What to do with a degree in ... **Political Science**

If you are questioning your career options or what others like you are doing with their degree this guide is a good place to start. It will provide you with industry specific information on careers, schools, associations, labour market information, and more.

**Career & Leadership Development Centre**

dl.ca/cldc
"Political Science is important to society because an educated citizenry is the best safeguard for democracy. Political Science is valuable for individuals who want to know more about the values, laws, institutions and policy mechanisms that govern their lives in society, and as well, the differences between their system of government and those in other countries". [Dalhousie Department of Political Science]

Political science degrees do not prepare you for just one career, so it is best to examine the job market broadly. The transferable skills and understandings you develop during your degree are valuable across the job market and can open up a breadth of career options. There are a variety of interesting opportunities available in both the public and private sector.

What you decide to pursue will depend on your background, individual preferences, and goals. When considering where to start keep in mind your concentration (Canadian politics, environmental politics, international relations etc.), any significant projects you were involved in, internships, personal strengths, past employment, and any other background information that may guide you.

The skills you have developed will make you competitive in many areas including:

- Politics
- Government
- Communications
- Charities and NGOs
- Consulting firms
- International business
- Law
- Education
- Business

Your options will be largely influenced by your level of education. If you pursue a Master's degree or Ph.D. your options directly related to the field will improve.

Related Positions

- Politician
- Lobbyist
- Legislative Assistant
- Demographer
- Consumer advocate
- Speech Writer
- Campaign Worker
- Foreign Service Officer
- Journalist
- Human Rights Officer
- Public Relations Specialist
- Political Aide
- Diplomat
- Legal Assistant
- Mediator

With Further Education

- Lawyer
- Trade Specialist
- University Professor
- Political Strategist
- Researcher
- Public Policy Analyst
- Consultant
- Urban Planner
- Corporate Trainer
- Trade Specialist
- Political Scientist
- Economist

There are a lot of transferable skills developed by a political science major. Most notably: political understanding, written/verbal communication, leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork. These can be applied to many fields and positions outside of the usual political science spectrum. Examples include:

- Author
- Event Coordinator
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Librarian
- Fundraiser
- Police Officer
- Budget Analyst
- Teacher
- Customs/Trade Specialist
- Human Relations Specialist
- Stock Broker
- Demographer
Opportunities in Your Program

Study Abroad - Opportunities to study include the University of International Business and Economics exchange in Beijing China and European Union Centre of Excellence in Europe. For more information check the department website.

Get Published - The Dalhousie Undergraduate Political Science Society publishes The Podium, an academic journal by and for undergraduate students at Dalhousie and King's College.

Research - Conduct an independent study while working with a faculty member.

Experiential Learning - Practicum placements in public policy, and Model UN Course

Opportunities at School

Involvement in extra curricular activities will make you competitive for jobs in your field. It will also give you the chance to focus on any specialties you are interested in. Consider joining a program like the ones listed:

- DalConnects - leadership certificate program
- Dalhousie Undergraduate Political Science Society
- Sodales (The Dalhousie Debate Society)
- Dalhousie Graduate Society of Political Science
- DAL Action - community stewardship society
- Dalhousie Model United Nations Society

The Dalhousie Co-curricular record (CCR) is a great way to track your extra-curricular involvement and display it for employers. Visit dal.ca/scr to learn more.

Summer Jobs and Volunteer Work

Summer jobs and volunteering are great ways to gain experience, develop specialties, and discover what you like in a job. Check out these resources:

Career and Leadership Development Centre
Get assistance looking for jobs, building resumes, practicing interviews and more.

Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP)
A program that provides post-secondary students with experience related to their field of study.

Talent Egg
This website provides postings for internships, co-ops, volunteer opportunities and entry level jobs.

Volunteer Halifax
A posting board where non-profits in Halifax post their volunteer opportunities and positions.

Professional Associations & Conferences

Professional associations and conferences are a great way to meet, learn from and network with professionals in your field. If you are an undergraduate keep your eyes open for any undergraduate conferences around Halifax. Below is a sample listing of professional associations and conferences that may be worth examining.

Canadian Political Science Association
A leading professional association that provides opportunities for student members to serve the association, search job openings, network with potential employers, find funding and enhance their resumes.

