

MARCH 2019

EAUC SUSTAINABILITY CAREERS GUIDE

UNDERSTANDING
PREPARING
WINNING



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Background

Teaching, courses and the interest areas of student groups are increasingly diverting from traditional disciplines and taking a more interdisciplinary view, with courses promoting the links between the environment, society and the economy. This is great news for the future of our country, producing more rounded graduates with a better understanding of real-world problems.

However, students leave college and university looking for jobs in sustainability which cannot be categorised within a particular sector, and struggle to find relevant advice and job opportunities. Careers advisors also report struggling to understand the sustainability sector, and have requested information on careers advice and jobs in sustainability to help them better support students.

This project was developed by EAUC-Scotland in direct response to this gap in provision, under the Universities and Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland 2014-2017 programme, supported by the Scottish Funding Council. It will be updated annually thereafter.

Aims

The Sustainability Careers Guide and Webinar Recordings are designed to help students, graduates and careers advisors:

- Learn about possible jobs and careers with a focus on sustainability
- Understand how to prepare themselves for work in this sector
- Find and win relevant positions

These resources should be used alongside existing careers guidance, for example from [Skills Development Scotland](#) and [Prospects](#), as well as individual support available from your college or university. Other particularly useful resources will be highlighted throughout this Guide.

Structure

This Guide consists of three sections, supported by three webinars (available as recordings) which are mentioned where relevant. The sections are:

- 1) Understanding jobs in sustainability
- 2) Preparing for jobs in sustainability
- 3) Winning a job in sustainability

Finally, before we get stuck into the details here is a fun fact for you - environment and sustainability professionals are among the [happiest workers in the UK](#)!

EAUC SUSTAINABILITY CAREERS GUIDE

MARCH 2019

UNDERSTANDING



What is a Job in Sustainability?

Understanding (1)

Defining sustainability is complicated (see Preparing (1) to read our explanation), and properly defining a 'job in sustainability' may actually be more so. Throughout this guidance a 'job in sustainability' will mean a job which overlaps the environmental, social and economic boundaries, and has either a strong environmental or social justice dimension.



You do not have to be working on renewable energy or on forestry projects to have a job in sustainability. All the examples of sustainability issues above are touched upon by a wide range of job roles and types, and that is by no means a complete list of work areas which fall within sustainability as a concept.

Variations in Jobs in Sustainability

Sustainability jobs can be sought by individuals because of a **value** the jobseeker holds (an administrator may really care about the social and environmental regeneration of their local area and so wanted to work for a company promoting this), or a **knowledge base** they have (through a degree in a sustainability-related subject or previous experience) – or both. This guide focusses on working within organisations but entrepreneurship is also a huge area of potentially working with sustainability and addressing issues through self-driven innovation.

Jobs in sustainability can have sustainability as the **core focus**, a **main responsibility**, or a **small aspect** of the role. Or sustainability may not come into their role at all, and may just be an important part of their **organisation's vision and mission**. An administrator working for a regeneration charity and a sustainability manager for a standard footwear production company both have 'jobs in sustainability'. Sustainability jobs occur in every **sector** – private companies, public bodies, education and research, charities etc. It is up to individual jobseekers to decide in which sector(s) they would feel comfortable.

There are jobs in sustainability which involve almost any **skill or training** you could imagine. It is important to consider what skills you have, and which you would like to develop on the job or through further study. Jobs in sustainability are available at all levels, for school leavers, graduates, and those already working. Different roles require extremely different core skills and knowledge, although all will require a basic understanding of sustainability and why it matters to the organisation. Read more about skills in the Preparing section of this Guide. Most jobs in sustainability have a **focus area**, which may be one of those in the word cloud above or something completely different. Non-specific sustainability jobs do exist (sustainability officers or consultants, for example), but generally then the organisation's activities or mission will dictate their focus.

If you are interested in working in this area, but you aren't exactly sure in what role or organisation, then looking at examples of job profiles from people working in sustainability would be a good next step.



If you haven't already done so, we suggest you [watch EAUC-S Careers Webinar 1](#) which introduces a number of people and asks them to explain why they consider themselves to have a 'job in sustainability', and the realities of working within this field.

Video Profiles

A large number of organisations encourage people with particular jobs within sustainability to produce written and video profiles. These are a great way to find out about different job roles, why the post-holder chose them, and how they got there – and to figure out if any might be of interest to you.

Top Tip: Sustainable jobs are rarely explicitly labelled, but it is worth trying search terms such as 'sustainable', 'sustainability', 'environmental', 'social responsibility' if you are looking for a non-specific job in this area. See our *Winning* section of these Guides for more information and tips when searching for jobs.

iCould - Video Profiles

iCould have a large range of [career videos](#), you can search these by subject, job type, or life decision (such as a hobby, changing career, wanting to start your own business etc.). Almost all the subject topics could feature a job with sustainability aspects, although [Environment](#), [Energy and Utilities](#), [Civil Service, Politics and Local Government](#), [Science](#), and [Charities and Community Work](#) may be a good place to start. You can also search for 'sustainability' or other interest areas on the [career videos main page](#).

Some interesting examples are:

- [Head of Sustainability for Lend Lease in the UK](#) (Property)
- [Sustainability Advisor with Halcrow](#) (Engineering)
- [Principle Consultant – Climate Change for the Met Office](#) (Climate Science and Communications)
- [Campaign Director for The Student Switch Off](#) (Communications)
- [Ethical Trade Manager at Boden](#) (Procurement / Retail)
- [Community Ranger for the Forestry Commission](#) (Education and Engagement)
- [Project Developer for E.ON Climate and Renewables](#) (Wind Farm Development)

Text Profiles

Prospects - Text Profiles

Prospects have a wide range of text-based [career profiles](#) providing a lot of detail, including a large section under [Environment and Agriculture](#) where many stray into sustainability, as do those under [Energy and Utilities](#) and [Public Services and Administration](#). Jobs within Social Care and other categories may also be of interest depending on your focus.

Other Websites

Target Jobs are similar to Prospects, also listing all the jobs you can go through as well as allowing you to select an area to focus on. There is no mention of sustainability so you will need to search for a related subject or your focus (e.g. environment, conservation, waste).

[The National Careers Service for the UK](#) also provides outlines for a large number of job options.

[Careersbox](#) is another free online library of careers-related film, news and information.

