A CHOSEN CAREER IN AGribusiness
CAREERS CENTRE
INTRODUCTION

The Curtin Careers Centre, working closely with employers and the university community, sources, develops and delivers career development programs and resources. The purpose of these professional and personal development learning opportunities is to facilitate successful career transitions; especially study to employment and further study and to enhance students’ ability to develop lifelong skills in managing their careers. The Careers Centre also provides accurate, current authoritative labour market and graduate recruitment information focusing on society’s needs and aspirations.

The Careers Centre team has written a series of occupation career booklets to enable tertiary students to consider their chosen field in more depth including information on the current labour market, associated professional associations, pertinent job seeking avenues and samples of relevant and related positions.

Whilst students are actively seeking information about a particular field they need also be aware of recruitment and selection methods and the need to develop strategies to be competitive in their field at graduate entry level.

Self-assessment is an essential component of job seeking i.e. a student needs to be fully aware of their interests, skills, attributes and capabilities to be able to convey this on paper (job application documents) and in person (networking/interviewing/promotion).

The purpose of this occupational booklet is twofold. It will assist students to develop knowledge of trends in employment and current opportunities and to identify existing skills and attributes required to successfully pursue a career in this field.

A student may not be aware that whilst using this resource that they are involved in Career Development Learning (CDL). CDL assists students to develop Self Awareness, to Identify Opportunities, to learn how to Make Decisions, to Manage Transition from university and incorporate Lifelong Learning.

This involves Curtin students working with the Curtin Careers Centre towards the attainment of required skills and knowledge at a tertiary level to successfully manage the changing contexts of life; incorporating:

- Personal Management
- Learning and Work Exploration
- Career Building

Contacting the Careers Centre...

Feel free to visit us at Building 303
Email us at careers@curtin.edu.au
Give us a call on (08) 9266 7802
Or check out our website at www.careers.curtin.edu.au

Stay connected to the Careers Centre with Jobs and Events Connect. Access new jobs posted daily, workshop information, special events and employer presentations.
Agribusiness is one of the largest industries, rapidly growing with many career opportunities. Demands for food are projected to double over the next 40 years and being one of the most complex professions. There is often an growing need in marketing agricultural products as compared to other areas, and working as a marketer is often a good entry level into the industry.

A graduate with a degree in Agribusiness can find a career in production, finance, marketing, and farm management. It’s a field where economics, business, and agriculture merge. Agribusiness management jobs are available in both the public and private sectors, such as government agencies and large corporations. Some individuals decide to go into business for themselves, such as operating a family farm.

Graduates can start a career as a manager in a company that manufactures farming equipment and machinery. Working in retail of the final products produced by farmers is another opportunity for individuals who prefer a career that indirectly relates to farm operations.

WHAT AM I QUALIFIED FOR?

As a Curtin University of Technology student you will have developed a number of employability skills and attributes that maybe you have not thought of or recognised in your self. In fact, all Curtin University courses are designed to ensure you are given ample opportunity to develop Curtin Graduate Attributes. These attributes are defined as qualities, skills and understandings that Curtin students develop during their time at the university. They are designed to go beyond the disciplinary specific expertise or technical knowledge you gain at university. Curtin graduates show evidence that they can:

- Apply discipline knowledge, principles and concepts
- Think critically, creatively and reflectively
- Access, evaluate and synthesise information
- Communicate effectively
- Use technologies appropriately
- Utilise lifelong learning skills
- Recognise and apply international perspectives
- Demonstrate intercultural awareness and understanding
- Apply professional skills

Combine these attributes with existing skills gained from life and work experiences and you will start to form a solid picture of what you are capable of. If you are having difficulty with outlining your skills or recording your achievements logon to Resume Express, Analyse Your Skills, attend a workshop or contact careers@curtin.edu.au to make an appointment to see a Careers Consultant.
OCCUPATIONAL ROLES

As a graduate with a Bachelor of Agribusiness, you will qualify to apply for positions in areas including:

- Business / Consulting
- Machinery
- Production
- Government
- Agronomy
- Protection

A large percentage of students after university, move into careers in agricultural production and consulting. Production is the most common pathway and includes farming, including planting, nurturing and cultivating of crops. This is usually for private farms or for commercial farms. Consultants are also common pathways and students find careers with consulting companies to help determine what is planted where, crops rotations, and how the soil is used future growing seasons. Consultants help farmers learn how to manage farms and in matters such as establishing business plans, setting goals, and the general processes necessary to successfully operate an agricultural business.

