



POLITICS CAREERS

INCLUDING WORKING IN

WESTMINSTER AND EUROPE

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Introduction

This information sheet is mainly aimed at students within PoLIS but it may also be of interest to students from other subject areas who wish to make their career in this area. A relevant degree is not always a pre-requisite for the areas of work covered by this leaflet. The Careers Service has produced this because you could get the impression that we are only concerned with business careers and graduate schemes. Some areas of work do not have big budgets to promote themselves so you'll need to work a little harder to seek out information and opportunities. The University Careers Service provides a range of professional and confidential services to support you in this endeavour.

If you are studying Politics then you need not be constrained by the jobs listed in this leaflet. Many employers of graduates in a broad range of businesses and organisations do not specify degree discipline so you can look more widely.

Within the field of Politics-related careers this leaflet will point you in the direction of mainly web-based resources and organisations where you can find inspiration and/or opportunities. We have written other leaflets, such as one on *Social policy, social sciences and sociology careers* and another on *International development, international organisations and international relations*, and you will find these in our information resources listed on our website: www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/information-resources/helpsheets. In the same place you can see our separate guides *Finding a graduate job* and *Finding your own placement* for general advice on job-seeking strategies you can adopt. You can also collect these from the Careers Service office.

It is worth checking **MyFuture** <https://myfuture.bath.ac.uk> on a regular basis as this is where we would advertise any vacancies notified to us.

General careers resources

To research any potential career in detail, view our catalogue of resources for *Occupational research* and *Working & studying internationally* at www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/information-resources/catalogue.

Look at *Occupational research* and then under one of the headings of interest. Here are some obvious headings to check out:

- Administration
- Public sector
- Advertising, PR and marketing

Occupational profiles are core reading, outlining key activities, advice on getting in and case studies. You can read or print copies of the profiles in the Careers Service or view them in the *Types of jobs* section at www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles.

Some profiles of interest include:

- Civil Service Administrator
- Civil Service Fast Streamer
- Diplomatic Service Officer
- Government Social Research Officer
- Local Government Officer
- Newspaper Journalist
- Politician's Assistant
- Public Affairs Consultant
- Public Relations Account Executive
- Public Relations Officer
- Social Researcher
- Trade Union Research Officer

Another website with good job profiles is Targetjobs: <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/job-descriptions>. Profiles worth viewing are:

- Civil Service Administrator
- Diplomatic Service
- European Commission Administrators
- Government Research Officer
- Local Government Administrator
- Political Party Agent
- Political Party Research Officer
- Public Affairs Consultant (Lobbyist)
- Public Affairs Consultant (Research)
- Trade Union Research Officer

What jobs do Politics graduates do?

Your subject might be a good starting point to thinking about possible careers. Your degree comes with a wealth of choice and opportunity, whatever you study, but it doesn't always come with a specific tag or guarantee of relevant work. Start by considering how much connection you want between your degree and your working life. These two resources can be a useful starting point particularly if you are looking for jobs with a direct link:

- What do Bath graduates do? www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/choose-a-career/what-our-graduates-do.
- Prospects Options with your subject www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree/politics-and-international-relations

Another way to think about your subject is to consider the skills you have developed - not just knowledge but transferable skills. This can help you to understand your own strengths and also recognise your values and interests. Articulating the value of your degree is as important as being able to talk about skills you have gained from work experience and extra-curricular activities. A Politics degree means you have:

- the ability to research, source and examine information thoroughly;
- the ability to critically analyse evidence and construct coherent arguments;
- excellent written and oratory skills;
- intellectual independence and autonomy;
- team-working skills;
- a flexible and open-minded approach to work

See the QAA Benchmark Statement for your degree www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-politics-15.pdf

Nearly half of all new graduate vacancies advertised do not ask for a specific degree subject. Of course your degree subject is important, but it doesn't define you. Employers will value the package of knowledge, skills, qualities and experience you present and they will seek it from every degree discipline. Your subject is a springboard to an array of future choices.

The rest of this leaflet highlights particular areas of work directly related to Politics.

