



Universities and Colleges
Climate Commitment for Scotland



EAUC-Scotland Careers Project

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➤ Understanding

➤ Preparing

➤ Finding

➤ Winning

Understanding



What is a Job in Sustainability? Understanding (1)

Defining sustainability is complicated (see Preparing (1) to read our explanation), and properly defining a 'job in sustainability' may actually be more so. Throughout this guidance a 'job in sustainability' will mean a job which overlaps the environmental, social and economic boundaries, and has either a strong environmental or social justice dimension.

You do not have to be working on renewable energy or on forestry projects to have a job in sustainability. All the examples of sustainability issues above are touched upon by a wide range of job roles and types, and that is by no means a complete list of work areas within sustainability.

Variations in Jobs in Sustainability




Sustainability jobs can be sought by individuals because of a value the jobseeker holds (an administrator may really care about the social and environmental regeneration of their local area and so wanted to work for a company promoting this), or a knowledge base they have (through a degree in a sustainability-related subject or previous experience) – or both.

Jobs in sustainability can have sustainability as the core focus, a main responsibility, or a small aspect of the role. Or sustainability may not come into their role at all, and may just be an important part of their organisation's vision and mission. An administrator working for a regeneration charity and a sustainability manager for a standard footwear production company both have 'jobs in sustainability'.

Sustainability jobs occur in every sector – private companies, public bodies, education and research, charities etc. It is up to individual jobseekers to decide in which sector they would feel comfortable.

There are jobs in sustainability which involve almost any skill or training you could imagine. It is important to consider what skills you have, and which you would like to develop on the job or through further study. Jobs in sustainability are available at all levels, for school leavers, graduates, and those already working. Different roles require extremely different core skills and knowledge, although all will require a basic understanding of sustainability and why it matters to the organisation.

Most jobs in sustainability have a focus area, which may be one of those in the word cloud above or something completely different. Non-specific sustainability jobs do exist (sustainability officers or consultants, for example), but generally then they are focused on working with a particular sector or organisation.



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Basic Sustainability Knowledge

Preparing (1)

If you are looking for a job in sustainability, you will need to ensure you have a good understanding of sustainability generally and specific information relevant to the focus of the role you are applying for.

Understanding Sustainability

The term 'sustainable development' (SD) can be defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (United Nations, 1987). SD balances three interlocking priorities, attempting to consider economic, social and environmental concerns simultaneously.



An extended definition and explanation of Sustainable Development can be found on the [International Institute for Sustainable Development](#) website. If you prefer to learn by watching, there are a series of videos by [Sustainability Illustrated](#) on YouTube.

Understanding sustainability means recognising that all actions have wide and diverse impacts. Most people working in sustainability will focus on one issue, or one way in which everyday behaviours or activities relate to sustainability issues (i.e. travel, energy use, food choices, buying habits, procurement etc.). If you would like to gain a better understanding of sustainability generally or any issues in particular, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) are a great resource. [FutureLearn's Understand Climate Change](#) course list or one of many categories on [Coursera](#) would be a good place to start.

Sustainability in Action

In addition to the above, you should probably try to have at least a general understanding of:

- General sustainability [definitions](#) and [principles](#), and [how the term was developed](#)
- [United Nations work on Sustainable Development](#), including the [UN Sustainable Development goals](#)
- The [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) and the effects these may have on national governments and businesses
- The [UK Climate Change Act and regulations](#) and (if relevant) the [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#), [Climate Change Strategy for Wales](#) or similar policies and strategies for your country or nation block.
- The role of national government organisations particularly if they are relevant to your interest area, such as the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ([DEFRA](#)) and the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (previously known as [DECC](#)).
- [Sustainability Literacy Test](#)

You might be interested in taking a look at the [Sustainability Literacy Test](#)..



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Finding

Where to find sustainability jobs Finding (1)

There are a lot of generic job sites out there but you can make it easier for yourself by searching websites specifically aimed at your area of interest, job, or internship which will make the process quicker.

Focused Sustainability Careers Websites

The list below will help highlight some of the best places to find a sustainability related job, graduate scheme. And in some cases volunteer opportunities. Have a look through the options to see which website best suits what you are looking for.

- [Acrc](#)
- [Countryside Job Service](#)
- [Environment Job](#)
- [Environment Jobs](#)
- [Evergreen Resources](#)
- [Green Jobs](#)
- [Green Roles](#)
- [Guardian Jobs- Environment](#)



Graduate Careers Websites

These sites are aimed at people who have recently graduated or are about to. There is a lot of useful information about career paths as well as graduate placements or internships.

- [Adopt an intern](#)
- [Bright Green Placements](#)
- [Change Agents](#)
- [Graduate Jobs](#)
- [Milk Round](#)
- [Prospects](#)
- [ScotGrad – Environmental & Science](#)
- [Target Jobs](#)
- [Third Sector Internships Scotland \(TSIS\)](#)

Top tip: keep an eye on the Twitter, Face book or LinkedIn accounts of these websites for updates if you prefer using social media.

Top tip: many of these websites will allow you to set up email reminders or will send you weekly updates of jobs relevant to your interests - make sure to make use of this feature!

Winning

Winning a job in sustainability

Winning (1)

Now that you have found that dream job in sustainability you've got a few more steps to go before you can win it! The recruitment process of any job can follow a variety of paths. There is the application stage which may include a CV and Cover Letter, there may be an online form to complete or you may just have to register your interest. Once you are accepted in the application process there is usually an interview to get through as well. The intensity of the interview process will be dependant on the company; from informal chat to testing centres—there is a lot of diversity. In this section you will find some helpful examples and links to places which can help support you with your application process and make you stand out in the crowd

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Your CV is the main arsenal in your application—more often than not this is what will be asked for when applying for a job. This is the perfect chance to highlight and promote any work (voluntary or paid), education or hobbies that are applicable to the job. Make sure that each time you apply for a job that your CV is updated for each application—this means tweaking a core version of the document each time to highlight areas that will be most interesting for the company and the position you are applying for.

The nature of sustainability jobs means that a lot of education or work experience may not obviously look like it will apply to the job however it most likely will in some aspect. Transferable skills are those which can be used in multiple jobs and are not solely specific to one aspect of a job, they may also come from either your social or professional life. (e.g. written communications or team work)

There are a few approaches that you can take when creating your CV:

- Chronological - this is the most common type of CV to find. It outlines education, work experience, and other qualifications in their own group. Within that group the most recent experience is listed first then works back chronologically. This makes it easier to see what your most recent and highest level of experience is.
- Skill based—this type of CV focuses on your relevant skills and personal experiences which are particularly applicable to the job being applied for. This means that there is less emphasis on the time spent in each previous work place but on the skills gained during your time there.

Things that should be included in your CV:

- Contact details
- Personal Statement - short introduction to you highlighting your keys skills for the job
- Education history - including grades
- Qualifications
- Employment history - including duties and skills acquired
- Extra-curricular activities & hobbies
- References

Webinar 1: Understanding Sustainability Jobs

9th March 12.00-13.00

A large teal arrow with a dark purple outline, pointing to the left. Inside the arrow, the text 'GET SIGNED UP!' is written in bold, black, uppercase letters.

GET SIGNED UP!

Webinar 2: Preparing for a job in sustainability

Webinar 3: Winning a job in sustainability

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