

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES/SCIENCE

What can I do with this major?

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION/COMPLIANCE

Ground Water
Surface Water
Soils
Air
Sediments
Remediation
Liability
Audit
Compliance
Sustainability

Federal government:
Army Corps of Engineers
Department of Defense
Environmental Protection Agency
Department of Interior: Bureau of Reclamation,
Office of Surface Mining, Bureau of Land
Management
Department of Agriculture
Natural Resource Conservation Service
Agricultural consulting firms
Environmental consulting firms

Gain experience through internships, volunteer or other part-time positions with government or private remediation projects.
Develop excellent communication skills, both oral and written, as well as the ability to work as part of a team.
Conduct regulatory research regarding environmental issues in area of interest.
Plan to travel to worksites.
Seek experience with data management, analysis and tools used for remediation, i.e. GIS, CADD and regulatory/compliance software. OSHA HAZWOPER training may be required for some positions.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Risk Assessment
Quality Control
Logistics
Planning
Recycling
Transportation
Compliance
Environmental Engineering
Public and Environmental Health
Industrial Hygiene

Federal, state and local government:
Environmental Protection Agency
Department of Energy
City/county waste management departments
Recycling centers
Private waste management firms
Consulting firms
Nonprofit organizations

Pursue experience through volunteer, paid and intern positions related to waste management.
Seek opportunities to hone communication skills, both written and oral. Take courses in technical writing.
Develop decision-making and problem-solving skills, diplomacy and the ability to work under pressure.
Demonstrate flexibility and willingness to look at issues from various perspectives.
Gain familiarity with current technologies, regulations and statutes.
Join community groups or service organizations that focus on environmental awareness; attend public meetings about waste management.
Become familiar with Superfund and its programs. Learn about the activities of local chapters of citizen watch groups.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

SOIL SCIENCE

Soil and Water Conservation
Land Use Planning
Waste Disposal
Environmental Compliance
Reclamation of Contaminated Lands
Landfill Operation and Monitoring
Agrichemical Management
Fertilizer Technology
Agricultural Production: Food and Fiber
Research
Education

Federal government:
Environmental Protection Agency
Natural Resource Conservation Service
Department of Agriculture
Department of Health and Human Services
State farm bureaus
Environmental research laboratories
Agricultural or environmental consultant firms
Privately owned farms and ranches
Universities

Develop acute observational skills.
Seek related experience through co-ops, internships or part-time jobs in area of interest.
Gain extensive laboratory and research experience to prepare for research positions.
Stay abreast of current environmental issues including policy, conservation and industry trends.
Seek knowledge of technology used in natural resource management including software, geographical information systems and global positioning systems.
Participate in related clubs, organizations and soil judging teams to build contacts and cultivate academic interests.
Learn about certification programs offered by the Soil Science Society of America including soil science and agronomy.

AIR/WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Testing/Analysis
Watershed Management
Stream Restoration
Sustainable Infrastructure
Risk Assessment
Project Development
Compliance
Permitting
Modeling

Federal, state and local government:
Environmental Protection Agency
Geological Survey
Natural Resource Conservation Service
Fish and Wildlife Service
Department of Agriculture
Public works departments
Consulting firms
Private laboratories
Nonprofit organizations
Water treatment plants
Consumer products manufacturers

Develop strong research skills through coursework with laboratory components, by assisting faculty with research projects or through related internships and jobs.
Seek experience in student and community organizations related to the environment such as those focused on water resources, pollution or conservation.
Stay up-to-date with local and federal regulatory agencies and laws pertaining to your specialty.
Develop strong oral communication and technical writing skills, as well as the ability to collaborate in a team environment.
Learn to use the tools and software associated with watershed modeling or air dispersion modeling
Investigate certification programs offered by the American Institute of Hydrology.
Be willing to work and travel to various client sites.

