WHAT CAN I DO WITH A DEGREE IN ENVIRONMENT?

Finding solutions to the pervasive and accelerating deterioration of our environment will require innovative, interdisciplinary approaches. The future will require environmental professionals who can combine good, in-depth disciplinary knowledge with the broader understanding of complex environmental issues. Issues of sustainability arise in a multitude of contexts. Accountants have to deal with full costs and the equitable allocation of fiscal responsibility for environmental exploitation. Environmental audits are required before a land transaction can take place. Environmental assessments are required before projects can be approved and those assessments must address local issues, global implications and future generations.

In 2012, “an estimated 1,799,695 Canadian workers dedicated at least some of their time to activities related to the environment, a number that represents 10.3% of the entire Canadian labour force. Over 730,000 environmental professionals in Canada spent at least 50% of their work time performing environmental activities, representing just over 4% of the total Canadian labour force. Since ECO Canada’s previous study in 2010, the number of environmental professionals has grown by about 7%. Based on a general comparison of trends over the years, there is a continual increase in the demand for environmental skills. This growth has consistently outpaced that of the overall Canadian workforce.” (For further information, go to the source of the above: https://www.eco.ca/research/report/pcee-2013/)

What sorts of jobs will a program in environment prepare you for? Many, but the field is changing quickly. Jobs advertised today may not be available when you graduate, while new job titles are constantly opening up.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION...
The Faculty of Arts & Science calendar contains complete listings and descriptions of all School of the Environment programs and courses at https://fas.calendar.utoronto.ca/listing-program-subject-areas#E

Undergraduate program inquiries:
David Powell, Undergraduate Student Advisor and Placement Coordinator
Room 1022, Earth Sciences Centre, 33 Willcocks Street Wing
416.946.8100 • ugs.office.env@utoronto.ca

Graduate program inquiries:
Pavel Pripa, Graduate Student Advisor & Program Assistant
Room 1021, Earth Sciences Centre
416.978.3475 • grad.office.env@utoronto.ca

Consider the discovery of the “hole” in the ozone layer over Antarctica. Prior to that discovery, opportunities were relatively limited in areas such as atmospheric physics. Suddenly not only were there jobs for physicists, but for chemists to develop replacement chemicals for ozone-depleting CFCs, mathematicians to develop new algorithms for the analysis of satellite data, engineers to re-design refrigerant systems, policy analysts who formulated international treaties and a host of other, new “jobs”.

Opportunities also opened in related industries: technicians trained to remove CFC’s from faulty refrigerators and cars, educators to develop training programs for these technicians, new textbooks and legislation to be written, and so the web of new opportunities grows.

Finally, many current “environmental” jobs are not in explicitly-identified “environmental” industries.

Seize the Opportunity of the emerging environmental marketplace.

“Since 2010, the number of Canadian establishments with environmental employees on staff has grown significantly. Furthermore, a large proportion of these establishments expect these numbers to grow in the near future.”

“Canadian environmental employees are distributed fairly evenly across all environmental sub-sectors. More than four-fifths (82.4%) of environmental employers reported that their environmental employees work in multiple sub-sectors, indicating that environmental work continues to be highly interdisciplinary.”

- Environmental health and safety (37% of environmental employees)
- Waste management (33.5%)
- Environmental communication and public awareness (31%)
- Water quality (28%)
- Environmental education and training (24%)
- Sustainability (22%)
- Site assessment, remediation, and reclamation (21%)
- Air quality (15.5%)
- Environmental policy and legislation (15%)
- Energy (15%)
- Natural resource management (13%)
- Fisheries & wildlife (12%)
- Research & development (11%)
- Other activities (1.6%)

Source:https://www.eco.ca/research/report/pcee-2013/

Environmental career options are numerous as we saw in the ozone example with opportunities in the areas of environmental policy development, regulation, risk assessment and policy analysis. Opportunities also exist in education (elementary, secondary, post-secondary teachers; park guides), communication (newspapers; mass media; communication of environmental concerns for private industry; information officers for public agencies) and interpretation (parks; nature centers; exhibition halls; zoological/botanical gardens).

Some more established, even conventional environmental jobs (environmental technicians in forestry and fisheries or conservation officers) are expected to increase at a lower than average rate, with most of the jobs coming through retirements and vacancies, rather than new positions.

Preparing for an environmental career involves identifying the current trends in global thinking. The long-term outlook is one in which people are concerned about the impacts of environmental contamination on their own health as well as the implications of the loss of biodiversity. As concern has increased, opportunities in the environmental job market have also increased.

In examining environment-related employment opportunities, it is possible to explore career options either by "content" or by "position." Content refers to employment opportunities that directly relate to certain areas of study or preparation, such as water, air, or solid waste. Position relates more specifically to the type of job, such as educator, toxicologist, or geophysicist, and the setting in which the work occurs including public, private, not-for-profit organization, or regulatory agency.

**Content-Focused Jobs**
- Environmental Planning
- Housing and Community Development
- Water- or Air-related Issues
- Fund Raising and Foundation Work
- Environmental Education
- Pollution Prevention and Control
- Disease Prevention
- Waste Management and Recycling

**Positions**
- Research & Development
  - Biologists, chemists, earth scientists, ecologists; physicists; toxicologists; laboratory technicians
- Technical
  - Civil engineering; transportation engineers; environmental health
- Regulator
  - Health regulation; environmental regulation; natural resource management regulation
- Regulated Industry
  - Risk assessment; impact assessment, environmental compliance officers; environmental health officers
- Policy Analysis
  - Environmental economists; consulting firms; lobbyists; environmental groups
- Education
  - Elementary, secondary, post-secondary teachers; parks; nature centers; hands-on science museums or centers; outdoor education

**INTERNET RESOURCES**
The Internet can be an invaluable tool in a career search. Make use of search engines with terms such as "environmental careers" to obtain current environmental career possibilities.

- http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/cc
  - University of Toronto Career Centre
- http://careernavigator.studentlife.utoronto.ca/
  - Profiles of alumnae in the environmental and other fields.
- School of the Environment, Environmental Careers information
  - Click here
- http://www.eco.ca
  - The Environmental Careers Organization Canada is an excellent, comprehensive source of information about both environmental careers and environmental programs across Canada.
- http://www.ecoemploy.com
  - Specialized listings for environmental employment in Canada and U.S.
- http://www.ec.gc.ca/emplois-jobs/
  - Environment Canada's employment page
  - Public Service Commission of Canada for employment with the Federal government.
- http://www.eco.ca/employers/internship-program/
  - Environmental Internships for recent graduates.
- http://www.gojobs.gov.on.ca/
  - Employment with the Ontario Government
- http://www.planetfriendly.net/goodwork.html
  - Good Work: Work Search Engine
- http://www.charityvillage.com/
  - Charity Village: Non-Profit Work Search Engine
- http://www.planetfriendly.net/volunteer/
  - Planet Volunteer: Volunteer opportunities with green organizations

**NEED A CAREER PATH?**
The traditional approach to career identification is through a position approach but how can you do this if you're not even sure where to start? Try working backwards from content. Start with a favorite aspect of the natural or human environment. This decision will at least put you into a 'content' realm. Since most environmental areas have a related career aspect, you can then follow up your content focus by searching for information on positions both paid and voluntary.

Don't underestimate the value of a BA or BSc in any field. University teaches you to think critically, write logically, present ideas persuasively and work synergistically as part of a team. These skills are important for any job!