Completing an Animal Science major prepares graduates for a very rewarding, yet challenging career in agriculture with a charter of producing food and fibre for an ever increasing and diverse world population. Alternatively the Animal Health major concentrates more on the health and well-being of both domestic animals and wildlife.

An Animal Science major produces graduates with the scientific knowledge, communication skills and confidence to solve issues and increase the sustainability and efficiency of food and fibre supply chains at a farm, local, state and national level. Graduates gain practical on-farm training in animal production, health and welfare throughout their degree, and develop a suite of analytical scientific skills. Students can complete a research project in their 4th year in their chosen field and be considered for the award of Honours. Students can also gain professional recognition from the Ag Institute Australia (AIA) as a result of this degree major.

The Animal Health degree covers topics similar to that offered in the Veterinary major at Murdoch such as infectious diseases, pharmacology, physiology, biochemistry and nutrition. Students not only develop relevant scientific skills throughout their degree, they also work in small teams to address complex problems, developing their communication, team and problem solving skills.

These two majors are interrelated and often completed together, however you can also choose just one.

Engage in your career before you graduate

Launching a career after completing an Animal Science and/or Animal Health major can be difficult without forging relationships with potential employees throughout your degree and gaining practical experience. This experience is not always available through your degree and so it is important to seek independent work experience or volunteer work, engaging with industry and confirming key interest areas. Furthermore, if you are keen to apply for a transfer to the Veterinary program at a later date (a small number of students are offered this opportunity each year), not only are excellent grades required, but relevant experience can also make you more competitive.

Opportunities can include:
- Undertaking part-time work or work experience on a property or business which runs production animals, or at the zoo or wildlife sanctuaries;
- Working in livestock production industries;
- Joining industry relevant committees (e.g. Royal Agricultural Society);
- Volunteering with RSPCA or other animal advocacy groups, and at agricultural shows;
- Applying for Internship opportunities;
- Engaging in co-curricular opportunities at university (e.g. Peer Tutoring, Mentoring or Leadership Programmes, or being an active member of a relevant student club or society);
- Gaining laboratory experience (through temporary agencies offering student opportunities).

The Murdoch Volunteering Hub (situated next to the Guild Shop on Bush Court) is a useful resource for ideas on where to gain relevant experience. You can also graduate with a "Community and Career Skills Development Transcript" through volunteering. The Volunteering Hub email: volunteering@the-guild.com.au and Phone: 08 9360 6307.

Lastly, you are encouraged to enter student team competitions hosted by industry (e.g. the annual, nationwide Intercollegiate Meat Judging conference and competition). Industry-based team competitions are a great way to network, meet industry leaders and add something different to the resume, thereby setting you apart.
Careers in Animal Science and (or) Animal Health

Careers in Animal Science and/or Animal Health cover a wide range of roles, however the main areas of employment fall into the following categories:

- Livestock Management;
- Primary production and agribusiness/consulting;
- Animal Nutrition/Food and Fibre Products /Livestock and Dairy Production;
- Breeding Programs/Genetics;
- Animal Welfare, Animal Behaviour and Training;
- Disease Control/Quarantine;
- Quality Control; Meat & Dairy science and inspection;
- Policy, Industry Research, Agriculture and Resource Economics;
- Agribusiness Development/Distribution, Marketing, Sales and Public Relations;
- Communication/Reporting/Technical Writing;
- Tourism and Wildlife Protection Education and;
- Government policy;
- Media and marketing;
- Academia/Vocational Education (Technical/Para-professional training).

The exciting part about choosing an animal science and/or health major is the multidisciplinary nature of your career. For example, a manager of a livestock production system will wear many hats all on the same day such as being a human resources manager (manage staff), geneticist (manage the breeding), animal welfarist (care for the health of the animals), economist (analyse the finances of the business), marketer (manage the sale and purchase of goods), engineer (fix, design, build and maintain infrastructure), agro politician (watch government and industry policy) along with other numerous varied roles. No two days are ever the same, which makes for an exciting career!

Graduates with animal science and/or animal health majors can gain employment across the vast private agricultural sector or the public sector. Government departments and regional development commissions, together with food production companies, research laboratories, zoos and breeding organisations, agriculture equipment and supply companies, academic/vocational training providers, agribusiness companies, rural banks and industry associations are all employees of past graduates.

If you elect to choose either Animal Science or Animal Health, you can pick up another second major or an additional minor to further diversify your career options. Animal Science and/or Animal Health graduates can also go onto an additional Honours (research) year and then possibly postgraduate research (Master of Philosophy, Doctor of Philosophy). Transferring into the Veterinary program is another possibility for high achieving students.

Lastly, Animal Science and/or Animal Health final year students are eligible to apply for multi-discipline Graduate Program positions that may be offered by the public sector and larger private organisations. Graduate Programs are structured professional development programs specifically designed for new graduates. Final year students apply for these positions from March for the following year. Departments concerned with Agriculture, Health, Education and Scientific Research are popular Graduate Program employers for Science graduates.

Animal Science and/or Animal Health can open many different doors but you have to pave your own journey through your experiences and industry connections. You have the ability to continuously develop your career by actively engaging in university life, networking initiatives and stepping up to the vast amount of opportunity that exists in the agricultural industry. Choosing a degree in Animal Science and/or Animal Health is just the beginning!

Further Information:
Career Harvest
www.careerharvest.com.au
Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture
www.csu.edu.au/special/acda/careers
Job Guide
www.jobguide.thegoodguides.com.au
Ag Institute of Australia
www.aginstitute.com.au
Department of Agriculture and Food
www.agric.wa.gov.au

Extend your network, get advice, join the Murdoch e-Mentoring Network on LinkedIn