

Environmental Work

Version 2.12

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/startingpoints

Working in the Environment

Environmental work is an area that attracts many graduates. Although opportunities remain buoyant in some areas, entry can be highly competitive. Successful candidates often have a relevant post graduate qualification, together with related work experience – entry without either of these can be difficult. There is no single environmental profession: environmental work encompasses a wide range of technical and non-technical jobs in industry, local and national government and voluntary organisations. Thus, graduates without a science background can gain entry to some lines of work with relevant postgraduate training and work experience.

Job search tips

Graduate entry level jobs are not always advertised: although you will find some environmental recruiters at our careers fairs (usually the larger multidisciplinary consultancies and oil/utility companies), many jobs in this sector fall into the “business as usual” category and are advertised as they come up, rather than as part of an annual recruitment campaign. As a job hunter, you need to go to them, targeting organisations that interest you individually, researching their current opportunities and, if all else fails, approaching them speculatively.

Research employers and occupations: some entry level jobs in the environmental sector are not widely advertised. Researching jobs and companies is a good way to find out entry criteria for different roles: it will help you identify the sort of work experience and skills that will make you more employable. Annual “salary and career” surveys can be useful to get a snapshot of the environmental labour market.

www.endsdirectory.com/index.cfm?action=articles.view&articleid=2010011 (2010)

Getting experience

Work experience is very important! Even if you have an environmental degree, employers still look for this as evidence of your commitment to environmental issues. It doesn't need to be paid or full time, but it does need to be ongoing rather than just the odd day then nothing for 12 months. Be prepared to do anything, however menial, and stick at it.

Develop relevant skills: many employers rate practical skills and experience highly. The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers runs conservation skills training courses and they are active in the Greater Manchester area www.btcv.org.uk. The Environmental Network 4 Manchester also lists regional training and events www.en4m.org.uk.

Consider further study: some recruiters require an additional qualification such as a Masters degree. In many cases, you don't need a higher degree to actually do the job but because so many people have one (c60% across the sector) it is becoming the standard entry level qualification. Lots of relevant work experience is about the only way to avoid doing one. The exception would be large companies such as utilities who hire graduate trainees at entry level.

Project work: if your degree requires you to submit a dissertation or other project work, pick one with an environmental focus. Information interviews and surveys present a great

opportunity to network with relevant environmental professionals and policy makers. It could be linked to a specific employer or environmental organisation - what better way to demonstrate your potential employability than undertaking a viable and relevant piece of research?

Keep abreast of topical issues: read the environmental press and keep in touch with current issues and legislation relevant to your area of interest e.g. The ENDS report (online at www.ends.co.uk) and Nature Post and Sustainable Business Magazine, both available in the Careers Resource Centre. Register with sites like www.edie.net and www.environment-analyst.com to receive their free e-newsletters.

Seek out opportunities to network: joining professional institutions as a student member can provide access to regional events and meetings, where you could be in direct contact with professional environmental staff. A list of professional bodies can be found at the end of this handout. Events such as the 'Insight into Careers in the Environmental Sector' and 'Careers in International Development' (both held in the second semester) organised by the Careers Service allow you to talk with the people actually doing the work. Information gleaned from such interactions can help you spot opportunities and target your applications more effectively.

Consider joining Linked In. Linked In is the world's largest professional network with over 100 million members. LinkedIn connects you to contacts and helps you exchange knowledge, ideas, and opportunities with a broader network of professionals. You can join specialist groups to link with professionals in your field www.linkedin.com

Join a relevant organisation or local group: e.g. a wildlife trust, and use it as an opportunity to network and to do some voluntary work. Local talks and events may bring you into contact with professionals as well as other people who share your interest. Arrange to talk to someone involved in the field that interests you or set up some work shadowing. Volunteering can also help build your practical experience e.g. working for a community recycling organisation is good experience for those considering careers in waste management.

Start early... it takes time to build up work experience and to develop contacts. If you have always wanted to work in the environment, don't leave this until your final year - employers will question your motivation!

