

SKILLS DEVELOPED THROUGH A DEGREE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

While this is not an exhaustive list, you will find below some of the transferable skills that your education in Political Studies may have helped you develop or enhance. Transferable skills are aptitudes and understandings you have developed during your undergraduate degree that are essential to positions in various fields such as Foreign Service Officer, Public Relations Specialist, Legislative Analyst, Lawyer, etc. Use the following list as an opportunity to reflect and identify the transferable skills you have acquired during your education as well as work and volunteer experiences.

Analytical / Critical Thinking

- Identify the different historical, social events that influenced policies.
- Recognize the factors that contribute to the different political viewpoints or the creation of new policies
- Identify and analyse the purposes and processes of local, provincial and federal government
- Identify the possible impacts of new policies on different social groups and /or the different levels of government

Research

- Use various research techniques and information sources (books, scientific articles, interviews etc.) to find and gather relevant information on a topic
- Synthesize vast amounts of information to extract the most relevant information
- Consult up to date information and research articles to support your arguments and make decisions

Oral and written communication

- Present findings using the appropriate research structure (including sections such as literature review, methodology, etc.)
- Ensure conciseness and clarity of written or presented information
- Ability to select, interpret and organize information on a subject, to form an argument tailored to a specific audience.
- Present and explain ideas or complex concepts effectively and clearly to others
- Ability to identify differences and similarities in opinions

Organization

- Ability to identify the various actions needed to create, plan and coordinate projects
- Organize ideas, facts and opinions into a logical flow
- Ability to carry out tasks with thoroughness and precision

Problem solving

- Identify the different factors and individuals that influence a specific situation
- Draw on inductive and deductive reasoning to analyze related information and to identify options
- Evaluate options (feasibility, impacts on people involved, etc.) to identify the best option

Teamwork

- Work collaboratively to design, plan, organize and implement projects and tasks within an allotted timeframe
- Identify and set priorities as well as delegate tasks according to the skills and interests of team members

The description of each profession presented in this document comes from the information found on the Career Cruising Website. www.careercruising.com and Repères (<https://reperes.qc.ca/asp/reperes.aspx> Password required)

CAREERS WITHOUT ANY FURTHER TRAINING

Your undergraduate degree has given you the basic knowledge and skills to meet the requirements and to accomplish the tasks related to the professions listed below. However, depending on the demand for such positions and the availability of skilled professionals in the area that you want to work in, you may need to gain more specialized skills or knowledge to enhance your candidacy (e.g.: by gaining work experience or by pursuing short specific training).

Activist

Activists are responsible for raising awareness about issues they care about, be they societal, political or environmental. They also aim to achieve positive change in regards to these issues. They can be found in various non-profit organizations. In order to be a successful activist you must acquire an in-depth knowledge of the cause you are advocating for, have good public relation skills and effectively utilize the different media available to inform the public and get their support. The tasks of an activist may vary greatly from one position to another, yet most of them will be involved in activities such as writing (speeches, articles, press releases, petition letters, etc.) and public speaking (meeting politicians, members of the community to get their support).

Blogger

Bloggers are writers that share their point of view or their knowledge on the Internet via a blog. Bloggers can either work for hire, which involves them being hired by companies or other organizations such as political parties, or they can work as web publishers, which involves them create their own blogs and monetizing them through various means, such as advertising. Bloggers can write about any topic, but like columnists, they will often specialize in one area. Bloggers must have a great understanding of social media and digital communication in order to be effective.

Political Aid (Legislative assistant)

Most Political Aids will start their career as a legislative assistant. The main task of both professions is to keep the politician they work for up to date on important political issues. They spend considerable time researching policy issues, preparing briefs and press releases, as well as assessing public reactions to recent political issues. Political Aids will often specialize in different areas (health, environment, etc.) They often interact with campaign managers, lobbyists, researchers, the press, and government officials.

Municipal Clerk

Carry out the different administrative tasks for a city or town, such as providing information on rules/regulations and municipal services to the public. They also produce, administer and organize municipal documents and official records. Clerks can also provide support for official municipal activities, such as council and committee meetings.