Atlantic Provinces Political Science Association
atlanticprovspolsciassociaction.com

American Political Science Association
www.apsanet.org
Undergraduate Program

Dalhousie’s Political Science courses give you the opportunity to discover and pursue the aspect of the field that most interests you, whether it be local politics, foreign relations, or the politicization of social issues. First-year courses provide overview of political theory and history and serve as a solid foundation for more specialization in the upper years. All courses focus on developing strong research, critical thinking, and writing skills.

Students will work closely with nationally recognized and award-winning faculty members in a small and hospitable setting. While we excel in teaching the traditional subfields (international relations, Canadian politics, political theory, and comparative politics), our program is the best place in Canada to study marine issues from an interdisciplinary perspective (including security, environmental, legal, and historical dimensions).

For globally minded students, our department houses the European Union Centre of Excellence and the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, which is involved with such international projects as the new Child Soldiers Initiative.

Graduate Program

The department of Political Science offers a high-quality graduate program. At this level there is extensive contact between professors and students. Students may work in interdisciplinary programs, such as International Development Studies.

Subject Areas

- Canadian Government and Politics
- Comparative Politics
- Political Theory
- International Relations and Foreign Policy

Program Length

- MA - typically 1-2 years
- PhD - typically 3-4 years

Entrance Requirements

A minimum average of A- while meeting the general requirements for admission to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Applicants whose native language is not English must demonstrate a minimum TOEFL score of 600 (or the equivalent score on a comparable test).
There are other established political science programs in Canada and abroad. A great resource for examining post-secondary programs is Career Cruising. Career Cruising can be accessed through your Dalhousie MyCareer profile or by visiting the Career & Leadership Development Centre. Below are some notable programs:

**York University**

Location: Toronto, Ontario

BSc, MSc, PhD in Social and Political Thought, Political Science

**University of British Columbia**

Location: Vancouver, British Columbia

BA, MA, PhD in Canadian politics, international relations, comparative politics, political theory, and U.S. Politics

**Simon Fraser University**

Location: Burnaby, British Columbia

BA, MA, PhD in Political Theory and Methodology; Canadian Politics; Comparative politics; International Relations, and Public policy/Public Administration and Urban government

**University of Toronto**

Location: Toronto, Ontario

BA, MA, PhD in Political Theory, Canadian Government, International Relations, comparative Politics and Development studies

**University of Alberta**

Location: Edmonton, Alberta

BA, MA, PhD Canadian Politics, comparative politics, International Politics, Political Theory, Gender studies

**Queen’s University**

Location: Kingston, Ontario

BA, BA(Hons.) MA, PhD in Political Theory, Canadian Government, International Relations, comparative Politics and Development studies

**University of Ottawa**

Location: Ottawa, Ontario

BA, MA, PhD in international studies and modern languages, public administration, or Public Management and Governance
Labour Market Information

Alumni

Given the broad array of directions you can take a Canadian studies degree it is important to first identify the sectors that political science students work in. Looking at LinkedIn statistics from 2500 Dalhousie Political Science alumni it appears that most alumni end up in the following fields:

- Legal
- Media and Communication
- Education
- Research
- Operations
- Sales
- Consulting
- Entrepreneurship
- Community and Social Services
- Finance
- Administrative
- Business Development

Dalhousie alumni's top employers for political science graduates include:

- Government of Nova Scotia
- BMO Financial Group
- McInnes Cooper
- Canadian Armed Forces
- Stewart McKelvey
- Department of National Defence
- RBC
- Scotia Bank
- CIBC

Projections

The following Labour Market Information (LMI) was taken from jobbank.gc.ca. It represents the 2013-2015 projection period in Nova Scotia. For jobs with a 4 digit number you can use that number on Job Bank to look up additional information on the field.

For more LMI on other jobs within your field click on 'Explore Careers'. If you search by occupations or education program then click on outlook for specific LMI.

Good Outlook Low rate of unemployment, expected job growth

The best career outlooks for an individual with a Political Science degree are: Financial Auditors and Accountants (1111), Retail Trade Supervisors (6211); and Sales Representatives - Wholesale Trade (6411).

