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**Career Information  
Working as a Sustainability Professional**

There are many different ways ENS graduates may apply their education: A) in their personal and private lives,

B) in a diverse and hard-to-quantify array of employment contexts- as with any other form of a liberal education curriculum, C) as interdisciplinary “translators” or facilitators promoting sustainability within an organization, or

D) within the broad but rapidly growing area of “sustainability science,” which RW Kates (2011) describes as

“a different kind of science that is primarily use-inspired, as are agricultural and health sciences, with signiﬁcant fundamental and applied knowledge components, and commitment to moving such knowledge into societal action.”

Employment opportunities for ENS graduates also include fields that are newly emerging, for example: corporate sustainability officers, community non-profit environmental leadership positions, leadership in small-scale urban agriculture initiatives with a social justice or public health mission, and environmental justice advocacy positions.

The U.S. Department of Labor, [Employment and Training Administration](https://www.doleta.gov/) has provided information about environment and sustainability-related careers on their O\*NET portal. The following information is cited:

**Sustainability Specialists**

[www.onetonline.org/link/summary/13-1199.05](http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/13-1199.05)

**Job description:**

Address organizational sustainability issues, such as waste stream management, green building practices, and green procurement plans.

**Sample of reported job titles:**

Champion of Sustainable Design; Chief Specialist, LEED (Chief Specialist, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design); Lead Sustainability Specialist; Senior Sustainability Advisor; Senior Sustainability Consultant; Sustainability Consultant; Sustainability Coordinator; Sustainability Specialist; Sustainable Design Consultant; Sustainable Design Coordinator

**Wages and employment trends:**

Median wages (2020): $37.22 hourly, $77,420 annual  
Employment (2020): 1,777,300 employees  
Projected growth (2020-2030): 5 - 10%  
Projected job openings (2020-2030): 141,900

**Environmental Specialists and Scientists**

[www.onetonline.org/link/summary/19-2041.00](http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/19-2041.00)

**Job description:**

Conduct research or perform investigation for the purpose of identifying, abating, or eliminating sources of pollutants or hazards that affect either the environment or public health. Using knowledge of various scientific disciplines, may collect, synthesize, study, report, and recommend actions based on data derived from measurements or observations of air, food, soil, water, and other sources.

**Sample of reported job titles:**

Environmental Analyst, Environmental Health and Safety Specialist, Environmental Programs Specialist, Environmental Protection Specialist, Environmental Scientist, Environmental Specialist, Hazardous Substances Scientist, Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS), Research Environmental Scientist

**Wages and employment trends:**

Median wages (2020): $35.21 hourly, $73,230 annual

Employment (2020): 87,100 employees

Projected growth (2020-2030): 5 - 10%

Projected job openings (2020-2030): 9,400

**Chief Sustainability Officers**

[www.onetonline.org/link/summary/11-1011.03](http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/11-1011.03)

**Job description:**

Communicate and coordinate with management, shareholders, customers, and employees to address sustainability issues. Enact or oversee a corporate sustainability strategy.

**Sample of reported job titles:**

Corporate Sustainability Process Manager; Director of Sustainability; Director of Sustainability Programs; Director of Sustainable Design; Supply Chain Manager, Sustainability and Energy; Sustainability Coordinator; Sustainability Director; Vice President, Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability (VP CSR and Sustainability)

**Wages and employment Trends:**

Median wages (2020): $89.40 hourly, $185,950 annual

Employment (2020): 292,500 employees  
Projected job openings (2020-2030): 17,500

**Environmental Compliance Inspectors**

[www.onetonline.org/link/summary/13-1041.01](http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/13-1041.01)

**Job description:**

Inspect and investigate sources of pollution to protect the public and environment and ensure conformance with Federal, State, and local regulations and ordinances.

**Sample of reported job titles:**

Compliance Investigator, Enforcement Officer, Environmental Compliance Officer, Environmental Protection Specialist, Environmental Quality Analyst, Environmental Specialist, Oil Program Compliance Specialist, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Enforcement Officer (RCRA Enforcement Officer), Toxics Program Officer, Waste Management Specialist

**Wages and employment trends:**

Median wages (2020): $34.18 hourly, $71,100 annual  
Employment (2020): 348,700 employees  
Projected growth (2020-2030): 5 - 10%  
Projected job openings (2020-2030): 30,000

**Professional Certification**

[www.sustainabilityprofessionals.org/sustainability-excellence-credentials](http://www.sustainabilityprofessionals.org/sustainability-excellence-credentials)

The International Society for Sustainability professionals offers a professional certification program that may be suitable for students to consider post-graduation.

Designed with rigorous international standards in mind, these credentials provide third-party verification of sustainability knowledge, skills, and abilities in the profession.

**Graduate study in Environmental and Sustainability Studies**

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) maintains an extensive database of academic programs in the U.S. and internationally: [hub.aashe.org/browse/types/academicprogram/#resources-panel](https://hub.aashe.org/browse/types/academicprogram/#resources-panel).