Other agribusiness opportunities include education, related to the business side of agriculture. This includes trainers who help commercial farmers learn how to manage a larger farm operation to best effect, both in terms of cultivation and harvesting of crops.

The opportunities within Augibusiness are endless and can take you all over the world. To highlight some key areas, The Job Guide shows the following (2010):

POLICY ADVISOR

Policy analysts develop and advise on policies guiding design, implementation and modification of government and commercial operations and programs.

FARM MANAGER

Farm managers undertake farming operations to raise livestock and cultivate crops, fruit, vegetables and other agricultural products.

RESEARCH OFFICER

Research officers plan and conduct research into a variety of issues or areas.

INVESTMENT / FINANCIAL PLANNING

Investment Bankers and Financial Planners develop and implement financial plans for their clients. Some of the areas an agribusiness planner or advisor will advise on are: debt management, insurance and risk, estate planning, managed investments, securities and futures markets. Financial planners may also specialise in such areas as: ethical investments, loans and mortgage advice, in the areas of agriculture.

MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

Agribusiness graduates can work in marketing and advertising. Students who work in mmarketing know what people in the agricultural industry want and try to satisfy that want. This comes from understanding why people buy and don’t buy, identifying gaps and recommending new product lines or suggesting new ways for the product to be offered to potential customers.

SALES

Agents advise and represent farmers and graziers in business transactions such as the buying and selling of livestock, wool, fertiliser, farming and grazing land, equipment and merchandise.
OCCUPATIONS AND ROLES

AGRONOMIST

Agricultural scientists study commercial plants, animals and cultivation techniques to improve the productivity and sustainability of farms and agricultural industries.

AGRI- ANALYST

Analysts study the overall business and information needs of an agricultural business, in order to develop solutions to business and related technology problems.

AGRI-LAW

Primary products inspectors examine animals, plants and agricultural produce at farms, abattoirs, processing and packing plants, wholesale markets and places of storage or shipment to make sure that they meet government standards of hygiene and quality, and export requirements.

CONSULTING

Opportunities include strategic business planning, corporate financial services, human resource management services, information management and e-commerce strategy development, risk management and pest management. Joining a major consulting firm offers graduates the chance to work alongside more experienced consultants and undertake the preliminary research and analysis of business structures, processes and systems that are part of the consulting brief (Graduate Careers Australia, 2010).

Graduates can not only find employment working in private farms, but also with corporate companies. Corporate farms grow crops to sell to the public at a profit. Some companies grow their own crops, market their products and package ready for sale. Due to the large scale of these organizations, government regulations are strictly adhered do and some commercial companies employ environmental impact graduates, public relations and media students. There are many career opportunities with companies such as these due to the extent of the process.

Other typical employers of graduates are agricultural farming products like machinery, fertilizers and pesticides and tools. Graduates can be employed to sell products and assist with advertising and marketing.

There are also companies that specialize in providing staff for agricultural companies. There are called recruitment companies and their role is to locate qualified workers, anywhere from farm hands to farm managers, to fill in or contract for agricultural organizations when required.

Occupations in the public service sector is diverse and there are many opportunities in the federal, state and local government. Most government departments actively seek graduates from a range of disciplines for their graduate programs, including students with agricultural degrees.
LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

The average yearly income for a graduate with a degree in Agribusiness can change depending on the specific career pathway they will take. Gradsonline states that graduates who find employment in their first year in the agricultural industry (all fields) may earn a median salary of $43,000.

CONSULTING

The financial rewards in the consulting sector can be very good, however, the industry is highly competitive and work demands can be heavy. Remuneration varies depending on the particular field of consultancy, among other factors. New graduates typically earn $32,000-$44,000, while experienced professionals in these fields typically earn anywhere $60,000-$180,000 (Graduate Careers Australia, 2010).

