than a legitimate medical reason, and inhalants used illegally; included is Marijuana or Cannabis in all forms.

**Workplace:** is considered to be any time the extern is on AFHC property, any time the extern is on company business, or any time it affects the extern's work performance, employees' safety or AFHC's position in the community.

**Extern Safety:** Extern safety is one of our priorities. We encourage and expect that externs will handle vicious animals in a manner that will not jeopardize the safety of any extern, employee, or client. Any pregnant extern is not to be near the radiograph machine when exposures are made and is not to enter the properly marked radiation areas in the clinic.

**Health Risks:** In our veterinary environment, there may be certain diseases that could affect you if you have any health restrictions. Consult with your physician for further details regarding health issues or complications that may be a hazard with your level of work exposure at Alamo Feline Health Center.

**Reasonable Searches:** AFHC management reserves the right to open and inspect the externs work area at any time. Additionally, externs will be expected to permit inspection of all bags, purses, or other "containers" brought to the workplace by the externs. Failure of an extern to permit inspection of his/her handbag or other "container" is grounds for immediate dismissal.

**Weapons Policy:** Possession of firearms or other weapons on company premises or in company buildings is prohibited. This prohibition also applies to individuals who possess a license to carry a concealed handgun under the authority of Texas Concealed Handgun Permit Law. Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of externship. "Other weapons" shall include clubs, explosive weapons, illegal knives, knuckles, and switchblade knives.

**Technology Usage:** Externs are not to use the Internet for personal use during working hours. Access to the Internet is a privilege which will be removed if abused.

Accessing pornographic or hate Web sites will be grounds for immediate dismissal. Material that is fraudulent, harassing, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, intimidating, defamatory, or otherwise unlawful, inappropriate, offensive (including offensive material concerning sex, race, national origin, religion, age, disability, or other characteristics protected by law) or that violates the practice's equal employment opportunity policy and its policies against sexual or other types of harassment may not be downloaded from the Internet or displayed or stored in the practice's computers.



The e-mail system is the private information system of the practice. Individuals using this system expressly consent to monitoring of their activities. Personal e-mail should be checked on personal time. Anything transmitted by, received from, or stored in the e-mail system is the property of the practice. Externs should have no expectation of privacy in the use of the e-mail system or the Internet, or the transmission, receipt, or storage of information in that system. Violation of this policy shall result in the appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

The practice, in its discretion as owner of the e-mail system, reserves and may exercise the right to monitor, access, retrieve, and delete any matter stored in, created, received, or sent over the e-mail system, for any reason and without the permission of any employee. The practice intends to enforce this policy but reserves the right to change it at any time as circumstances require.

Blogging/Personal Websites: In general, the hospital views personal Web sites and Weblogs (blogs) positively, and it respects the right of externs to use them as a medium of self-expression. If you choose to identify yourself as an Alamo Feline Health Center extern or to discuss matters related to our business on your Web site or blog, please bear in mind that, although we and you view your Web site or blog as a personal project and a medium of personal expression, some readers may view you as a de facto spokesperson for the hospital. In light of this possibility, we ask that you observe the following guidelines:

Blogging is a form of public communication. Your public communication concerning Alamo Feline Health Center must not violate any guidelines set forth in the extern terms and conditions whether or not you specifically mention your extern status.

Disclaimer: Please make it clear to your readers that the views you express are yours alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Alamo Feline Health Center, its owner, or its employees. To help reduce the potential for confusion, put the following notice—or something similar—in a reasonably prominent place on your site (for example, at the bottom of your “About Me” page):

The views expressed on this Web site/blog are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my externship hosts.

Confidentiality: Be careful to avoid disclosing any information that is confidential or proprietary to the hospital or to any third party that has disclosed information to us. Consult the hospital’s confidentiality policy for guidance about what constitutes confidential information.

Alamo Feline Health Center prohibits blogging during work hours and intends this policy to address after-hours blogging.

Company logo: The company logo is the property of Alamo Feline Health Center and may not be reproduced without the written consent of the owner. None of the hospital’s identifying marks may be included within the blog.

Be respectful: Your site or blog is a public space. The blog should not become a vehicle for personal attacks on the company, its services, its executives, supervisors, co-workers competitors or customers, or others.

