

# Careers involving Government & Politics



Politics is broadly seen as the study of government, institutions and decision-making processes that govern the world we live in. It can also be the study of ideas, like justice, democracy, equality and freedom, and how power is distributed and exercised.

From international cooperation, conflicts and crises to the intricacies of electoral systems in particular nation states, the study of politics at university can encompass international relations, sociology, philosophy and economics, among other disciplines.

At undergraduate level, politics is frequently taught through a mixture of lectures in large groups, and seminars, where smaller groups discuss ideas and material studied. Seminars tend to allow and encourage more debate and interaction, and students are typically asked to read texts in advance to increase engagement.

Politics graduates are typically employed by:

- accountancy and banking organisations
- charities
- commercial businesses - particularly within marketing departments
- councils
- law firms
- local and national government
- retail companies
- media organisations.

Other employers include the United Nations (UN), the European Commission, the Civil Service, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), lobbying, campaigning, and voluntary organisations and the public sector in general. Campaigning organisations or pressure groups and UK-based charities with an

international presence are particularly suitable if you wish to pursue an international career.

If you're a student, consider running for office in your university Students' Union or gaining volunteering experience through the university community and student societies. This demonstrates initiative and can provide leadership experience and opportunities to further develop written and oral communication skills.

Many degree courses offer the opportunity to undertake professional work experience on a placement or sandwich year. Roughly 60 per cent of graduate jobs are open to those who graduated in any discipline, and 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 as MPs, starting off as parliamentary researchers, special advisers and civil servants and others find work in local government, 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.

Around 20 per cent 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 Organisation. Others work in think tanks, pressure groups and charities.

Politics students tend to be up to speed with current affairs and interested in leadership and the ways in which ideas and principles are put into action – attitudes that can be useful in the workplace. They are typically enthusiastic about their subject, opinionated and hardworking, and used to arguing a case and presenting their views. Many politics graduates go on to further study, often in specialised areas of politics such as international relations and international human rights. Others pursue careers in areas such as business, HR and finance. The public sector was the most popular career choice for students of politics identified by a 2018 survey of more than 60,000 undergraduates carried out by Trendence UK, a partner of TARGETjobs' parent company GTI. Just under a tenth (**9.5%**) of politics students who participated in the survey said they were interested in this area.