Humanitarian Aid Worker

Humanitarian Aid Workers help people who live in difficult conditions, due to poverty, wars or natural disasters, to survive and possibly improve their quality of life. Depending on their education and work experience, they may hold different positions, such as teacher, first aid respondent, project coordinator or sanitation worker. They need to have a good understanding of the social, political, cultural situation of the country/area they will work in. As well, they must be open and willing to adapt to cultural differences, willing to work with limited resources and able to handle emotionally intense situations.

Foreign Service Worker

Foreign Service Officers help to advise the government on foreign policies as well as on diplomatic matters. They are often required to travel and live in other countries. They are responsible for acting on the behalf of Canada in these other countries. Their tasks may vary greatly based on the area in which they work (e.g.: political and economic affairs, international trade, immigration or management and consular affairs). However, all Foreign Service Officers must be comfortable with administrative tasks, dealing with a wide variety of individuals and negotiating with government officials.

Journalist

Journalists write articles for a variety of outlets, such as newspapers, magazines or online publications. They must be able to think creatively and find an interesting angle to their article. Journalists spend a large amount of time conducting research on their story and on finding pertinent sources. They also need to possess very good interviewing skills in order to obtain relevant and interesting information from their sources. They must also be able to work under pressure and strict deadlines.

Public Relations Specialist

Public relations specialists must have strong written and oral communication abilities as well as strong persuasion skills. Their objective is to promote the product, person or business they represent and to control the public's perception of it. Public relations specialists have different responsibilities. They do a lot of research to become experts on their employer's needs, they write and edit documents, they plan events, they fundraise, they manage politicians and the media and they organize publicity campaigns.

Public Opinion Researcher

Public Opinion Researchers help measure public's opinion on various products, services, or social issues by gathering information from a sample of the population through questionnaires and interviews. They collect, analyze, and interpret data to identify the public's need, concerns, opinion or explore and identify trends. Public Opinion Researchers can work for government agencies (Statistics Canada, political parties, or private companies).

CAREERS WITH ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Lawyer

Lawyers are responsible for helping their clients during legal proceedings by advising them and representing them. They must be comfortable doing large amounts of reading, writing and researching. For example, they must research various regulations and previous cases as well as prepare legal documents such as contracts. They must have good analytical skills as well as an ability to think creatively, since they often are called upon to interpret the law and find ways to apply it to their client's situation. Lawyers will usually focus on a certain area of the law (e.g.: criminal law, civil law, corporate law). They may also specialize in either trials or settlements.

Lobbyist

Lobbyists aim to influence government policies and legislation for their clients, who can be either individuals or organizations. A lobbyist's tasks will vary based on the whether they use a direct or indirect method of lobbying. In the direct method, lobbyists meet directly with politicians in order to persuade them to modify their policies and can sometimes be involved in drafting new policies alongside politicians. In the indirect method, lobbyists will try to rally the community in order to achieve change and will often aim to raise public awareness through various means (e.g.: by writing articles, appearing on television, organizing events). In both methods, the lobbyists must be able to research their topics and be able to present them in an effective manner.

Mediator

Mediators help people resolve various types of disputes outside of court, either business-related or personal. Mediators must be adept at using conflict resolution strategies as well as facilitating communication. They must also have knowledge of various ethical and legal issues and be able to work in confidential situations. They tend to work independently but can often be found in mediation firms. Mediators must also be comfortable dealing with various administrative tasks, such as billing and scheduling mediations.

Public Policy Analyst

Public policy analysts are responsible for studying a wide range of societal problems, policies, programs, laws. They use all this information to evaluate the effectiveness of current government policies, procedures, services, as well as to identify potential ways governments can be more effective. Public policy analysts can be found working in either the federal or provincial government, but they can also work in the private sector for lobbying or consulting firms.

Economic Development Officer

Economic development officers gather and analyze different economic and social data to identify the assets of the community and ways they could encourage business development and economic growth. They work closely with the different local businesses to inform them of the different government, legal programs and services that could help them grow. They also work closely with city administrators and economic development organizations to identify strategies that will encourage economic growth (tax reductions, changes in city policies, etc.)