AGCAS, the **Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services**, produce detailed Industry Insights into a range of career areas, which are well worth a look. You can find a list of them all to view from the University of Salford [here](#). Of particular interest may be Charity and development work, Energy and utilities, Environment and agriculture, Government and public administration, Health, Science, Tourism or Transport and logistics - but of course it just depends what aspect of sustainability you are interested in!

Profiles of Sector or Organisation Specific Roles

[Lantra](#) is the Sector Skills Council for the environmental and land-based sector, and their website has careers sections for a range of industries, including routes into various careers in them.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) [My World](#) features employees working in different roles around the organisation, who have come from a whole range of backgrounds.

The **EAUC** do a regular feature called [Meet a Member](#) on people working within the further and higher education sector with jobs in sustainability as academic and support staff.

The roles and companies offering jobs in sustainability are extremely varied, and constantly changing in response to changes in legislation and the business and funding environment.

A Growing Sector

Businesses and organisations are beginning to realise the importance of sustainability, responding to changes in regulation, public pressure and other business risks, as well as to new opportunities. The number of people working in sustainability is increasing, for 3 main reasons:

1. Existing businesses are employing people specifically to focus on sustainability and identify necessary changes in operations to minimise sustainability risks and harness any opportunities.
2. A growing number of 'normal' roles are taking responsibility for monitoring, reporting and managing factors within the sustainability agenda as part of their regular duties.
3. New businesses and organisations are being founded in response to opportunities linked to the sustainability agenda, with the formation of new sustainability-focused job roles.

Businesses Need Skills in Sustainability

The [Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment](#) (IEMA) has done research into the skills required for a sustainable economy, and has found that investment in developing organisational capacity and skills to tackle the sustainability challenge is lagging behind investment in other skills. Their [“Skills for a Sustainable Economy: preparing for the perfect storm”](#) campaign aims to highlight this issue and catalyse action through work with businesses and government.

Research has shown that employers believe a range of skills for sustainability to be important when considering the recruitment of recent graduates, and so developing a level of sustainability literacy should be a priority for current students and new graduates. Find the report by the Higher Education Academy, Change Agents UK and National Union of Students [here](#).

Due to the increase in regulation, public pressure and link to business risk, it is likely that in the future every job will include sustainability responsibilities. In some organisations this is already the case, but many have a sustainability or corporate social responsibility officer or department. As the number of jobs involving sustainability will continue to grow, an understanding of sustainability ideas and how they intersect with business priorities such as resource efficiency and PR will be a bonus for any role.



If you haven't already done so, we suggest you [watch EAUC-S Careers Webinar 2](#) which explores the range of skills businesses are looking for and why sustainability is important to business.

Head to our next section of the Careers Guide—[Preparing...](#)

(Last updated March 2019 – please email Scotland@eauc.org.uk with any new resources for our next update)

EAUC

MARCH 2019

SUSTAINABILITY
CAREERS GUIDE

PREPARING

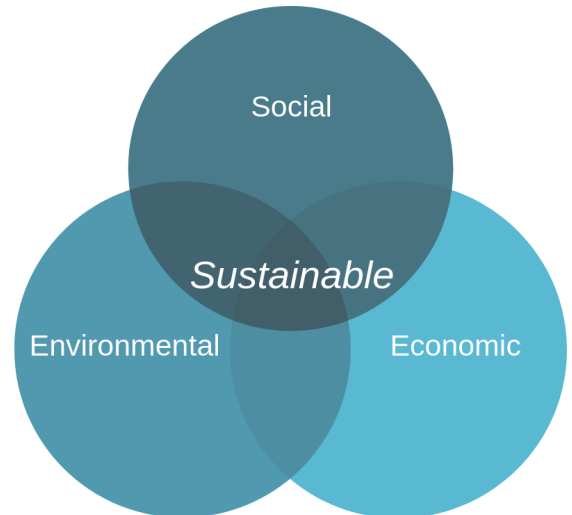
PREPARING



If you are looking for a job in sustainability, you will need to ensure you have a good understanding of sustainability generally and specific information relevant to the focus of the role you are applying for.

Understanding Sustainability

The term 'sustainable development' (SD) can be defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (United Nations, 1987). SD balances three interlocking priorities, attempting to consider economic, social and environmental concerns simultaneously.



An extended definition and explanation of Sustainable Development can be found on the [International Institute for Sustainable Development](#) website. If you prefer to learn by watching, there are a series of videos by [Sustainability Illustrated](#) on YouTube.

Understanding sustainability means recognising that actions have wide and diverse environmental, social and economic impacts. Most people working in sustainability will focus on one issue, or one way in which everyday behaviours or activities relate to sustainability issues (i.e. travel, energy use, food choices, buying habits, procurement etc.). If you would like to gain a better understanding of sustainability generally or any issues in particular, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) are a great resource. [FutureLearn's Understand Climate Change](#) course list or one of many categories on [Coursera](#) would be a good place to start.

Sustainability in Action

In addition to the above, you should probably try to have at least a general understanding of:

- The history of the how Sustainable Development was [created as a term](#)
- [United Nations work on Sustainable Development](#), including the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- The [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) and the effects these may have on national governments and businesses
- The [UK Climate Change Act and regulations](#) and (if relevant) the [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#), [Climate Change Strategy for Wales](#) or similar policies and strategies for your country or nation block
- The role of national government organisations particularly if they are relevant to your interest area, such as the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ([DEFRA](#)) and the [Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy](#) (previously known as [DECC](#))

If you have established a focus area within sustainability (this may be something like renewable energy or human rights, or a subject where sustainability may be less immediately obvious, such as banking or nursing) it is also important that you know a little about the sustainability work of any major private, public or charitable organisations in this sector. It is impossible to offer a full list of these, but examples might be the [Environment Agency](#) (in England and Wales) or [Scottish Environmental Protection Agency](#), [Natural England](#) or [Scottish Natural Heritage](#) who focus more on wildlife and protecting the natural environment, [Sustrans](#), a UK Charity promoting sustainable transport, or the [Fairtrade Foundation](#).

There may also be important policies, structures or issues related to sustainability in your focus area which it would be good to understand before you start looking for jobs. An internet search may reveal some of the key links and issues, but it may also be worth engaging with the relevant Professional Body.

Professional Associations and Institutions

Professional Associations work to support and develop a particular profession/academic discipline, and represent the interests of those working in that area. Many offer a professional development programme with certification for paid-up members, networking opportunities, and other benefits. Joining one of these bodies is a good way to keep up to date with developments in your interest area, and to display to potential employers your sector knowledge by including memberships you hold on your CV. However you can often also get a limited understanding through free areas and news sections on their websites.

