

The complete guide to landing a green job

June 2021



Contents

Deciding what you want to do	1
Know what you want to do	2
Dissertation	3
Finding opportunities	4
CV Writing	5
LinkedIn	7
Applications	8
Interview	11
Work experience	13
Networking	15
Continuous Professional Development	17
Moving inside the green sector	19
Getting promoted	20

Deciding what you want to do

When you are starting out it is important to decide what you want to do with your career. This is also true if you have many years of work experience as markets change and new opportunities and roles arise.

Start thinking!

- Create a list of things you'd like to have in a job. For example, you could include where you'd prefer to work (i.e., outdoor, or on in an office), you could include the type of work you'd like to do (i.e., analytical, or more creative) or if you are passionate about a topic. Knowing all of this will help you on your search.
- Seek professional advice from careers advisers: It's highly likely that your university will have career advisors who can help you to identify what you want to do, so seek them out.

Understanding

The next step is looking for what careers exist. For this you will have to do some research. There are several ways you can do this:

1. Look up careers in the environment and sustainability sector and read through the job description and see if they match with your list of wants and needs. See more in [finding opportunities](#)
2. Talk to people: Find people working in the career you are interested in and have a chat to find more about what the job is like. See more in the [Networking](#) section
3. Watch IEMA's Day in the Life series to learn what people do in their day-to-day jobs and at different levels.

Understand the level that you are aiming for and be strategic. Have a 5-year plan of where you want to be and work backwards to know what type of job you need now to achieve it.

Know what you want to do



Who?

- » Continue with your research and find which are the desirable companies you might want to work in. Find out who you can connect with to find out more.
- » Connect with people in those companies and follow them on LinkedIn to find out about job vacancies



What?

- » Research which sectors you would like to work in.



Where?

- » Know which locations you would like to work in. If you are flexible, it is better to list places than to just say anywhere.

Dissertation

A dissertation can be a good place to gain work experience if chosen correctly. One of the ways to do this is to tailor your studies to your dream job.

Link to your ambitions

Choose a topic that you want to work in.

Opportunity to network

Ask for interviews in the sector, this will provide you with the opportunity to network with people in the industry.

Be relevant and up to date

Choose a topic that is up to date and relevant to the work you want to do. This will help you gain knowledge, insights and generate contacts within the field you want to work in.

Show your passion

Show your passion for the sector. Share your dissertations through LinkedIn.

Location

Think of the location. If you want to work internationally then you can choose to do a dissertation in a different country which will help to demonstrate that you have international experience.

Finding opportunities

When looking for opportunities don't forget about SMEs, public sector and charities. All organisations recruit through three methods:

Personal contact:

- Be active in your industry and network to get the word out of who you are and what type of work you are looking for. (See more in the Networking section)
- Remember not all job applications are on job postings as they are expensive, so if you like a company try to find people that work in it who can let you know about job openings.

Advertising:

- Companies recruit by posting jobs on their website, LinkedIn, job boards and niche websites
 - » From the research you did to identify the companies you like, look for them and register for their job vacancies alert.
 - » Register for the job boards and set up job alerts using the parameters of the list you did (See more in the Deciding what to do section)

Contacting Head-hunters and recruiters

- Sign up to recruitment agencies.
- Use LinkedIn to connect with head-hunters.



CV Writing

When writing your CV it is important to consider the following:

General CV advice:

- » Try to keep it to 2 pages.
- » If you do not have a CV template to write look for google templates
- » Before writing the CV, research the company, sector, and the job.
- » You should write a bespoke CV for every job application.
- » Proofread your CV.
- » Have others check your CV and give you feedback on how you come across.
- » The purpose is to get you an interview. Get a series of hooks to grab the attention. Focus on the outcomes of any previous work you've done, don't just list responsibilities. i.e. 'I was responsible for X programme and as a result we generated X income or reduced our carbon usage by X'.

Compelling opening summary:

- Show passion and personality.
- Write about your career aspirations:
 - » In the opening paragraph try to include the following:
[which industry] expert with [number of years] experience, gained from [describe organisations]. Skilled in [examples]. Experience of [examples]. Excellent knowledge of [examples].

Work experience:

- There are different ways to write your CV but keep it simple.
- In this section include relevant information to showcase how your experience is relevant to the job
 - » If you have relevant work experiences write about it.
 - » If not, you can describe your core modules, any transferable skills from other jobs you may have had, or you could include volunteering experience. The important part is to highlight how this is relevant to the job you are applying.

