

# POLITICS CAREERS



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## **Politics Careers ideas:**

### **Political careers within government**

#### **Member of parliament (MP)**

The most obvious career path for politics graduates would be a role within the government, for example as a member of parliament (MP). MPs represent the residents of their local community in national affairs, and must first campaign to be elected, either as a member of a political party or as an individual. To succeed in this role, you should have a good knowledge of the issues affecting both your local area and the nation as a whole. You should also be motivated, determined and a confident, persuasive public speaker. Commitment is also an important factor for success as an MP; to demonstrate this, you could start by volunteering for your chosen political party.

#### **Political assistant**

Political assistants are employed by elected MPs or political candidates to carry out administrative and secretarial tasks. They also help with campaigning, research and publicity, perhaps responding to enquiries from the media or members of the public. Other tasks include assisting with campaigns before and during elections, keeping up to date with current affairs, contributing to writing reports and speeches, and managing and collaborating with other members of the politician's team. To become a political assistant, it's essential to have relevant experience, such as from shadowing a politician or taking part in an internship at a local or national government office.

#### **Government social research officer**

Government research officers help to inform the policy decisions of ministers. To do this, they conduct research and evaluation activities, providing government departments and local authorities with the evidence required for the preparation, execution and assessment of policies. It's very helpful to have studied social or public policy during your degree for entry to this role, as you'll need a strong knowledge of social research, and good skills in this area.

#### **Roles within the civil service**

If you want to work within the civil service, you could choose from a variety of political jobs in government departments, agencies or non-departmental government bodies. This political career involves helping governing bodies to develop and implement policies on a daily basis. Your responsibilities will usually include contributing to policy development, answering requests for information from other government departments or members of the public, generating analysis and reports, and managing resources. In the United Kingdom, graduates can follow a Civil Service Fast Stream to quickly gain experience within the civil service, which includes roles in diplomacy.

### **Other political jobs**

#### **Diplomatic service officer**

This political career is ideal for those who are interested in foreign affairs, quick-thinking and skilled at solving problems. It might particularly suit graduates of international relations. As a diplomatic service officer, you'd live in another country, representing the interests of your home nation and its citizens. You'd also provide advice and support to ministers developing foreign policy. To succeed in this role, you should be a good communicator, and able to get on well with people from all societies and cultures. Competition for this political career is fierce and entry often involves a series of tests. You don't need to be fluent in a foreign language for this role, but it would definitely be an advantage.

#### **Public affairs consultant**

This role is often referred to as a 'lobbyist', but the work of public affairs consultants is more extensive than this suggests. Public affairs consultants offer valuable political and public policy guidance to clients using their knowledge of the political system, as well as media resources and personal contacts. They can be employed by both public and private sector organizations, such as charities, governments and international bodies such as the UN. To gain entry to this political career, work experience is again essential. This could be from an internship in a political office, charity, pressure group or public affairs consultancy, or from involvement with a political party or your university's student union.

### **Political journalist**

If you've got a keen interest in both national and international political affairs, and want to be involved in providing in-depth news and analysis on the latest political events, this political career could be for you. You'll also cover controversies, campaigns and debates, and offer insights on possible outcomes, incentives and trends. You might work in just one field of journalism (print, online, TV, radio), or across a combination of these, and perhaps even make a name for yourself as a recognized and respected observer in the field. To succeed in this career, you should have an investigative mind, be determined, a good writer, and able to produce factually accurate content to tight deadlines. To become a political journalist, it's crucial to have relevant experience, for example at the office of a local or national newspaper, and build up professional contacts. You could also consider taking a postgraduate degree in journalism.

### **Public relations account executive**

The skills you've gained from your politics degree could also be relevant in a role within public relations (PR). As a PR account executive, you'll use various forms of media to build and sustain a good profile and reputation for your employer (an individual or organization) and their intended audience. Among other tasks, you'll plan publicity strategies and campaigns, monitor and analyse media coverage, and commission market research. To become a PR account executive, you might find it helpful to complete a postgraduate degree in the subject and/or complete relevant work experience.