Sources of work experience and mentoring schemes

Often jobs and opportunities are not advertised, so you will have to contact organisations direct. Ask for a copy of the "Networking" handout at the Careers Service or follow the below link for more information on creative job search. www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/startingpoints

The Careers Service has a dedicated **Volunteering and Community Engagement Team** which encourages and supports our students to volunteer in the wider community. They promote a wide range of online volunteering opportunities including environmental and conservation work via their volunteering vacancy service. www.manchester.ac.uk/volunteers

Manchester Gold is a high profile mentoring scheme for students of The University of Manchester, offering opportunities to network with employers nationally. It offers the chance to get the inside track on a career, from being linked up to someone who works in your ideal job or sector. Manchester Gold has linked students with mentors in a variety of environmental roles. www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/manchestergold

The **Manchester Leadership Programme** combines a taught academic Leadership in Action unit, which focuses on 21st century leadership challenges, with volunteering leading to the Manchester Leadership Award. www.manchester.ac.uk/mlp

Advertised work experience vacancies

- Your Careers Service website. Log into CareersLink.
www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink
- Manchester volunteering opportunities. Log into CareersLink.
www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/volunteers

Schemes in the UK

- BTCV
Voluntary work, conservation holidays, courses.
www.btcv.org.uk
- National Trust
Working holidays and practical volunteering at their properties.
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
- Groundwork Trust
Environmental regeneration organisation;
www.groundwork.org.uk
- The VPA (Volunteer Project Assistant) scheme offers work experience in Oldham and Rochdale
<http://oldham.groundworknw.org.uk/page.asp?id=2229>
- National Grid Environment Education Centres
Voluntary opportunities for 16-25 year olds at 6 sites in the UK.
<http://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/Community/eec>
- StudentForce for Sustainability
Paid 2-12 month projects for recent graduates in the sustainability sector.
www.studentforce.org.uk
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International schemes

Many of these schemes require you to “pay your own way” and it can be expensive. They include organisations like Raleigh International and Coral Cay. Check out the files in the Careers Resource Centre for more information. You may also find the Starting Point Sheets on “International / Overseas Development Work” and “Working for a Charity or Voluntary Organisation” useful.

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/startingpoints

Postgraduate study

There are a range of postgraduate courses relevant to environmental careers, from environmental engineering to pollution control. Although there are conversion courses open to all graduates, some require you to have a relevant first degree or prior work experience. The Prospects website has a searchable database of taught courses and research in the UK.

www.prospects.ac.uk/links/pgdbase

You may also find www.findamasters.com useful.

To determine whether a course is right for you, ask the admissions tutor about the career destinations of past students. They can also advise on any available funding. Looking at the subject areas covered by the course can help determine whether the course has a theoretical or practical focus.

For those interested in environmental policy and practice, Forum for the Future run a Leadership for Sustainable Development Masters Programme. This includes placements across 6 sectors, including government, regulatory institutions and the media.

www.forumforthefuture.org/masters-course

Job sites

- www.countrysidejobslink.co.uk
Links to UK national organisations, local government and organizations in the voluntary sector.
- www.countryside-jobs.com
The countryside jobs service, an 'ethical small business publishing free and low cost information and vacancies'.
- www.earthworks-jobs.com
Employment opportunities in geological engineering, contaminated land and land management.
- www.environmentjobs.co.uk
Jobs site organised by employer e.g. business, charity, public sector.
- www.environmentjob.co.uk
Jobs site organised by area of work e.g. conservation, recycling.
- www.naturejobs.com
Nature Journal.
- www.newscientistjobs.com
NewScientist Jobs site.
- www.stopdodo.com
Global portal for environmental jobs and resumes.
- www.oneworld.net/jobs
Jobs in human rights, environment and sustainable development worldwide.

Relevant organisations

- www.btcv.org.uk
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.
- www.cat.org.uk
Centre for Alternative Technology.
- www.defra.gov.uk
DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) includes Civil Service Fast Stream entry to DEFRA.
- www.en4m.org.uk
Environmental Network 4 Manchester.

- www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Includes online vacancy list by region
- www.naturalengland.org.uk
Natural England site, including information, jobs and volunteering opportunities.
- www.nerc.ac.uk
Natural Environment Research Council.
- www.panda.org
World Wide Fund for Nature, information, job vacancies and volunteering opportunities.
- www.wildlifetrusts.org
The Wildlife Trusts website.

Careers information / research

- www.prospects.ac.uk/industries_environment_agriculture_overview.htm Graduate Prospects, including Industry Insight on “Environment and Agriculture” and detailed profiles on a range of environmental occupations. See **‘Contacts & Resources’** and **‘Typical Employers and Vacancies’** for an extensive list of relevant websites.
- www.edie.net
Edie (Environmental Data Interactive Exchange) information and jobs. Relevant to environmental management.
- www.eldis.org
Gateway to jobs, volunteering and research opportunities relating to Development and Environmental issues worldwide.
- www.ends.co.uk
Environmental Data Services: incl. job and agency listings and a list of consultancies (ENDS Directory).
- www.newscientist.com/section/environment
- New Scientist Environment information and news about the sector.
- www.envirolinkuk.org
Environlink – the online environmental community.
- www.growing-careers.com
Careers in the Environment, Food Chain and Rural Sector.

