

I am frequently asked about the employment prospects for graduates from the Ecological Economics programme. I thought that it might be instructive to contact a selection of former MSc students and ask them if they might provide a synopsis of their current jobs and the extent to which the Masters programme provided training for these posts. You will note from these that many former students come from non-economics and non life-sciences backgrounds but are now employed in the field.

In some cases the alumni have provided email contacts should prospective students wish to contact them. Please do feel free to do so, but I would only ask that you be courteous and brief. They are all very busy people.

I have not approached alumni who are doing PhDs but there are many who are (and have) done so.

Salman Hussain
MSc Programme Director Ecological Economics

15 March 2006

James R. Pittman American (U.S.) currently in Seattle, Washington
[Jpittman \[...at\] prescott.edu](mailto:jpittman@prescott.edu)

Current job: *Consulting Ecological Economist, Earth Economics* <http://www.eartheconomics.org>

What I do in my current job

Currently working on several projects including: a web-based ecosystem service valuation tool for local, regional and national policy makers and others to learn about the value of natural assets; an ecological economic analysis of Hurricane Katrina and valuation of wetlands conservation/restoration as the least cost solution to pre-disaster damage mitigation; application of ecological economics tools and methodologies to assessment and policy analysis for the Puget Sound region. Previously worked to host the July 2005 Annual Conference of the US Society of Ecological Economics with the theme "Forging Solutions: Applying Ecological Economics to Current Problems." in Tacoma, Washington. Honored to be working with Robert Costanza, Herman Daly as well as other founders and leaders in the field of ecological economics.

Adjunct Faculty, Prescott College <http://www.prescott.edu>

Teaching students in BA, MA and PhD programs with courses including the following: Introduction to Ecological Economics; Understanding and Managing Sustainability with the Triple Bottom Line; Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability Assessment and Reporting; Ecosystem Service Theory and Quantitative Valuation Methodologies; Qualitative and Participatory Methods for Valuation and Appraisal.

Other Comments

The MSc program at the University of Edinburgh was absolutely integral to my understanding and application of ecological economics, a great launching point for my career and an international experience I greatly value on a variety of levels. Salman Hussain is by far the best teacher I have ever had and a great colleague to have met and worked with. I highly recommend the program to anyone interested in an informed perspective on complex times in history with unique challenges and opportunities before our diverse and interconnected organizations and communities.

William Murdoch - British

william.murdoch [.]at]gmail.com

Current job: *Environmental Advisor (BP 'Challenge' Graduate Scheme)*

What I do in my current job

Following my masters in Ecological Economics, I moved on to work as an environmental advisor in BP's "North Sea Strategic Performance Unit". Based in Aberdeen, my role has proven both diverse and challenging. My primary responsibility is to provide environmental support for the Central North Sea offshore platforms. This includes, maintaining their environmental management system and advising on issues relating to the latest legislation.

Comments

My background in Ecological Economics has proven particularly useful with respect to the Offshore Petroleum Activities (Oil Pollution Prevention and Control) Regulations 2005. As the name suggests, the legislation aims to reduce the volume of oil that North Sea platforms discharge to sea, (namely by limiting discharge to a maximum of 30 parts per million). In 2007, the legislation should allow the trading of discharge permits and it is this use of market mechanisms to drive an overall reduction in pollution which is closely linked to my masters.

On a similar line, BP voluntarily entered the UK Emissions Trading Scheme when it was established in 2002 and will shortly be participating in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (January 2007). Preparing for the EU scheme is an interesting experience as it is gradually becoming necessary to consider the tradeoffs between investing in emissions reduction technology vs. the cost of purchasing emissions reduction credits.