Structure of work experience:

- First line: Job title - date.
- Second Line: Name of Organisation you work for.
- Responsibilities: Include a short list of your main responsibilities - try to choose the ones that are relevant to the job you are applying to.

- Achievements: Include relevant achievements you have accomplished that are relevant to the job application. if possible, try to quantify the impact your achievement had and tied it to how it helps the organisation your work for.
- Address as many requirements as you can – but you don't need to meet them all.

Skills:

- Include a skills box but only put in if you are going to include highly technical skills otherwise, it is best to provide context of your skills.

Others

- Include any awards, from your work or industry, etc.
- Your CV might be read by an applicant tracking system (ATS) so use keywords and don't use images with text.
- IEMA suffix: If you have an IEMA suffix put it on your CV, social media, and business card as it helps demonstrate your dedication/competencies.

LinkedIn

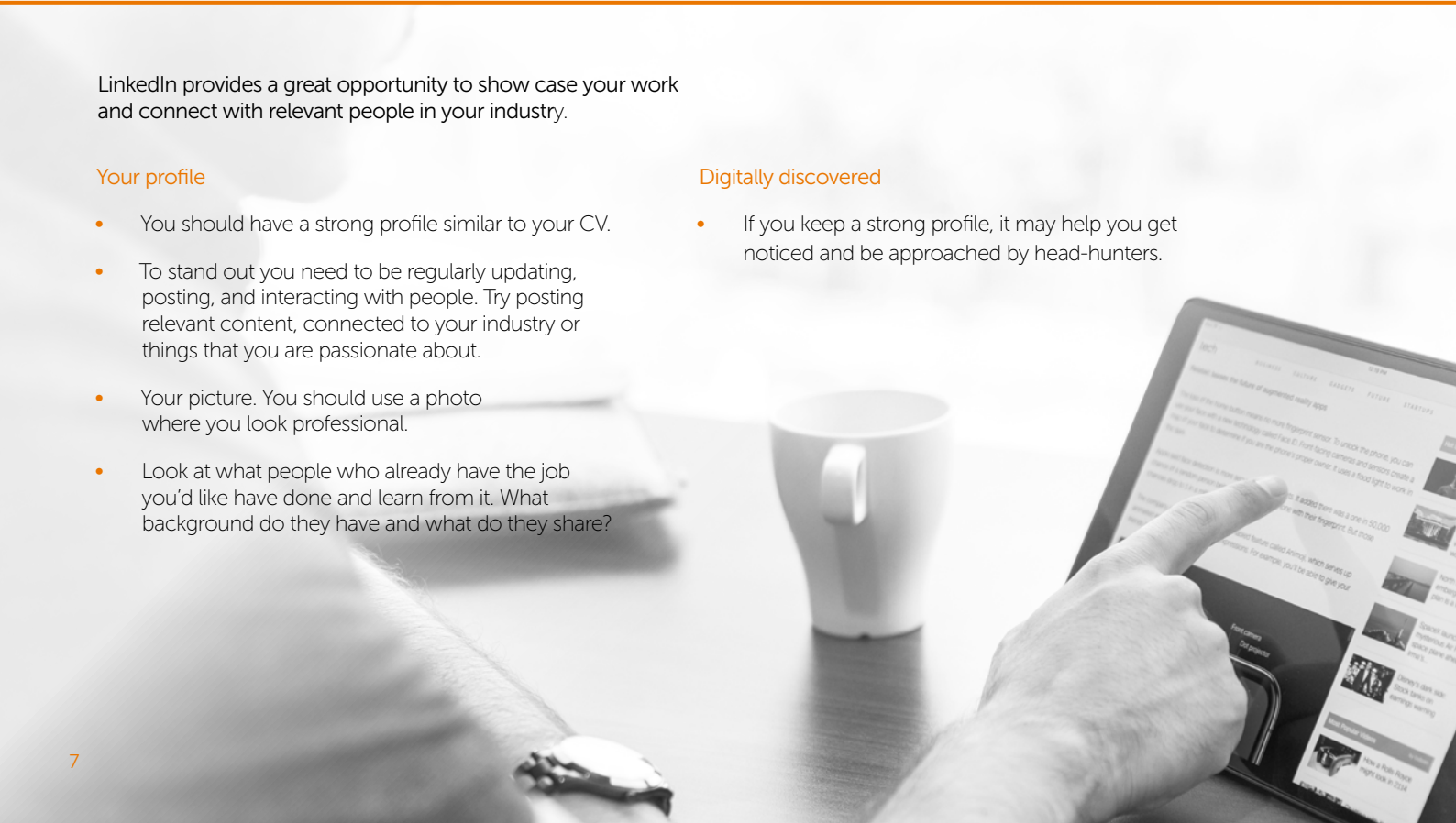
LinkedIn provides a great opportunity to show case your work and connect with relevant people in your industry.

