

MAKING PLACES GREENER

Environmental officer



In the fight against climate change, the pressure is on business and industry to clean up their act. But most organisations need help. That's where environmental officers come in. It's their job to make sure their employer is sticking to the legislation and adopting sustainable practices throughout the business. Working in both the private and public sector, for employers from local councils to chemicals companies, they develop and implement Environmental Management Systems (EMSs) and help businesses meet stringent international standards. If you're strong on science and IT and have good organisational and communication skills, you'll find plenty of opportunities in this field.

Degree needed

Normal entry is with an accredited degree in a science or physical geography-related course.

Good courses

- BA (Hons) Environmental Studies (Sheffield Hallam University)
- BA (Hons) Environmental Studies (University of Salford)
- MSc/PGDip Environmental Pollution Control (University of Leeds)
- MSc/PGDip Environmental Pollution Control (University of Middlesex)

Other related courses to degree level include:

- BSc (Hons) / BA (Hons) Physical Geography (Oxford Brookes University)
- BSc (Hons) Physical Geography (Lancaster University)

Higher education institutes across the UK run environmental science-related courses.

The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) is a not-for-profit member organisation established to promote best practice in environmental management, auditing and assessment. It runs a series of accredited vocational courses for those already employed in environment-related professions.



Kathryn Mee at work
Sustainable Development Manager, Yorkshire Forward



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Starting salary

Between £24,000 and £29,000.

Working hours

Generally 9am to 5pm.

Days' holiday per year

On average 25 days per year.

Skills and experience

Environmental officers need to be strong on science and IT and have good organisational and communication skills.

Would suit

This role would suit someone who is ecologically-aware and interested in helping organisations regulate their impact on the environment.

Likely employer types

- Central and local government bodies or publicly funded agencies
- Organisations in the chemical and heavy industrial sectors
- Firms involved in energy production and other utility sectors such as water
- Organisations involved in the remediation of contaminated land

How many jobs available?

There is a steady demand for environmental officers in the chemical and industrial sectors.

Number of people employed in this field

IEMA has some 10,000 individual and corporate members. It has no figure on the exact number of environmental officers employed but plans to build a better picture of employment in this area.



Meet the expert
Kathryn Mee,
Yorkshire Forward

Visit AskWhatIf.co.uk to watch video diaries and get opinions from other real people doing real jobs.



Did you know?

The Inland Revenue's vast Newcastle complex reduced its water consumption by 29.6 per cent, electricity by 31.6 per cent and gas usage by 29.5 per cent after initiating its own sustainable development programme.

More information

- The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment is the professional body for environment professionals www.iema.net
- Prospects has case studies written by environmental officers which give an insight into the role www.prospects.ac.uk

"Environmental management is such a big part of business now, it's not just tree huggers who go into it. I work with academics, energy specialists - it's a real mixed bag."