You may not post any material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful, or embarrassing to another person or entity connected to Alamo Feline Health Center, its employees, owners, management, or competitors.

Harassment and discrimination: The hospital expects externs to follow the policies on prohibiting discrimination and harassment.

If you have any questions about these guidelines or any matter related to your Web site that these guidelines do not address, please direct them to the practice owner.

Emergency Procedures: Any bites or scratches must be treated immediately. First aid measures should be performed by one of the doctors, and the extern's physician should treat the injury as soon as possible. Any on-the-job injury must also be reported to the hospital manager immediately.

In the event of a fire during business hours, please follow the procedures listed below:

- Immediately dial 911 and report the fire to the local fire department.
- Meet all staff at meeting point across Chula Vista from the AFHC facility.

Fire extinguishers are located in the reception area, Dr. Norsworthy's downstairs office, and upstairs near the apartment entrance.

Any act of dishonesty will be reported to the Dean's Office and to the student's clinical advisor. Theft or other illegal acts will be prosecuted.

### *What to Expect*

You will see 100% feline patients.

You will not see exotic cats.

You will work an average of about 50 hours per week, but you are expected to stay until the work is done.

You will work as a team member, but you will be respected as a professional.

You will work with cutting edge equipment – computers, ultrasound, endoscopes, etc.

You will be exposed to referral cases.

You will work with some fractious cats, but you will have the equipment and training to do so safely.

Some days you will feel like you know everything. Some days you will feel incompetent.

You will discuss differences of opinion like a professional. Yelling is not acceptable behavior.

You will be expected to assist when needed and work in a cooperative manner.

You will make mistakes. However, our motto is: "Failure is really success if you learn from it."

You will perform assigned duties only under the supervision of a veterinarian, and you will not be assigned to the primary care of any patients.

### *You Will be Expected To ...*

Be honest and truthful. Note that this is listed first and foremost.

Express yourself in professional terms.

See everyday as a day for continuing education.

Read journals and research cases.

Be early – not late.

Be dependable.

Communicate with clients in an effective manner.

Become proficient with the computer system.

Be time efficient.

Learn ways to humanely and painlessly work with cats.

Learn from your mistakes and from those of the other doctors.

To work closely with RVT and non-RVT technicians and be understanding when they cannot do what you expect.

To have your knowledge challenged.

Have a sense of humor.

Laugh at yourself.

**6. Participation Contract**

Alamo Feline Health Center Externship Program

Participation Contract (to be filled out upon arrival at Alamo Feline Health Center).

I have read the "Terms and Conditions" of the Alamo Feline Health Center Externship Program. I understand my responsibilities as outlined and I hereby agree to abide by the guidelines of the program.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervising Veterinarian(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Student: I will be participating in the AFHC Externship Program from (dates):

\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Name: (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervising Veterinarian(s): I (We) will be participating in the AFHC Externship Program and do hereby agree to supervise the above named student for the period specified above.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Business Address: 16201 San Pedro Avenue  
San Antonio, TX 78216

Phone: (210) 404-2287

Fax: (210) 404-2285

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Living Accommodations

There is a furnished, one bedroom, one bathroom plus kitchenette apartment area located on the second floor of Alamo Feline Health Center that can be rented with advance notice. The student will be responsible for his or her own board, but the room rental is without charge. Accommodations are subject to availability, and therefore plans to utilize the living quarters should be made in advance with the practice manager. A printable version of the rental agreement is available at [www.alamofeline.com/Room%20Rental%20Agreement.pdf](http://www.alamofeline.com/Room%20Rental%20Agreement.pdf)

## 8. Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Please include three letters of reference. They should be from a professor, dean at your veterinary school and/or previous employer. Letters should be submitted with your application.

GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Professional Organization Memberships: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Extracurricular Activities: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Past work experience (*Please list in reverse chronological order*):

Employer	Position	Manager	Phone	Address	Dates

Description of Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer	Position	Manager	Phone	Address	Dates

Description of Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer	Position	Manager	Phone	Address	Dates

Description of Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

What journals do you read? \_\_\_\_\_

What courses have you taken that involve feline medicine and/or surgery?

What is your current interest in feline medicine? For example, are you thinking of entering feline-only practice, or is your intent more to increase your feline knowledge base?

What are your post-graduate plans?

*\*\*If extra space is needed, please attach extra pages to this page\*\**