Some of the professional associations and institutions operating in the UK which may be of interest are outlined below. Some offer student or graduate membership, which is a great (and much cheaper) way to access the benefits of the association and see whether full membership is something to aim for. Your degree or course coordinator or careers advisor may be able to suggest which might be most relevant.

- [British Sociological Association](#)
- [Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management](#)
- [Chartered Institute of Environmental Health](#)
- [Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development](#)
- [Chartered Institution of Wastes Management](#)
- [Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management](#)
- [Energy Institute](#)
- [Institute of Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability](#)
- [Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment](#)
- [Institution of Environmental Sciences](#)
- [Landscape Institute](#)
- [Royal Economic Society](#)
- [Royal Geographical Society](#)
- [Royal Town Planning Institute](#)
- [The Geological Society](#)

The [Profession Finder tool](#) by **TotalProfessions.com** has a list of over 300 professional bodies which can be searched by sector to find one to suit you.

There is considered to be a significant gap in UK businesses in skills to help encourage a sustainable economy, this gap is likely to become more pressing for individual businesses over the next few years. Businesses want education institutions to ensure their graduates have a broad understanding of the social and environmental issues currently facing the world, and possess a broad range of skills ([NUS, 2015](#)).

Skills generally fall into two types - **technical skills** and general **transferrable skills** (find out more transferrable skills in the Winning section of the Guides), often known as employability skills, which are “an essential precondition for the effective development and use of other, more specialist or technical skills required for particular Jobs” ([NUS, 2011](#)). However a new set of sustainability skills have been identified, which often don’t fall into the traditional employability skills lists but are the skills which will be helpful in leading the world towards a sustainable future - what we are calling **skills for the future**.

Technical Skills

The best technical skills to develop will depend entirely on what aspect of sustainability you want to go into. If you consider yourself to have a “partner subject”, such as business, engineering or communications, which will be key in your job then make sure not to ignore the development of any key skills in that area. Some technical skills might also explicitly support sustainability, such as those specific to alternative energy generation.

Employability Skills

Target Jobs have identified the [Top 10 Skills](#) that will help you get a job as being Commercial Awareness, Communication, Teamwork, Negotiation and Persuasion, Problem Solving, Leadership, Organisation, Perseverance and Motivation, Ability to Work Under Pressure, and Confidence. Alternative lists exist, but these are good skills to work to develop and be able to demonstrate when applying for jobs. Employability skills can be developed in formal education but also in wider life, including through work experience, volunteering, and the pursuit of hobbies - making all these activities really important in winning a job.

Skills for the Future

However there are some broad skills which have been identified by the [Aldersgate Group](#) (an alliance of leaders from different sectors driving action for a sustainable economy) as skills for a future, more circular and more sustainable economy.

The Aldersgate Group consider that in the future we need less skill silos and more systems thinking. With wider skill sets in individuals and organisations it will be easier to re-contextualise problems to understand and properly address them. Find a list of the skills they identified as vital for leadership in the new economy overleaf, and think about how you might work to develop some of these skills for the future.

Skills for the leaders of the future identified by the Aldersgate Group

“Systems thinkers At present much learning and training is specialist. Whilst specialist knowledge and technical skills will always be important it is essential to see the wood from the trees. Systems thinking at all levels enables people to take a broad, holistic view thus enabling them to make connections, see possibilities and to adapt in response to feedback. Systems thinking is at the heart of all learning.

Pro-active, independent enquirers Small children are naturally inquisitive. As they progress through formal education and training this curiosity is burnished and encouraged. Learners and their teachers are rewarded for taking risks, for exploring issues from different perspectives and for making reasoned judgements.

Self-managers Learners organise their own time, establish their own priorities and are able and willing to change in the light of feedback. They look actively for fresh opportunities, and manage their own learning to be able to rise to new challenges.

Creative innovators No one has the monopoly of wisdom. As we explore the era post cheap oil and materials with its new and challenging predicaments, education and training aim to develop creative people who can reframe the way we think, come up with novel ways of optimising systems and creating multiple benefits for a wide range of stakeholders.

Team workers, effective participators and empathetic colleagues People are social beings and formal education empowers learners to be empathetic, to respect the views of others and to contribute their own views, knowledge and skills clearly and with confidence. For this they need mastery of language and mathematics. They are able to work collaboratively and resolve disputes in which they are themselves a party.

Reflective practitioners committed to lifelong learning Feedback loops are essential to all meaningful learning. Learners develop the habits of self-monitoring and reflection, listening to and offering constructive criticism, and making changes. Learners also seek mentors who provide external perspective and counsel against tunnel thinking by providing context which may be missing from the learner’s viewpoint.

Highly adaptive The future is unknown and 21st century learners need to be flexible and to have wider strategies expanding their intelligence and for changing their habits of mind.”

Degrees and Courses

A 'job in sustainability' covers an incredibly large range, and people from all degree backgrounds can end up with sustainability being part of their role. See some examples in the images on these pages, and find more examples on each of the [webinar videos](#).

Is My Degree or Course Subject Important?

Any course or degree could lead you to a job, and a career, in sustainability. Most sectors have organisations and individuals working on social and environmental sustainability. Many courses are also as much about developing transferrable skills as about the subject itself, and can therefore lead you anywhere.

So a degree or course choice without a focus on sustainability will not close doors – but if you are still making choices about your education keep your sustainability interest in mind, and try to broaden your understanding of sustainability and range of relevant skills, both as they apply to your “partner subject” and generally.

The [NUS A-Z Guide](#) lists a broad range of UK further and higher courses that include sustainability in their curriculum, showcasing how sustainability can and is being tied into all subject areas.

Finding Relevant Courses

If you are seeking a Degree or Course with a focus on Sustainability try searching for 'sustainable', 'sustainability' on the appropriate course catalogue. There are a number of broad courses on sustainability, but if you have a particular focus try also using that search term (such as business, environment, international development or energy) to find the most relevant courses for you.

- [Which University](#) provides degree subject guides and university profiles, as well as options to find degree courses.
- [My World of Work](#) from Skills Development Scotland provides links to find opportunities to [learn and train](#) through **courses at all levels and volunteering opportunities** as well as more general careers advice.
- [Prospects](#) offer a popular search engine for **Postgraduate** courses, as do [Find a Masters](#).