Your profile

- You should have a strong profile similar to your CV.
- To stand out you need to be regularly updating, posting, and interacting with people. Try posting relevant content, connected to your industry or things that you are passionate about.
- Your picture. You should use a photo where you look professional.
- Look at what people who already have the job you'd like have done and learn from it. What background do they have and what do they share?

Digitally discovered

- If you keep a strong profile, it may help you get noticed and be approached by head-hunters.



Applications

General advice:

- Start applying as early as you can.
- You don't have to have all the requirements needed to apply for jobs, you need to convince them that you can learn them. If you have between 60% to 80% of the requirements go for it.
- Tailor your job applications.
- Track your applications. A spreadsheet will help you track your progress and when you get an email or a call you know which application they are referring. Some of the categories your spreadsheet could include are the following:

<i>Name of Company</i>	<i>Job Title</i>	<i>Location of Job</i>	<i>Deadline for application</i>	<i>Status of application</i>	<i>Feedback</i>



CV

- CV (See more in the CV writing section)

Cover letter

- Write a bespoke cover letter for each application. The application should include the following:
 - » Use concrete examples of relevant skills and experience in your cover letter and apply the FAB technique: where you describe your features (skills, experience, and knowledge) then explain the advantages of those features and how they can benefit your potential employer.
 - » Why you are applying for the role and a brief description of what you want to with your life (5-year plan).
 - » Be specific with the application, remember less is more.
 - » Get your personality across: Mention interests and how they may link to the job.
 - » Understand the company and their values and culture. Try to find someone to contact to ask.



Extra tasks or assessment

Some organisations ask the candidates to do extra tasks or take assessments. In some cases, you can prepare but if not, it is always good to remember:

- Not to panic, the company doesn't expect you to be perfect.
- If you are allowed to prepare, it is always better to have a bit of practice.

Job replies

Job replies can be varied. The responses can be successful, complete further task/requirements, unsuccessful or no response at all.

- Don't assume that if you haven't received a response that you are unsuccessful. You can always try to email the organisation to ask for information about the process. Many times, the process might have been delayed or the job description might have changed slightly.

Dealing with setbacks

- If unsuccessful try to get feedback, if possible, from the organisation and apply it to your next application.
- If they mention in their feedback, they mention why you are not right for the job you can always ask if there is a training scheme that you can apply for or join a summer placement.
- If you have not gotten any responses after several applications, you need assess why.
 - » Try making changes to your CV (structure or layout of the CV, style of writing of the cover letter) and ask for feedback on how to improve it.
 - » Look at your personal branding: Instagram, Facebook, etc. Recruiters look at it! Make sure that the pictures and your statuses on social media are appropriate. Make sure you have a professional email address.

Interview

When interviewing the most important thing you can do is prepare.

General Advice:

- Be enthusiastic and interested in the job.
- Wear appropriate clothing for the interview,
- Try to Relax and enjoy. Remember you are talking about something you are passionate about and something you enjoy, so make sure that comes across.
- Try to build a relationship with the interviewers.

Research the company, sector, and the job:

- Find out key information about the organisation such as size, key staff, significant projects, geographical locations, turn over. You can look up this information on the web or you can use LinkedIn to network and find people in the company that can help you understand the company and its culture.
- Research the people who will be interviewing you. Look for them on LinkedIn and look at their background to see if there might be any synergies in theirs and yours interests or background that can help you break the ice



Research the company sustainability strategy:

- Try to find out answers for the following questions:
 - » What sustainability means for the organisation.
 - » What role does sustainability play in the organisation's commercial aims?
 - » How developed is the sustainability strategy? Are they market leading or middle of the pack?
- Try to think about how you can talk about sustainability in a business sense. (Risk, legislation, reputation)

Prepare talking points

- Look for generic questions online that they do in job interviews and write bullet points about the key points you want to say about yourself that highlight experience and skills that are relevant to the job. Some typical questions are:
 - » Why do you feel you are suited for this position?
 - » Why do you want to work there?
 - » Why are you drawn to a career in the environmental sector?
 - » What is their culture like?
 - » What are the company's goals?
 - » What is the commercial stream of money, who their clients are?
 - » What can you tell us about our company?
 - » Where do you see yourself in five years?
 - » What are your strengths and weaknesses?

