

As an employer, how much weight does an environmental internship hold as compared to thesis work? In other words, do you think it is more beneficial to obtain an outside environmental internship that could possibly detract from one's thesis work or to devote one's time solely on thesis work?

I recommend focusing on the thesis. Completing your master's degree and preparing a quality thesis is likely to be more beneficial over the long run than an internship.

I am already employed in a consulting role. My employer did not seem to think a Master's program I was interested in (joint M.S./J.D.) would be beneficial. I really want to further my education but am worried to invest more time and money in something that may not be beneficial. I am very interested in specializing in groundwater/hydrology. Do you think continued education would be beneficial in this case?

Continuing education is beneficial and a Master's degree can carry you further, more quickly, in your career. Having your employer's support is important since the time needed to complete the degree may take time away from work. This support is even more important if your company has a tuition reimbursement program. I would work with your employer to identify a program that you are interested in and your employer supports.

Hi, I'm a senior geology major in my undergrad and I am considering a career in the environmental industry, however recently I've been questioning how much I enjoy my major. This makes me a bit apprehensive about obtaining a Master's degree directly after my undergrad despite being told how important a master's is in geology and the environmental field. What advice would you give to someone trying to get a job in the environmental industry with only a BS in geology?

Many companies hire graduates at the BS level particularly in the current job market. If you are unsure about how much you enjoy your major, I recommend working for a couple of years to see if the environmental field is something you will enjoy. If it is, then you can return to school at a later date. You may even find an employer that will help pay for your degree. One of the benefits of a Master's degree is a higher starting salary and potentially quicker advancement in your career.

When you say peer review. How do I know who I should give the paper to if I am just starting?

Your employer or supervisor will likely let you know who the best proof-readers and editors are for review. If not, just choose a colleague with whom you have a good relationship and who has several years of experience and ask them to review.

Is there a list of terms used in the industry (i.e. using endangered instead of imperiled.)

There are many resources available on the web. Here is one: <https://emsenv.com/glossary-of-environmental-terms/>.

Additional Questions from “Important Writing Skills for Careers in the Environmental Industry”

For recent undergraduates, what recommendations do you have for how to improve report writing? Also, how would you judge or prioritize writing experience on resumes?

Practice, practice, practice. The more you write the better you will get. Peer review and learning for more experienced colleagues (those who are good writers) will also help. A cover letter helps demonstrate your writing abilities; some companies will also ask you to write a paragraph on a subject of your choice during the interview. It is difficult to judge writing skills from just a resume.

How can you build a demonstrable writing portfolio when some or much of your writing may be proprietary?

That can make it difficult. Redacting references to clients and specific sites in reports can allow you to maintain confidentiality. If a report has been submitted to a state or federal agency, then it is part of the public record and can be shared without redaction.

What should we highlight more on a resume to an environment consulting firm: or writing skills or data skills?

Both are important. Including a cover letter can help demonstrate your writing skills, knowledge of the company you are applying to, and the specific employment opportunity.