Working in UK central government

Civil Service Fast Stream

This is the accelerated development programme for graduates which is open annually between end of September and end of November for a start date of the following September. This includes entry into the Diplomatic Service. It is also possible to apply to the Civil Service Fast Stream even though you are already working within the Civil Service.

See www.faststream.gov.uk and follow their www.facebook.com/faststream. There are several different Fast Streams:

Analytical Options (AFS):

- Government Economic Service (GES)
- Government Operational Research Service (GORS)
- Government Statistical Service (GSS)
- Government Social Research Service (GSR)

Corporate Options:

- Generalist (GFS)
 - Central Departments (GD)
 - Diplomatic Service (DS)
 - Houses of Parliament (HoP)
 - Science and Engineering (SEFS) (only open to postgraduates)
- European (EFS)
- Northern Ireland (NIS)
- Commercial (Commercial and Finance) (CFS)
- Internal Audit (Commercial and Finance) (IAFS)
- Finance (Commercial and Finance) (FIFS)
- Human Resources (HRF)
- Government Communication Service (GCFS)
- Digital and Technology (DAT)

Other Civil Service Graduate Schemes

Graduate schemes run by individual departments can be hard to find out about so keeping an eye on the Civil Service Jobs website <https://civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk> is important as not all have dedicated webpages available to see year round (see section below).

- HM Treasury Graduate Scheme www.hmtreasurycareers.co.uk (closing date 11 Nov in 2016). See Careers Adviser Report of recent Visit <http://blogs.bath.ac.uk/careers/2016/10/09/graduate-policy-adviser-at-hm-treasury-report-on-a-visit-by-a-careers-adviser>.
- DWP Data, Security and Technology Graduate Programmes (advertised in February)
- HMRC Tax Professional Programme www.gov.uk/guidance/tax-professional-development-programme.
- Department for Transport Commercial Fast Track (advertised Jan/Feb)
- MoD Information Graduate Scheme www.gov.uk/government/collections/mod-information-graduate-scheme.
- Defence Engineering and Science Graduate Scheme www.gov.uk/government/collections/desg-graduate-scheme
- Defence Commercial Graduate Programme www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-commercial-graduate-programme-brochure.

- DFID Graduate Development Scheme (advertised May/June) www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development/about/recruitment.
- Government Statistical Service Data Science and Statistical Officers (ongoing) <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/careers/joining-us/>.

It is also worth noting that many Civil Service graduate schemes make offers of jobs at the grade below to 'near misses'. This happens in the Fast Stream too. Those that scored only a few points below the overall benchmark may be made an offer or an interview for a role at Executive Officer grade (the grade below the one Fast Streamers start on). This isn't always well publicised because employers don't want to raise candidate expectations but it is worth being aware that applications to the Fast Stream or other Graduate Scheme can be a good entry point into the Civil Service.

Other services who recruit graduates include:

- **MI5** www.mi5.gov.uk/careers
- **Secret Intelligence Service, SIS (MI6)** www.sis.gov.uk/explore-careers.html.
- **GCHQ** www.gchq-careers.co.uk.

These offer challenging and fast-paced careers in the security services, and often recruit graduates into intelligence roles.

Other Civil Service Jobs for graduates

The place to look for all Civil Service vacancies is <https://civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk>. Create an account and you can then set up some preferences and then receive regular job updates by email. You will need to click "Show more" to be able to select Job Grade as a preference. Why should you look here? Because there are many jobs that would be suitable for graduates within the Civil Service that are not part of the Fast Stream or other Graduate Schemes.

Frequently spotted on Civil Service Jobs:

- HMRC Social Researchers
- Temporary Statistical Officers
- Temporary Assistant Economists
- Various individual Scientist Posts suitable for both undergraduates and postgraduates
- Graduate Internships at Executive Officer level

Civil Service Work Experience

There is not a strong expectation that you will have gained experience within the Civil Service before applying for a graduate job there. Think about the competencies that they recruit against and develop your experience to demonstrate these.

There are two schemes available:

- **Summer Diversity Internship Programme (SDIP)** is only available to those in their final year at University, with an ethnic minority background, those with a disability or those from under-represented socio-economic backgrounds.
- **Early Diversity Internship Programme (EDIP)** is only available to those in the first year of their undergraduate degree who are from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and/or socially/economically disadvantaged background.