Professional bodies

Joining a relevant professional body can provide students with access to a network of professional contacts by attending local events.

- www.ciwem.org.uk
Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management.
- www.environmental.org.uk
Society of Environmental Engineers.
- www.esauk.org
The Environmental Services Association.
- www.ieem.net
Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management.

- www.iema.net
Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment

Careers Resources

Resources available include reference books, journals, as well as online resources. Visit our online Careers Library at www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/library

Careers Service talks and events

- **Insight into Careers in the Environmental Sector** provides an opportunity to network with professionals working in the environmental sector. Please be aware that **this is not** a recruitment fair but a chance to talk and listen to the people actually doing the job.
- Look out for talks as part of the Career Service Events programme, run each semester.

For further information about Careers Service events, log into CareersLink www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/events

Specialist recruitment agencies

Agencies often require candidates to have several years' relevant experience.

Search for an agency by sector (and/or region) at the site of the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) www.rec.uk.com

- Acre
www.acre-resources.com
- Allen and York – Search and Selection
www.allen-york.com
- Evergreen Resources
www.evergreen.org.uk
- Index Environmental
www.index-environmental.co.uk

Find us

The Atrium, 1st Floor, University Place

Open all year round

For opening times see website
www.manchester.ac.uk/careers

Contact us

0161 275 2829
careers.info@manchester.ac.uk

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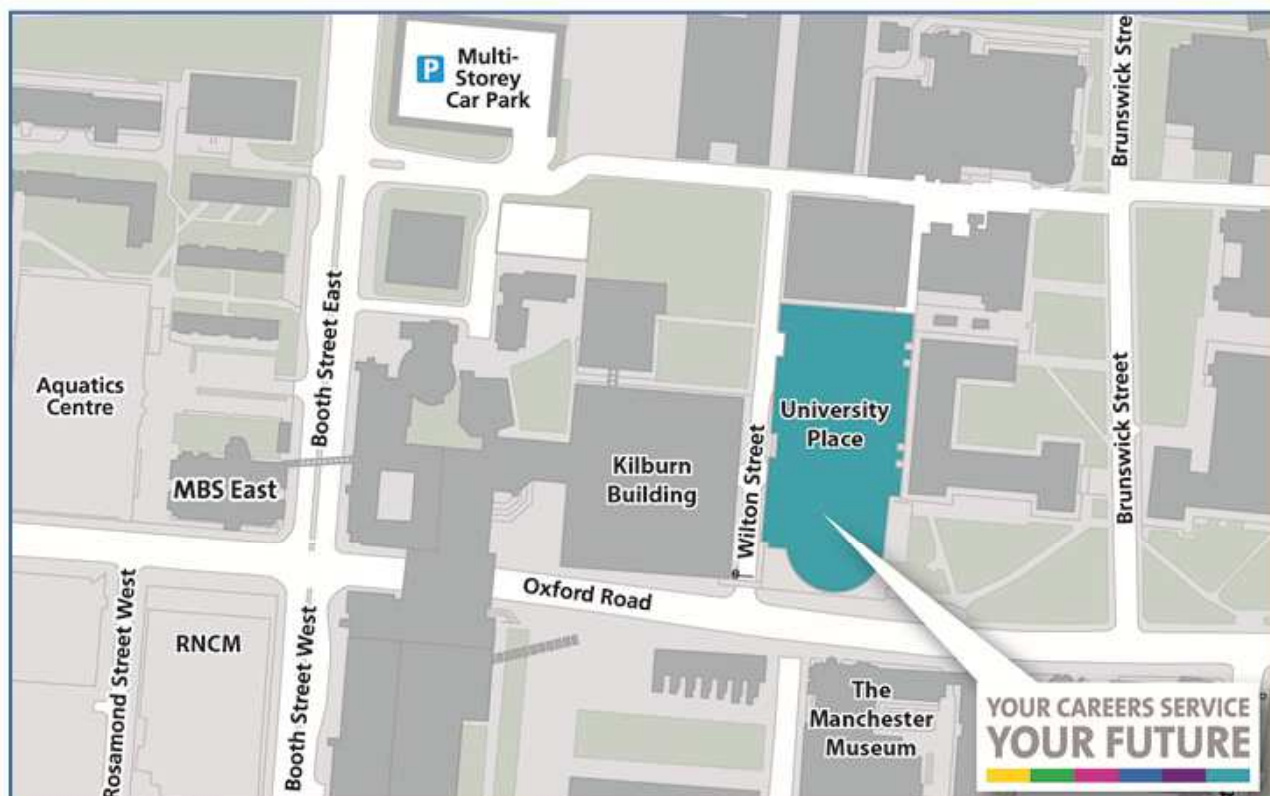
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