Environmental studies and environmental science differ from each other in the amount of science course work required. Environmental studies provides a broad base of hard sciences as well as social science coursework. Environmental science incorporates hard sciences and environmental sciences. Choice depends upon career focus, for example, administration or policy-making versus technical areas or research. Pursue volunteer or internship experience to test fields of interest and gain valuable experience. Take independent research classes if possible. Stay up-to-date with changing environmental legislation by reading related literature and journals and participating in professional associations. Attend seminars, conferences and workshops sponsored by professional associations or public interest groups and utilize networking opportunities. Learn local, state and federal government job application procedures. Utilize your campus career center staff for assistance.

A bachelor’s degree will qualify one for work as a laboratory assistant, technician, technologist or research assistant in education, industry and government. A bachelor’s degree is also sufficient for nontechnical work in writing, illustration, sales, photography, and legislation. A master’s degree allows for greater specialization in a field and more opportunities in research and administration. Some community colleges will hire Master’s level teachers. Doctoral degrees are necessary for advanced research and administrative positions, university teaching and independent research.

**AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY**

- Ground water
- Surface water
- Soils
- Air
- Sediments
- Risk assessment
- Quality control
- Logistics
- Planning
- Recycling
- Transportation
- Compliance
- Environmental engineering
- Public and environmental health

**COMMON EMPLOYERS**

- Federal government
- Army Corps of Engineers
- Department of Interior: Bureau of Reclamation, Office of Surface Mining, Bureau of Land Management
- Department of Agriculture
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Department of Defense
- Agricultural consulting firms
- Environmental consulting firms
- Private waste management firms
- Nonprofit organizations
- State farm bureaus
- Environmental research laboratories
- Agricultural or environmental consultant firms
- Privately owned farms and ranches
- Universities

**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

- American Geosciences Institute
- Crop Science Society of America
- Ecological Society of America
- Environmental Scientist Society
- National Association of Environmental Professionals
- National Council for Science and the Environment
- National Environmental Education Foundation
- National Environmental Health Association
- North American Association for Environmental Education
- Project Lead The Way
- Sierra Club
- Society for Conservation biology
- Society for Ecological Restoration
- Society of American Foresters
- Soil Science Society of America
- The Conservation Foundation
- The Student Conservation Association
- Water Resources.

**STRATEGIES ON ENTERING THE FIELD**

- Pursue experience through volunteer, paid, and intern positions related to waste management.
- Seek opportunities to hone communication skills, both written and oral. Take courses in technical writing.
- Develop decision-making and problem-solving skills, diplomacy and the ability to work under pressure.
- Demonstrate flexibility and willingness to look at issues from various perspectives.
- Gain familiarity with current technologies, regulations and statutes.
- Join community groups or service organizations that focus on environmental awareness; attend public meetings about waste management.
- Become familiar with Superfund and its programs. Learn about the activities of local chapters of citizen watch groups.
- Seek related experience through co-ops, internships or part-time jobs in area of interest.
- Gain extensive laboratory and research experience to prepare for research positions.
- Stay abreast of current environmental issues; policy, conservation and industry trends.
- Seek knowledge of technology used in natural resource management: software, geographical information systems and global positioning systems.
- Participate in related clubs, organizations and soil judging teams to build contacts and enhance academic interests.
- Learn about certification programs offered by the Soil Science Society of America including soil science and agronomy.

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