

Volunteer Placements



Welcome

Firstly thank you for considering a volunteer placement at Blue Reef Aquarium Portsmouth.

In this booklet you will find out all you need to know about our volunteer programs, the difference between the programs, the application process and how to apply.

We really appreciate the hard work of our volunteer team and would be delighted for you to join us.

A volunteer position at Blue Reef Aquarium Portsmouth is a lot of hard work, but also a lot of fun. As well as gaining experience to further your career and share your passion; you will also make some great memories.

Previous participants in our volunteer program have gone on to work in some amazing places and collections such as an Aquarium in Dubai, Australia Zoo and even right here as an aquarist.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Robert Davidson

Displays Supervisor

Blue Reef Aquarium Portsmouth

Thank you for your interest in joining Blue Reef Aquarium Portsmouth's volunteer program. Please read all information in this booklet carefully before applying to join any of following the programs.

Once you have read through this information you can apply by filling in our application form, which can be found on our website.

We are looking for confident and enthusiastic people to join our volunteer team; therefore we will not accept enquiries or applications from parents or guardians.

You must be **over 18** to participate in any of our volunteer programs.

We also require a minimum commitment of **140 hours** (Volunteer Aquarist) and **70 hours** (Guest Experience Volunteer).

Two Programs:

Guest Experience Volunteer – As a guest experience volunteer you will be the face of the aquarium, interacting with visitors of all ages, answering questions, hosting activities, and assisting in daily talks and much more. (This position will be mainly seasonal and weekends as a result of visitor numbers).

Volunteer Aquarist – As a volunteer aquarist you will take on the role of assisting our team in the daily care and husbandry of all animals housed at Blue Reef Aquarium, ranging from native, tropical, freshwater fish species to reptiles and a whole lot more.

Interview

After you have completed your application form, if you have been successful, you will be invited to an interview.

This is so we can get to know you a bit better and see if you will fit in with our team. You will also be able to ask some questions to see if the program is right for you!

The interview will consist of some general questions followed by a short presentation.

We would like to see that you are enthusiastic about wildlife, eager to learn and ready to get your hands dirty (sometimes literally!).

Presentation

As part of the interview, you will be asked to give a short (5 minute) presentation on something which you are passionate about. This can be absolutely anything and does not have to relate to fish or aquaria.

The next steps...

If you are successful, we will contact you to arrange your start date.

Deferring start date

Our volunteer program is extremely popular and occasionally we will have no spaces available to start. In this case you may be asked to defer your start until the next available intake.

What we expect from you and what we will deliver

Our volunteer programs are designed to give you the skills you need to succeed in a career working in an aquarium or similar industry. Therefore, we require you to follow the same set of rules that our staff follow.

You will be expected to work from 9am until all tasks are finished (usually around 5pm) and we require a minimum commitment of at least one day per week.

Uniform

You must provide your own work boots and black trousers. (We will provide a navy blue polo and jacket, dependant on the season).

Please note that the aquarium can get cold in the winter, so layers are advised.

You also need to ensure the following:

- Clean, short and unpainted nails
- Long hair tied back
- Uniform is clean
- Clean shaven or a tidy beard.

We will provide you with any safety equipment or PPE which you need to carry out your duties.

If you cannot provide the above or meet our dress code each and every day you will not be allowed to start your day, until you can do so.

Duties

During the program you will be expected to carry out the following tasks. This list is not exhaustive and will be subject to the relevant training and differ dependant on the program and event.

Guest Experience Volunteer:

- Engaging with the public
- Assisting with daily talks
- Assisting/hosting seasonal activities (Half terms, Holidays, etc.)
- Keeping the aquarium clean (sweeping, mopping, litter picking)
- Answering questions
- Assisting with school groups/birthday parties

Volunteer Aquarist:

- Food preparation
- Assisting with animal care and daily husbandry
- Cleaning and scrubbing of tanks
- Keeping the aquarium clean (sweeping, mopping, litter picking)
- Assisting with public talks and feeds
- Assisting with school groups

As well as helping look after our animals, you are also here to help our visitors have a great day. Interaction with visitors is essential in both roles.

(Please note you can only apply for one role out of the two).

Your first days

On your first day you will arrive by 10am.

You will get a safety briefing and complete paperwork you will spend time getting to know the team and taking in some of our talks and feeds and familiarising yourself with tanks and their contents.

After the safety briefing and paperwork you will get a tour of the building, and be introduced to the team.

Day two

On day two you will be shadowing one of our aquarists for the day.

Here you will learn all about the species we have at Blue Reef Aquarium Portsmouth and get an idea of the day to day running of the aquarium.

Your Progress

Throughout your voluntary program you will follow our stages of training. This will ensure that you are continuously developing your skills and learning new things.

These stages will start with basic tasks and develop into more hands-on activities.

Like what you see? Click the link below to apply and start your journey with us at Blue Reef Aquarium Portsmouth.