

## **Job description**

Job title: **Practical Learning Officer  
(seasonal)**

Division: **Discovery and Learning, ZSL  
Whipsnade Zoo**

Responsible to: **Head of Discovery and Learning,  
ZSL Discovery and Learning**

## **Outline description**

The practical learning officer will play a key role in delivering ZSL's learning strategy and in doing so achieve the Society's mission to raise awareness and inform visitors and other audiences about animals and their habitats and associated conservation issues

A major remit for this position is to plan and deliver 6 ZSL Zoo Academy courses during 2012. ZSL Zoo Academy is a practical course aimed at 15-17 year olds wishing to pursue a career with animals. The Practical Learning Officer will support the students in practical work within the ZSL Whipsnade Zoo as well as teaching theory sessions about husbandry, welfare and aspects of conservation. They will also be responsible for planning and liaising with the animal department and ensuring safe working practice at all times. Additional practical programmes for other audiences will be also required.

The role will also encompass delivering some live interpretation events at ZSL Whipsnade Zoo. This post will assist the explainers in providing interpretation experiences throughout the day on a variety of topics within the zoo. Effective presentation skills are required to ensure these events achieve the educational and visitor enjoyment targets set by the ZSL.

In addition, the practical learning officer will assist the education officers in the delivery of a variety of formal learning sessions and activities to the wide range of audiences that attend ZSL Whipsnade Zoo as part of an education visit.

## **Key responsibilities and accountabilities**

### **1. Practical Courses**

- Assist in the planning, development and organisation of the ZSL Zoo Academy courses for 15 – 17 year olds.

- Deliver theoretical and practical sessions for Zoo Academy on both week days and on some weekends (to be agreed with the head of Discovery and Learning)
- On some occasions, deliver practical programmes to pupils with specific learning and support needs, e.g. teenagers from Pupil Referral Units and SEN schools.

## **2. Schools programme and events**

- Assist in the development of the Education programme for schools in accordance with the National Curriculum, current programmes of study and relevant syllabuses.
- Teach a range of activities to school groups, age 3 – 16 years (up to 35 pupils per session).
- Teach formal education sessions to post-16 students and further education groups (10-90 pupils per session).
- Research and write resource material for visiting education groups and teachers, to include pre-visit information and materials to support self-guided exploration of the Zoo.
- Assist in the organisation, set-up and delivery of the Christmas event for over 5,000 primary school children and their teachers and supporting adults.
- Develop, purchase and maintain resources for the education sessions.

## **3. Live Interpretation**

- Assist explainers with the delivery of live interpretation ( e.g talks, storytelling) around the zoo, throughout the day.
- Assist explainers with visitor events and activities as required
- Develop resources and materials for live interpretation around the site
- Assist with evaluation of live interpretation as required

## **Other duties**

- Present the Education animals (e.g. snakes, invertebrates) during sessions, and contribute to their care and husbandry (training provided).
- Work with Volunteers during the management of events.
- Develop and deliver new school & family learning events and activities as required by the Line Manager, e.g. outreach visits.
- Liaise with the Customer Contact Centre to ensure that school booking information is up-to-date and correct at all times.

- Liaise with animal department to ensure that the ZSL Zoo Academy is delivered to suit the needs of the business.

## **Person Specification**

### **Expected**

- Experience of teaching in either a formal or informal education setting.
- Experience working in a zoo or animal related environment
- Ability to carry out and demonstrate to others correct animal husbandry and management skills.
- Excellent written and spoken communication skills.
- Experience working with children and communicating to a wide range of audiences
- Previous experience of presenting public talks/shows/events
- Ability to learning new skills and information within a strict time limit e.g. performance skills, handling different animals, working with different departments in the zoo
- Available to work some Saturdays as agreed with the formal learning manager
- Able to work in an outdoor environment for large period of time, in all weather conditions.

### **Desirable**

- A teaching, animal management and/or presenting qualification
- Previous experience teaching practical animal related courses
- Experience of working with school children outside the classroom, for example in a science centre, museum or field centre.
- Experience of working with children and teenagers with emotional or learning support needs.

As the post involves working with children a CRB check will be required.