Preparing (4)



Lucy Arndt
MA Sustainable Development (2011)
Lead Sustainability Advisor, BG Group



Daniel O'Connor
BSc Biology (1999)
Founder, Warp-It Reuse Network



Tom Toolan
BA Education (2010)
Chairman, Institute of Carbon
Accountants and Traders

Investigate Graduate Destinations

If you are considering undertaking a course, and are unsure whether it is the right one to help you reach your dream job, it is worthwhile investigating the career destinations of previous students. The department, careers service, or admissions department are likely to have this information available.

On a more general level, the Higher Education Careers Services Unit and AGCAS (Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services) produce [What do Graduates do?](#) each year, dividing UK graduates into degree subjects, allowing you to see what past students do six months after graduation.

Short Courses

A number of organisations offer free or low cost learning opportunities which are a good way to boost your understanding or test your level of interest in a particular subject before you apply for a course or job in that area.

Training Events

If you have done some online research, you might have come across short training events and programmes, which may or may not be accredited, to help develop both general knowledge and specific skills. If you can afford the time and any associated costs, these courses are a great way to enhance your knowledge, meet people interested in similar things, and demonstrate to future employers that you are dedicated to learning about the subject.

MOOCs

As mentioned in Preparing (1), MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) are a great way to participate in a short course to introduce new ideas and sources of information. Generally courses are just a few hours a week, can be done at home on the sofa or while commuting, and are free. [FutureLearn's Understand Climate Change](#) course list or one of many categories on [Coursera](#) would be a good place to start looking. This [Sustainable Scotland](#) course from Open University provides a regional insight.



Daianna Karaian
BSc Industrial Engineering (2001)
Founder and Chief Exec, Thoughtful



Gerrard Fisher
MEng Chemical Engineering (1995)
Special Advisor, WRAP



Zoë Lenkiewicz
BSc Environmental Biology (2001)
Freelance Environmental
Communications Consultant

To successfully apply for a job it is important to gain as much experience of working in sustainability roles or organisations as possible to build up your skills, show your level of understanding of and commitment to sustainability, and also to make connections which can lead to references or even job opportunities. Depending on your situation, experiences can be gained through a range of channels.

Experience through college, university or local groups

Joining a local group is a great first step in developing your understanding, building contacts, and starting to make a difference, and can also be a lot of fun.

Most Universities have a range of student societies with sustainability themes, explicit or otherwise, and at some Universities these are open to non-students, or run events which are open to all. Some colleges also have relevant student groups, and local communities often have groups which allow people get to involved with aspects of sustainability, such as Fairtrade or growing your own food.

If you don't know of any, try looking online for your institution / location and words such as 'sustainability', 'Transition' (find out why on the [Transition Network](#) webpages), or sustainability areas of interest to you, such as 'food', 'environment', 'reuse', 'save energy' or 'green travel'. Your Student Union, advice centre, careers centre or local library might also be good places to ask.

Expeditions and Volunteering Overseas

A number of organisations offer the opportunity to get involved with sustainability, environmental, and international aid projects through international expeditions. These allow you to acquire specific skills or experience work within particular places or communities, but are often expensive.

Some organisations offering or showcasing such experiences are:

- [Atlantic Whale Foundation](#) - Marine habitat surveying, volunteering on whale watching boats etc.
- [Coral Cay Conservation](#) - Terrestrial and marine habitat conservation
- [Earthwatch Institute](#) - Over 50 scientific research expeditions to choose from covering wildlife and ecosystems, archaeology and culture, climate change and ocean health
- [Frontier](#) - adventures, community and construction, working with animals, healthcare, journalism, marine conservation, teaching and sports coaching and more
- [One World](#) - showcases international development volunteer roles offered by other organisations
- [Operation Wallacea](#) - Research expeditions on biodiversity and conservation management in remote locations across the world
- [Outreach International](#) - community-based sustainability projects and conservation projects in central and South America, East Africa and Asia
- [Projects Abroad](#) - teaching, care and conservation projects worldwide
- [Raleigh International](#) - remote community and environmental projects in Costa Rica & Nicaragua, Malaysian Borneo, Nepal or Tanzania

- [SEED Madagascar](#) - construction, community, conservation or English teaching in Madagascar
- [Trekforce](#) - Borneo orang-utan protection or expedition and survival skills
- [Travellers Worldwide](#) - Projects in almost every area for any age, and both individuals and groups
- [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#) - must be currently on a degree programme and remain enrolled while participating in a full time 3-6 month placement
- [World Food Programme](#) - Internship and volunteer opportunities based in Rome
- [Worldwide Fund for Nature](#) - Youth internship programme and a list of other recommended conservation agencies

Charity Work or Fundraising

Local part time or short term work, volunteering or fundraising for a local, national or international charity with aims relevant to your interest area is a great way to demonstrate commitment to the cause, pick up useful skills, and potentially meet people who could help you progress. These experiences are usually at little or no cost, and, although you don't gain financially, whether you are working in a charity shop, running a bake sale or planning to abseil off a bridge you know you are making a difference - as well as helping your career prospects! Consider relevant charities and what opportunities they might offer. Do remember however that all skills development is useful, whether the focus is on sustainability or not.

Part-time or Holiday Jobs

It can be hard to land your first graduate job if you don't have much experience in the world of work. Consider finding a relevant part-time or holiday job while still studying, so you are ready to hit the ground running. These could be in sustainability or something more sector-specific - or could be completely unrelated to sustainability and just be an opportunity to boost skills (and your bank balance!).

Job Shadowing

You may have participated in a shadowing programme in the past through school work experience or even 'bring your kids to work day', but if you are unsure whether a particular job area is right for you, you should consider shadowing opportunities. Some colleges and universities have a shadowing programme run through their careers service, but don't be afraid to ask someone you know, or someone you meet through Networking (see Preparing (6)), whether it might be possible to shadow them for a day or a week. As part of a typical shadowing experience you would expect to have briefing sessions and periods of observation, but there may be opportunities for you to get involved in activity in some way, depending on the organisation and role. Shadowing is also a great way to make contacts.

Networking is a great way to develop relationships with people who can help your career develop, or answer questions you might have, immediately or in the future. It is estimated that up to 70% of all jobs are not formally advertised, and so who you know – *and who knows you* – is extremely important.