Link:

BP Health, Safety, Security and Environment (HSSE) Technologists Graduate Recruitment Site:
<http://www.bp.com/sectiongenericarticle.do?categoryId=9005673&contentId=7006313>

Juan Pablo Castañeda - Guatemalan

[jupa \[...at\]hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jupa[at]hotmail.co.uk)

Current job: Coordinator the component “Cuentas Ambientales y Análisis de Sostenibilidad” (*Environmental accounts and sustainability analysis*) del proyecto Cuenta con Ambiente (*Count with environment project*)

Coordinating institution: IARNA-URL (*Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment Insitute, Rafael Landívar University*) www.url.edu.gt

I am grateful to the Ecological Economics programme in Edinburgh and people involved in it, for giving me a good background in topics which were quite different from my previous work. Although I was previously involved in Environmental Impact Assessment (especially for construction projects) and had no previous formal economics studies, the programme opened for me a new dimension of economics and its relation with the environment. With the motivation given by the programme, I got more and more involved in the study of macroeconomics and aggregate indicators which stimulated me to explore the different advances regarding macro indicators linking the environment, economic and social dimensions towards an assessment of sustainability, with a special focus to identify possible applications for my country (Guatemala).

During my dissertation period I managed to contact Banguat (Guatemalan Central Bank) and they supported my idea to focus my research topic to an application of the last revision of the UN System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounts (SEEA2003). With the support of my supervisor, I managed to finish my dissertation with rather interesting results and at the same time study and get prepared to a possible future application in Guatemala. Fortunately enough I managed to contact a research institute that has been financed by the Netherlands cooperation in the past and after presenting my ideas to them and thanks to having the background of studying in Edinburgh they accepted my proposal and added it to a more general programme consisting of strengthening the environment statistics of the nation. It got such a good impact that the name of the project was modified to suit better to the new expectations.

I can say without any doubt that the MSc at SAC-EDIN gave me all the basic knowledge and instrumentation required for me to develop this project at present day. Although we are starting a four year project, things seem to be running smoothly at the moment and the future looks quite well. The experience at Edinburgh and especially at SAC opened for me a new door of knowledge and work opportunities, which combined with the experience of being in Scotland, will always accompany me in my professional activities.

Guatemala, 6 February 2006

Nick Edgerton - Australian

email: nick.edgerton [...at] ampcaptial.com

Current job title: *Research Analyst, Sustainable Funds Team*

What I do in my current job

I provide objective advice to the Fund Manager for the socially responsible investment fund. First, I look at the sustainability of whole industries, such as tobacco, health care, and energy. I use the fundamental principles I learnt through the ecological economics core subjects to understand the type and scale of impacts on the environment and (such as resource extraction) and society (such as social welfare) of those industries. With this information I advise the fund manager whether industries can be considered sustainable. Secondly, I examine specific companies for their sustainability performance, or, corporate social responsibility. I use the knowledge I gained from applications in ecological economics, EIA, and Project Appraisal, to understand and analyse company systems, processes, and performance. The knowledge gained includes an understanding of environmental management systems, environmental impact assessment, sustainability indicators, and participatory processes.

I have found that being conversant in social and environmental issues in an economic setting, or understanding economics when working in the environmental and social sectors has been highly prized and desired. After my MSc I used my knowledge to lecture in environmental economics; and then provide economic analysis of Australian Government environment policy, including:

- sustainable yields in fisheries,
- the role of catch labelling to eliminate a fishery black market,
- the economic valuing of harvesting vs non-harvesting of whales,
- the development of biodiversity indicators in natural resource management,
- the development of water trading for irrigators,
- the remediation of a contaminated site in Antarctica,
- the development of a Protected Area Management Plan in Antarctica,
- the development of an EMS audit protocol for an Antarctic Research Station,
- the economics of illegal animal trade and CITES, and
- structural adjustment and compensation for fishers on the Barrier Reef following the closure of fisheries.

I then worked for 2 years as a sustainability consultant, including:

- running a seminar series for social advocates on Economics
- valuing the total economic value of Community Legal Centres
- designed water efficiency and demand management programs for water in Australian centres

illustrated to water utilities the most cost effective manner to sell less water and remain revenue neutral

- developed a sustainability strategy, policy and KPIs for a Science Museum
- research options for government to mainstream socially responsible investment
- developed a sustainable total water cycle management strategy for local government
- combined qualitative and quantitative methods to conduct an economic, social and environmental assessment of water supply and demand options
- developed and run community workshops as part of a sustainability visioning and issues identification process for local government

Stephanie O’Gorman – Irish

[Stefanie.o'gorman \[...at\]jacobs.com](mailto:Stefanie.o'gorman [...at]jacobs.com)

Current job title: *Senior Ecological Economist, Jacobs environmental consultants*

What I do in my current job

My main focus at the moment is related to the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and associated economic analysis requirements in the UK, Ireland and Latvia. Within my current role I do a lot of Project Appraisals and also have recently been investigating the potential for using Non-use values (developed from Contingent Valuation and Choice Experiment studies) in UK policy making. I have also had the opportunity to carry out a major Contingent Valuation study on the Benefits of Natura 200 sites in Scotland for the Scottish Executive.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Research/17824/N2K>

- Full report

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Research/17824/N2KAppendix>

- Appendices)

Other comments

Completing this course has altered the course of my career dramatically and has provided me with skills that are at a premium in today's environment business both in the UK and worldwide.

