

## Options with zoology

### Your skills

Over the course of your degree you develop a good mix of subject specific and technical skills as well as transferable core skills. Consider these alongside other achievements, such as paid work, volunteering, family responsibilities, sport, membership of societies, leadership roles, etc. Think about how these can be used as evidence of your skills and personal attributes. Then you can start to market and sell who you really are, identify what you may be lacking and consider how to improve your profile.

The skills you'll gain through studying zoology are marketable in most career areas. You'll gain both practical and technical skills during laboratory sessions including obtaining, recording, collating and analysing data using appropriate techniques; and the use of highly technical equipment. Working with others in a team, in the laboratory and on projects or assignments, you'll develop written and oral communication skills, project management and organisational skills.

You'll learn:

- analytical and problem-solving skills;
- IT skills;
- understanding complex scientific data and information, including data analysis and using statistics;
- organising your workload;
- working to tight deadlines;
- interpreting, assessing and evaluating sources;
- working independently;
- setting tasks and managing your own time.

Many zoology students do voluntary work in zoos and animal welfare organisations and get involved with conservation work. Evidence of skills gained from work experience and extracurricular activities, as well as through your study, can help you in CV writing and job applications. It will really boost your employability.

### Employment prospects

Every year, statistics are collected to show what HE students do immediately after graduation. These can be a useful guide but, in reality, with the data being collected within just six months of graduation, many graduates are travelling, waiting to start a course, paying off debts, getting work experience or still deciding what they want to do. For further information about some of the areas of employment commonly entered by graduates of any degree discipline, check out 'What Do Graduates Do?' and the AGCAS Special Interest booklet 'Your Degree... What Next?'

In 2006, six months after graduating, 59% of zoology graduates had entered employment. Many were in jobs they didn't consider permanent and were using as a 'stepping stone' to gain experience for their longer-term career aims.

Of those in employment, about 7% had entered professional or managerial roles in commerce, industry or the public sector; 5% scientific analysis or research; 5% marketing, sales and advertising; and 4% business and financial roles. Just over 20% of employed zoology graduates were in a variety of other professional jobs. Close to 8% of zoology graduates were unemployed, compared with the national graduate unemployment rate of just over 6%.

You will need to be able to demonstrate you have transferable skills to employers as you are likely to change your job from time to time in the future. So getting employability skills matters.

### Job options

Bear in mind that it's not just your degree discipline that determines your options. Get hold of the AGCAS Special Interest booklet 'Your Degree... What Next?' from your careers service. This looks more generally at the options for today's graduates and offers informed advice on career planning. Or try 'What jobs would suit me?', an online career planning tool, at [www.prospects.ac.uk/links/ppanner](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/ppanner).

You can choose between jobs that are degree-related or those that appeal because they use other interests or elements of your degree.

#### Jobs directly related to your degree

- [Zookeeper](#) - cares for a large variety of exotic animals, mostly in zoos, safari parks, bird collections and aquariums. Responsible for public relations, education and managing conservation species.
- [Research scientist \(life science\)](#) - analyses scientific information and generates knowledge using both theoretical and experimental means. See also [Scientist, process development](#) and [Scientist, industrial research](#).
- [Nature conservation officer](#) - protects, manages and enhances wildlife habitats through biological surveys, and the management of practical conservation.

#### Jobs where your degree would be useful

- [Biomedical scientist \(MLSO\)](#) - carries out laboratory tests on human samples as an aid to diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease.
- [Environmental education officer](#) - visits schools, gives talks, leads walks, produces educational resources, and develops innovative ways of promoting education for sustainable development.
- [Patent attorney](#) - acts as an agent for the purposes of obtaining patents worldwide. See also [Patent examiner](#).
- [Recycling officer](#) - develops, plans, implements and monitors a variety of recycling schemes; provides advice on the management of recycling issues and other related functions.
- [Sales executive](#) - increases awareness and usage of a company's range of pharmaceutical and medical products amongst health care professionals.
- [Scientific laboratory technician](#) - assists scientists and others engaged in research, development, analysis and scientific investigations.
- [Toxicologist](#) - plans and carries out laboratory studies to evaluate the potential adverse effects of biological materials, chemicals and radiation on living systems and the environment.

Although for many graduates the jobs listed here might not be their first, they are among the many realistic possibilities with your degree, provided you can demonstrate you have the attributes employers are looking for. It's worth noting that many graduate vacancies don't specify particular degree disciplines.

To find out more about the above options and other jobs, see AGCAS Occupational Profiles and other sources of occupational information available in careers services. Occupational Profiles are also available on [www.prospects.ac.uk/links/occupations](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/occupations).

### Where are the jobs?

Zoology graduates are qualified for a variety of careers both in biological fields, and in careers where specific scientific knowledge may not be required.

Employers include: universities and government research institutions; the National Health Service and medical research establishments; water authorities; zoos; wildlife trusts and environmental protection agencies.

There are opportunities in the private sector as consultants or in technical and research roles with veterinary, agricultural, fisheries and biotechnology organisations, and with other employers such as chemical, pharmaceutical, and petroleum companies.

Zoology graduates can also find work in the education sector, with museums or other cultural organisations, or move into other jobs such as management, marketing, sales or scientific journalism.

For more information, see the following sectors:

- [Environmental, food chain and rural](#);
- [Financial services](#);
- [Science](#).

Career management is an ongoing process, one that you'll no doubt develop all your working life. For further information on all the above employment areas, visit [www.prospects.ac.uk/links/sectorbs](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/sectorbs) or ask to see the AGCAS Sector Briefings at your careers service.

## Further study

A large proportion of zoology graduates, about 25%, go on to further study, including 5% who study while also being employed. You could choose to specialise in an area that has interested you during your undergraduate degree.

Alternatively, you could choose courses in areas such as marketing, finance, business, law, museums and journalism as many courses will take graduates from any subject. This will help you to gain further skills in career-related areas.

Finally, you could apply for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), or Scottish Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), in preparation for a teaching career.

These trends show only what previous graduates in your subject did immediately upon graduating. Over the course of their career - the first few years in particular - many others will opt for some form of further study, either part-time or full-time. If further study interests you, start by taking a look at the AGCAS Special Interest booklet 'Postgraduate Study and Research' or the 'Further study' section of [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk). For a comprehensive list of courses, see 'Prospects Postgraduate Directory'.

Refer too to the 'Prospects Postgraduate Funding Guide', the AGCAS Special Interest booklet 'Postgraduate Study and Research' and AGCAS Vocational Course Surveys for further details relating to finance and the application process.

## Other options

Don't forget there are alternatives to entering employment or postgraduate study, such as taking time out, volunteering or travelling. Longer term, you may want to consider starting your own business. Check out the AGCAS Special Interest booklets 'Beyond Nine to Five: Flexible Working', 'Self-employment' and 'Working Abroad', all available from your careers service.

Sometimes your first job is unrelated to your chosen career. But you can still use your time effectively in order to gain experience for your longer-term career aims. Consider evening classes; doing an IT course; learning a new language; arranging some work shadowing, work experience or voluntary work. Employers will really value the commitment and initiative you have shown to move your career forward.

## What next?

This should have started you thinking about your future. Whatever stage you are at, your careers service will be able to help you. A huge number of resources, including most of those mentioned here, plus a wide range of other services, including individual careers guidance, employer presentations and workshops on topics such as successful applications and interview techniques, are likely to be on offer.

A full list of useful resources plus case studies of graduates in this subject can also be found on [www.prospects.ac.uk/links/options](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/options).

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The work of writers and editors is gratefully acknowledged.

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