Finding a Summer Lab Science Internship: Tips and Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What are summer lab science internships? What are the advantages to lab science internships?
• Temporary work in a science or medical laboratory to gain research experience and hone critical thinking skills
• Provides lab/clinical experience
• Possibility for publication
• Valuable and unique experience in preparation for future graduate studies and/or medical school applications

Q. What can you expect from an internship?
• Assist in a current ongoing research project
• Can be anything from advanced project to supportive laboratory tasks which may include:
  – Aliquoting
  – Extraction
  – Centrifugation
  – Instrument preparation and loading,
  – Administrative tasks
• Potential to perform pre-analytical functions
• Observe high-complexity testing
• Participate in a variety of educational topics to expand clinical laboratory knowledge

Q. How/When to start looking? What can you expect?
• The application submission window is usually January to February
• Contact the volunteer office at the institution, contact people at outreach programs offered by the institution, and/or contact your school advisor about potential opportunities
• Write a personalized, lab-specific email inquiry
• Find a current research topic that really interests you
• MS Society webpages or NIH website will inform you of currently funded projects
• Find current information at www.Pubmed.com
• Inquire about topics the lab is publishing on

Q. What do I include in my CV?
• Education
• Career Objectives/Personal Statement
• Prior experience
• Showcase your passion, strengths and transferrable skillset
• References

Q. What are other points of consideration?
• Will you consider an unpaid internship?
• What is your time commitment?
  – Hours and time frame (e.g., May -> August)
• Institutions may require drug screening (allow ~2-3 weeks) and safety training (allow ~1 week), as well as training specific to working with lab animals
Q. Once you’re in a lab…
   • Attend lab meetings
   • Keep accurate lab notebooks and records
   • Engage in networking and seminars

Q. When you leave a lab…
   • Leave your freezer samples and notes organized
   • Continue to network
      – Connect with people on LinkedIn
      – Connect with people who are willing to write reference letters (PI, post-docs) for your future career