You will find that placements are available through your placement office in some government departments and others may be advertised through the Civil Service Jobs website mentioned previously.

A-Z of central government departments, executive agencies & non-departmental public bodies

Helpful if you want to target particular departments or know the scope of the Civil Service and its agencies: www.gov.uk/government/organisations

Working in UK local government

Local government has been one of the largest graduate employers in the country. Whether employed on specific graduate training schemes or recruited into particular roles, there are opportunities for graduates to develop a career in local government although heavy cuts in public expenditure over the past four years have reduced the opportunities available.

As well as the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) for local government, which aims to recruit the senior managers and chief executives of the future, some councils run their own graduate training programmes. To find out if your local council has a specific programme, you should contact the HR department. We also find the Guardian newspaper jobs site useful for adverts for some graduate opportunities in local government <http://jobs.theguardian.com/jobs/government-and-politics/graduate/>.

Councils also recruit graduates into particular jobs in many different occupational areas. For example: environmental health, planning, surveying, legal work, accountancy, IT, personnel, marketing, policy and research, plus many more. Some of these roles will need specialist qualifications. Some local authorities have a temporary work bank system which could be a useful back door into working for a local authority. Again it is worth contacting the HR department of local authorities you would be interested in working for.

Local Government Officer Job Profile

Includes details of the work, qualifications and skills required as well as useful links to job sources www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/local-government-officer.

National Graduate Development Programme

The NGDP offers graduates a two year leadership development programme in a host local council which includes placements, skills development and mentoring. Applications open in November and close in January for a September start:

www.local.gov.uk/national-graduate-development-programme

The following local authorities have run graduate schemes in the past:

- Hertfordshire County Council
- Kent County Council
- Shropshire County Council
- Suffolk County Council
- London Local Government
- East Cheshire

Working in parliament, political parties and for MPs

UK parliament jobs

Listings of all parliamentary positions, and also an email job alert to sign up for:

www.parliament.uk/about/working/jobs/

Work for an MP

Job listings for working in parliament (and not just for jobs with MPs). Also includes think tanks and lobby groups:

www.w4mp.org. Students wanting to work for an MP should also contact political party headquarters to find out about opportunities.

Speaker's parliamentary placement scheme

The scheme offers 10 paid internships to people from diverse backgrounds, and helps to make access to - and experience of - Parliament more representative of the UK population. Successful applicants spend four days a week working in an MP's office as a parliamentary assistant. On Fridays interns are placed with one of the various departments of the House of Commons. Usually apply during early April www.parliament.uk/about/working/work-placements-and-apprenticeships/speakers-parliamentary-placement-scheme.

Parliament Undergraduate Sandwich Student Placements

www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/commons/commonshro/hofc-ssp/

Political party agent

A Party Agent organises and supports a party at constituency level and promotes the party and its representatives. The largest parties occasionally recruit graduates as trainee party organisers/agents otherwise there are assistant posts to apply for. Check political party websites.

Becoming an MP

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/faq/candidates/how-do-i-find-out-about-standing-as-a-candidate

Working for the European Union

Discover EU Careers

Information on selection procedures including sample tests: www.europa.eu/epso/discover

Jobs in EU

Information about current recruitment opportunities: www.europa.eu/epso/apply

UK Civil Service European Fast Stream

Working for the UK government on European issues:

www.faststream.gov.uk/european/

EU Delegation of the EC to the US

Internships for students and recent graduates, based in Washington:

www.euintheus.org/what-you-can-do/work-with-us-internships

European and public affairs directory

Hardcopy directory listing all the constituent bodies that form the EU Institutions and Associated Services. Available from the University of Bath library, Reference collection Level 5, Shelf Mark 337.142025 EUR.

