

Sustainability: And why it matters for your future career

By Anna Gennotte

“What even *is* sustainability? Isn’t it just recycling, reusable cups, and expensive eco-products?”

If you’ve ever had thoughts like these, don’t worry. Many people misunderstand sustainability or think it only matters in environmental science. In reality, it is a skillset and mindset that employers look for across **all industries**.

The term is traditionally defined as *“meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”* (UN, 1987). Greenpeace describes it as *“using resources in a way that could continue forever.”*

So, what does this mean for *you* as a university student preparing for your future career?

Let’s break it down together.



The Triple Bottom Line: a framework every student should know

Have you ever heard of this framework? It helps organisations balance social responsibility, environmental protection, and long-term economic value. Understanding it gives you an advantage in job interviews, group projects, and real-world decision-making.

- **Planet (Environmental Responsibility)**

Sustainability begins with minimising harm to the environment: reducing emissions, avoiding waste, and protecting natural resources. Companies are investing in renewable energy, eco-friendly production, and greener transportation methods.

Employers increasingly expect graduates to understand climate challenges and contribute to responsible business practices.

- **People (Social Responsibility)**

This side of sustainability focuses on employee wellbeing, inclusion, ethical supply chains, and fair working conditions.

Whether you work in HR, marketing, business, tech, or design, you'll need to understand ethics, diversity, and how social issues shape workplace culture.

- **Profit (Long-term Economic Value)**

The goal isn't short-term profit—it's creating an organisation that lasts. Sustainable businesses plan for long-term growth, build trust, innovate responsibly, and integrate social and environmental considerations into their business strategy.

Employers are looking for graduates who can think strategically and understand how sustainability drives innovation, customer loyalty, and competitive advantage.



Why is sustainability a career advantage?

Sustainability is no longer optional. It's a requirement across various industries, including finance, marketing, technology, fashion, law, and public policy. Employers want candidates who can:

- think critically about global challenges
- identify ethical and practical solutions
- innovate responsibly
- show awareness of environmental and social impact



7 ways students can build sustainability skills for employability:

1. Get informed

Subscribe to the Sustainability Newsletter: <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/university-life/get-involved>

Read more about Sustainable Development at the University of

Westminster: <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/vision-mission-and-values/sustainable-development>

2. Join sustainability-focused societies

Get involved in activities like the University of Westminster Sustainability Team and the Student Union's green initiatives. Search through the university's societies

here: <https://uwsu.com/societies>

3. Apply for the Sustainability Fund

You can receive up to £5,000 for financing your sustainability projects or research. Read more here: <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/news/apply-now-for-the-sustainability-fund-2025-26>

4. Showcase sustainability in your assignments and CV

Whether you study business, IT, design, or law, sustainability can be integrated into case studies, presentations, or dissertations. Employers love candidates who demonstrate awareness of global issues.

5. Build systems thinking and innovation skills

Explore concepts like circular economy, sustainable innovation, or design thinking. These are in high demand across many industries.

Try the Careers and Employability services for skill-building workshops:

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/employability>

6. Gain experience through volunteering or part-time work

Roles involving community engagement, social impact, or environmental initiatives are excellent evidence of sustainability competencies.

Westminster Volunteering: <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/employability/volunteering>

7. Learn to evaluate ethical issues

Being able to identify misleading sustainability claims shows analytical thinking and commercial awareness, skills employers value highly.

The **Careers Team** often runs sessions on ethical decision-making and employability skills:

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/employability/careers>

Final Thoughts

Sustainability is not just a global challenge; it's a **personal career opportunity**.

Understanding the Triple Bottom Line and demonstrating sustainable thinking in your everyday choices, studies, and early work experiences can make you stand out to future employers.

You don't need to be a climate expert.

You need to be willing to learn, reflect, and make choices that create a better future for yourself and for others.

Thank you for reading, bye!