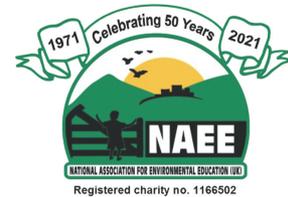


# NAEE's Evidence to the House of Commons EAC inquiry into Green Jobs



In 2021, NAEE presented *written evidence* to the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee. In this, we argued for all school leavers to have an essential understanding of key environmental issues. Our key point was:

**We call for all school leavers to have an essential understanding of key environmental issues. We say this because a knowledge and understanding of the essence of, and background to, all this cannot be the responsibility of every employer, just as essential numeracy and literacy are not. As with literacy and numeracy, it ought to be the responsibility of schools to work with students to develop appropriate attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills related to living and working as though nature mattered.**

This is our full response:

1. **The** National Association for Environmental Education [NAEE] is the UK's oldest educational charity supporting schools and teachers to help young people understand the inter-relationship between humans and the rest of nature, and the responsibilities that we have towards the planet.
2. **Ours** is a long-standing and trusted voice and we have our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in September 2021.
3. **Uniquely**, NAEE produces a termly journal for practitioners and we work with like-minded organisations to promote real-world learning, innovative practice and sustainable school development.
4. **We** publish blogs, article, reviews, reports and position papers that are freely-available on our website – [naee.org.uk](http://naee.org.uk)
5. **We** welcome the Environmental Audit Committee investigation into [i] how green jobs can help tackle the expected rise in unemployment due to COVID-19 in a sustainable way, [ii] the jobs, skills and training needed to achieve the UK's longer-term climate and environmental ambitions, and [iii] what planning and work is taking place to meet these requirements.
6. **We** note the International Labour Organization definition of green jobs as “decent jobs in any economic sector which contribute to preserving, restoring and enhancing environmental quality”, but think that this misses an important point.
7. **Our** view is that all jobs should be seen as green jobs these days even though they do not have the specific ILO focus on preserving, restoring or enhancing environmental quality. We argue this because of [i] the environmental laws and regulation already in place that all employers and employees now face in a routine, everyday way; and [ii] because of the moral imperatives which underpin these.
8. **We** understand that there are particular circumstances that affect key industries, eg building regulations; air quality standards, and sewage disposal regulations (inadequate, and imperfectly-observed though many of these might be) which makes these particularly important because of their wide-ranging social impacts if things go wrong.
9. **But** in the wider economy, *all* employers and employees are now faced with moral imperatives and regulatory obligations to save energy, reduce resource use, eliminate waste, protect and

restore biodiversity, cut carbon use and footprints, support adaption to climate change, etc. This applies across society from sole trader, to SME to conglomerate.

10. **Many** of these regulations require clear communication from employer to employee, and employee to customer. WWF (UK) agreed with this in its comments on the Dasgupta review of the economics of biodiversity. It said that businesses “must also help to educate and bring customers along with them, leading rather than waiting for customers to demand change”.
11. **We** agree, and this supports our call for all school leavers to have an essential understanding of key environmental issues. We say this because a knowledge and understanding of the essence of, and background to, all this cannot be the responsibility of every employer, just as essential numeracy and literacy are not. As with literacy and numeracy, it ought to be the responsibility of schools to work with students to develop appropriate attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills related to living and working as though nature mattered.
12. **Given** the above, there’s a need for education programmes in schools to provide an understanding of the background to and the challenges of facing up to climate change and environmental problems. This can provide both a basis for living and working in today’s world and a foundation for employers / FE / HE to build on. This is not in itself a vocational education, and is not just in support of the sort of green jobs as defined by the ILO; rather, like the development of numeracy and literacy, it is a necessary foundation for nature- respecting, positive and fulfilling lives as workers, consumers, citizens and social actors.
13. **It** is clear to us that our conviction that schools must have an essential role in helping to underpin our transition to a sustainable future is not shared by the Department for Education. We therefore urge the Committee to send a strong signal to DfE that it needs to align its curriculum framework and policies towards ensuring that young people are equipped to play a constructive and significant role in our transition to a sustainable society and world.

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