

# Qualification Route to Becoming an Animal Keeper

Depending on your GCSE results there are three routes to reach a level 3 qualification

## 4 Year Route

2 or more GCSE's at grade D-E/3-1 or above

Animal Care – Level 1

Animal Care – Level 2 Certificate

## 3 Year Route

4 GCSE's at grade D/3 or above, English and Maths at grade D/3

Animal Management – Level 3

## 2 Year Route

5 GCSE's including Science, Maths and English at Grade C/4

A level 3 can then lead to...

Maximum job progression – Upper Management Positions

Trainee Animal Keeper job

HND, FdSc or BSc in an Animal Science field

Trainee Animal Keeper job

Maximum job progression – Head of Section

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# How to Become a Curator Without Going to University

Level 3 in Animal Management

If you get a BSc after the Level 3, you won't need to do the part time BSc, which will reduce the time of job progression by 2 years.

Age 18

Trainee Animal Keeper

Keeper and Aquarist Apprenticeship **OR** Diploma in the Management of Zoo and Aquarium Animals (DMZAA)

2 years

Age 20

Qualified Animal Keeper

5 years

Senior Animal Keeper

Age 23

Age 29

Head of Section

10 years

Deputy Head of Section

8 years

Age 26

Part time BSc – 5 years

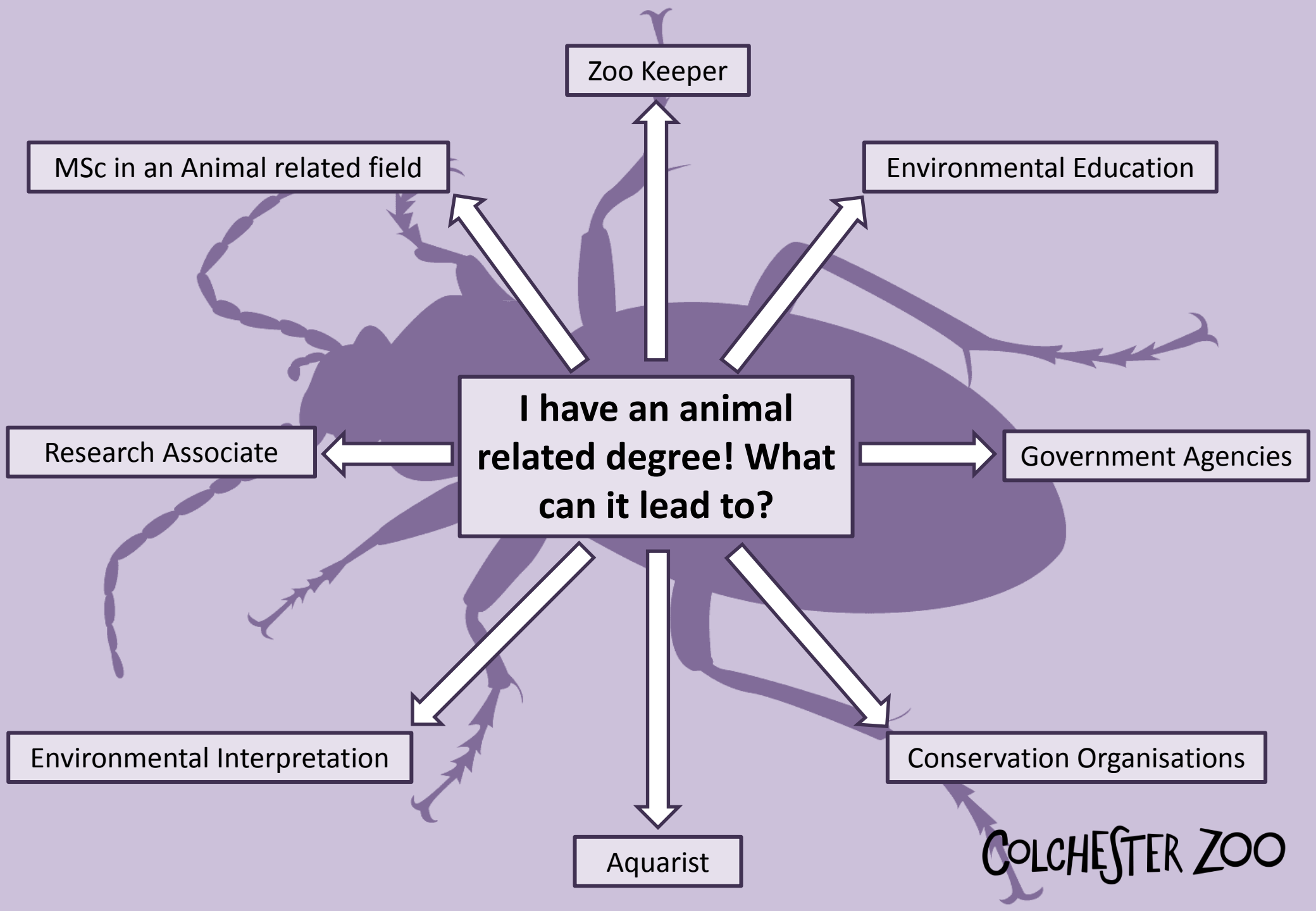
18 years

Curator

Age 36

The timescales and ages are based on minimum requirements. Career progression is subject to individual assessments and achievements.

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Zoo Keeper

MSc in an Animal related field

Environmental Education

**I have an animal related degree! What can it lead to?**

Research Associate

Government Agencies

Environmental Interpretation

Conservation Organisations

Aquarist

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The following job roles are an outline of some of the key positions within a zoo, highlighting the main responsibilities of the role as well as the experience and qualification commonly needed.