GOVERNMENT

Starting salaries vary depending on the role and area of government. Half of all bachelor graduates employed full-time in federal government in 2006 earned a starting salary of $41,000-$51,000. The equivalent ranges for state government and local government are $38,600-$48,100 and $39,000-$50,000 respectively. With experience and a demonstrated track record, salaries of $80,000 or more are not uncommon (Graduate Careers Australia, 2010).

FARM MANAGEMENT

Salaries can vary depending on the crop grown, the size of the farm and the responsibilities involved. Graduate Opportunities suggest the figure is between $25,000 – $68,000. If this is an area that you are interested in working, you may consider looking at the roles and responsibilities and see if you feel the pay is appropriate for those roles (Graduate Careers Australia, 2010).

Investigating graduate salaries is very important during your career research and job searching. To find out more information you could consider visiting these sites:

- http://wwwgraduatecareers.com.au
- http://www.apsjobs.gov.au
The Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry has experienced an employment downturn in recent years due to the effects of the drought. Some factors that have contributed to this are environmental issues, the leveling off of private investment and a stronger Australian dollar have affected the industry’s growth and competitiveness (DEEWR, 2010). However, employment in the agricultural sector is projected to grow, although employment change will vary by specialty. The graph below shows projected employment growth over the specific sectors.

Australia’s Agribusiness industries today comprise a rich mix of multinational corporations, Australian grown corporations, small-to-medium enterprises, investment management companies and family owned businesses. According to MyCareer (2010) established industries like meat, horticulture and dairy in Australia, is among the largest producers in the world. In wine, the country has made a name for itself as a producer of high-quality products for international palates. The second graph shows the main contributors of employment.


GRADUATE AND VACATION WORK

Graduate programs are available to final year students and recent graduates. Applications can open as early as February/March of each year. Programs can be from one year to three years in duration, depending on the discipline. Graduate Programs generally offer training and development, job rotation through various departments of the organisation, challenging roles, mentoring, and social and networking opportunities.

Vacation programs are available to penultimate and final year students and can be offered in either Winter or Summer. Winter programs will be approximately four weeks in duration and summer programs can be up to twelve weeks. Vacation programs offer paid positions and training pertinent to your discipline, the application of theory to the workplace and may also lead to selection for a Graduate Program. Applications are generally open in Semester I for Winter Vacation Programs and this can tie in with the advertising of the Graduate Programs. Summer programs are often advertised mid-year, June to August.

Both public and private sector employers target final year students from all disciplines. Have a look at what they have to offer. See www.graduateopportunities.com.au and www.unimail.com.au for an A-Z listing of employers offering graduate and vacation programs.

Note: You may not wish to apply for a Graduate Program but the position descriptions will give a good indicator of what type of graduate and graduate skills/attributes employers are seeking from prospective candidates. If you believe that you meet this type of criteria, it is likely that you are already in the professional employability stakes. If not, then you know what you have to do leading up to your graduation - increase your employability stakes. Some companies that have Graduate Programs are:

NAB  

CBA  

Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
http://www.daff.gov.au

KPMG  

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ASSOCIATIONS

It is very important that students know their professional associations and affiliations. There are often student membership options which provided you with valuable industry specific information and professional development opportunities and open you up to a vast network of professionals in your chosen area of expertise.

Agribusiness Association of Australia  
http://www.agribusiness.asn.au

International Food and Agribusiness Management Association  

ICM Agribusiness  
Set up a Desktop Folder and add a Favorite Internet Explorer folder.

Download jobs of interest for future reference. This allows you to keep a track of who is hiring in your field and the types of positions available.

NOTE: Don’t just save the link as the details will disappear once the position has been filled. Copy the advertisement or any additional files onto Word and keep in your desktop folder. *This is also a useful tip for when you begin working in your field, keep an eye on pertinent positions at all times.

Look at positions available around the country and not just in Perth. This will give an idea of who is recruiting and where and differing salary scales.