Be clear about what knowledge or experiences you are looking for, and make sure to take advantage of opportunities to ask relevant questions or pursue your goals. If meeting a new contact at an event or talking online, consider what questions should you ask to create a good impression and also further your understanding of their area of work.

This [video](#) from Career Services at Harvard University provides some good advice on networking, and networking in the sustainability sector is no different to any other.

Your college or university may offer a service which supports current students to network with alumni – if the opportunity is there don't miss it!

How to Build a Network

Develop your network by first connecting with those you already know, family and friends as well and teaching staff and people working in the sector you want to enter, and making sure they know of your career ambitions so they can pass opportunities your way. Social media platforms such as [LinkedIn](#) (find tips for using LinkedIn more effectively below) are a good way to find out if you have any contacts in common with those you really want to talk to and request an introduction. Start by developing your network close to home, as that will enable it to spread widely.

Remember that relationships are two-way. Let your contacts know if you hear of opportunities which might be good for them, and if they introduce you to someone or an opportunity take the time to thank them and update them on your progress.

[A Guardian Jobs Guide to Networking](#) provides some good advice on developing your networking skills.

Networking at Events

Opportunities to network at events arise regularly in the sustainability sector, such as at public sector conferences, charity or campaign group events and guest seminars at Universities, and these are often open to all. Join relevant groups online and mailing lists for local and national organisations (try an internet search to find these) to hear of opportunities. If you have a tertiary education institution or conference centre locally keep an eye on their event programme – vaguely relevant events can still provide useful new contacts. Some events can be expensive, but many are low-cost or free.

Networking through Social Media

Social Media is a powerful tool to make relationships, learn new things, and also to portray yourself as having skills, experiences and dedication to the field - or indeed to put future employers off if used carelessly!

Top tip: Try Googling yourself, and change your privacy settings or remove content to hide anything you would rather wasn't seen or doesn't align with the personal brand you want to promote. For example, if you want to work in low carbon travel, a profile picture of you attending a flying lesson may not be the best

All social media platforms contribute to your online presence and networking ability, with LinkedIn and Twitter currently (2017) perhaps the two most often used for career development generally.

[LinkedIn](#) is aimed at business professionals, and allows you to promote your skills, knowledge and experience as well as network, and receive personal recommendations. It is a great way to find out about others (although people may know you have looked at their profile - check your settings and decide what level of privacy suits you), and maintain a detailed CV (useful for referring to for job applications), as well as for finding job and networking opportunities. If you need support in developing your LinkedIn profile (and almost all could do with improvement) LinkedIn provide [tutorials for students](#) on a range of topics.

[Twitter](#) is for sharing short updates and links, allowing you to follow relevant accounts to see what those individuals or organisations are doing, and to search for information and opportunities using specific hashtags. You can also use it to interact with people directly to ask questions or show support.

Top tip: If a social media profile you would like to promote, for instance on LinkedIn or Twitter, isn't ranking highly under your name there are two key things you can do. Firstly, make sure you have an original but sensible user name as your LinkedIn URL or Twitter handle, and secondly, make sure the profiles are active and as developed as possible. 'All star' LinkedIn profiles rank more highly on searches, so complete as much as you can.

Once your profiles are up to scratch, engage online by posting content and respectfully contributing to groups or discussions relevant to your career interests.

Having and maintaining accounts on other social media or web-based platforms can also be useful if used effectively, particularly if communications might be part of your role.

There are some good tips on successful use of social media in the Guardian's ['How social media can boost your professional profile'](#) and ['Don't ruin your career in 140 characters'](#) articles. Prospects also discuss building an online presence and managing your online reputation on their feature on ['Job hunting and social media'](#).

Used well, social media is a great way to network, formally or informally, and enhance your visibility as well as your understandings of sustainability issues.

Networking through Professional Associations and Institutions

Professional Associations and Institutions (see the Sector Specific Knowledge under Preparing (2) for more information on these) offer a range of ways to meet or engage with people working in the sector, as well as access to knowledge and training. Such events offer a great chance to meet people, learn skills, and potentially hear of job opportunities.

And if you get to talk to someone relevant...

If your networking pays off and you have the opportunity to talk to someone at an event or an individual meeting, treat it like a job interview and be polite and professional. Think in advance about what you want from the meeting - advice, a job opportunity, shadowing, or just an introduction. Prepare a narrative to tell relevant people about yourself and what you are aiming for with your career. Make sure to cover any key questions or points, but don't just talk at them. Be mindful of their time too – if the discussion has to be short, ask if it is okay to contact them on LinkedIn or by email to ask any further questions.



Remember, people who work in sustainability are often passionate about their subject, and if you are interested in similar things will look for a similar passion in you. Don't miss the opportunity to leave a positive impression - and your contact details. Carry a pen and paper to note anything of interest, either during or after the discussion, and consider investing in business cards to ensure you don't miss an opportunity to get or stay in touch.



If you haven't already done so, we suggest you [watch EAUC-S Careers Webinar 3](#), which includes some top tips on networking and how it can benefit your careers, as well as suggests Networking Groups which might be of interest.

Now you know how to build the experience and the networks we will move on to explore where is best to find the sustainability job of your dreams, and how you can win over that potential employer. Head to our next section of the Careers Guide—[Winning...](#)

(Last updated March 2019 – please email Scotland@eauc.org.uk with any new resources for our next update)

EAUC SUSTAINABILITY CAREERS GUIDE

WINNING



Where to find sustainability jobs

Winning (1)

There are a lot of generic job sites out there but you can make it easier for yourself by searching websites specifically aimed at your area of interest or job role, or using special search terms on standard job sites. *Please note most of these are UK based, and you will need to find alternatives if seeking roles elsewhere.*

Focused Sustainability Careers Websites

The list below will help highlight some of the best places to find a sustainability related jobs, graduate scheme, and in some cases volunteer opportunities. Have a look through the options to see which website best suits what you are looking for.

- [Acre](#)
- [Charity Job](#)
- [Countryside Job Service](#)
- [Elevator Café](#)
- [EnvironmentJob](#)
- [Environment Jobs](#)
- [Evergreen Resources](#)
- [Goodmoves](#)
- [Green Jobs](#)
- [Guardian Jobs - Environment](#)
- [Third Sector Jobs](#)

Top tip: Many of these websites will allow you to set up email reminders or will send you weekly updates of jobs relevant to your interests - make sure to make use of this feature!

