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CAREERS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

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OVERVIEW

Political Science degrees are likely to include examination of past and current political conflicts; different models of government; ideologies like communism, liberalism and anarchism and concepts such as freedom, equality and human rights. As a politics undergraduate student, you're more likely to study the work of influential historical figures in the field such as Confucius and Machiavelli and then more recent theorists such as Karl Marx and John Rawls. This degree also allows you to look at the more practical side of the field – how different political systems work, the impact of developments such as new technologies and mass media, and the role of international political organizations and alliances such as NATO and the UN.

If you studied political science, you will have gained skills useful in both public and private sectors, in roles, which are more varied than you might expect.

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

One of 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 of your local area and the nation as a whole. You should also be motivated, determined and a confident 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 as well as 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 political leader 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.

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.

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 diplomat 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 be able to get on well with people from all societies and cultures. Bilingualism is definitely an asset.

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 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 organization, 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 groups or public affairs consultancy, or from involvement with a political party or your university's student union.

POLITICAL JOURNALISTS

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 career could be good 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 or across a combination of these, and perhaps even make a name for yourself.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND CHARITIES

If you are interested in other ways in which you can use your political science 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 government and non-governmental organizations. Or perhaps you'll be involved in managing projects designed to improve conditions for different groups of people.

WHO EMPLOYS POLITICAL SCIENCE GRADUATES

Wondering where to Jump Start your career? Below is a list of employers who typically hire Political Science Graduates.

- ✓ Government agencies
- ✓ International agencies
- ✓ Law firms
- ✓ Universities and colleges
- ✓ Consulting firms
- ✓ Newspapers/media
- ✓ Private firms
- ✓ Banks
- ✓ Lobbying firms
- ✓ Research organizations

PROGRAM RELATED SKILLS

As a Political Science student, you develop the following skills:

- ✓ Strong analytical and writing skills
- ✓ Thorough knowledge of political science disciplines and techniques
- ✓ Verbal and visual presentation skills
- ✓ Perspectives on international on political research
- ✓ Designing and research projects
- ✓ Identifying and collecting relevant data and evidence
- ✓ Ability to effectively communicate ideas and information
- ✓ Ability and desire to engage in with social and political problems

POSSIBLE CAREER PATHS

Below is a sample of the many types of occupations and jobs perused by graduates of this program. Note: This is not an exhaustive list. Detailed career profiles are available in the Career Centre. Some occupations require further education and experience.

Private Sector

Budget Analyst
Communications Officer
Financial/Business Consultant
Financial Planner*
Human Resources Specialist*
Market Analyst
Researcher*
Sales Manager
Public Opinion Analyst
Public Relations Specialist*
Lawyer*

Journalism

Editor*
Press Officer
Print Journalist*
Publisher*
Public Relations Specialist
Television and Radio Journalist*

Government

Public Policy Analyst*
Financial/Economic Analyst*
Social Policy Program Officer
Foreign Service Officer*
Immigration and Revenue Officer*
Legislative Analyst
Political Aide*
Politician*
Lobbyist*
Diplomat
Customs Officer
Economic Development Officer*

*View these titles at Career Cruising, available on [CLN](#) under the *Resources* tab

HOW TO GET EXPERIENCE

Volunteer

- ✓ Canadian International Council - Conseil International Du Canada
45 Willcocks Street, Suite 210, Toronto, Ontario: [Volunteer Profile of Canadian International Council](#)

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- ✓ CJPAC Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee
Branch: Toronto Toronto, Ontario:
[Volunteer Profile of CJPAC Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee](#)
- ✓ Ontario Liberal Party
10 St. Mary Street, Suite 210, Toronto, Ontario: [Volunteer Profile of Ontario Liberal Party](#)

[Internships](#)

- ✓ [Parliamentary Internship Programme](#)
- ✓ [Ontario Legislature Internship Programme](#)
- ✓ [Council of the Federation Youth Internship Program](#)

[Part-time positions](#)

- ✓ Client Litigation Lawyer: Prudent Law, Mississauga ON
- ✓ Policy Analyst: Canadian Mental Health Association, ON
- ✓ Policy Development Officer: City of Toronto, ON
- ✓ Public Relations Specialist: Behaviour Matters, Toronto, ON

[Additional Related Student Organizations](#)

Join a student club or an academic society at UTM to meet like-minded people, explore your interests, and make valuable connections. To view a list of current clubs and societies, visit the Centre for Student Engagement's website. Some organizations you may consider are:

- ✓ Debating club at UTM: <https://www.facebook.com/utmdbc/>
- ✓ Political Science & Pre-Law Associations: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/political-science/psla>
- ✓ UTM Global Brigades: <http://utmgb.sa.utoronto.ca/>
- ✓ UTM Students' Union: <https://utmsu.ca/>

[Create a LinkedIn Profile](#)

Create a [LinkedIn](#) profile to connect with professional in various fields, explore the career paths of UTM alumni, research employers, apply for specific positions, and more. Need help? Come to the Career Centre to book a LinkedIn profile critique.