AREAS

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION

Natural Resource Management: Land, Soil, Water,
Plants, Animals
Sustainability Management
Water Resources
Aviation Planning
Transportation Planning
Building/Zoning
Land Acquisition
Land Use
Recreation Management
Park/Preserve Management
Mining
Construction

EMPLOYERS

Federal, state and local government:
Environmental Protection Agency
Natural Resource Conservation Service
Fish and Wildlife Service
National Park Service
Department of Agriculture
Department of Transportation
Public works departments
Planning departments
Utilities companies
Forestry companies
Indian nations
Mining companies: petroleum, mineral
Consulting firms
Real estate development companies
Market research companies
Colleges and universities
Nonprofit organizations
Land trust organizations: The Nature Conservancy or Trust for Public Land
Zoological parks
Hunting and fishing clubs
Wildlife ranges

STRATEGIES

Obtain experience through volunteer positions such as Student Conservation Association, and seek leadership positions.
Seek research experience with professors, through coursework or through internships in the industry.
Develop knowledge of land and water policies, ecology and conservation history. Real estate experience may be beneficial for some positions.
Participate on planning boards, commissions and committees to stay abreast of local planning and conservation initiatives.
Hone communication and negotiation skills for interacting with various stakeholders including land owners, elected officials and conservation and community representatives.

AREAS

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

Teaching:

Elementary

Secondary

Post-Secondary

Non-classroom Education

Technical Writing

Editing

Illustrating

Photography

Public Relations

EMPLOYERS

Public and private schools, K-12

Two-year community colleges/technical institutes

Four-year institutions

Museums

Zoos

Nature centers and parks

Publishing companies: scientific magazines,
professional journals, periodicals, textbooks,
online publishers

Newspapers

Educational and scientific software companies

Environmental organizations

Government agencies

Nonprofit organizations

STRATEGIES

Gain experience working with students through tutoring, part-time employment or volunteering.

Learn to work well with people of varying backgrounds and skills.

Develop excellent interpersonal, communication and content area knowledge.

Complete a teacher preparation program for K-12 positions, which varies by state. Learn about the endorsements for environmental science.

Master's degrees may be sufficient for teaching at community or two-year institutions.

Seek Ph.D. for teaching opportunities at colleges and universities.

Join professional associations and environmental groups as way to learn about the field and network.

Acquire thorough knowledge of photographic procedures and technology.

Take advanced courses in technical writing or journalism classes or consider a minor in either.

Join professional associations like the National Association of Science Writers or the Public Relations Student Society of America.

Seek related volunteer or paid experiences with student/local publications to increase marketability.

Consider earning an advanced degree in a communications field to specialize, i.e. scientific journalism or public relations.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Political Action/Lobbying
Regulatory Affairs
Science Policy
Patent Law
Non-profit or Public Interest
Environmental Law
Mediation

Law firms
Large corporations
Federal and state government:
 Environmental Protection Agency
 Department of Justice
 Attorney General Offices
Political Action Committees
Nonprofit organizations, i.e. Green Action and
 Natural Resources Defense Council

Develop strong research and writing skills. Hone communication skills through public speaking courses, debate team or Toast Masters, a public speaking organization.
Participate in pre-law honor societies and seek guidance from campus pre-law advisors.
Maintain current knowledge of industry trends, laws and policies specific to area of interest, i.e. conservation, regulation compliance, etc.
Take courses in history, political science and/or legal studies to supplement science curriculum.
Learn about the law school admissions process, maintain a high GPA and plan to perform well on the LSAT. Research schools with concentrations of interest, i.e. environmental law and policy, conservation, sustainable development, etc.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Environmental studies and environmental science differ from each other in the amount of science course work required.
- Environmental studies provide a broad base of hard sciences as well as social science coursework. Environmental science incorporates hard sciences and environmental sciences.
- Choice depends upon career focus, for example, administration or policy-making versus technical areas or research.
- Pursue volunteer or internship experience to test fields of interest and gain valuable experience. Take independent research classes if possible.
- Stay up-to-date with changing environmental legislation by reading related literature and journals and through participation in professional associations.
- Attend seminars, conferences and workshops sponsored by professional associations or public interest groups and utilize networking opportunities.
- Learn local, state and federal government job application procedures. Utilize your campus career center staff for assistance.
- A bachelor's degree will qualify one for work as a laboratory assistant, technician, technologist or research assistant in education, industry and government.
- A bachelor's degree is also sufficient for nontechnical work in writing, illustration, sales, photography and legislation.
- A master's degrees allow for greater specialization in a field and more opportunities in research and administration. Some community colleges will hire Master's level teachers.
- Doctoral degrees are necessary for advanced research and administrative positions, university teaching and independent research.