CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Description of the Field:
Today’s environmental managers and policy makers are focused on pollution prevention and integration of environmental considerations into economic and social decision-making. Population and economic growth pressures are creating complex environmental problems that directly impact all aspects of human society. Sustainable development, once the cutting edge of environmental issues, is now expanding to incorporate education, governance and democracy, poverty reduction, public health, security, and economic strategy along with the traditional environmental fields of agriculture, natural resource management, pollution abatement and conservation. For example, waste management cannot be addressed only with landfill policies, but also must include smart growth, recycling, emission capture, and creation of markets to turn waste into a useful commodity.

Challenges for today’s international environmental policy analysts include: controlling global climate change, considering environmental regulations in treaties and trade agreements, creating environmentally and economically sustainable development, and helping the private sector find ways to incorporate environmental concerns into business planning. In much of the world, basic environmental management such as water resources, wetlands protection and restoration, and environmental health are also very important developments as economic progress puts stress on existing systems.

Environmental careers can generally be divided into the following areas:
- Conservation
- Green business and services
- Technical assistance to government agencies for management and planning
- Regulatory and legislative design
- Policy-making
- Public education/advocacy
- Policy and scientific research
- Regulatory compliance and enforcement
- Entrepreneurial development in environmental products and services

Career Paths and Entry Salaries:
Entry-level positions in international environmental policy can be found in government, private industry, international organizations, and research, nonprofit and non-governmental organizations.

The U.S. Federal Government is the largest single employer in the environmental career world. While the Environmental Protection Agency is the agency traditionally associated with environmental policy development in the U.S., including international environmental policy, many other federal agencies pursue international environmental activities, including the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, USAID and the U.S. Department of State. One program that provides entry into the Federal Government is the Presidential Management Fellowship.

The private sector has both traditional businesses and consulting firms. Traditional businesses seek qualified managers to work in environmental compliance programs, to incorporate environmental concerns into business strategies, to improve performance by waste reduction and energy efficiency, and to develop sustainable strategies. Environmental consulting firms provide technical assistance to both domestic and foreign government agencies as they work on environmental problems and solutions. They need both administrative managers who write and manage the contract proposals and technical experts who provide the research for various tasks in an awarded contract. Starting as a contract employee with a consulting firm might provide an entry point into environmental consulting. While starting salaries are not unusually high, income is often supplemented with stipends for staff that travel overseas regularly.
Employment opportunities within non-profit, non-governmental, and international organizations are highly competitive and not as numerous as within the other sectors mentioned. According to a survey by the Environmental Careers Organization, the 30 best-known environmental nonprofit organizations employ less than 5,000 employees total, and approximately half of those employees are with The Nature Conservancy, the largest environmental nonprofit group. While salaries are sometimes lower in nonprofits than in government or private organizations, nonprofit boards are showing more willingness to reward hard work with increased compensation in order to maintain organizational stability.

**Recommended Qualifications to Enter the Field:**
- Scientifically literate (not necessarily a science background) with interdisciplinary knowledge
- Professional experience in the environmental field you wish to enter
- Excellent writing and oral communication skills
- Strong research and data analysis skills
- Specialization (e.g. planning, forestry, biology or engineering)
- Good sense of teamwork
- Volunteer experience in the area of interest
- Integrity (especially in regard to law enforcement)
- Understanding of broader global and social context of environmental issues
- Expertise in regional politics and economics
- Overseas experience and language skills
- Fundraising and management skills
- Ability to translate science policy

**Sample Employers and Resources for More Information:**

**Private Sector Employers:**
- Development Alternatives, Inc. [http://www.dai.com](http://www.dai.com)
- Environmental Resources Management [http://www.erm.com](http://www.erm.com)
- ICF Consulting Group, Inc. [http://www.icfconsulting.com](http://www.icfconsulting.com)