Ian Spencer, British

[spencer_ian \[...at\] hotmail.com](mailto:spencer_ian [...at] hotmail.com)

Currently job: *Environmental Policy Consultant, Entec UK*

What I do in my current job

My job entails working within a consultancy firm as an environmental economist on environmental policy projects, mainly for UK Government departments and the European Commission. I work across a range of environmental policy areas, including air quality and climate change, energy, chemicals and water. Many of my company's projects contribute directly to UK and EU policy implementation and sometimes formation of new policy. My inputs are mainly around placing economic values on environmental quality and human health, working in the development and adjustment of economic instruments such as emissions trading schemes, and projects that help government make better informed decisions about the trade offs between industrial activity and environmental pollution.

This work gives me a chance to apply what I learnt during my MSc in new areas, and I still often refer back to my texts and even my dissertation. The MSc was a vital stepping stone into the work I now do - the core principles and skills that it taught me, such as the tools for cost benefit analysis, valuation and economic instruments, are currently highly valued in the environmental sector, where environmental economics is increasingly applied to decision making.

Other comments

Doing the MSc felt like a real leap of faith as my first degree was English Literature. My career had previously led me into work that sparked an interest in economic development and sustainability - I had recently finished an internship with the European Commission working with EU regional economic development.

I felt that there was lots of talk about sustainability but it was very scarce to hear robust economic arguments on why the environment mattered. I looked for a course that would equip me with practical skills to work in environmental protection, and found the MSc at Edinburgh. Having read up on ecological and environmental economic approaches, it seemed to address a lot of what I was looking for. Coming from an arts background, getting to grips with economic theory and scientific approaches was a real challenge at first, but it should not put you off if you are looking to change direction. It just means you have to work a little harder at the start to get familiarised - the course lecturers are also sensitive to a mixed set of backgrounds. The pace was just about right to keep you on your toes but not get you lost.

Sandra J. Velarde-Pajares – Peruvian

Can be contacted via website: www.sandravelarde.galeon.com

Current job: Programme Officer in Pantropic Ecosystem Assessment with the Alternatives to Slash-and-Burn Programme (ASB), hosted by ICRAF – World Agroforestry Centre, seconded by the Dutch government since March 2003.

What I do in my current job

At ASB, I am supporting a network of more than 80 institutions that work on balancing poverty reduction and conservation at forest margin benchmark sites under the direct supervision of PhD Thomas P. Tomich. Sites spread across the Amazon of Brazil and Perú, the Congo Basin forest of Cameroon, the island of Sumatra in Indonesia, the northern mountains of Thailand, and the island of Mindanao in the Philippines.

I have a key role in supporting partners for ASB's global synthesis, impact assessment and contribution to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment activities across its network. I am leading the integration of scenarios tools in ASB's programme of work, a major outcome for the ASB programme. I also provide formal and informal mentoring to both senior and junior staff from ASB partners.

Prior to joining ICRAF, I worked as a consultant with FAO in Rome, Italy and with an e-business company in Edinburgh and as a Research Assistant for the PERU-DARWIN Project between Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

Helen Todd, British
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Current job: *Access Campaign Officer, Ramblers' Association Scotland*

What I do in my current job

Ramblers Scotland is the representative body for walkers in Scotland, and my role is to ensure that the access legislation, which came into effect in 2005 under the Land Reform Scotland Act 2003, is implemented effectively. I work with other environmental and recreation NGOs, groups of volunteers, plus local authority and government staff involved in access and environmental issues. An average month can include a trip to visit a site where there are access problems (e.g. illegal fencing), a meeting with Scottish Natural Heritage and other NGOs to discuss rural development issues, a visit to the Scottish Parliament to watch a debate or give evidence to a committee, a chat with a journalist to give a quote or to work on an access-related story, and a visit to a local Ramblers group to talk about access and give training on how they can help to uphold access rights.