### **Careers in human rights and charities**

If you're interested in other ways in which you can use your politics degree to make a difference (possibly on an international level), there are a huge variety of roles available within the human rights and charity sectors. Look for openings in central and local government bodies; worldwide governmental and non-governmental organizations; charities, pressure groups and campaigning organizations; academia and law. You could work in communications and campaigns, helping to raise awareness about human rights issues and abuses. Or perhaps you'll be involved in managing projects designed to improve conditions for different groups of people. Other charity jobs you might be interested in include roles in policy development, public relations and fundraising.

### **Where to find job adverts for careers using Politics qualifications?**

Many of the types of jobs listed on the previous page will be advertised on online platforms of broadsheet newspapers such as The Guardian, on job recruitment websites or on websites linked to companies that specialise in these areas e.g. PR recruitment websites.

For careers within government departments there is a dedicated website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/civil-service/about/recruitment>

If you want to pursue a career as an MP, more information on how to do this is here:

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/mp>

Politics degrees:

There are many subjects that support your studies of Politics, but some of the main ones are:

History

English

Religious Studies

## **Where are the best places to study Politics at degree level?**

All of the leading universities in the UK have politics-related degrees on offer, but according to the Complete University Guide, the top 10 best places to study Politics are as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> Oxford

2<sup>nd</sup> Cambridge

3<sup>rd</sup> London School of Economics

4<sup>th</sup> University College London

5<sup>th</sup> Warwick

6<sup>th</sup> St Andrews

7<sup>th</sup> Sheffield

8<sup>th</sup> Exeter

9<sup>th</sup> Durham

10<sup>th</sup> Bath

You can check the entry requirements for these courses (and many others!) on [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

## **What do people who study politics do after graduation?**

The transferrable skills acquired in the course of a politics degree include the ability to think critically, conduct research thoroughly and communicate effectively, contributing to a high employment rate among politics graduates.

Although some eventually work in politics, starting off as parliamentary researchers, special advisers and other political posts and others find work in local government. However, not as many politics graduates pursue a career in politics as is often assumed. A large number go into public affairs, marketing, media and communications, while many look for jobs across the public sector.

Many go on to careers in business, finance and human resources. Many work for supranational organisations like the United Nations, European Union, World Trade Organisation, World Bank and World Health Organization. Others work in think tanks, pressure groups and charities.

## Career specific websites

Among the many political work positions out there, below are 10 websites that are guaranteed to assist any prospective employee in their search for a job in politics.

### 1. Political Jobs

A contemporary site that provides a link to advertisers and political organizations from all over the world who are seeking employees. [Political Jobs](#)

### 2. Political Job Hunt

A forum for individuals seeking different types of political jobs. This site allows you to narrow your job search by position titles, locations, and specific organizations.

### 3. Democratic GAIN

An organization dedicated to recruiting, training, and supporting professional progressives in politics. This site allows you to directly apply for positions, and also provides several training tips. [Democratic Gain](#)

### 4. Guardian Jobs

Sub-site of The Guardian that shows available political job positions in a variety of areas and allows for applications to be completed and processed. This site provides a listing of available jobs across the globe and shows a timeline for how much time is left to apply. [Guardian Jobs](#)

### 5. Indeed

A job search engine with specific listings of politics job openings. This unique site enables prospective employees to search jobs based on desired salary, as well. [Indeed](#)

### 6. Flex Jobs

A site promoting flexibility in jobs and part-time political and governmental positions. Here, you can choose between jobs based on how much time you'd like to dedicate to work and what type of position you'd like to obtain. [Flex Jobs](#)

## Famous people who studied politics

As one might imagine, many world leaders past and present studied politics, including former US presidents Barack Obama and Gerald Ford, former chancellor of Germany Helmut Kohl and prime minister of India Narendra Modi.

In Britain, PPE (politics, philosophy and economics) is a particularly popular course among politicians, with many high-profile graduates including former UK prime ministers Harold Wilson, Edward Heath and David Cameron, former UK secretary of the state for foreign and Commonwealth affairs William Hague, former chancellor Philip Hammond, former leader of the Labour party Ed Miliband and MPs Angela Eagle and Peter Mandelson.

But a range of people who became famous in other fields also studied politics at university, from broadcaster Jerry Springer and fashion designer Miuccia Prada to singers Will Young and Pete Burns and comedians Miranda Hart and Harry Enfield.