

## **Graduate Information from Evergreen Resources**

### **Introduction.**

As you may already be aware, Evergreen Resources has been helping candidates and companies find each other over the last 10 years, and has built up a good, strong reputation in the environmental sector. We are specifically targeted towards the environmental market and assist people at all levels throughout the UK and also further afield.

The intention of this information sheet is to discuss the following areas:

- The environmental market;
- Identify skill areas that employers are looking for in prospective candidates;
- Look at the CV in general and how to present it;
- Looking at ways to gain relevant experience and generally market yourself.

### **The current environmental sector in brief.**

We at Evergreen Resources are sure that you have all studied really hard and have acquired a full understanding of all the legislative drivers affecting companies. It is not our intention to cover any specific technical areas, though if you do have specific questions we will do our best to answer them.

There are three distinct sectors that you should be concentrating on during your job search: Environmental consultancies; Industry, and the Public Sector.

### **Consultancies.**

Consultancies are experiencing growth in pretty much every technical area, including environmental management and related systems, contaminated land, industrial and municipal waste management, M&A due diligence work, environmental assessment, health, safety and environment related issues in industry. New areas of growth include sustainability, social and ethical issues and climate change.

### **Industry.**

Industry presently employs environmentally related people in the following areas: Environmental management or a combination of H&S; HS&E or QHS&E. Historically speaking, industrial firms have tended to either develop people internally into roles that have an environmental flavour (such as ISO14001 implementation) or employ more junior candidates - maybe even graduates - to provide environmental expertise to health and safety managers.

The main drivers for industry are legislative and the environment is still perceived as a “grudge buy”. However, firms are now recognising the need for accomplished environmental management as the cornerstone of their business, and are using this form of risk management to benefit their business. The PR and corporate profile that can be gained from sound environmental practice is now fully recognised by most leading blue chip companies. SME’s are also able to gain competitive advantage by understanding and maximising their cost base/bottom line and identifying possible new markets through environmental awareness. Energy efficiency is just one example of how companies can create savings that have an immediate impact on the bottom line.

### **Public sector.**

Public sector: local authorities; central government and the Environment Agency currently deal with all environmental issues across the country. All local authorities as well as central government are looking at waste management, LA21, management systems, contaminated land, air quality issues amongst others. The Agency polices all environmental issues across the country.

We at Evergreen Resources predict that the opportunities for environmental professionals will grow substantially over the coming years as legislation becomes tougher and companies are compelled to better understand, in detail, the effects that their business has on the environment in order to maintain a competitive advantage. However, in order to be in the right place at the right time prospective

candidates need to understand what prospective employers are looking for as well as how to approach them.

### **What are prospective employers looking for in candidates?**

Frankly, it does not matter which of the above - mentioned sectors you are targeting yourself towards. All employers are looking for good qualifications, solid technical skills, a broad appreciation of general environmental issues as well as some sort of specific interest or specialisation. This may well be targeted through your dissertation and/or work placement.

One important area that all employers are looking for, but more specifically the consultancies and industrial companies, is business acumen. Those candidates that portray or can demonstrate an understanding of business and more specifically sales and marketing will stand a much greater chance of success. This is because consultancies rely on consultants selling their consultancy's services to the wider business community.

Most employers are concerned that they will be spending time training graduates up only for someone else to benefit a year or two down the line when they are just starting to get some real benefit from them. This is because companies who have not invested the training costs can pay more to those graduates with a couple of years experience and/or who have already been trained. Therefore, if you have had some sort of work experience it should put you at an advantage.

### **The CV.**

As discussed above, most employers are looking for candidates with some experience and it is the job of you and your CV to demonstrate that you are a candidate worth talking to.

You must try and write a CV that highlights all of the specific technical skills that you can offer. This should include project management in whatever form, baseline assessments, desk studies, scoping studies and any form of research that you have undertaken for environmental projects. Some of these areas should ideally have been covered during your work experience.

Below is a copy of a CV that indicates both how to organise all the relevant sections, and how to present an engaging, definitive style.

In general the CV should not be more than two pages, unless there is a specific reason. It is recommended that you use *Times New Roman* as the font and experiment with the size for the headings.

The general lay out is as follows:

- Personal details
- Profile
- Educational background
- Work experience

#### **Personal details.**

Your personal details should include every possible method of contact: There is nothing more frustrating than discovering that a candidate has a mobile phone number and hasn't included it on their CV. I am sure that it wouldn't preclude you from an interview, but if the prospective employer can reach another candidate you may miss the boat. Date of birth is also important as it provides a reference point for other dates in the CV.