- Learn about your weakness and strengths
 - » To understand your strengths and weakness look at times you've been successful and unsuccessful in school, university, volunteering, etc and try to understand what made it successful or what made them unsuccessful.
 - » For your weakness explain how you have improved on them.
- Have key points you want to get across about yourself:
- Present your skills, knowledge and experience by using real life examples of what you can do and what you have done.
- Keeping up to date with environmental policy

Practice:

- Practice your responses.
- Have someone watch you and give you feedback (positive and negative)

Have your questions ready:

- It is always important for you to ask questions to assess if this job fits with what you want, and it also a good way to show interest in the organisation.
- Some of the questions you could ask are:
 - » What are the attributes of your highest performing staff?
 - » What are the plans for the business moving forward in terms of growth, new markets, etc?
 - » Do you have any concerns about my ability to do the job?

Work experience

More and more jobs are asking for some sort of work experience. So, it's important to find some work experience!

Finding work experience:

If you've never worked before it is important to find some work experience. There are several ways to do this:

- **Volunteering:**
 - » Volunteering can help you get to know the field and roles you are interested in.
 - » Helps you build skills in an area you are interested in.
 - » Help to network with people in the industry.
 - » It also helps demonstrate that you are passionate about sustainability to future employers.
- **Internship or Placement:** An internship is a period where students or graduates work for an employer to gain exposure to the work environment. Placements are similar but they tend to be longer in time. o find internship and placement opportunities utilise your networks (See more in the Networking section) and look for them in your university or on LinkedIn.
 - » Internship and placement are good experiences to understand what you like and don't like about a certain job or industry.
 - » In some cases, they may lead to a job offering.
 - » They help you build your skills related to the industry you are interested in.
 - » Helps you network with people in the industry.
 - » Can give you a real sense of a business setting.

- **Dissertation**

- » If your dissertation is linked to what you want to do in the future, it can help you gain valuable experience.
- » If it relates to a current subject, it could also provide new insights of an industry.
- » It also helps you build your network.
- » It can help you build your skills.
- » It helps demonstrate what you are passionate about.

- **Temping jobs**

- » Even if the job is not related to the industry or job you want, it will help you build transferable skills that you could use.
- » It can give you a real sense of a business setting.
- » It will also help build your network.

- **Graduate Schemes:** This is a work-based training programme aimed at recent graduates to help them gain practical experience within a company.

- » Graduate schemes will provide training.
- » It helps you develop practical skills for the jobs you want.
- » It will help you develop your network.
- » Can give you a real sense of a business setting.

Leveraging your experience: It is important to know how to leverage your experience to find work. In order to do this, you need to:

- » Know your skills, experience and knowledge. List all of your skills, knowledge and experience on a spreadsheet.
- » Understand the requirements of the job you are applying for. It is important to understand each role is, what skills and knowledge you will need to do the job, what their daily role is like and to write them down. You can find this information by having a chat with the recruiter, or shadowing someone with a similar job.
- » Draw parallels from your experience to the job description: Once you know what skills, knowledge and experience you have and what the job entails you can start to draw parallels between your experience and the requirements.

Networking

Why network:

- Most opportunities are filled by word of mouth or personal referrals so having people know you will help.
- They help you find opportunities,
- They can provide advice or mentorship.
- It can help you get internships.
- It helps enhance your profile and career progression.

Where to network:

- **Personal contacts:**
 - » Use your personal connections and ask for introductions.
 - » Let your contacts know you are looking to meet people.
- **Career Fairs:**
 - » This can help you to understand roles and sectors and levels of roles.
 - » When meeting the speakers, take notes and show interest. Present yourself as you would in an interview and take notes. These meetings could potentially lead you to a job.

- **Alumni Network**
 - » Make contact with alumni from your degree as they could have insights on what you can do with your degrees.
- **Society and networks:**
 - » Join IEMA or institutes relevant to your interests.
 - » Speak to other members and ask for introduction for (i.e., internships, to help with dissertations, to help with knowing more about a role or a company)
 - » Ask for guidance.
 - » Help design your Career path.