[Join a Professional Association](#)

There are many benefits of becoming a member of association(s), such as developing a network of contacts, learning about industry trends, accessing industry-related job postings, and stating your affiliation on your resume. Some associations related to this major are:

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- ✓ Canadian Political Science Association (CPSA): <https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/>
- ✓ Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers (PAFSO): <https://pafso.com/>
- ✓ International Politics Science Association (IPSA): <https://www.ipsa.org/>

SAMPLE JOB LISTINGS FOR GRADUATING STUDENTS/ RECENT GRADUATES

Below is a sample of **delisted** positions that were posted on Uoft's Career Learning Network (CLN). To access current listings, login to [CLN](#) and click on *Jobs*.

- ✓ Legal Assistant, Abrams & Krochak
- ✓ Policy Advisor, Management Board Secretariat
- ✓ Research Assistant, Department of Political Science, UTM
- ✓ Regulatory Affairs and Legal Services, Toronto Hydro Corporation
- ✓ Client Services Advisor, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services
- ✓ Parliamentary and Information & Research Assistant, Library of Parliament
- ✓ Foreign Language Intelligence Analyst, Communications Security Establishment
- ✓ Policy Analyst, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- ✓ Library Student Assistant, Library, UTM
- ✓ Indexing assistant, Mediacorp Canada Inc.
- ✓ Intern, Global Affairs Canada
- ✓ Policy & Legislation Implementation Assistant, Ministry of Labour
- ✓ Political, Economic & Consular Intern, U.S. Consulate General Toronto
- ✓ Communications and Outreach Assistant, Office of Student Transition, UTM
- ✓ Report Writer, Flow Consulting Group
- ✓ Resource Centre Coordinator, Ontario Public Interest Research Group

HOW CAN THE CAREER CENTRE HELP

[Library Resources](#)

The Career Resource Library contains information about a wide range of occupations in all industries, resume and cover letter resources, effective work search methods, graduate/professional school preparation guides and more. Below listed are some sample of Career Centre Library Resources:

- ✓ Canada's Top 100 Employers
- ✓ Great Jobs for Political Science Majors
- ✓ Great Jobs for Liberal Arts Majors
- ✓ Career Cruising, a Canadian electronic career guide
- ✓ Career Information binders – various career areas including
And many more....

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You can also visit our online library collection by going to the Career Centre website:

<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/> and click on the Career Planning icon and then scroll down to Library Resources. Once you register, you can download a book for up to 14 days.

Appointments

- ✓ Attend a one-on-one appointment with a [career counsellor or an employment strategist](#) to discuss what career options might work for you and determine a job search plan.
- ✓ Meet with an [academic or departmental advisor](#), who can guide you in achieving academic success. Contact the Office of Registrar or your department for more information.

Career Planning by Year

Visit our Career Planning by Year page for ideas of important career related activities for each year. You can visit us in the Career Centre to find out more about careers that interest you. The UTM program plans are also a good resource to learn more about how you can use your degree and to find out how to map out your academic career path for each year while at UTM: www.utoronto.ca/program-plans.

The National Occupational Binder

The National Occupational Code Binders in the Career Resources Library provide very detailed, specific and extensive information relating to hundreds of careers. From general overviews of the job, to working conditions, to sample job postings related to the field and related articles, the binders are sure to provide you with in-depth answers to many of your job-specific questions.

Tip sheets

Do you like information in an easy-to-read, easy-to-digest, take home format? Take a look at our tip sheets on subjects like Effective Interviewing, Networking and Preparing for Graduate School.

Events

Would you like a chance to interact with prospective employers and expand your networking circle? The Career Centre offers a number of events that help you brush shoulders with professional and experts from all fields. Attend the Get Experience Fair, Get Hired Fair, Professional School Fair and Summer Job Fair. Practice putting those networking skills to use and land yourself a job! Check out the events and workshops section of the Career Learning Network to find out what is happening on Campus.