#### **Profile.**

The profile should detail any industry buzzwords that are relevant to the position you are going for and the experience that you have. (An example is provided in appendix 1 below).

### **Educational background.**

The educational background should detail all relevant courses covered in your degree and/or dissertation. Don't forget the grade: *this is important*. A-levels are also important as they indicate what your early interests were, be it math's and physics or history and English. This is often a good indication of a candidate's type of intellect. O-levels or GCSE's are also significant, but a short list will suffice. The dates of courses are essential for demonstrating continuity. Finally, remember to put everything in chronological order, **most recent first**.

### **Work Experience**

Any work experience should also be in chronological order, **most recent first**. Positions should be listed - again to ensure continuity. Bear in mind that a prospective employer is interested in relevant work experience so make sure that you include all the relevant details. As above make sure that the technical elements of the positions that you have undertaken are detailed.

### **A note on covering letters.**

We commonly encounter letters that contain technical specifics about roles that candidates have had, yet their CV does not acknowledge this detail. In short, if it is not in the CV then it didn't happen. Candidates may feel this is a way of briefly portraying their experience whilst grasping the reader's attention, but please ensure that this information is also in the CV.

You should be assured that most employers will read all the CV's that appear on their desk. The covering letter should briefly introduce you (maybe referring to a telephone conversation that you have had) and then ask for some sort of commitment. This should be that you are going to call them on a specific date to discuss the CV.

### **Marketing Yourself.**

There are other ways of ensuring that prospective employers are interested in the CV, and should read it, other than sending it in by post.

It has become increasingly prevalent for companies to recruit graduates directly rather than using agencies. However, if there are specific or urgent requirements then agencies will normally be contacted. For this reason it is worthwhile registering your details with agencies, though do not pin all of your hopes on this route. You may find that a lot of agencies might not even reply. Evergreen, however, is different in that all emails receive a response, be it negative or positive. We offer graduates a tailored, specific response, an outline of which is covered below.

For starters I feel that the web, email and telephone are now your best tools to research and contact prospective employers.

Use all of the relevant web sites:

[www.edie.net](http://www.edie.net)    [www.ends.co.uk](http://www.ends.co.uk)    [www.evergreen.org.uk](http://www.evergreen.org.uk)

These web sites all have consultancy directories as well as lots of other companies either advertising services or jobs. You should be able to identify companies who work in fields that are of interest to you. Once you have the details of targetable firms, you need to make initial contact and find out relevant details such as the names of people you will need to speak to. Before you do however, make sure you look at the web site for the company. This will give you a better understanding of what the company is involved with, as well as identifying any relevant vacancies.

I would normally recommend that you try and keep the fact that you are a graduate out of the first conversations so that you don't get put through to personnel. This will normally result in you being asked to send in a CV without being able to speak to anyone on the technical side of the business. Try and ask for the name of the director in charge of the section that is relevant to you - be it environmental assessment, management systems or contaminated land. If necessary call back and ask for the person directly, once you have obtained their name.

You could also ask to speak to someone within the relevant team/division on the premise that you are researching for your dissertation on a particular subject. You could then speak to someone of relevance, gauge the current workload situation and maybe fish for whether or not the company could use some part time or contract help on certain projects. You should also use it to get information that really could be of use in your project.

Your aim should always be to speak to someone who makes the decision about who the company is looking to recruit. Try to make sure that you plan the call in advance so that you have a list of questions to ask. These always make you look as though you have done your research.

Firstly, ask if it is okay to take up a few minutes of their time. (Remember, they may be in a meeting and cannot speak to you directly). If it isn't then make sure you ask when you should call back. If they tell you just to send in a CV then mention that you will, but you wanted to speak generally about what the company is involved with and see if there may be opportunities at a junior level or even on a voluntary basis.

If it is convenient to speak to the internal contact then make sure that you cover all of the points that you have already written down. Tell them why you are calling, what you are interested in and what you are looking for. Ask them about their own company. Remember that senior people in companies love to talk about their own firm. Flatter them about the web site and how some of the projects look really interesting. Try and relate it to your own experiences and interests.

You are of course building to the question about what vacancies they have at the moment. Make sure that you cover all the bases: Contract, temporary, voluntary work as well as permanent.

