

POLITICAL SCIENCE and GOVERNMENT

What can I do with this major?

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT

Public policy
Urban planning
City or Town management
Legislative, Executive, or Judicial services
Program administration
General services
Community affairs
Social services
Law enforcement

Counties
Cities
Municipalities
Townships
School districts
Departments of state government
Legislative agencies
Court systems
School districts

Research your local and/or state government.
Check statistics on growing communities to find opportunities following population trends in terms of growth and decline. Be prepared to relocate based on availability of positions.
Develop a network of contacts through referrals and informational interviews.
Conduct research (e.g., education, homelessness, etc.) that could be useful to your community.
Get involved in civic organizations and events.
Complete an internship in a government agency.
Participate in local or national election campaigns.
Familiarize yourself with government application process.
Considering earning a graduate degree in public administration (MPA) or public policy (MPP).

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Public policy
Research
Intelligence
Foreign service
Law enforcement
General services
Legislative, Executive, or Judicial services
Program administration

There are over 170 federal departments and agencies. See <http://gogovernment.org/>

Take courses or minor in applicable interest area(s).
Seek leadership roles in relevant campus organizations (e.g., model United Nations, student government, cross-cultural organizations, etc.).
Write for campus publications focused on national and international affairs.
Develop skills in computers, statistics, and data analysis.
Acquire foreign language competency and travel experience for international positions.
Do extensive research of specialized agencies within the federal government to find the area that best fits your interests.
Become familiar with the government application process. Utilize applicable websites and seek assistance from your college career center.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONTINUED

LAW

See also What Can I Do With This Major in Law?

Prosecution

Defense

Contractual

Corporate

Nonprofit or public interest

Government

Mediation

Law assistance

Lobbying

Other specialties

Law firms

Federal, state, and local government

Private practice

Corporations

Special interest groups

Universities and colleges

Legal aid societies

Nonprofit and public interest organizations, (e.g.

ACLU, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Legal Services Corporation)

Legal clinics

Other private legal services

Obtain an internship in a federal agency or department.

Participate in national campaigns.

Conduct informational interviews with government employees.

Build a strong personal network.

Develop strong research skills and attention to detail. Participate in debate teams to hone communication skills.

Choose courses or a minor to specialize in a particular area of law (e.g. a minor in business for a career in corporate law, a minor in human development and family science for a career in family law).

Gain practical experience through an internship, part-time job or summer work in a law firm.

Shadow an attorney to learn more about the field and various specialties.

Get involved in pre-law organizations.

Plan to attend law school and earn a law degree (JD).

Maintain a high GPA and secure strong faculty recommendations.

Prepare for the LSAT (Law School Admission Test).

Obtain specialized certification for paralegal positions.

POLITICS

Elected or appointed leadership

Campaign management

Staff administration

Special interest advocacy

Political advising

Lobbying

Public policy

Public relations

Community organizing

Government relations

Legislative, executive, or judicial officials

National, state, or local government

Political action committees

Political parties

Campaigns: national, state, or local

Industrial, educational, and public interest groups

Lobbying organizations

Large business firms

Polling and consulting firms

Advocacy organizations

Volunteer for national, state, or local campaigns.

Be prepared to begin a political career as a volunteer before moving to paid positions.

Consider beginning a career in another field (law, medicine, business) before campaigning for office. Many elected officials' careers did not originate in politics.

Gain experience through internships with government agencies, lobbying firms, or legislatures.

Obtain leadership roles in campus organizations.

Become involved in campus political groups, student government, publications, or community service projects.

Take courses in statistics, public policy, or other specific interest areas.

AREAS	EMPLOYERS	STRATEGIES
<u>POLITICS CONTINUED</u>		Get involved with a political party/group and develop a personal network. The ability to build networks, coalitions and alliances with other associations is highly valued. Develop excellent public relations, interpersonal, and communication skills.
<u>INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS</u> <i>See also What Can I Do With This Major in Global Studies?</i> Governance Policy making and analysis Public sector reform Poverty-reduction strategy Ethics and anti-corruption Human rights Public law Organization and management development Resource development Public-private partnerships Media/Communication policy and practice	Intergovernmental agencies (e.g. World Bank, United Nations, etc.) National governments Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) Non-profit agencies Religious organizations Foundations Policy and research organizations Private businesses Contracting and consulting firms Research institutes Defense contractors Federal government including: Department of State Department of Agriculture Department of Commerce Department of Defense National Security Council	Earn a double major or minor in order to gain additional skills or knowledge (e.g., Africana studies, Asian studies, business, psychology, etc.). Spend time studying or working abroad. Make and maintain contacts in foreign countries. Seek cultural experiences on campus and get involved with the international student population. Obtain internships or volunteer to gain experience in areas of interest. Participate in overseas mission trips or spend a Semester at Sea. Research the history and culture of interest areas. Become proficient in at least one foreign language. Learn about international travel regulations and take steps towards obtaining work or study visas for various locations. Earn a relevant graduate degree in international affairs, foreign policy, or other speciality areas.
<u>BUSINESS</u> Sales Human resources Management Public relations Market research Customer service Marketing Advertising Product design Real estate	Product and service organizations Retail stores Hotels Restaurants Manufacturers Insurance companies Print and electronic media Consulting firms Financial institutions Real estate companies Property management firms Other business corporations	Develop strong analytical, verbal, and writing skills. Take additional coursework, minor, or add a secondary major in business. Gain relevant experience in an area of interest through internships or other employment. Obtain leadership roles in campus organizations. Demonstrate excellent interpersonal and communication skills. Hone computer skills and learn software packages such as databases, spreadsheets, and presentations. Remain aware of current issues related to corporate law. Become knowledgeable about different business models including corporate social responsibility.