Extern Job Shadowing Program

Are you still curious about what career path is best for you? Would you like a chance to explore working in an industry to find out if it's really the path for you? The Extern Job Shadowing Program can help. This job-shadowing program grants you a one-to-five day placement in a career of your choice. Go to the Career Learning Network to register for the workshops that will help you to prepare for your placement. To register go to: www.clnx.utoronto.ca and then go to workshops and events to see when the next workshop is happening.

Talk to Professors

Connecting with your professors can be a great way to explore the different paths a major can lead you to, as well as learn about possible opportunities for research, volunteer, or becoming a TA. Drop by during their office hours or request an appointment.

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[Career Counselling](#)

Are you feeling lost, unsure and overwhelmed with finding out what career path you would like to choose? Or you've decided on a career or the type of job you want, but what are the next steps? Our career counsellors are here to help. Book an appointment with one of our professionals who can help you determine what paths you can take after graduation or how your area of study can relate to a career post-grad.

[Job postings](#)

Are you graduating soon or a recent graduate? Sign up for the Graduating Students Employment Service (GES) or the Recent Graduate Employment Service (RGES). These services allow you to gain access to full-time job postings while your final year of study or access full-time job postings for up to two years after you graduate. To learn more, check out our Career Centre website.

Please feel free to come and visit us in Room 3094, South Building. You can also reach us by phone, 905-828-5451 or email at careers@utm.utoronto.ca.

ALUMNI PROFILE

Name: Satinder Chera

Grad Year: 1999

Degree: BA

Program: Political Science

Title: Director of Provincial Affairs

Industry: Social Science, Education & Religion

Organization: Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses

"This was a newly-created position to enable stronger lobbying efforts on behalf of small and medium sized businesses in Ontario. The CFIB has been a big voice for small business for over 35 years with 105,000 members nationwide in every sector. Taking our direction from CFIB Members, through regular surveys, we lobby for small- and medium-sized businesses at the federal, provincial and local levels of government," says Satinder, who is also currently in the process of completing a Master's in Public Policy at the University of Waterloo.

"In this position, strong government relations are developed through regular meetings with the Ontario Premier, Cabinet Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Leader of the Official Opposition, Members of Provincial Parliament, Mayors and Reeves. Some of the exciting opportunities include appearing extensively in the media. This has resulted in effective representation of business interests in major daily newspapers (including The Toronto Star, The Globe and Mail and The National Post) on live radio programs and through regional media outlets to debate public policy issues. Promoting business interests in collaboration with other trade associations has resulted in a strong public profile for small businesses.

The challenges are competing with other organizations that also have vested interests in lobbying on behalf of businesses.”

Satinder, who was an intern at The Fraser Institute in British Columbia in 1998, says relationship building with members of the government, the media and stakeholders is essential for successful lobbying.

“I was selected from hundreds of applicants to attend The Fraser Institute’s Student Leaders Colloquium in British Columbia to debate pressing public policy issues in 1997. During my internship in 1998, I reviewed government policies from the perspective of free market principles. After the internship, I understood the process of creating public policies and assessed implications of public policies,” says Satinder who co-authored a report on the performance of the government of British Columbia during the 1990s, which garnered extensive media coverage.

“My experience at The Fraser Institute, my involvement in provincial politics and my undergraduate degree were key achievements. I was initially hired at Queens Park as a policy assistant to an MPP. My undergraduate degree built a solid foundation that coupled with experiential skills to set me apart from other candidates. The key to success is to always keep a balance with work, academics and volunteering efforts. To establish a successful career in any field it is important to get involved with the community.”

ADDITIONAL WEB RESOURCES

- ✓ Canadian Political Science Association: www.cpsa-acsp.ca
- ✓ Ontario Internship Program: <http://www.internship.gov.on.ca/mbs/sdb/intern.nsf/>
- ✓ UNA – Canada’s International Youth Internship Program (IYIP):
http://www.unac.org/en/get_involved/internships/index.asp
- ✓ The Ontario Legislature Internship Program: <http://www.olipinterns.ca/index.html>
- ✓ Public Service Commission for careers in the federal government: <http://jobs-emplois.gc.ca/>
- ✓ Canadian International Development Agency: <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/index-e.htm>
- ✓ United Nations Association of Canada: <http://unac.org/>