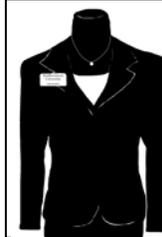


# Major Possibilities: Animal Behavior



## Career Services

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*Here to help you get ahead.*

### Summary

- A major in Animal Behavior prepares students for a variety of graduate programs, including animal behavior, animal learning, behavioral ecology, biopsychology, ecology, neuroscience and veterinary science.
- Students interested in veterinary school are advised to obtain clinical experience and seek the BS degree in Animal Behavior.
- A genuine concern for the welfare of animals is an understood trait for someone who works with animals. However, some jobs also require physical strength and long hours of work.

### Animal Behavior major synopsis

Animal Behavior is an interdisciplinary major which combines courses from Biology and Psychology. *Note: This major is being discontinued at SU.* Students can receive either a Bachelor of Science or a Bachelor of Arts in Animal Behavior, depending upon whether they take the biology, chemistry, and mathematics/computer science courses required for a Bachelor of Science. The major requires biology courses, psychology courses, statistics and chemistry courses. In addition to these courses, students are required to conduct research under the supervision of a faculty member. This research can be conducted in the lab or in the field. The capstone project consists of conducting original research in the student's area of interest and in cooperation with one of the program's faculty advisers.

### Select categories of Animal Behavior occupations

#### Protective Agencies

Working in an animal shelter is one way to help save animals. The shelter managers supervise daily activities within the shelter, meaning they interact with both animals and their staff members. For this job, it is important to have knowledge about animals, but people skills are also a necessity so that shelter operations run smoothly. Some private shelters have an education department, with the goal of educating the public about the proper way to care for their pets and other animals. The primary audiences for humane education programs are children, so you should be willing and able to communicate on their level.

Wildlife refuge centers handle animals that are not domesticated. Positions in wildlife fields are highly competitive and obtaining a master's or doctorate degree in wildlife-related fields is encouraged. Biologists who work at wildlife refuges study the interaction between animals and their habitat and work to correct potential imbalances in this relationship.

#### Teaching and Research

The majority of Animal Behavior majors go on to receive their PhD in Animal Behavior or a DVM so they can continue their research and teach new people interested in the field. There is a lot of competition for these positions but students who obtain their PhD in programs offering broad training in one or more of the behavioral or biological sciences will be more competitive in the job market. Those with a BS or MS who do not wish to obtain a PhD or DVM may become a research assistant. They work under the direction of faculty or staff researchers and help to design, perform and analyze the results of animal behavior studies.

#### Training

Some behaviorists train animals for public performance for zoos, circuses, stage, or television; others train them to be obedient pets, guard dogs, seeing-eye dogs, search-and-rescue, etc. Currently, in most states and provinces, animal trainers are not required to have any specialized training. However, many have been through a certification training program or have apprenticed to another professional animal trainer.

#### Veterinary Medicine

More than 75 percent of veterinarians work in private practices, and most of these treat small animals (known as companion animals). About one-fifth of all veterinarians work in mixed animal practices, where they see pigs, goats, cattle, sheep, and some wild animals in addition to companion animals. A very small percentage of private practice veterinarians exclusively treat large animals. Veterinarians who do not work in private practices often do research or are on staff at places like zoos. Prospective veterinarians must graduate with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM or VMD) degree from a four-year program at an accredited college of veterinary medicine and obtain a state license.

### Sample job titles

#### Arts, Media & Entertainment

Curator  
Pet Portraitist  
Trainer  
Wildlife Photographer  
Zoo Director  
Zookeeper

#### Industry and Commerce

Clerical Worker  
Groomer  
Kennel Worker  
Pet Sales and Service  
Pet Sitter/Walker  
Therapist

#### Research

Animal Reintroduction Program Coordinator  
Animal Reproduction Research  
Aquarium Director  
Environmental Scientist  
Ornithologist  
Research/Wildlife Biologist

#### Service and Education

Animal Control Officer  
Humane Educator/Investigator  
Refuge/Shelter Manager  
Science Teacher  
Trainer  
Veterinary Medicine Doctor/Tech

## **Potential internship sites**

Animal Hospital of Georgetown  
Austin Humane Society  
Austin SPCA  
Austin Zoo  
Cameron Park Zoo (Waco, TX)  
Georgetown Animal Outreach  
Humane Society of Williamson County  
Sea World San Antonio  
Texas Parks and Wildlife  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services  
Walt Disney World – Living Seas program  
Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation (apprentice)  
Zoo Atlanta

## **Sample full-time employers of SU grads**

Adoption Counselor – San Antonio Humane Society  
Boarding Facility Staff – Zoot Pets  
Environmental Scientist – Conestoga-Rovers and Associates  
HHMI Research Assistant – Southwestern University  
Laboratory Technician – Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory  
Mission Integration Specialist – Wyle Laboratories  
Pet Store Manager – Herpeton Exotic Pets  
Primate Keeper – Busch Gardens  
Research Assistant – UT MD Anderson Cancer Center  
Research Assistant – UT Southwestern  
Receptionist – Town and Country Animal Hospital  
Seventh Grade Integrated Physics/Chemistry Teacher – Houston ISD  
Veterinary Technician – San Gabriel Animal Hospital

## **Professional organizations**

American Association of Zookeepers: [www.aazk.org](http://www.aazk.org)  
American Society for Animal Science: [www.asas.org](http://www.asas.org)  
Animal Behavior Society: [www.animalbehaviorsociety.org](http://www.animalbehaviorsociety.org)  
Association for Psychological Science: [www.psychologicalscience.org](http://www.psychologicalscience.org)  
Association of Zoos and Aquariums: <http://www.aza.org/>  
International Society for Applied Ethology: [www.applied-ethology.org](http://www.applied-ethology.org)  
International Society for Comparative Psychology: [www.comparativepsychology.org](http://www.comparativepsychology.org)  
National Counsel for Science and the Environment: [ncseonline.org](http://ncseonline.org)  
Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology: [www.sicb.org](http://www.sicb.org)

## **Other Web Resources**

Animal Behavior Associates: Career Information: [www.animalbehaviorassociates.com/career\\_cert.htm](http://www.animalbehaviorassociates.com/career_cert.htm)  
Guide Dogs of America: <http://www.guidedogsofamerica.org/1/>  
Indiana University's Center for the Integrative Study of Animal Behavior: <http://www.indiana.edu/~animal/index.html>  
Career Information in Animal Behavior: [http://acunix.wheatonma.edu/kmorgan/ab\\_careers/animal\\_behavior\\_careers.html](http://acunix.wheatonma.edu/kmorgan/ab_careers/animal_behavior_careers.html)

## **Career Services' print resources**

Alternative Careers in Science	Opportunities in Animal and Pet Care Careers
Careers for Animal Lovers and Other Zoological Types	Opportunities in Biological Science Careers
Career Opportunities in Politics, Government, and Activism	Scientific Research as a Career
Career Opportunities in Science	The Nonprofit Career Guide: How to Land a Job that Makes a Difference
Career Opportunities Working With Animals	Vault Guide to Veterinary and Animal Careers
Eco Guide to Careers that Make a Difference: Environmental Work for a Sustainable World	WetFeet Insider Guide to Careers in Non-Profit and Government Agencies
Making a Living While Making a Difference: Conscious Careers in an Era of Interdependence	100 Jobs in the Environment