AREAS	EMPLOYERS	STRATEGIES
<u>NONPROFIT</u> Administration Management Public relations Fund raising/Development Policy analysis Research Grant writing Direct service Advocacy Volunteer coordination	Local and national nonprofit agencies Foundations Charitable organizations Trade or professional associations Special interest groups Labor unions Libraries Museums Historic sites/historical societies Research organizations and think tanks Educational institutions	Gain practical experience by volunteering or completing an internship with a nonprofit organization of interest. Earn a minor or supplement curriculum with courses in business, psychology, or social work. Obtain leadership roles in relevant campus and community organizations. Develop strong communication and research skills. Learn grant writing skills. Demonstrate knowledge and experience in a specialty area (e.g., public health, environment, urban issues). Research organizations' values to find a good for you. It is critical that you are knowledgeable and committed to the work you're going to do. Investigate term of service or service corps positions as a way to gain entry into the field (e.g., AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, VISTA). Consider earning a graduate degree for more job opportunities and advancement.
<u>MEDIA</u> Editing Reporting Circulation Sales Publishing Electronic media Public relations News programming Production	Newspapers: national, local, or trade Wire services Magazines Internet sites Large corporations Political parties Political action committees Professional publications/associations Labor unions Academic journals Broadcast media companies including television, radio, and the movie industry Major networks Public, cable, and private television stations National, state, or regional radio networks Independent radio syndications Video production companies Government agencies	Obtain an internship or work experience with a newspaper, magazine, radio station, or television station. Become proficient in desktop publishing and photography. Develop a professional network and become aware of various social medias. Learn HTML and other computer programs to prepare for online work. Develop excellent verbal and written communication skills through communications courses or other writing intensive coursework. Join the college newspaper, yearbook, or other publication staff. Become a student member of professional associations. Create a portfolio of published writing samples.

AREAS	EMPLOYERS	STRATEGIES
<u>MEDIA CONTINUED</u>		Obtain experience in and knowledge of a specialty area of interest. Experience in government is usually required for specialized reporting positions. Develop professional image for television or other visual media positions. Volunteer to announce local or campus sporting events. Become involved in drama (e.g., direct, act, or work with technical crew).

EDUCATION

Elementary	K-12 schools, public and private	Seek experiences with youth through summer jobs at camps or other community organizations.
Middle	Boards of education	Gain related experience on campus through student leadership opportunities such as Peer Mentors, Resident Assistants, or Orientation Leaders.
Secondary	Four-year colleges and universities	Complete a teacher preparation program to teach in the public school system.
Administration	Two-year and community colleges	Obtain teaching certificate/license for desired subject area and/or grade level. Requirements for certification/licensure vary by state. Seek multiple certifications to increase employability.
Higher education:	Technical schools	Consider obtaining a graduate degree in the subject area of interest. Private schools may prefer candidates with greater subject knowledge.
Teaching	Medical and professional schools	Earn a master's degree in student personnel, student development, counseling, or library/information sciences for student affairs and librarian positions.
Research		Consider obtaining a doctoral degree to teach and research at four-year institutions or to enter the highest level of university administration. A master's or Ph.D. degree is required to teach at two-year schools.
Administration		
Student affairs		
Information/Library services		

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Consider participating in organizations of interest including Mock Trial, Model UN, or politically affiliated groups.
- An undergraduate degree in political science is good preparation for graduate or professional study in areas such as political science, public administration, foreign policy, law, business, and more. Carefully research programs in order to choose specializations or concentrations of interest.
- Maintain a high grade point average to ensure admission into a graduate or law program and/or a position within the government.
- Expect keen competition for federal positions. Prepare yourself with a strong academic background and good experience. Many government jobs have strict guidelines and want to carefully match candidates' knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job description. Research this first and seek the classes and experiences that will best prepare you.
- Explore application to Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) and the Outstanding Scholar Program for federal positions.
- Develop strong leadership skills; run for office in clubs and organizations in school or community. Volunteer to organize or lead an event or project.
- Join related social and/or professional organizations.
- Build and maintain a strong personal network through informal contacts.
- Consider military experience and training as an entryway into government jobs and public service. The Peace Corps is also a good way to enter a career in government.