If you get a bite then email the CV across directly. If not then make a judgement on whether or not to forward a CV. Get contact details either way. Please ensure that if you are sending a CV through then you make an appointment to ring back to discuss the CV. Remember that it is ok to ask for a meeting. We have found that clients are more than happy to meet up if somebody sounds interesting and possibly relevant. Don't forget that we spoke about business acumen earlier and in this instance tenacity can work in your favour. A company is always on the lookout for candidates that have the ability to get ideas across and sell yourself on the telephone.

### **Making use of Contacts that you already have.**

You must make sure that you make use of the resources available to you in house. Your course has probably been running for many years now and you should ensure that the lecturers provide you with access to all the contacts that you need.

Remember, your work placement should enable you to prove yourself within a company, and is one of your best opportunities to secure a full time post.

**Appendix 1. Example CV Presented by Evergreen Resources.**

**Curriculum Vitae**

Date of Birth: 19<sup>th</sup> July 1977  
Nationality: British

**Professional Profile**

Extremely committed and enthusiastic post-graduate, with a thorough knowledge of pollution control practices and legislation. Capable of achieving personal objectives as demonstrated by successful completion of my Masters Degree. Methodical and organised with excellent verbal and written communication skills. Accomplished in producing technical reports. Keen to broaden experiences and confront challenges on both a personal and professional level, with an enthusiastic interest in travel. Highly presentable, ambitious and goal orientated.

**Education**

1998-2000 University .....  
MSc Environmental Pollution Control  
This course provided me with a specialist and comprehensive understanding of environmental pollution control within industry and the regulatory bodies, encompassing:  
- The development of environmental management skills.  
- Development of professional qualities in the ability to use a wide range of techniques for the protection, control and monitoring of environmental conditions.  
- The acquirement of the necessary knowledge and skills to operate within companies and the regulatory bodies in order to identify and solve environmental problems and reach goals.

1995-98.1 University .....  
BSc (Hons) Environmental Science  
My degree course combined theoretical knowledge, laboratory experience, and empirical research, that has provided me with a broad range of abilities required in environmental science and management. This course followed a highly integrated approach covering many different disciplines, providing me with a fully comprehensive understanding of the subject.

1988-95 Comprehensive School,  
A Levels- Design Technology (A), Art (C), Biology (N).  
GCSE's- 9 grades A-C including English, Mathematics, and Chemistry.

**Employment**

Jan 01- Present- Environmental Compliance Dept.  
Responsible for: quantitative environmental monitoring, auditing, reporting and compliance.  
Interpretation of environmental quality data,  
Health & Safety Representative,  
Technical committee representative,  
Landfill operation overview inspections (OPRA),  
Landfill environmental and safety risk assessments.

Aug- Sep 00- Chester.  
Duties included: Photographing rock core samples. Supported engineers with preparing and logging of samples.  
On site work including: piezometer dips, gas monitoring, CBR's, soak away tests.

- Feb- July 00- Temporary Positions  
Accounts Clerk,  
Duties included: Accounts Payable, responsible for all financial payments,  
Supporting work for Chief Accountant,  
General office duties, such as filing, answering phone queries, updating system files.
- Call Centre Support Staff, FESC National Help Desk,  
Duties included: Advising BT engineers on H&S testing of equipment,  
Arranging emergency equipment deliveries by liaising with suppliers and couriers,  
Maintaining H&S records, data entry and filing.
- Sep-Feb 2000- MSc Research Project/ industrial placement:  
Research paper title: 'Preliminary Investigations into Actual and Potential Pollution Problems from UK Landfill Sites Containing Calcium Sulphate Deposits'  
Required assessing published material, liaising with LA's, The EA, local businesses and local pressure groups.  
On completion of the research, a small run was published and circulated, and has been well received by The Environment Agency, Local Authority staff, and a number of Welsh Assembly Members. Also, the University are considering publishing it as a technical paper and is due to be assessed in the coming months.
- Summer-  
1999 Bar/Catering Staff.,.  
Working in a busy airport environment challenged me physically and to meet time objectives.
- Summer-  
Sales Assistant, Cardiff.  
I organised and co-ordinated stock in a busy retail outlet, as well as being a member of a sales team on the retail shop floor, developing both my ability to work with people in a pleasant and friendly manner and develop my commercial awareness.

**Interests**

I enjoy most water sports, and regularly spend my free time surfing and swimming. I also enjoy racquet sports, mostly tennis and squash. I am keen to travel and enjoy any opportunities to broaden my outlook and develop my interests in other cultures.

I have a clean driver's license and have my own vehicle.