



WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

Earth System Sciences

Life after graduation



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BSc: wur.eu/bsw
MSc: wur.eu/mee

Life after graduation

Explore future job possibilities

Earth System Sciences graduates are in high demand because of their in-depth knowledge and technical skills. Will you become a developer of the next generation climate models, a water manager who combats drought and forecasts floods, an advisor who helps farmers improve soil biodiversity, a scientist who examines satellite data to measure air pollution from space, a professional who works on nature-based solutions for sustainable land use, an expert who assesses the water quality in nature areas, a teacher of physics, geography or mathematics, or something else?

This booklet highlights a selection of career possibilities across the different fields within the BSc and MSc Earth System Sciences: hydrology, meteorology, geology, education, water quality, air quality and soil quality. These examples offer just a glimpse of paths graduates can take, as there are many more!



The BSc and MSc Earth System Sciences offer a wide variety of possibilities in the job market (Figure 1). Most of the graduates end up in the Engineering and Consultancy sector, where they work on projects and provide advice to commissioners based on their area of expertise. Additionally, a large share of alumni works in the Research sector (University & Research Institute). These are mostly graduates who start their careers by doing a PhD.

Some alumni end up working for the government. This sector can be subdivided into the Central Government, with organizations such as Rijkswaterstaat and the water boards, and the Non Central Government, for example local municipalities. A smaller portion of alumni works in the Industry sector, for instance at water utilities, weather forecasting companies or energy companies.

Lastly, a few graduates start working for a Non-Governmental organization (NGO). These are non-profit organizations that aim to achieve a specific social, societal or scientific goal with the help of donations and without making profit.

Curious to explore some options? Take a look at the booklet!

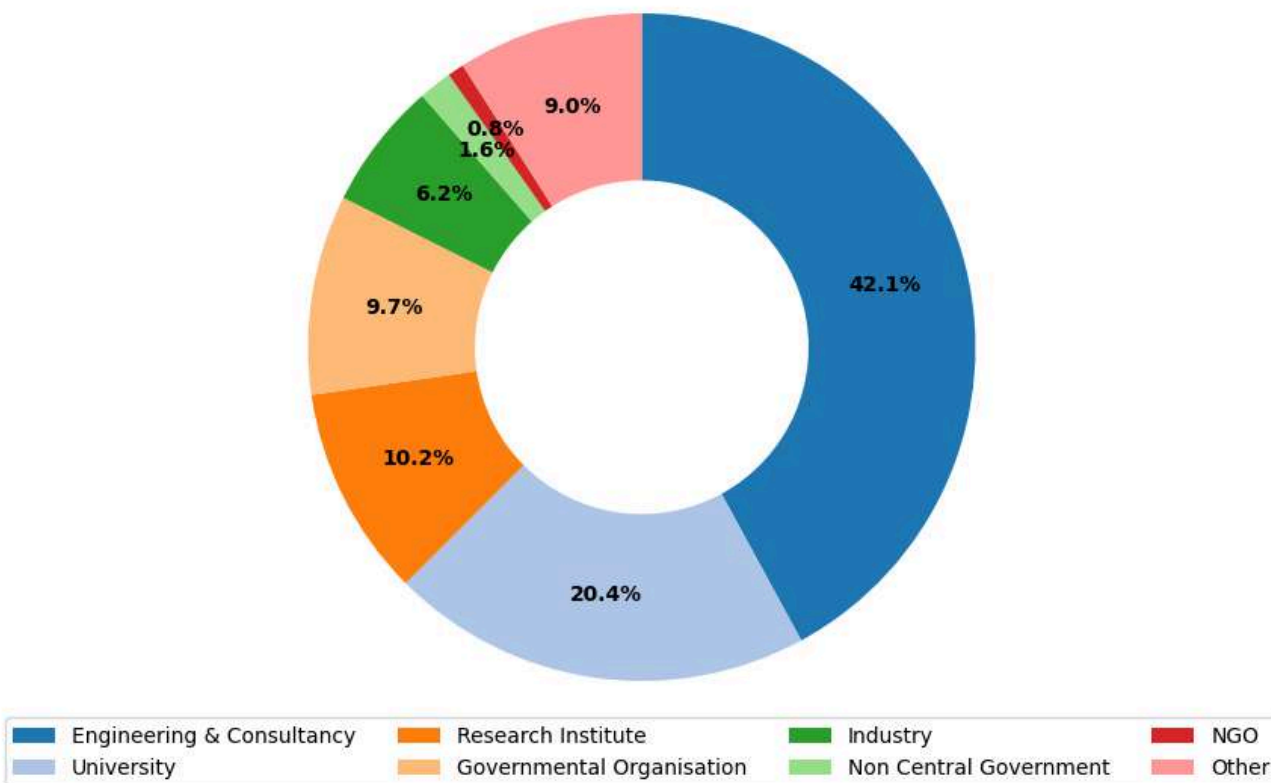


Figure 1 Sector of the first job of Earth System Sciences alumni



Hydrology

Merel Verbeek



River Hydraulics Consultant

Rijkswaterstaat



Hi, my name is Merel Verbeek and currently I'm a River Hydraulics Consultant at Rijkswaterstaat. Before starting this job, I did an internship at the Port of Rotterdam, where I measured and modelled water and salt distribution at bifurcations (channel junctions) in the port area. After that, I completed a PhD in Civil Engineering at TU Delft. During my PhD research, I investigated the flow effects of tidal energy farms in coastal areas through fieldwork, laboratory experiments, and computer modelling, working with a fantastic group of partners.

Within my position, I provide advice on hydraulic aspects related to the maintenance of the River Rhine on behalf of the river authority, Rijkswaterstaat. It's a broad role that involves frequent collaboration with colleagues within the organization, as well as with engineering firms and research institutes.

