

Options with politics

Your skills

Over the course of your degree you develop a good mix of subject specific and technical skills as well as transferable core skills. Consider these alongside your other activities, such as paid work, volunteering, family responsibilities, sport, membership of societies, leadership roles, etc. Think about how these can be used as evidence of your skills and personal attributes. Then you can start to market and sell who you *really* are, identify what you may be lacking and consider how to improve your profile.

Studying politics encourages the development of both specific and transferable skills. You will gain a clear understanding of politics, whether it is domestic, international or a combination of both. Politics courses focus on the theory and application of politics, and integrate economic, historical, philosophical and sociological arguments to the debate.

You will learn how to demonstrate your knowledge of different political systems and how to interpret political issues and events. Transferable skills are also gained. These include the ability to:

- examine issues from a range of viewpoints;
- construct well-researched arguments;
- present information in a balanced and unbiased manner.

Studying politics enables you to acquire research skills as well as develop the ability to investigate and analyse solutions to problems. Many politics courses focus on teamwork, research and presentation and communication skills. Courses often help students to develop the ability to communicate effectively both in speech and in writing.

Voluntary and work experience can provide other examples of transferable skills and can be gained in your spare time. Whether related to a career in politics or more general, this experience shows that you have an interest in the community and can use your time effectively, make valuable contacts and use your initiative.

Job options

Bear in mind that it's not just your degree discipline that determines your options. Look at [your degree... what next?](#) for informed advice on career planning and graduate employment, or take a look at [what jobs would suit me?](#) a helpful starting point for self-analysis.

You can choose between jobs that are degree-related or those that appeal because they use other interests or elements of your degree.

Jobs directly related to your degree

- [Public affairs consultant \(lobbyist\)](#) - uses their understanding of the political system to provide political and public policy advice to their clients.
- [Politician's assistant](#) - provides their elected Members with the administrative, secretarial, research, constituency, parliamentary and publicity support they require to carry out their role.
- [Government research officer](#) - provides research required to help inform the policy decisions of ministers.
- [Social researcher](#) - designs, formulates, carries out and manages social research projects, either personally or via agencies.
- [Civil Service Fast Streamer](#) - fast track training programme to work with and for government; roles include policy adviser, project leader, consultant and researcher.

Jobs where your degree would be useful

- [Charity fundraiser](#) - employed to achieve an annually agreed money-raising target through actively marketed and promoted activities, campaigns or events.
- [Education administrator](#) - organises and oversees administrative activities and systems that support and facilitate the smooth running of an education institution.
- [Local government administrator](#) - deals with the administrative needs of different departments, assists in the development of policies and procedures, and helps coordinate their implementation. There are many areas of specialism including: finance; personnel; education; social work; and IT.
- [Event organiser](#) - identifies potential business, researches markets and plans and runs all aspects of events on behalf of a client or their own organisation.
- [Market researcher \(qualitative/quantitative\)](#) - collects data from a variety of sources and uses it to enable informed decision-making in many sectors.
- [Volunteer work organiser](#) - coordinates the work of volunteers and develops new voluntary opportunities either within their own organisation or on behalf of other organisations such as hospitals.

Other options

These are just some of the careers that graduates with a degree in politics can go into. However, politics graduates can access a wide range of opportunities. For many jobs, the skills, interests and experience you pick up whilst at university are often more important than the particular degree you have studied. Opportunities can also be found in international organisations such as the European Parliament (UK Office) (<http://www.europarl.org.uk>).

Although some of the jobs listed here might not be first jobs for many graduates, they are among the many realistic possibilities with your degree, provided you can demonstrate you have the attributes employers are looking for. It's also worth noting that many graduate vacancies don't specify particular degree disciplines, so don't restrict your thinking to the jobs listed here.

[Explore types of jobs](#) to find out more about the above options and related jobs.

Career areas

Every year statistics are collected to show what HE students do immediately after graduation. These can be a useful guide but, in reality, with the data being collected within just six months of graduation, many graduates are travelling, waiting to start a course, paying off debts, getting work experience or still deciding what they want to do. For further information about some of the areas of employment commonly entered by graduates of any degree discipline, check out [what do graduates do?](#) and [your degree...what next?](#)

There are very few careers where a first degree in politics is essential. However, there are many careers where a politics degree is useful, including: journalism; charity work; politics and government; civil service; social or political research.

In 2007, six months after graduating, 50% of politics graduates were in full-time employment. Many graduates chose careers unrelated to their degree. The most common types of work that politics graduates entered immediately after graduating were clerical and secretarial occupations (19%); commercial, industrial and public sector managerial positions (15%); business and financial jobs (15%); retail, catering, waiting and bar work (11%);

and marketing, sales and advertising (7%).

Where are the jobs?

Typical employers of politics graduates include: local and national government; further and higher education institutions; charities; retailers; media; accountancy and banking; and law firms.

Take a look at the following sectors for more potential roles and information:

- [Local, regional and national government](#) - covers the civil service (central government), local and regional government (the public sector).
- [Retail](#) - the UK's largest employer outside the public sector. Eleven percent of all workers (2.9 million people) are employed in the retail sector.
- [Voluntary](#) - deals with all areas of civil society, and can be divided into two groups: charities and non-profit-making organisations (universities and trade unions).

Career management is an ongoing process; one that you'll no doubt develop throughout your working life. [Explore job sectors](#) for further information on all the above employment areas.

Further study

In 2007, six months after graduation, 18% of politics graduates had taken up further study such as Masters courses and PhDs.

Having a further academic qualification can enhance employability by illustrating: a commitment to further study; a greater understanding of a subject area; a valuable piece of research; and useful contacts. It is particularly desirable if you are aiming to enter a career as a researcher.

Vocational courses are popular with politics graduates, particularly courses that qualify graduates to work in careers such as accountancy, journalism, law, management and teaching.

If you are considering further study, you need to think carefully about your motivations, long-term career plan and finances. Will a further qualification enhance your employability? Seek guidance from tutors, a careers adviser, employers and people who have undertaken further study.

These trends show only what previous graduates in your subject did immediately upon graduating. Over the course of their career - the first few years in particular - many others will opt for some form of further study, either part time or full time. If further study interests you, start by thinking [about postgrad study](#). [Search courses and research](#) to identify your options; you can also [apply for courses online](#).

Look at [funding my further study](#) for more details relating to finance and the application process.

What next?

Don't forget there are alternatives to entering employment or postgraduate study, such as taking time out, volunteering or travelling. Longer term, you may want to consider starting your own business. For something different, check out [self-employment](#) and [flexible working](#) or explore [working and studying abroad](#).

This should have started you thinking about your future. Whether you are in the early stages of career planning, or you have definite ideas about what you want to do, you will find further information to help you in the following sections:

- Analyse your skills, interests and motivations to find out [what jobs would suit me?](#)
- [Explore types of jobs](#) to find out about entry requirements, salaries and working conditions.
- [Explore job sectors](#) for hints on breaking into various industries.
- [Find graduate employers](#) and see what they have to offer.
- Look at the advice on [applications, CVs and interviews](#).
- Get [work experience](#) through vacation work or a work

placement.

- [Find courses and research](#) and investigate postgraduate study opportunities.
- If you have already graduated, get online [interactive advice](#).
- Visit [your university careers service](#) for a wealth of advice and resources to help with your career planning.

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