Register with websites for specific job alerts

Consider search terms e.g. agriculturalist, farm management, agronomist, consultant. This will ensure that email alerts of appropriate jobs are sent directly to you. If positions on the job search websites give the name of the recruiting company – go directly to their website and check for other employment opportunities. Apply directly from the company website if possible.

GENERAL JOB SEARCH ENGINES

(all provide hits on the above search terms)
http://www.seek.com.au
http://www.careerone.com.au

Review job advertisements and job requirements – pay attention to the job description form (JDF) or job requirements and to the selection criteria.

NOTE: Selection criteria may be included in a JDF as for government jobs or may be ‘hidden’ in the advertisement. If no set selection criteria are asked to be addressed – target your letter to the position. Don’t just limit yourself to reviewing entry level or graduate positions, look at the variety of positions in your field at various levels and view the requirements. This will let you discover what will be expected of you at higher levels and the type of experience that you will hope to gain at earlier stages in your career. Consider lifelong learning and developing your career.

SPECIFIC JOB SEARCH ENGINES

Check out appropriate organizations/companies in your field and look for Career or Employment pages. See the Careers Resource Officer for assistance if required.

Attend the Curtin Careers Festival (held semester one each year) and other career related events throughout the year to gain more information on the employers hiring graduates in your field. This information is also available online at www.careers.curtin.edu.au. You should be investigating employers throughout your studies to be able to identify those which you may wish to work for when you graduate.

Some specific job search sites are:

AgBIZ Careers
http://www.agbizcareers.com.au

Agricultural Appointments
http://wwwagri.com.au

Agribusiness Association of Australia
http://www.agribusiness.asn.au

Rimfire Resources
http://www.rimfireresoures.com.au
FURTHER YOUR CAREER WITH POSTGRADUATE STUDY

Postgraduate study can enhance your career opportunities by allowing you to develop more specialised expertise in a particular area. If you are considering careers in academia, or industry-based research and development, you will almost certainly need to complete honours and undertake a postgraduate research degree (Masters or PhD). Some management roles also require postgraduate coursework or research experience. It is also possible to complete shorter coursework degrees (graduate certificates and graduate diplomas) in a wide range of areas. These allow you to expand your career options by gaining knowledge of areas that may be specialized or unrelated to your undergraduate degree. Competition for graduate employment is intensifying so postgraduate qualifications are increasingly important to prospective employers in some industries. In many cases, salary is also indicative of your level of study.

Postgraduate study may be greatly enhanced by the knowledge you gain from being in the work force before, or during your study. Many postgraduate courses are offered in a range of delivery modes to accommodate the needs of students who are working and studying at the same time. Look for courses that allow you to enrol part-time and/or as an external student.

Some postgraduate courses you could study at Curtin are:

- Graduate Diploma in Agriculture
- Masters of Accounting
- Master of Management
- Masters of Logistics

RESEARCH AT CURTIN

Higher degree by research differs from other postgraduate degrees in that the main part of your work will be in the form of a thesis written under the guidance of a supervisor and associate supervisor(s).

The department of Environment and Agriculture’s research programs are focused on key areas. The opportunity to combine these research areas in collaborative projects and postgraduate programs is a major strength of the department. The graduate studies program is an important component of the department’s research profile.

The research interests of staff are currently focused on five main areas: Environmental Biology; Aquatic Science; Viticulture and Wine Science; Agricultural science; and Horticulture.

For more information, please visit:

Research at Curtin:

http://agrienvi.curtin.edu.au/research/

Curtin Business School:

Gaining work experience is essential to your career development. Here are some of the benefits:

- Insight on the working environment and relevant industries
- Development and acquisition of new skills
- Creates career networks and integration into the labour market
- An opportunity to demonstrate discipline knowledge, skills and abilities
- Highlights and informs career choices
- Professional grooming and development

By viewing position descriptions you will get a clear idea of what will be required in a specific role for a specific industry or field and you can start to address any skill shortages prior to completion of your studies. Employers look for students who are ‘all-rounders’. These are students who, whilst still performing well academically, can also demonstrate an interest in their chosen field beyond textbooks. The Curtin Careers Centre has many services to assist you in finding a work placement. These are:

- Attend a Work Experience Workshop conducted by the Careers Centre. Please see Jobs and Events Connect for a full schedule of upcoming workshops. http://www.careers.curtin.edu.au/studentlogin.html
- You can email us at careers@curtin.edu.au or phone (08) 9266 7802 to make an appointment.