EuroBrussels

Latest European Affairs jobs in Brussels and the EU: www.eurobrussels.com

College of Europe, Bruges

Has very limited scholarships but can be a route into the EU: www.coleurope.eu

Working in international organisations

Download our separate information sheet *International development, international organisations and international relations*: www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/information-resources/helpsheets

Working in communications and persuasion

This sector includes lobbying and public relations. You will need to build up paid or volunteering experience in advance of applying for jobs if lobbying is an area of interest. Working in the Students' Union, in local political parties, a stage in the EU or campaigning for a charity, as well as a public or corporate affairs placement will help. The resources below may help but often posts are found by networking and speculative applications rather than responding to adverts. Public relations involves working on behalf of either your employer or clients to manage and maintain their reputation. This means you could work in-house for an organisation as diverse as a charity, government department or commercial company, or you could work in a PR consultancy with a range of clients from different organisations.

Public Affairs Consultant job profile

www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/public-affairs-consultant.

Public Affairs - LSE list of resources

www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/CareersAndVacancies/careersService/EmploymentSectors/PublicSectorPoliticsPolicy/Public%20Affairs.aspx

European and public affairs directory

Hard copy directory listing all the constituent bodies that form the EU Institutions and Associated Services. Available from the University of Bath library, Reference collection Level 5, Shelf Mark 337.142025 EUR.

The public affairs network

Network and leading resource for the public affairs, government relations, policy & communications industry. Useful jobs listing of more senior posts:

www.publicaffairsnetworking.com

Association of Professional Political Consultancies

Useful for identifying possible networking contacts and work experience enquiries:

www.appc.org.uk

Parli-training

Professional training for parliamentary affairs personnel www.parli-training.co.uk

Government Communications Fast Stream

Launched in 2015, you will reach out to our audiences, supporting awareness and engagement with some of the most important issues in our society. www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-fast-stream-government-communication-service/fast-stream-government-communication-service

Public Relations Account Executive job profile

www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/public-relations-account-executive

Public Relations Officer job profile

www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/public-relations-officer

Chartered Institute of Public Relations

Careers advice section with case studies

www.cipr.co.uk/content/careers-cpd/careers-advice-and-case-studies

Public Relations Consultants Association www.prca.org.uk

PR week

The magazine for industry news and opinion www.prweek.com/uk

Behind the Spin

An online news and features magazine for public relations students and young practitioners.

<http://www.behindthespin.com/>

Pressat

Guide to getting a job in PR

www.pressat.co.uk/how-to-get-a-job-in-public-relations-and-various-other-pr-tips

Working in public policy research

Policy workers are employed in a wide variety of settings in the public, private and voluntary sectors to provide research and information in support of the organisation's remit. These organisations could include national, regional and local government, quangos, charities/non-profit organisations, public affairs consultancies, academia, think tanks, pressure groups, professional bodies, learned societies and private companies. Policy work is part of a number of other areas covered by this leaflet.

University of Edinburgh Policy Work

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/careers/explore/occupations/public-services-and-policy-work/policy-work. A useful list from their careers service including a short list of some public policy consultancies.

HM Treasury Graduate Policy Adviser Scheme

This is an opportunity to work at the heart of government in a policy role that is not aimed at more numerate disciplines. Read our Blog here:

<http://blogs.bath.ac.uk/careers/2016/10/09/graduate-policy-adviser-at-hm-treasury-report-on-a-visit-by-a-careers-adviser/> or visit the employer's website:

www.hmtreasurycareers.co.uk/about-us/role-of-hm-treasury.

Policy jobs net

www.policyjobs.net International jobs website.

University of Bath Institute for Policy Research www.bath.ac.uk/ipr

Working in social research, think tanks and other research roles

Social Research Association

Their website contains useful careers advice for getting into the sector: http://the-sra.org.uk/sra_resources/careers/.

Government Social Research Service

Fast stream closes 30 September and you will need a 2:1 or higher in any social science degree subject with a substantial social research methods component, or a relevant post-graduate degree: <https://www.faststream.gov.uk/government-social-research-service/>
All other vacancies are advertised on the Civil Service Jobs website. Select Social Research as the Job Role to discover current vacancies or sign up for email updates: <https://civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk>.

Houses of Parliament Fast stream

This Fast Stream focuses on the constitution, politics and public policy. In this role you are serving Parliament and not the Government of the day: www.faststream.gov.uk/houses-of-parliament/.