Graduate Careers Websites

These sites are aimed at people who have recently graduated or are about to. There is a lot of useful information about career paths as well as graduate placements or internships.

- [Adopt an intern](#)
- [Bright Green Placements](#)
- [Change Agents](#)
- [Graduate Jobs](#)
- [Milk Round](#)
- [Prospects](#)
- [ScotGrad – Environmental & Science](#)
- [Target Jobs](#)

Generic Job Website with 'Sustainability' Category

If you are looking to use some of the main generic job websites here is a list that allows you to narrow down the search with key words such as 'sustainability'. This is just an example - if you have a focus area or "partner subject" you can use that to focus the search instead.

- [Guardian Jobs](#)
- [Indeed Jobs](#)
- [Job is Job](#)
- [Reed](#)
- [Simply Hired](#)
- [Total Jobs](#)

Graduate Programmes - Company Specific

A lot of companies will have their own Graduate Programmes that will take on recent graduates for 1-3 years to develop them. These are a good option if you are looking to try a variety of positions to find a career direction.

Winning (1)

These are some of the key sustainability bodies and companies that run their own programmes:

- [Atkins](#)
- [BRE Graduate Scheme](#)
- [British Geological Survey](#)
- [Carbon Trust Internship](#)
- [Environmental Agency](#)
- [Eon Graduate Scheme](#)
- [Forestry Commission](#)
- [National Grid](#)
- [Natural Power](#)
- [Ofgem Graduate Programme](#)
- [PwC – Sustainability & Climate Change](#)
- [Scottish Environmental Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#)

Through Networking

It is often stated that around 70% of jobs are never advertised, and while we aren't sure on the exact data it certainly is the case that existing relationships lead to job offers. Within the Preparing section of these Guides we outlined the importance of networking, and top tips for building and utilising your network. Having a wide network of people who understand your interests and experience can help raise your awareness of potential opportunities, and will mean more people are aware of what you have to offer.

Social Media

Social media is a great place to find job opportunities as previously mentioned.

LinkedIn has a [jobs function](#) which is used by many companies to advertise their jobs. The system pulls information about you from your profile to show you opportunities which might be of interest, and you can alter your preferences to ensure you see roles which fit your interest area and level of experience. Many people also share job opportunities within their own companies on their Feed - making having a large and relevant network on LinkedIn particularly beneficial.

Twitter is good for finding jobs by following relevant jobs accounts and also using relevant hashtags (find a few you might want to try to the right). Most of the recruitment companies outlined above post opportunities on Twitter as well as on their website, and their accounts are easy to find and follow.

Twitter Hashtags:

#charityjob
#countrysidejob
#energyjob
#envirojob
#environmentjob
#ethicaljob
#greenjob
#humanitarianjob
#job
#notjustajob
#socialjob
#sustainabilityjob

Speculative Applications

Speculative applications involve getting in contact with a potential employer without an identified role being available, stating your interest in working for the organisation and the skills and experiences you can offer. These can be on the back of contacts made through networking or through research, and can be a particularly effective way to gain work experience or volunteer opportunities which may lead on to something more long-term. [Prospects](#) and [TargetJobs](#) offer good advice on how to go about this approach.

Now that you have found that dream job in sustainability you've got a few more steps to go before you can win it! The recruitment process of any job can follow a variety of paths. There is the application stage which may include a CV and Cover Letter, or there may be an online form to complete. Once you are accepted in the application process there is usually at least one interview to get through as well. The intensity of the application and interview process will depend on the organisation you are applying to.

In this section you will find some helpful examples and links to places which can support you with your application process and make you stand out from the crowd.

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Your CV is the main arsenal in your application toolkit - generally this is what will be requested when applying for a job. This is the perfect chance to highlight your sustainability credentials and promote any work (voluntary or paid), education or hobbies that are applicable to the job.

Make sure that your CV is updated for each application - this means tweaking a core version of the document each time to highlight areas that will be most relevant for the company and position you are applying for. Never submit a CV over two pages long, and be sure to structure it clearly so it is understood at a glance.

Information that can be included in your CV:

- *Contact details (name, email, phone number)*
- *Personal Statement - short introduction to you highlighting your key skills for the job*
- *Education history - including grades*
- *Qualifications*
- *Employment history - including duties and skills acquired as relevant to the job*
- *Extra-curricular activities & hobbies*
- *References (full contact details if contactable immediately or 'provided on request')*

There are a couple of key structural approaches that you can take when creating your CV:

- **Chronological** - education, work experience, and other qualifications are grouped individually with the most recent experience listed first then works back chronologically. This makes it easier to see what your most recent and (probably) highest level of experience is.
- **Skill based** - relevant skills and personal experiences which are particularly applicable to the job being applied for are grouped. There is less emphasis on the time spent in each previous work place and more on the skills gained during your time there. (You can see an example of a skill based CV further on in this Winning Guide).

You can find examples of both of these, and also of an Academic CV, Teaching CV and Technical CV, on the [Prospects](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/) website.

Transferable/Employability Skills and Sustainability

The varied nature of sustainability jobs means that although most job seekers will have education or work experience which may not initially appear relevant to a sustainability job, they will likely actually have more experience than they think. (See the 'Skills for the Future' mentioned in the Preparing section of these Guides). Many sustainability jobs look for examples of transferable skills, and those you have should be identified, highlighted and evidenced at the application and interview stage.

Transferable (or employability) skills are those which can be used in multiple situations and are not specific to one job. They may also come from other areas of your life, for example voluntary work, hobbies, sports or informal training. See the Preparing section of these Guides for more information on understanding and developing skills for sustainability jobs.

Examples of Transferable Skills:

- *Team work*
- *Self-motivation*
- *Motivating others*
- *Active Listening*
- *Presentation skills/public speaking*
- *Problem solving*
- *Dealing with difficult situations*
- *Communications - written and spoken*
- *Social media*
- *Project management*
- *Report writing*
- *Data analysis*
- *Records management*
- *Customer service*
- *Providing training*

CV Writing Help

For more general tips on writing your CV please see the following websites:

- [Open University - Tips for creating a CV](#)
- [The Guardian - CV for environment and sustainability sector](#)
- [University of Kent - Environment CV Example](#)
- [University of Cheshire - Social Work CV Example and Applications Guide](#)

If you are currently studying at a College or University, your Careers or Student Advisor may also be able to provide you with more advice, or perhaps look at a draft CV and give you suggestions for improvement.