No matter what type of work placement you are on accident insurance is essential. Accident insurance covers you if you hurt yourself on a work site. If a work experience opportunity is not paid the employer’s Personal Accident Insurance does not cover you. The Curtin Careers Centre provides students free appropriate accident cover.

- Download the “How To” Guide for Gaining Work Experience to give you all the tips and hints you need to find a placement http://www.careers.curtin.edu.au/workexperienceprograms.html
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Research and Development: Research positions can often require Honours or a four year degree. If you have an interest in this area, keep an eye on university positions.

Some universities allow for email alerts. See http://www.australian-universities.com/list/ for access to all Australian Universities.

Agribusiness Advisor and Research

Agribusiness Australia

Department of Agriculture and Food

STILL CONFUSED?

If you are a current or recent Curtin graduate and you are still unclear about your career directions and the opportunities available for you please contact the Curtin Careers Centre for an individual career counselling session with a professional career development consultant. Just call reception on +61 8 9266 7802 to make an appointment.

If you are not a Curtin University Student or Alumni but would be interested in learning more about the courses at Curtin University please contact Future Students +61 8 9266 1000 (domestic students) or +61 8 9266 7331 (international students) or check out their website at http://www.futurestudents.curtin.edu.au
AGRIBUSINESS ANALYST

Industry Sector: Agriculture / Primary Industry:
Career Type: Administration / Operations Assistant
Job Type: Full-time (5 days)
Min Years Experience: Agriculture / agribusiness specialties advantageous
Salary: Competitive (based and negotiated on experience)

Is an emerging agribusiness and agricultural investment company, currently operational nationally, is seeking a full-time Agribusiness Analyst.

The role involves:
- Business development projects;
- Agricultural and Carbon production and financial modelling;
- Managing operational and research projects; and
- Assisting with various other projects and business operations.

You will enjoy a varied day and will use your initiative.

The ideal candidate for this role will have strong Microsoft Office skills (particularly Excel), have studied or are currently studying at a tertiary level (Agricultural discipline highly regarded), be enthusiastic, and be proactive in getting involved in the company.

You will have strengths in organisation, time management, and multi-tasking. Experience in agricultural investment, carbon markets, Australian agricultural production systems, and the institutional investment market would be advantageous.

Will offer a great working atmosphere, competitive remuneration, career growth, and stability.
GRADUATE GRAIN MERCHANT

Full time

Newly created graduate opportunity
Broad exposure to a leading Agricultural business
50 – 60k package and incentives

This company is at the forefront of a rapidly changing industry and we are looking for people who want to be a part of that change. As one of Australia’s largest agricultural supply chain and logistics companies we know that the strength of our relationships is integral to our success.

As a recent graduate, you will have a natural ability to build relationship and interact with key industry stakeholders to help achieve set objectives. Above all else, we are looking for an individual with the enthusiasm, and desire to learn, to develop you into an Agribusiness professional.

The Role

As part of Grain Marketing Services, the role of Graduate Grain Merchant provides the critical link between grain growers, our trading team, and our storage and logistics network. Working closely with the trading team you will be responsible for the accumulation of grain from growers, active promotion of GrainCorp products and services, and generation of supply and demand information.

Given the geographical scope of this role business travel is a requirement and a valid driver’s license is essential.

We are committed to developing our people in a versatile workplace where they can reach their full potential. This makes it possible for them to not only thrive, but to excel in an industry where change brings opportunity.
REFERENCES


Contacting the Careers Centre...

Feel free to visit us at Building 303
Email us at careers@curtin.edu.au
Give us a call on (08) 9266 7802
Or check out our website at www.careers.curtin.edu.au

Stay connected to the Careers Centre with Jobs and Events Connect. Access new jobs posted daily, workshop information, special events and employer presentations.