

Emerging careers

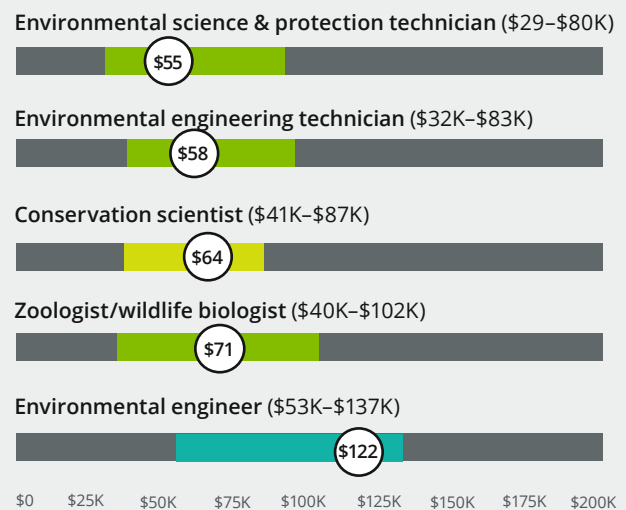
Environmental science

The state of the environment, the preservation of natural resources, and the health of humans and wildlife are important topics of conversation these days for government, businesses, and individuals alike. The collective desire to “go green” is growing significantly, and at the head of this movement are environmental scientists and technicians dedicated to identifying, studying, and ultimately finding solutions to today’s environmental challenges.

Careers in this innovative field can follow a number of possible trajectories. Technicians have more flexible educational requirements. They may split their time between the lab and field, monitoring the environment, collecting data, and upholding regulations.⁽¹⁾ Scientific and engineering roles are more academically demanding, requiring rigorous interdisciplinary study — and the resulting knowledge of multiple branches of science and a focus on problem-solving will open up a variety of career opportunities.⁽²⁾

Whether going the technician route or the scientific route, job prospects in this field are great, and the demand for green expertise is only growing.

Specialties⁽³⁾



Skills of the field⁽⁴⁾

Technical skills

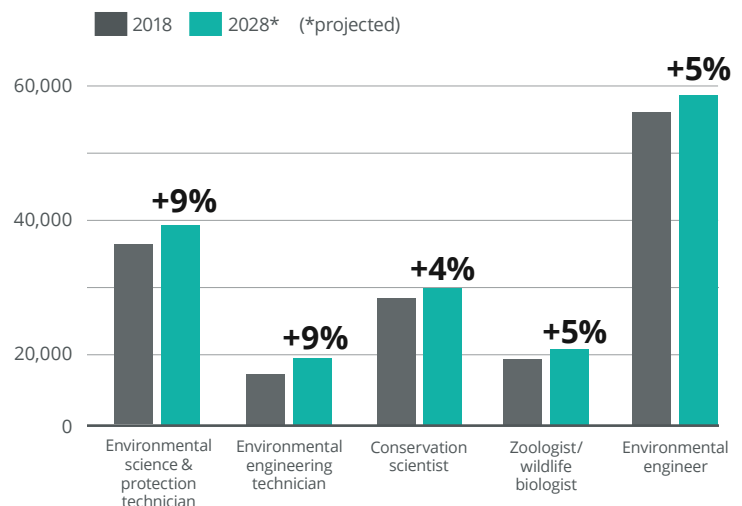
- Biology/chemistry/physics
- Mathematics
- Law
- Administration
- Information technology

Soft skills

- Active listening
- Critical thinking
- Reading comprehension
- Complex problem solving
- Speaking

Job growth

Total number of environmental science jobs in the United States 2018–2028.*⁽⁵⁾



Study options available

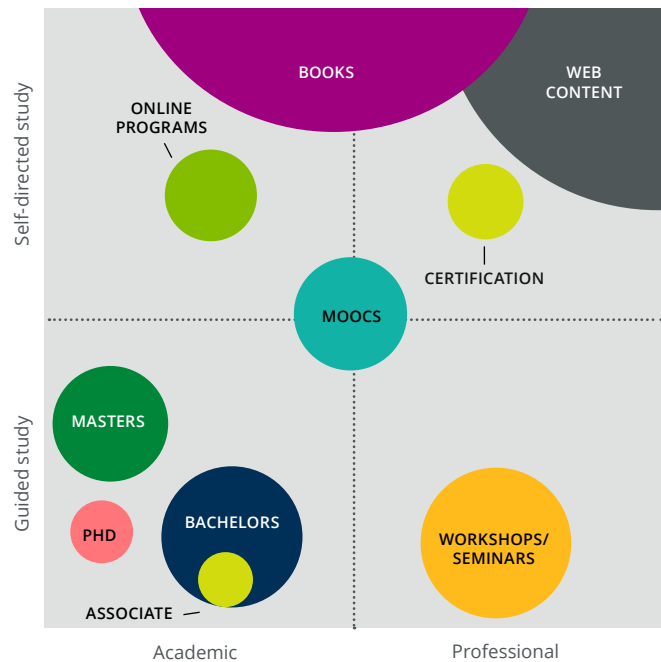
For the most part, anyone looking to break into the green industry is going to need a degree. At the technician or support level, an associate degree or graduate certificate may be enough to land a job. For scientific roles, a cross-disciplinary environmental science degree is great, but a specific concentration or minor will be helpful in pursuing specialized opportunities. Candidates with masters will be even more competitive.⁽⁶⁾ If a research or academic role is the goal, a PhD could be required.

Even without an undergraduate degree in the sciences, it's still possible to pursue a postgraduate degree or certification work that may open up opportunities in the field. At any level of education, enthusiasm and a history of volunteer work in the field can be important in making a résumé stand out.⁽⁷⁾

Explore additional fast-growing professions that offer new opportunities for rewarding careers—with the right education and skills.

[See the careers >](#)

Education options



Insider advice

“Environmental people sometimes focus only on the final outcome of their work, but job seekers may be better served by paying attention to daily activities. What do you want to actually do all day? Do you want to write, organize, research, do scientific data gathering, or something else? Think in terms of verbs and you’ll know a lot about whether you’ll be competitive for a job.”⁽⁷⁾

—Kevin Doyle, Executive Director of Career Development, Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies

Sources

¹ “Environmental Engineering Technicians”, “Environmental Science and Protection Technicians”, collegegrad.com

² “Studying Environmental Science: What is it like and where can it take you?”, Mendeley.com

³ collegegrad.com

⁴ “19-2041.00 - Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Including Health”, The National Center for O*NET Development

⁵ *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

⁶ “What to Do With an Environmental Science Degree”, Ilana Kowarski

⁷ “How to Land Your Dream Environmental Job”, idealist.org