**Research, Nonprofit and Non-Governmental Organizations:**
- Audubon International [http://www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)
- Friends of the Earth [http://www.foe.org](http://www.foe.org)
- International Institute of Environment and Development [http://www.iied.org](http://www.iied.org)
- International Institute for Sustainable Development [http://www.iisd.org](http://www.iisd.org)
- The Nature Conservancy [http://nature.org](http://nature.org)
- World Conservation Union [http://www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)
- World Resources Institute [http://www.wri.org](http://www.wri.org)

**International Organizations:**

**U.S. Federal Government:**
- Defense Environmental Network and Information Exchange [https://www.denix.osd.mil](https://www.denix.osd.mil)
- Department of Energy [http://www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)
- Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration [http://www.fda.gov/oia/homepage.htm](http://www.fda.gov/oia/homepage.htm)
- Department of the Interior  http://www.doi.gov/intl
- Department of State, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs  http://www.state.gov/e/oes
- Fish and Wildlife Service  http://www.fws.gov
- Foreign Agricultural Service  http://www.fas.usda.gov
- Forest Service  http://www.fs.usda.gov/global
- Environmental Protection Agency Office of International Affairs  http://www.epa.gov/international
- House Committee on Resources  http://resourcescommittee.house.gov
- Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry  http://agriculture.senate.gov
- Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  http://energy.senate.gov
- Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  http://epw.senate.gov

**Career Resources & Membership Organizations:**

- Elliott School Career Connection –  http://www.elliottschoolcc.com
- The Environmental Careers Organization -  http://www.eco.org
- Environmental Career Opportunities –  http://www.ecojobs.com
- National Association for Environmental Management –  http://www.naem.org
- National Association of Environmental Professionals –  http://www.naep.org
- National Registry of Environmental Professionals –  http://www.nrep.org
- Student Conservation Association –  http://www.sca-inc.org

**Internet Resources:**

- DevNetJobs.org  http://www.devnetjobs.org
- Environmental Career Opportunities  http://www.ecojobs.com
- EnvironmentalCareer.com  http://www.environmentalcareer.com
- Environmental Careers Organization  http://www.eco.org
- Environmental Organization Web Directory  http://www.webdirectory.com
- Environmental Yellow Pages  http://www.enviroyellowpages.com
- Green Dream Jobs  http://www.sustainablebusiness.com
- Idealist  http://www.idealista.org
- International Career Employment Weekly  http://www.internationaljobs.org
- OneWorld  http://www.oneworld.net
- Publisher of National Environmental Employment Report (print newsletter)
- The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe  http://www.rec.org
- SustainUs  www.sustainus.org

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**Elliot School of International Affairs**

**THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

**GRADUATE STUDENT CAREER DEVELOPMENT**
**Course Suggestions for Careers in Environmental Policy & Management**

The following list represents a sampling of different courses offered throughout The George Washington University that would be appropriate for this career field. As academic departments continually update their bulletin, these courses might not be available on a regular schedule. This list does not include required courses in the Core or Regional Fields and does not correspond to, though it closely follows, the curriculum for graduation. Students should consult their academic advisors to see if taking some of the courses below fits into their academic plan.

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<th>International Affairs:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Security</td>
<td>Climate Change &amp; Community Development</td>
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<td>International Climate Change Policy</td>
<td>Climate Change &amp; Sustainability</td>
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<td>Development Policy &amp; Practice</td>
<td>Energy Policy</td>
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<td>Technology Creation/Diffusion</td>
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<td>Public and Nonprofit Program Evaluation</td>
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<td>Water Resources, Policy &amp; Management</td>
<td>Geographical Perspectives on Development</td>
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<td>Seminar: Political Geography</td>
<td>Urban Sustainability</td>
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<th>Engineering Management and Systems Engineering:</th>
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<td>Environmental Management</td>
<td>Hazard Mitigation in Disaster Management</td>
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<td>Analytical Tools for Energy Management</td>
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<td>Ethics in International Affairs</td>
<td>Leadership and Teamwork</td>
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<td>Formal Briefing</td>
<td>Political Analysis</td>
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<td>Fundraising for Non-Profits</td>
<td>Methods in International Program Evaluation</td>
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