While there are perhaps few overt links between the course and my job, the work I did during that year has proved invaluable in many ways. First of all, the course gave me a grounding in economics, the planning system and instruments such as EIA and Cost Benefit Analysis. Secondly, the best part for me was that I was able to select for myself each essay topic and my dissertation subject. This meant I had the freedom to study in depth issues which were related to Scotland and which set me up for work in the environmental NGO sector.

Other comments

I had worked previously as a teacher and teacher trainer and so the course was a first step in changing career. On graduating I found that I was competing for jobs against very experienced candidates so decided the best way to go forward was to work as a volunteer in various organizations. I did policy work for Scottish Wildlife Trust while the Nature Conservation bill was passing through Parliament, conservation work for the National Trust for Scotland and parliamentary policy research for the Scottish Green Party. In all of these positions, I was aware that I was using knowledge and skills gained from the course, and these helped me to find a part time job as Campaigns Researcher for Friends of the Earth Scotland. When that contracted ended, I applied for my current position at the Ramblers. The cross-disciplinary nature of the MSc was extremely useful given my background in other fields, and enabled me to find areas of great interest to me.

I would be happy to recommend this course to others.

Martina Blum-Kusterer, German

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Current job: *sustainability analyst and research associate*

What I do in my current job

As a sustainability analyst I assess listed companies regarding their ecological and social performance. By using information from the companies' environmental and sustainability reports and from questionnaires we assess their performance against a number of environmental and social indicators. Companies that are rated above average are recommended to be part of a sustainability fund (socially responsible investment - SRI). Besides the sustainability rating I am responsible for the internal environmental management and work as a research associate in environmental projects and consulting.

Projects examples are a study for the Swiss Federal Office of Energy estimating biomass potential in Switzerland and a study for the Federal Office for the Environment about the effects of environmental protection on GDP and employment. For this study but also for the general topics studied and discussed in our company the ecological economics classes in Edinburgh and the research for my MSc dissertation helped me a lot.

Other comments

During my year in Edinburgh I got to know the basics of conventional economics in a nutshell and at the same time got to understand its limitations with respect to sustainability issues. Coming from an engineering background economics was a completely new discipline to me while at the same time due to the holistic approach of the programme I was able to draw many links to my previous work experience in environmental consulting. Having an educational background in two of the sustainability dimensions broadens job opportunities and is highly appreciated with potential employers.

Before working as a sustainability analyst and research associate I was a project engineer doing energy efficiency analysis for the semiconductor industry. I will leave the area of socially responsible investment and change to environmental management at an international reinsurance company from May 2006.

Lucia Lavric – dual nationality Romanian/Moldovan

Current position: *Consultant at IPA Energy Consulting, Edinburgh*

What I do in my current job

In my current job I have contributed to various energy projects

(http://www.ipaenergy.co.uk/jobs_careers_ll.htm), including

- the carbon pricing aspects of an EU wide electricity optimisation model,
- a study of the effects of the EU ETS on the investment attractiveness of the UK power sector and UK power prices

(<http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/euets.shtml>),

- assessment of carbon reduction potential of a range of gas to power projects, mainly in West Africa
- feasibility work, regional benefits analysis for a gas pipeline in West Africa.

Previously I worked on identifying potential Clean Development Mechanism projects in Moldova and provided an overview of Moldova's climate change related legislation (mainly energy and transportation) and compared it with the EU *acqui communautaire*.

Other comments

I completed the Environmental Sustainability MSc but took both Ecological Economics core modules as well as Project Appraisal and Environmental Impact Assessment and was supervised in my dissertation by Salman Hussain. The Programme helped me to:

- obtain practical skills and knowledge about modelling tools (e.g. linear programming and multi-criteria analysis), and project appraisal methods
- form my opinions about economic growth, environmental and social impacts of development, in particular by interacting with people from various backgrounds and regions of the world
- through its flexibility, focus on my main area of interest—energy related issues
- obtain an internship placement at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which was very interesting and useful