If you haven't already done so, we suggest you [watch EAUC-S Careers Webinar 3](#) where we hear from a Careers Advisor about how to make good applications, and a Recruiter about what stands out when hiring for sustainability jobs.

The next couple of pages are an example job description for the position as 'Communications and Events Intern' at a UK sustainability charity followed by the skills based CV application for the job. Have a look at

Example Job Description - Communications and Events Intern

Job Title: Communications and Events Intern

Description: Full-time fixed term contract to start as soon as possible, providing events management and communications to support a team running a UK sustainability charity.

Benefits: This role will offer the post-holder the opportunity to work within an established, dynamic and forward-thinking sustainability team. The successful candidate will be able to develop skills in effective communications, events delivery and engagement within a small but diverse organisation.

We offer flexible working hours and on job training in a fun and exciting working environment.

Hours: Fixed term contract until for 24 weeks – 37 hours per week

Salary: The appointee will work 37 hours per week for a 24 week period. We will pay the appointee at the Living Wage rate. Travel and expenses will be agreed as required throughout the project.

Skills and Experiences

Required:

- Degree or equivalent experience in event management
- Excellent written and spoken communication skills
- Excellent organisational skills
- Adaptable and able to balance multiple priorities
- IT literate with experience in Word, Excel, internet browsers, Outlook etc.
- Able to work on own initiative as well as a part of a small team
- Willing to travel around the UK

Preferred:

- Degree or equivalent experience in communications
- Understanding of the basic principles of social and environmental sustainability
- Experience of working in education, environment or charity sector
- Experience of office administration duties such as filing and event administration
- Experience using creative design packages such as Adobe Photoshop and infographics websites
- Experience using Mailchimp (or similar) and Social Media packages
- Website administration experience

Example Job Description - Communications and Events Intern

Job Description

The post-holder will be required to undertake a range of tasks to support the office with event organisation and communications.

Events Administration:

Supporting development and administration for networking and training events; webinars; and the annual conference. Tasks will include:

- Venue management and liaison
- Speaker research and liaison

Event communications:

- Delegate bookings and confirmations
- Payment procedure management
- Preparation of necessary equipment, signage etc.
- Event management and support during event
- Providing records of networking events and meetings
- Post-event resource development and communications
- Post event evaluations

Communications:

- Developing monthly newsletter communications using MailChimp
- Maintaining Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook pages
- Ensuring webpages are kept updated
- Developing and uploading case studies and resources to website
- Promotion of case studies and resources

The Events and Communication Intern may occasionally be required to undertake other tasks to support the team such as office administration duties, as agreed through discussion with their Manager. Attendance at events will require flexible working hours and occasional overnight, depending on location.

Application Process:

Interested applicants should submit a copy of their CV and cover letter by 30 August. Panel interview to follow two weeks later.

Example CV - Communications and Events Intern

Katy Summers

34 Newbattle Terrace, Edinburgh, EH4 6LT

Email: ksummers00@gmail.co.uk

Mobile: 077537154

I am a friendly, reliable and dedicated person with excellent event management and customer service skills, which I have acquired from working at Virgin Money Giving and Mercure Hotel. As a bilingual French/English speaker who has lived, worked and studied in France, Canada and the UK, I have come into contact with a wide variety of people and can easily adapt to the task at hand, bringing a practical positivity to any work environment. Through studying for my MSc I have strengthened my skills in research, enquiry, critical thinking and problem solving.

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

2015 – 2016	MSc in International Management and Leadership with Hospitality at University of Dundee, UK.
2015	Exchange semester at Université du Québec Montreal, Canada.
2012 – 2015	BA with Distinction International Hospitality and Tourism Management University of St Andrews, UK.
2005 – 2012	Highers and Advanced Highers, The Royal Academy of Glasgow

WORK HISTORY

June 2016 – present	Virgin Money Giving UK, Edinburgh Masters Project with the Communication team where I am promoting the Virgin Money London Marathon
February 2014 – August 2014	Mercure Hotel, London 3 Month Placement, Full-Time Assistant
June 2013 – July 2013	Hilton Doubletree Hotel, Glasgow Internship
April 2013 – August 2013	Forgan's Restaurant, St Andrews Part-Time Assistant

INTERESTS

2012 – 2015	Active campaigning member of the local Greenpeace Group
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Example CV - Communications and Events Intern

SKILLS

Excellent communication

- Highly articulate both verbally and in writing both in French and in English.
- Creating press releases for Virgin Money Giving was one of my project responsibilities
- Managing social media and website content, as well as observing and recording analytics
- Experienced in Word, Outlook, Excel, Mail Chimp and a basic knowledge of Adobe Photoshop.

Planning and organizing

- Successfully planned and organized events at Virgin Money Giving where my role requires me to create ideas, which will be put into action through careful planning and organizing
- Able to create plans and distribute work tasks as demonstrated during my time at Forgan's Restaurant where I organized two special dinner events for a larger group
- Meet all deadlines and achieve high quality results as demonstrated through my undergraduate studies at university where I received Distinction

Customer Service

- Excellent customer service skills and proactive behaviour as developed through working in four-star luxury hotel Mercure Hotel, London, where I worked in a fast-paced and high pressure working environment.
- Able to deal with customer enquires, handle complaints and take responsibility in order to deliver outstanding customer service as demonstrated by working in various hospitality establishments

Creativity and initiative

- Having lived in France, Scotland, England and Canada I am a passionate individual who likes to take on new personal challenges
- My project at Virgin Money Giving requires me to generate creative ideas in order to reach as big an audience as possible

Team working

- Excellent teamwork skills in hectic work environment such as at the Mercure Hotel where I was part of an international team with diverse backgrounds
- Ability to receive high results through teamwork as demonstrated by my Master's studies where presentation-assessments required teamwork as an integral part of the learning process

Research and critical thinking

- Capacity to critical think and to challenge as reflected by high grade average during my master's studies and undergraduate where modules involved Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability and Sustainability Management

References available upon request

Cover Letters provide an opportunity to present a narrative about your story so far and how it fits the prospective organisation, as well as express your personality to prospective employers. You need to be concise and highlight your main sustainability credentials. Look at the company's website to understand their ethos, history, and current work. This can usually be found in the 'About Us' section and will give you an insight into the company, what their priorities are, and what they will be looking for in an employee. Address some of their company attributes which you identify with and support within your Cover Letter.

