



Environmental Scientist Jobs: An Overview

Environmental scientist jobs are essential to the earth. Because “the environment” includes the whole earth, including everything underground, it is important that as much as possible is known about it to help us protect the earth that sustains us. The air we breathe, the water we drink, and the energy sources we use are all part of the environment shared by everyone.

What Do Environmental Scientists Do?

Much of environmental scientists’ work involves research. They study the earth, people, wildlife, and anything else that may affect the environment. They try to come up with ways to not only clean up our environment but to preserve the parts of it that may yet be untouched by the problems that seem to plague virtually every part of our world. By understanding what is happening to the earth when we do not take care of it, the environmental scientist hopes to help people understand what can and will happen in the future.

Environmental scientists are responsible for writing up the risks involved with the different changes to land and water due to things like construction. Recycling and saving the earth from becoming saturated with landfills is another way that environmental scientists help to preserve the environment. They come up with solutions to the ways we have been doing things in order to help us become more earth-friendly. Keeping up with federal regulations and taking land that has become contaminated and converting it to usable land are other ways the scientist can help to preserve the environment.

Many times environmental scientists will work at firms that consult with big businesses to help them follow environmental regulations. A company will normally hire someone to help them get their business straightened out when they have had problems that need to be addressed. The environmental scientist goes in and checks on the given problem and offers the plan that must be followed to get back on track.

Depending upon the companies for which they work, the pay for environmental scientists can be relatively meager or quite high. A smaller company may have environmental scientists who will work with the government and clients on a one-to-one basis. Larger companies will normally have environmental scientists who work with other scientists.

Jobs for environmental scientists may include working on ways

to help raise awareness of what we do and how it affects our environment. The goal is to educate enough people so that future generations will take the environment seriously.

Environmental scientists have work that is quite similar to that of other types of scientists. The only difference is that they are working on environmental issues. Many environmental scientists may decide to specialize in a certain field rather than the whole environment. They may decide on ecology, conservation, or fisheries science.

Environmental scientists who work with the government often have to learn how to write grant proposals so that they can find funding for the research they are attempting to do.

Entry-level environmental scientist jobs may involve much time spent away from the office doing field research. Those scientists who have had more experience may be in the lab or the office more than they are in the field. Environmental scientists may also have to meet with investors who may be willing to fund some of their research.

What Education Is Required of an Environmental Scientist?

While earth science work may only require a bachelor’s degree, environmental scientists will definitely need a master’s degree in environmental science. For teaching positions and research, the best degree to have is a doctoral degree. There are many environmental scientists who have degrees in one of the following fields:

- Life science
- Chemistry
- Geology
- Geophysics
- Atmospheric science
- Physics



Scientist Career Feature

A master's degree is the lowest degree that is acceptable for [research positions](#) at the entry level in the private sector. The student who is interested in working in environmental areas should take courses in hydrology, chemistry, fluid mechanics, hazardous waste disposal, or geology.

Environmental scientists who are planning to work in consulting should take courses that are related to this field such as business, economics, marketing, and finance courses.

The combination of these courses with engineering will make one suitable for the highest number of jobs.

What Are the Earnings of Environmental Scientists?

Environmental scientists made an average of approximately \$56,100 in 2006. The highest paid percentage of workers earned close to six figures. The lowest percentage earned about \$34,590. Mid-range earnings were between \$50,000 and \$80,000.

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