

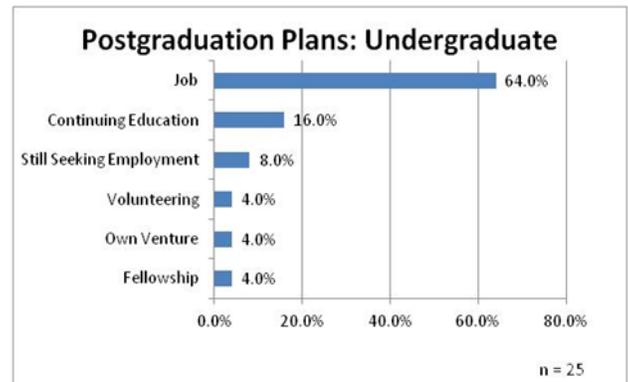
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR  
**Career Education**

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A DEGREE IN **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?**

**Where do Sustainable Development majors and special concentrations go?**

According to the 2015 Graduating Student Survey (with a 75.8% response rate for undergraduate majors and special concentrators in the Sustainable Development department):

- 84.0% of graduates were employed or were accepted to graduate school.
  - 64.0% were employed
  - 16.0% had secure plans to attend grad school
  - 4.0% had a fellowship



*Examples of organizations that hired Columbia Sustainable Development majors and special concentrators last year include:*



Graduates are also currently working at organizations such as: the Natural Resources Defense Council; Earthjustice; Clinton Global Initiative; USAID; Tishman Speyer; and Food Chain Workers Alliance. The undergraduate program hosts a list of other places alumni are working and alumni profiles on its [website](#).

*Examples of graduate schools and fellowship programs that have accepted Columbia Sustainable Development majors and special concentrators in recent years include:*

- Columbia University
- University of Oxford
- London School of Economics and Political Science
- Teaching Assistant Program in France

**What jobs do Sustainable Development majors do?**

A degree in Sustainable Development provides knowledge and skills relevant to a wide variety of jobs across the career spectrum, including:

- **Environmental Remediation & Compliance:** Public and Environmental Health Management
- **Planning and Conservation:** Natural Resource Management, Transportation Planning, Land Use, Preservation Management
- **Environmental Law:** Policy Analysis, Regulatory Affairs, Lobbying, Governmental Relations
- **Communications:** Journalism, Editing, Technical Writing, Public Relations, Consumer Affairs, Community Development
- **Education:** Teaching in schools, science museums, nature preserves, Research, Administration
- **Business:** Corporate Social Responsibility, Consulting, Customer Relations, Marketing, Sales

Use CCE's [Industry Exploration](#) webpages to learn more about these, and other fields.

## What do employers want?

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Most of the skills/qualities sought by employers are transferrable and/or soft skills that students can gain through classes, extracurricular activities, internships, volunteer experiences, or part time jobs including:

1. *Ability to work in a team structure*
2. *Ability to make decisions and solve problems*
3. *Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization*
4. *Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work*
5. *Ability to obtain and process information*
6. *Ability to analyze quantitative data*
7. *Technical knowledge related to the job*
8. *Proficiency with computer software programs*
9. *Ability to create and/or edit written reports*
10. *Ability to sell or influence others*

*Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2015 Job Outlook*

Your major can definitely demonstrate relevant coursework and knowledge to a prospective employer, but your studies aren't the only aspect of your experience that employers are evaluating. They select people who they believe can do the job (have the right skills), want the job (have demonstrated an interest in the field) and are a personality fit for the team and organization.

## What value do Sustainable Development majors bring?

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According to the Sustainable Development department at Columbia, the curriculum helps you to develop:

- A strong foundation in the natural and social sciences
- Expertise in critical areas such as food, water, health and climate change
- Skills in economic and GIS modeling, quantitative research and analysis
- The ability to draw from interdisciplinary perspectives in science, policy and the process of decision making

## What if I'm an international student?

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For international students at Columbia under student visas, selecting your major can play a significant role if you plan to work in the US after completion of your degree. Optional Practical Training is a work authorization that allows an international student to work in a job directly related to the student's major area of study either before or after degree completion. Employer sponsored H1B Visas also have similar strict requirements. Students with more questions about this should visit the International Student & Scholars Office (ISSO) and view CCE's International Students webpage at [careereducation.columbia.edu/students/International-Students](http://careereducation.columbia.edu/students/International-Students).