

University of Illinois Zoological Companion Animal Residency (IZCAR)

Positions: 1

Inclusive Dates of Program: (Off-cycle) January/February 2026 through January/February 2029 (3-year program)

First year salary: \$45,000

Program

The University of Illinois, College of Veterinary Medicine (UIUC-CVM) offers a 3-year residency in Companion Zoological Medicine. The program is currently seeking a resident outside of the match to start off-cycle, in early 2026. The residency is approved by the American College of Zoological Medicine (ACZM) and is supervised by at least three Diplomates of the college. The residency is supported by a minimum four full-time zoo, aquatic, exotic and wildlife veterinarians. The residency is designed to provide clinical training that will enable the resident to become competent in exotic, zoo, aquatic and wildlife medicine with a focus on companion zoological species. Additionally, the residency is designed to provide the necessary requirements to be eligible for certification in the American College of Zoological Medicine. The program includes training in research and scholarly writing and requires the completion of a Master's of Science degree which includes graduate level coursework. The majority of the three-year residency program will have clinical time divided between the Zoological Medicine Service, the Ambulatory Zoological Medicine Service, and the Wildlife Medical Clinic at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign.

The Zoological Medicine Service sees approximately 2,000 cases annually of client owned zoological companion animal species (50% avian, 30% mammal, 19% reptile, 1% other) for primary, referral, and emergency care. The Ambulatory Zoological Medicine Service provides preventative and emergency care for three local AZA accredited zoos: Scovill Zoo in Decatur, IL, Peoria Zoo in Peoria, IL, and Miller Park Zoo in Bloomington, IL. The majority of the care of the animals housed at these institutions is performed during regularly scheduled ambulatory visits, although emergent cases and those that require advanced diagnostics will present to the VTH for evaluation. The collections of these institutions include a broad range of mammalian, avian, reptile and amphibian species. The Wildlife Medical Clinic is a veterinary student run facility that accepts approximately 2,000 free-ranging wildlife cases annually (40% avian, 50% mammal, 10% reptile) that are presented to the clinic from local authorities and good Samaritans and provide medical and surgical care. In addition to their time spent in these 3 services, residents may also complete external rotations at the Brookfield Zoo and/or the Shedd Aquarium.

Residents will gain clinical experience under the direction of veterinary, technical and management staff including restraint and anesthesia, surgical techniques including diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopy, performance and interpretation of a variety of diagnostic modalities, preventative medicine principles, management of sick and injured individual animals as well as population (flock, herd, etc.) health. Residents are required to write and submit three manuscripts produced in conjunction with their residency for publication to fulfill residency requirements and to receive their residency certificate at the completion of their program. At least one manuscript must be an original research project which meets the Master's degree guidelines and is selected with input from faculty mentors. If the resident already has a Master's degree in veterinary medicine or a related field, the degree requirement is waived, but a research project is still required. Residents will receive a minimum of 8 hours per week, or the equivalent in regularly scheduled week-long blocks, to complete independent study, research, off-clinics training, paperwork, and communications.

During day-time hours, the resident will have primary case responsibility for emergent zoo and ZCA cases. Overnight emergency duties include back up support (secondary case responsibility) for the Small Animal Rotating Interns receiving ZCA cases, and the veterinary students receiving wildlife rehabilitation animals. Overnight and weekend duties will be split with the house officers with each covering approximately 25-33% of the time. In the case of emergent zoo, aquatic animal, or dangerous animal (including dangerous wildlife rehabilitation) cases the house officer provides primary case responsibility during overnight hours. House officers will also support the emergency service in receiving cases associated with their specialty in the form of consultation and/or transfers. For more information about our program and previous graduates of the program, please visit: <https://vetmed.illinois.edu/education/residencies-internships/illinois-zoo-companion-program/>.

Requirements

Candidates must have a DVM or equivalent degree from an AVMA accredited program. Foreign graduates must hold a DVM from an AVMA accredited college or have completed the AVMA Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG) certification or the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE).

Applicants for whom English is a second language must score =600100 iBT or above on the test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Candidates must have successfully completed the National Board Veterinary Licensing Examination or its equivalent. A license to practice veterinary medicine in Illinois is required to be pursued during the first year of the residency. DEA and USDA accreditation (category II) is also required, ideally within the first 6 months. A minimum of one year post-DVM training (e.g., rotating internship, zoological animal internship, clinical practice) is required. Due to issues related to prompt entry into this program, you must be a citizen of the US, Canada, or Mexico, a US permanent resident (i.e. holding a “green card” or TN visa), or other foreign national with employment authorization from US Citizenship and Immigration Services valid for and during the program’s period of proposed training without our institution’s provision of assistance, support or sponsorship in obtaining employment authorization.

Employment Information

The University of Illinois offers a complete benefits package. Malpractice coverage is provided under the U of I blanket plan for service provided to university clients only. Thirteen paid sick days per year (non-cumulative), 10 paid vacation days per year (non-cumulative), health, dental, vision insurance available. Parking is at .9% of monthly salary (\$55/month max). An annual stipend is available to aid in educational expenses including national conference attendance. This year this program is seeking a resident to start off-cycle and hope to have a start date in early 2026, with annual re-appointment for a maximum of three years based on annual performance. Residents will be employed by UIUC-CVM and compensated on a scale of standard residency programs (in Champaign-Urbana \$45,000) which includes benefits through UIUC-CVM with vacation and sick leave accruing monthly. The UIUC is an AA-EOE.

The U of I is an EEO Employer/Vet/Disabled <http://go.illinois.edu/EEO> that participates in the federal [e-Verify](#) program and participates in a background check program focused on [prior criminal](#) or [sexual misconduct history](#).

How to apply

Interested candidates should upload their application documents to the secure box folder: <https://go.vetmed.illinois.edu/IZCARoffcycle>. Application materials required are: letter of intent, CV, and contact information for three references. To ensure full consideration, applications must be received by **December 1, 2025**. Applications will be reviewed as they are received. Candidates may be interviewed prior to the closing date. Questions regarding the residency program may be directed to Dr. Michelle Borsdorf (borsdorf@illinois.edu) or Dr. Mariana Sosa Higareda (msosahi@illinois.edu).