

Earth Science Builds Careers for Life

The role of Earth science in meeting society's needs continues to grow in importance. Earth science develops skills that help students become better problem solvers, including three-dimensional analysis and comprehension of time and scale. Earth scientists use these skills to ensure a supply of clean water, explore for oil, gas, and coal, map the oceans, track severe weather, and discover the Earth materials we need to build our homes and roads, and the minerals and nutrients we need to farm the land.

Earth scientists work for a wide range of organizations, including petroleum companies, environmental firms, mining companies, and construction companies. They work in local, state, and federal government agencies and teach in our schools, colleges, and universities. Earth scientists also work in non-traditional industries such as telecommunications and financial planning, assisting their organizations to address Earth-related issues that affect their activities.

More than 800 colleges and universities in the United States offer degrees in the Earth sciences. Nearly half of these colleges offer a masters diploma, the professional degree for pursuing a career as an Earth scientist. However, training in the Earth sciences builds a foundation for work in other fields, and nearly half of those graduating with Earth science degrees establish careers in fields as varied as engineering, law, systems analysis, and financial management.

Earth science provides a strong background for many career paths and instills an understanding of how the Earth system influences the many and varied aspects of human activity. However, many students graduate from high school unaware of the contributions that Earth scientists make to society and the unique problem solving skills that Earth science instills. We must make Earth science education a priority at all levels if we, as a society, are to meet the increasing demands of the future.