It is important to remember that individual zoos will have slightly different requirements and they may have different titles, such as trainee keeper maybe referred to as junior animal keeper.

Useful website: [www.biaza.org](http://www.biaza.org)

### Zoological Director

**Responsibilities:** Ensuring the smooth running of the animal department, whilst maintaining high levels of welfare and developing the zoo.

**Experience:** Operational and people management skills, extensive leadership and management experience in an accredited zoological organisation.

**Qualifications:** BSc in a field related to the position and management qualifications. A MSc or higher is preferred.

### Curator

**Responsibilities:** Oversee the animal sections and staff management to ensure high levels of welfare and conservation. To support in the development of the zoo and the Zoological Director in decision making.

**Experience:** 15+ years in a zoological setting with leadership experience and in-depth knowledge of zoological data systems, breeding programmes and the husbandry needs of a variety of species.

**Qualifications:** BSc in an animal related field and management qualifications.

### Assistant Curator

**Responsibilities:** To support the curator in decision making and ensuring high levels of welfare and visitor experiences. To work with the heads of section to ensure good animal husbandry care and staff management.

**Experience:** Minimum of 15 years in a zoological setting and leadership experience. Knowledge of husbandry needs of a variety of species.

**Qualifications:** HND in an animal related field and DMZAA. Supervision training and a qualification in management is an advantage.

### Head of Section

**Responsibilities:** The day to day management of the animal section and staff, ensure high levels of welfare and ensuring a positive visitor experience.

**Experience:** 10 years in a zoological setting with 5 years of leadership experience. Good IT literacy, knowledge of zoological organisations.

**Qualifications:** DMZAA or Level 3 Animal related qualification. BSc an advantage.

### Deputy Head of Section

**Responsibilities:** Support the day to day running of the animal section and manage the section in the absence of the Head of Section.

**Experience:** At least 8 years in a zoological setting, as well as leadership experience. Good IT literacy and knowledge of zoological organisations

**Qualifications:** DMZAA or Level 3 Animal related qualification. BSc an advantage.

### Senior Animal Keeper

**Responsibilities:** Maintain the husbandry requirements and welfare of the animals. Provide a positive visitor experience. Support staff training and manage staff to support the daily running of the animal section.

**Experience:** Minimum of 5 years in a zoological setting and some experience of supervising staff.

**Qualifications:** DMZAA or Level 3 Animal related qualification

### Qualified Animal Keeper

**Responsibilities:** Maintain the husbandry requirements and welfare of the animals. Provide a positive visitor experience and support staff training.

**Experience:** 2-3 years in a zoological setting.

**Qualifications:** DMZAA or Level 3 Animal related qualification.

**DMZAA – Diploma in the Management of Zoo and Aquarium Animals**

### Trainee Animal Keeper

**Responsibilities:** Maintain the husbandry requirements and welfare of the animals. Provide a positive visitor experience.

**Experience:** Previous work experience within a zoo or similar establishment would be an advantage.

**Qualifications:** On the job training through the DMZAA qualification or apprenticeship in zoo and aquarium management.

# Job Roles in The Zoological Sector

These are broad job requirements and only a selection of the possible roles.

## Animal Keeper

**Qualifications:** Level 3 in Animal Management

**Experience:** Minimum of two years

**Can lead to:** Head of an Animal Section

**Tips:** Any animal experience is beneficial and you need a good level of fitness. Also be prepared to move to any part of the country.

## Aquarist

**Qualifications:** BSc Biology, Marine Biology or Zoology Aquaculture

**Experience:** Minimum of two years

**Can lead to:** Senior Aquarist

**Tips:** Aquarist jobs are technical and gaining experience in plumbing and water chemistry is useful.

## Field Ranger

**Qualifications:** Diploma in nature conservation

**Experience:** People, leadership and DIY skills

**Can lead to:** Reserve Manager

**Tips:** There are a number of field ranger opportunities in the UK, including volunteer positions.

## Student Keeper

**Qualifications:** Level 3 in Animal Management

**Experience:** Work experience with animals

**Can lead to:** Animal keeper

**Tips:** These are unpaid positions, so make sure you can fund yourself.

## Presenter

**Qualifications:** GCSE in Maths, English and Science

**Experience:** Public speaking

**Can lead to:** Roles in education or events.

**Tips:** Developing good personal and communication skills are key.

## Conservation Scientist

**Qualifications:** BSc, MSc and/or PhD

**Experience:** Research methods, field work

**Can lead to:** Lead scientist

**Tips:** Your area of study will determine which area you work in. The role can be office based or field based or a mixture of both.

## Animal Nutritionist

**Qualifications:** BSc Nutrition or Animal Science

**Experience:** Practical farm experience

**Can lead to:** Specialist field consultant

**Tips:** Can do a HND in human nutrition followed by a BSc in Animal Science

## Visitor Volunteer

**Qualifications:** None required

**Experience:** Interacting with people in a public setting

**Can lead to:** Animal work experience

**Tips:** This form of volunteering is a good way to discover more about how zoos operate and build confidence.

## Keeper Volunteer

**Qualifications:** Completing a Level 1, 2 or 3 in animal care

**Experience:** Any animal experience

**Can lead to:** Student keeper

**Tips:** A good way to gain experience alongside gaining qualifications.

## Education Officer

**Qualifications:** BSc in Animal Science or Education

**Experience:** Minimum of two years working with children and groups

**Can lead to:** Learning Manager

**Tips:** Working with scout groups, or youth groups is a good way to gain experience.