Association Manager

Association managers oversee the operation and delivery of services of all types of associations. They connect with officials (board of directors, government officials) to represent the organizations and its clientele. They spend considerable amount of time attending different committees as well as reading and researching relevant information to stay up to date on the different issues that could impact their organization and clientele. They are often the ones that will write funding proposal, create policies and define the scope of services offered by the organization, as well as create and monitor the budget. Finally they recruit and train new employees and ensure smooth running of operations. .

Ombudsman

The Ombudsman investigates public complaints about the organization they work for to identify if the complaint is legitimate (such as the person was treated unfairly). They make recommendations on ways to resolve the situation, as well as changes that should occur regarding the policies, procedures of the organization to ensure that this situation will not reoccur in the future. Ombudsman must have a very good understanding of the organisation, its policies and procedures, as well as a good knowledge of legal regulations that apply to the company. Furthermore, they spend a lot of time meeting and interviewing the parties involved to understand the situation and present their recommendations.

Urban Planner

Urban Planners are often hired by cities to analyse population statistics, economic data, and physical aspects of the community, as well as government and city regulations to identify an urban plan that will meet the needs of the community while ensuring its economic growth. They attend committees where they meet residents, business owners, representatives of community organizations and politicians about land use proposals. They may need to mediate the interests of different groups and balance social, economic, and environmental concerns. They may also develop policies and programs on land use to respect environmental regulations, protect public land, etc.

Logistics Specialist

Logistics Specialist main task is to analyze production, distribution and inventory information to find the most cost-effective way to produce and distribute the goods of the company they work for. They must have a good knowledge of labour, transportation and custom laws, as well as good problem solving skills. They interact regularly with clients, production manager, buyers, distributors and transportation companies to minimize production and transportation costs, while making sure that products are delivered on time to clients.

RESSOURCES

Canadian Political Science Association <https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/>

Institute of Public Administration of Canada <http://www.ipac.ca>

Federation of Canadian Municipalities <http://www.fcm.ca>

Canadian Public Relations Society <http://www.cprs.ca>

Parliament of Canada <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Elections Canada <http://www.elections.ca>

The Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research <https://www.cahspr.ca/>

The Institute of Public Administration of Canada <https://www.ipac.ca>

Canadian Association of Journalists www.caj.ca

Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada <http://www.international.gc.ca>

SHORT ADDITIONAL UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

Here are some examples of short undergraduate or graduate program titles that can be paired with your Bachelor's degree. These programs are an asset in your job search and allow you to specialize in a specific field while developing new skills. Some programs may require previous field experience. This list is not exhaustive but it is a good place to start your research.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM IDEAS		
Public Relations	Communication	Journalism
Health and Social Services Management	Community Economic Development	Executive Assistant
International Development	Fundraising Management	Public Relations Management
Brand Management	Mobile and Social Media Management	Supply Chain and Operations Management
Mediation - Alternative Dispute Resolution	Community, Public Affairs and Policy Studies	Policy and Program Evaluation
Public Relations Business Practices	Municipal Law Clerk	

ADDITIONAL GRADUATE PROGRAMS

There are several masters' programs that can be paired with your Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts. Their goal is to offer specialization in a field of study and/or gain research abilities. An undergraduate degree in Liberal Arts may not be sufficient enough for acceptance; some programs may require a qualifying year or previous work experience. Here are some examples of program titles that can be found in certain universities across Canada. This list is not exhaustive but it is a good place to start your research.

MASTER'S PROGRAMS	
Public Administration	International Political Economy
Economics	International Economics and Finance
Public Policy and Public Administration	Global Governance
Globalization and International Development	Urban Planning
Political Economy	Economics and Law

REFERENCES

University of Toronto - Careers by Major - Political Science

<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/careers-by-major-political-science>

York University - Careers by Major - Political Science

<http://careers.yorku.ca/my-degree/political-science/>