My work primarily focuses on identifying potential future challenges to the safe functioning of the river and developing projects with engineering firms to address these issues. These projects include monitoring campaigns, designing dredging operations or other river management measures, and modelling river characteristics under various conditions. Another important aspect of my role is evaluating proposed interventions in the Rhine area — submitted by both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders — for compliance with environmental legislation.





Meteorology

Stefan van der Grift



Meteorologist

Royal Netherlands Air Force



Hi, I'm Stefan van der Grift and after my studies in Wageningen with a bachelor's degree in Soil, Water, Atmosphere and a master in Earth & Environment (which together have been renamed to Earth System Sciences) with the Hydrology and Water Resources specialization, I started my working career as a hydrological consultant at ATKB. Currently, I serve as a meteorologist at Royal Netherlands Air Force.

As a military meteorologist at Royal Netherlands Air Force, I am working at the Joint Meteorological Group, whose mission it is to provide worldwide and 24/7 customer-oriented meteorological and space weather products and services. In this way, we contribute to the safety and effectiveness of our armed forces and its partners. We provide meteorological products depending on the wishes of the customers, such as specific weather forecasts.





Geology

Lenka Danilovic



PhD Candidate

Wageningen University & Research



Hoi hoi, my name is Lenka Danilovic and I am a PhD student at the Soil Geography and Landscape group at Wageningen University. After completing both the BSc Soil, Water, Atmosphere and MSc Earth and Environment (renamed to Earth System Sciences) at WUR I wanted to continue working here.

My interest has always lied between hydrology and geomorphology. For my PhD, I chose to study how sediments move and form landscape as a result of long term interaction between humans and nature in northern coastal Peru. I wrote a proposal as a part of the Research Master Cluster course that then received a grant from WUR's graduate school WIMEK. Although my main job is doing research (fieldwork, labwork, data analysis and writing), my daily tasks can consist of teaching, reading papers, bug-fixing or taking a course. On the one hand, this versatile work makes it hard to balance my overall PhD track, but on the other hand it makes it exciting and flexible.





Education

Inge Beukema



Project Leader

IVN Natuureducatie



Hi, my name is Inge Beukema and I am a project leader at IVN Natuureducatie (Institute for Nature Education). After graduating, I began my career as a maritime meteorologist. Due to company merges, I also started forecasting Dutch weather. While I enjoyed my work, I began to feel ready for a change. But what role or career would suit me?

During my studies, I discovered that I enjoyed working with young people. I completed the Education minor and earned my teaching degree. Although I knew I didn't want to become a full-time teacher, I was certain I wanted to do something in education, which led me to my current role.

At IVN, I lead various projects aimed at reconnecting people with nature and encouraging them to care for their environment. My work mainly focuses on young people and the recreational sector. Climate change and climate adaptation are increasingly important topics that I care about. My background in meteorology and hydrology helps me explain why taking action is so important. For example, recently I discussed the topic climate adaptation with youngsters, supporting their school project to redesign their schoolyard. While in another project, we guide recreational entrepreneurs in adopting nature-inclusive practices — helping them improve their surroundings and create better nature experiences for their guests.





Water Quality

Koen Kaffener



Policy Officer Water Quality

Ministry for Infrastructure and
Water Management



Hi, my name is Koen Kaffener and I'm a policy officer for the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. After I graduated, I selected for the National Water Traineeship, which I combined with a job at the ministry. Four days a week, I worked for the Ministry and every Friday I had training courses and project for the traineeship.

In my current position, my work focusses on the area of the IJsselmeer. With research and large scale projects (maybe you know Marker Wadden) we try to improve the ecological water quality and ensure the freshwater supply for the coming decades. That is challenging with climatic changes and all the social-economic interests.





Air Quality

Manou Spoor



Air Quality Specialist

Buro Blauw



Hi, I'm Manou and after graduating from the MSc Earth and Environment (renamed to Earth System Sciences) at Wageningen University, I started working at Buro Blauw Luchtkwaliteit, an environmental consultancy specialized in air quality research. I first came into contact with the company during my studies while exploring organizations on Career Platform working on air quality. The initial connection led to an internship, and later to my current position as Air Quality Specialist.

At Buro Blauw, I work on a wide range of projects related to industrial emissions and air quality in urban environments. This can involve studying the impact of new infrastructure developments, evaluating air purification technologies near highways, or assessing dust deposition from industrial activities. Next to this consultancy role, I coordinate field measurement campaigns, making sure the logistics and data collection run smoothly, and I analyse the results using, for example, Python to support environmental assessments and policy advice.

What I enjoy most about my job is the variety, combining detailed data analysis with hands-on work in the field, visiting companies, and understanding how different industrial processes influence local air quality. This mix of scientific work and real-world engagement keeps the job dynamic and meaningful!





Soil Quality

Arvid de Rijck



Project Manager Soil Policy

Witteveen + Bos



My name is Arvid de Rijck. Currently, I work as a project manager for 'Conditioning Studies' at the consultancy company Witteveen+Bos. Before, I worked as an environmental soil consultant and later on technical soil and remediation project. Compared to those jobs, I am now more involved in soil-policy related projects.

My role as a project manager has evolved over the past six years towards coordinating various 'conditioning studies'. This includes studies related to ecology, soil, groundwater, hydrology, geophysics, archaeology, and unexploded ordnance (ammunition). Within these projects I lead a team of colleagues, guiding them as they conduct technical researches. I am responsible for interpreting their results and translating them into potential project designs.



Bachelor Earth System Sciences
wur.eu/bsw

Master Earth System Sciences
wur.eu/mee

