

MBA Careers in Corporate Sustainability

Overview

Most large companies and many small ones have dedicated teams of professionals working on corporate sustainability—sometimes also called corporate citizenship or ESG (environmental, social, and governance) management. Corporate sustainability teams work on a wide range of issues—from setting environmental performance goals, to developing strategies to mitigate energy consumption, water usage, and waste, to sourcing more sustainable raw materials, implementing labor and human rights standards in their supply chain, investing in social and community impact programs, and communicating product sustainability to consumers, among other activities. Some companies have teams large enough to have specialists working on particular issues; others have small teams of generalists. It's also worth noting that impactful opportunities for driving sustainability in a company often exist in core business functions, not exclusively within the sustainability department.

Roles

Example MBA roles have included:

- Associate, Corporate Citizenship & Sustainability, Estée Lauder
- Lead Program Manager, Energy & Sustainability, Target
- Supply Chain Sustainability Program Manager, Cisco
- Consultant, Climate & Sustainability Strategy, BCG

What You Need to Know

Sustainability priorities vary greatly from industry to industry, driven in part by the issues the companies deem most material to their business and stakeholders. Managing supply chain labor standards might be a high priority for an apparel manufacturer, for instance, while an airline might list fuel usage (and associated emissions) as their number one sustainability issue. MBAs interested in working on sustainability would be well-suited to focus on one or two industries, and should understand the key industry drivers.

Some of the important topics you need to be familiar with include:

- [Sustainability measurement and reporting trends](#)
- [Materiality assessment](#)
- [Lifecycle assessment \(LCA\) of products](#)
- [Circular economy trends](#)
- [Greenhouse gas \(GHG\) measurement and reporting](#) (including understanding Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions)
- [ESG investing trends](#)

Sustainability internships and full-time roles generally come through just-in-time hiring and vary from year to year. Some of the companies that regularly post MBA-level sustainability openings include Nike, Amazon, Meta, AB InBev, Under Armour, Estee Lauder, Mars, Coca-Cola, and Microsoft—but there are many companies to keep an eye on beyond these. The EDF Climate Corps program is a terrific internship opportunity that recruits 50+ interns each year.

Key Resources

Learning

- [ISSP Short Courses](#)
- [GRI Academy](#)
- [Project Drawdown: "Climate Solutions 101"](#)
- [Sustainable Career Pathways Resources](#)
- ["Circular Economy: The Big Idea"](#)
- [MBA EDGE briefings](#)
- [McKinsey Sustainability Insights](#)
- ["Every Job is a Climate Job" Series](#)

Job Postings

- [GreenBiz Job Board](#)
- [Ed Carley's newsletter](#)
- [Reconsidered Jobs Hub](#)
- [BSR Job Board](#)
- [Indeed > "Sustainability"](#)

Internship/Fellowship Programs

- [EDF Climate Corps Internship](#)
- [GreenBiz Emerging Leaders](#)
- [ClimateCAP Fellowship](#)

Case Competitions

- [Haas Patagonia Case Competition](#)
- [Leeds Net Impact Case Competition](#)
- [Kellogg-Morgan Stanley Sustainable Investing Challenge](#)
- [Net Impact Competitions](#)

News

- [State of Green Business Report](#)
- [CEF Weekly Briefing](#)
- [GreenBiz newsletters](#)
- [Sustainable Brands](#)

Podcasts

- [EDF Degrees](#)
- [Sustainability Defined](#)
- [GreenBiz 350](#)