-
- **Volunteering:**
 - » Look into volunteering in causes that you are passionate about and that are related to your career interests to find like-minded individuals to connect with.
 - » Take the volunteering seriously to demonstrate your skills and knowledge.
 - **LinkedIn:**
 - » Grow your networks and follow relevant companies and relevant individuals.
 - » Use it to reach out and seek opportunities (shadowing, internship, or job opportunities)
 - **Industry events:**
 - » Go to events about things you are passionate about and talk to people.
 - » When meeting people present yourself with an “elevator pitch” to give them an idea of who you are and what your interest are.
 - » Follow up on the people you meet.
 - **How to do it**
 - » Have an elevator pitch prepared for introducing yourself (a short synopsis of your background, skills, experience, in as few words as possible)
 - » When attending events try to understand what the event topic is about and plan what you want to discuss and ask questions about.
 - » When doing face to face events, approach groups of three or more. Don't approach groups of two as they may be having a private conversation.
 - » If you want to participate in the conversation don't pretend to be knowledgeable when you are not, it is preferable to ask questions about the discussion.
 - » Explore general interest and ask social questions.
 - » Remember to follow up after the event and connect with them through LinkedIn, etc.



Continuous Professional Development

Once you have landed a job it is important you keep up to date with the legislation, policy and trends of the industry but also your skills.

Goal setting:

Is important to set your goals for your professional development so you can ensure that your career keeps moving in the direction you want.

To set goals you might want to look at the following questions:

- » What are the broader trends or policy in the industry you are currently working that you are lacking?
- » What kind of skill set you anticipate that you might need?
- » What competencies from the IEMA skills map for the level of membership you want to achieve are you lacking? (You can also take the skill gap analysis)

Once you have set your goals establish a time frame and research how you can achieve your goals.

What activities count for CPD?

- Webinars
- Reading room,
- Reading transform or blogs,
- Taking courses,
- Volunteering
- Coaching & mentoring,
- Experiential learning,
- Networking,
- Attending conferences,
- Getting involved in research,
- On the job learning



Recording your CPD:

- » Take notes about what CPD activities you are doing (webinars, volunteering opportunities, policy updates) and put them on a spreadsheet or mycareerpath.iema.net.
- » Next to each activity record a short line explaining what you learn from it.
- » Include an evaluation column where you assess with number 1 to 5 how much you enjoyed or learnt from that CPD.

Assessing your CPD activity

- » Review your CPDs and look at the evaluation column.
- » If the evaluation you gave for a certain type of activity or topic is low, you might want to look into different avenues of achieving the CPD or you might want to reassess your goal.
- » If the evaluation is high on a specific topic you might want to assess whether this is a topic you might want to pursue further.



Moving inside the green sector

When and why to move jobs?

- » Glass ceiling/lack of opportunity
- » Career advancement – taking a bigger role in a different company.
- » Bad management
- » Better working environment
- » Increase in salary.
- » Relocation
- » Broader project experience

Benefits of moving

- » Salaries increase more than by staying with one firm.
- » Securing promotion and greater responsibilities quickly.
- » Gaining a wider perspective on the market by working for different firms, different managers and in broader range of projects.

- » Experiencing diverse cultures and projects making you more rounded.

Note of caution.

- » Moving frequently can have a negative impact on your CV if you make a habit of it.
- » Do your research to make sure it is the right transfer and the right company.
- » Consider options for internal promotions and transfers.

Getting promoted

Routes to promotion:

- Good at Management: Show that you not only have technical skills but also soft skills. Start by volunteering to be a team leader.
- **Innovation:** Another way is by showing that you are innovative. It is important to execute your innovation not just have ideas. This will demonstrate that you have soft skills like time management, convincing people, winning over colleagues, budget managing.
- **Business development:** Show that you have the skills to develop business. Demonstrate you have skills in managing relationships, account management, persuading, stakeholder management and building relationships, setting out systems.
- **Technical:** If you want a promotion that is highly technical you need to demonstrate that you not only have a good technical knowledge but that you can manage other technical people, feeding into innovations projects, working with management and communications.

Getting experience:

- Talk to your employer to gain more exposure to different areas, like shadowing or, for more responsibilities, to manage a project to demonstrate your skills.
- Another way is to think what capabilities are important to the promotion you want and then think how you could gain them by expanding beyond the workplace. For example:
 - » Speaking at events,
 - » Coaching,
 - » Teaching,
 - » Consulting
 - » Writing
 - » Doing training
 - » Contracting
 - » Research

IEMA

Transforming the world
to sustainability

info@iema.net | +44 (0) 1522 540 069