Academic teaching and research – you'll need a postgraduate qualification, most usually a PhD: www.academiccareer.manchester.ac.uk and www.jobs.ac.uk

MP's researcher and party research departments – check www.w4mp.org

Trades unions: www.tuc.org.uk/about-tuc/job-vacancies and check on individual union websites

Think Tanks

Think Tanks conduct research and publish on a range of domestic or international policy issues, some specialising in particular areas. Usually entry level jobs are filled by interns who usually have at least a Masters degree so look out for internships or apply speculatively for one. There is limited employment in the Think Tank sector as they tend to be small. Size varies from forty people to a full-time staff of three or four. Senior staff come from academia, government, consulting and the private sector and are usually contracted to work for the organisation. If you join a Think Tank early in your career you will probably move on to another industry or to leave for a PhD. You'll need experience in the particular research field. Use these links to find out more:

- **University of Oxford Careers Service Guide to Think Tanks in the UK**
www.careers.ox.ac.uk/options-and-occupations/sectors-and-occupations/think-tanks
- **World Think Tanks**
www.policyjobs.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=807&Itemid=446
- **European and public affairs directory**
Contains a list of think tanks that research on EU topics. Book available from the University of Bath library.

Working in charity sector/advocacy

Many charities are advocacy organisations, which means they lobby the government on issues like poverty and human rights, so will deal with politicians directly and need politics graduates who understand them. Charities also recruit people to fundraise, manage campaigns and recruit volunteers, all of which might play to your organisational and communication skills. For more information on this sector see our information sheet *Charity sector and not-for-profit careers* www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/information-resources/helpsheets.

Working in law

The legal system makes sure the laws that politicians pass actually work. A politics degree would be useful at any level of the legal system, from criminal to corporate law. You'll normally have to do a law conversion course if you want to become a lawyer. Call into the Careers Service for a variety of takeaway material including:

TARGETjobs law: <https://targetjobs.co.uk/law> - information on legal careers and solicitors and barristers listings. Search training contracts and pupillages.

TARGETjobs vacation schemes & mini pupillages: <https://targetjobs.co.uk/career-sectors/law-solicitors/advice/340002-why-and-when-to-apply-for-vacation-schemes-in-law-firms> - information on how to secure a vacation placement with a solicitors or <https://targetjobs.co.uk/career-sectors/law-barristers/advice/312223-mini-pupillages-the-best-way-to-boost-your-work-experience-at-the-bar> for a mini pupillage.

More resources are listed on our website: www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/information-resources/catalogue/occupational/index.html#legal

Working in journalism

Much of the news is political and a politics degree can give you the communication skills to explain this to others as well. Work experience is essential for getting into journalism, so you should take the opportunity to get involved with your student media, and maybe start writing your own blog. A few good starting points are:

Media and Internet Sector Guide

This gives an overview of the sector, how to get in and further study advice: www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors/media-and-internet

Radio Broadcast Journalist

http://creativeskillset.org/job_roles_and_stories/job_roles/279_radio_broadcast_journalist

TV Broadcast Journalist

http://creativeskillset.org/job_roles_and_stories/job_roles/287_tv_broadcast_journalist

National Council for Training of Journalists www.nctj.com

Networking with Bath graduates

Advice about networking and, in particular using social media for this, can be found in our *Finding a graduate job* guide. Pick up a copy from our office or download it at www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/information-resources/helpsheets.

Bath Connection - www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/choose-a-career/bath-connection

Bath Connection is a secure online system which allows you to network with our Alumni Experts. They are Bath graduates who have volunteered to talk to current Bath students (and fellow graduates) about working for their employer, what's involved in their job and also diversity issues. We have developed this service as a joint initiative with the Alumni Relations Team.

Bath Connection includes hundreds of graduates working for a wide range of employers and in many types of role, from the high profile to the more unusual. You can use it to ask a quick question or to request more in-depth support.

This is a really great way to get some extra insight from someone who has 'been there already'. The Alumni Experts are ready to share their expertise and advice to help you succeed.

Careers Service

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This publication is available online at

www.bath.ac.uk/students/careers/information-resources/helpsheets.

If you need this information in another format, please contact us.

www.bath.ac.uk/careers