If you do not have previous experience working in the sustainability sector, your cover letter is the perfect opportunity to clearly explain your applicable and transferable skills you have for the job from other areas of your life, and highlight your desire to move into work within this sector or in a specific job role.

Topics to Mention in your Cover Letter

These are some suggestions of the points to cover when writing your cover letter. Make sure that it is only one page long so as not to make it into an essay and structure it well - think about how you would feel about reading it if you were in the employers shoes!

- The job/position you are applying for
- Where you found the job (social media/online/word of mouth)
- Your current notice period and when you would be available to start (be aware this could put potential employers off if you have a long notice period!)
- Your interest and credentials relevant to the particular job, including any technical and transferrable skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience
- Reference to the company and why you would like to work for them
- Finish by offering to answer any further questions, and say you look forward to hearing from them

Grammar and spelling are extremely important. Many jobs receive hundreds of applications, and any spelling and grammatical errors might immediately result in your application being binned. We suggest CVs and Cover Letters should be proof-read by a friend, family member or careers advisor before submission.

Top Tip: Use formal and gender neutral language when addressing the letter, using 'To Whom It May Concern' if you do not have a specific name for the recruiter.

Cover Letter Support

For additional tips on writing a Cover Letter we suggest the following websites:

- [Prospects - Cover Letters](#)
- [Reed - How to write a cover letter](#)
- [The Guardian - Cover Letter Examples](#)

This is one of the last crucial steps of securing the job you have been pursuing. If you have been invited to interview your cover letter and CV have been successful in attracting the attention of the employer, and now is your chance to expand on your relevant experience and enthusiasm for the role. The interview is the best way for the employer to get a feel for your personality, how you would fit with the company, and also to make sure that you know what you are talking about!

The best way to succeed at the interview stage is to plan, and to practice. Generally interviews will be based around your CV, Cover Letter and the Job Description, all of which you should know well before going to an interview, with examples ready to demonstrate that you have the skills required.

Interviews can take multiple forms, with the style used depending on the type of job applied for and the preference of the company. The interviewers can be employees of the organisation you are applying to or from a recruitment firm. Make sure you know what format the interview will take before you arrive in order to prepare to the best of your ability.

Top tip: *Environmental job interviews may take on different styles. You could have to work outside or show particular skills related to the job remit. If you have been told you will be visiting a site or have a practical element to your interview, come prepared. Looking smart is important, as is arriving*

Types of interview

- Formal or informal one-to-one chat - more likely if the work is casual or sometimes short-term
- Test centre - when evidence is needed of suitability to the role or particular system/technique is used by the company
- Group interview - to evaluate individuals' team work style and dynamic in a group
- Panel interview - this is the most common style, with one interviewee and a panel of interviewers
- Phone or video interview - this can be used for a one-to-one chat or panel interview if it is not possible to attend the interview in person or you will be working remotely

Interviews may take more than one form, and it is fairly standard for interviewees to be requested to pre-prepare a presentation or perform some simple tasks which will be part of the job role to demonstrate your ability. This can be a great opportunity to shine - prepare in advance and you should do well.



For the most part, interviews are formed around competency-based questions, which means that each question will focus on a specific skill that applies to the job.

Preparing

1. Have your CV and cover letter printed and know exactly what you said in order to answer questions in relation to your documents
2. Understand the company background, ethos and structure as best as possible to align your question answers with how the company operates
3. Read through the job description as well as roles and responsibilities thoroughly - the interview questions will focus on related skills and experience (see our Top Tip!)
4. Prepare answers to general interview question - examples of these can be found in the links below
5. Be prepared to ask some questions of your own, this is usually offered at the end of the interview and is the chance for you to gain insight to the company and ask anything you are unsure of. Don't ask anything that should be obvious if you have done your research into the company!

Interview Help

For more general tips on interview skills and example questions please see the following websites:

- [Prospects—How to Prepare](#)
- [The Guardian—First Job Interview Tips](#)
- [Target Jobs—Nine of the Trickiest Interview Questions](#)

Top tip: Examples are key to answering interview questions. When answering make sure you answer the question fully including a real-life example of when you have applied the particular skill being addressed. Use examples that are memorable and show succeeding in a particular role. Have these examples prepared beforehand in order to use them effectively in the interview.



If you haven't already done so, we suggest you [watch EAUC-S Careers Webinar 3](#) where we hear from a Careers Advisor and Recruiter about how to perform well at interview .

Good luck with the job hunt! We hope this section has helped give you some hints and tips of how to highlight your sustainability credentials and clinch that job you have been looking for!

Careers Advisors

At most institutions there will be someone assigned to help with careers advice, whether this is through an online service, a Careers Department or a Student Advisor in smaller institutions. This is a great source of support to help you prepare when applying for jobs. Some departments will offer additional support such as checking over a CV and Cover letter or having a run through of an interview scenario. It also helps sometimes to have someone to talk through your ideas with who can give some impartial guidance.

If you are currently studying at or recently graduated from a university or college make sure you contact your university or college's careers or student support department to find out more about what they offer. You may never have access to such a high level of careers advice again!

Teaching Staff

If you are currently studying then your lecturers / tutors / teaching staff will likely have good advice for you about job hunting and skills development, although if they don't specialise in sustainability aspects or focus on the themes you want to focus on make sure to be clear with them about your aspirations so you get tailored advice. They might also be able to tell you where past students ended up, and perhaps put you in contact with any who went on to relevant jobs and could provide advice or highlight opportunities.

Networking Contacts

As mentioned previously, networking is a key element when finding a job. These networking contacts are a brilliant way to find out more about a company that you are interested in, ask questions about particular jobs, or find out about jobs becoming available in the sector. Keep an eye on professional networking channels such as LinkedIn for jobs and contacts in your field of interest.

Family and friends

It is amazing how many contacts your family or friends may have when trying to find a job - people with experience in a variety of fields that you can learn from and may even know of potential opportunities. Your family and friends can also be good support when a CV needs checked or a Cover Letter needs tweaked - handy contacts who most likely aren't scared to call you out if you have written nonsense! Use the people around you, old flat mates, colleagues, fellow students or lecturers; social networks are also an excellent way to boost your job prospects.

Thank you for taking the time to read through the EAUC-Scotland Careers Guides. If you do need any more assistance or have any questions then please get in touch.

(Last updated March 2019 – please email Scotland@eauc.org.uk with any new resources for our next update)