Fair Outlook Overall future employment is expected to be fair

Career outlooks in Political Science with a fair outlook include: Government Managers (0411), Education/Health/Social Policy Researchers, Consultants and Program Officers (4166, 4165, 4164), Administrative Officers (1221), Senior Managers (0013), Business Development Officers (4163), Public Relations (5124), Survey Interviewers and Statistical Clerks (1454), Lawyers (4112), and Paralegals (4211).

Limited Outlook Weak employment growth, some levels of unemployment

Jobs with a limited outlook include: Government Managers - in Health, Social or Economic Policy Development and Program Administration (0411, 0412), and Program Officers Unique to Government (4168) and Senior Government Managers and Officials (0012).
Online

MyCareer - https://mycareer.dal.ca/
A resource for Dalhousie students to connect with jobs, employers and career related events on campus.

TalentEgg - tallentegg.ca
A great website to find internships, student jobs, and entry level positions. You can also find great advice and career guides. In addition to this, TalentEgg has challenges to help young people build transferable skills.

Careers for Political Scientists - http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/guides.shtml
This resource is designed to help Canadian political scientists in their job search. It provides valuable information and insights into the industry and is targeted towards job seekers looking for a career outside of an academic or teaching environment.

Tiger Society - https://tigersociety.dsu.ca/
This site lists all Dalhousie Societies and information about them. You can register to join a society through this site.

Career Beacon - careerbeacon.com
Provides job listings and corporate profiles with a strong presence in Nova Scotia and other Maritime Provinces. It can be a great resource for identifying what jobs are in your field and what skills employers are looking for.

Career Cruising - careercruising.com (log on available through MyCareer)
A comprehensive website that provides information to help you make informed choices about your career path.

Employment and Social Development Canada - National Occupational Classification
Contains occupational information and is used to find jobs that exist within Canada’s labour market.

Print

* Located within the Dalhousie Career & Leadership Development Centre

The Canadian Student & Grad Job Search Directory. Senor Media inc.
* Located within the Dalhousie Career & Leadership Development Centre

What Color is your Parachute: A practical manual for job-hunters and career-changers (2014)
* Located within the Dalhousie Career & Leadership Development Centre

Political Jobs in Ottawa: Legislative Assistants (LAs) to Members of Parliament
http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/pdfs/LegislativeAssistantsCareerGuide.pdf

Other

Career Counselling - Dalhousie - Student Union Building 4th Floor
This free service is a confidential and collaborative process in which you work with a career counsellor who assists you in your educational and career decision-making

Career & Leadership Development Centre - Dalhousie - Student Union Building 4th Floor
This resource centre can provide you with all the career tools and resources you need. Drop in for assistance with resumes, cover letters, interviewing and more.

DALConnects - Leadership Program - dal.ca/dalconnects
This program will connect you with leadership opportunities and workshops.
Director, Public & Government Relations -
Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada

Reporting to the President, Atlantic Division, the Director, Public and Government Relations serves as a member of a team who works collaboratively to achieve the goals of the MS Society. The Director oversees all marketing and leads all communication strategies, publications and initiatives in support of the organization’s business plan. This position will also lead all Government Relations efforts to improve legislation, policies, practices and opportunities that will enhance the quality of life of people affected by MS.

Responsibilities

- Oversees all external communications activities, including newsletters, website, annual report, and all related print and promotional materials
- Works in collaboration with Director, Development, to coordinate and oversee marketing strategies in support of fundraising activities
- Serves as primary media relations contact, also acting as the internal resource person to the Government Relations Committee of the Board of Directors
- Prepares annual Public Relations business plan and budget
- Evaluates and monitors all four Atlantic provincial government policies, programs and legislation and other initiatives affecting people with MS
- Establishes and maintains working relationships with government officials, department staff, volunteers and other relevant coalitions
- Provides information and guidance on MS Society positions at all three levels of government
- Collaborates with the Division President to set Public and Government Relations initiatives and policies
- Creates and implements strategic plans, timelines and logistics

Qualifications

- University education in political science, or public administration; with 5-7 years work experience
- Bilingual preferred (English/French)
- Possesses strong writing and editing skills
- Strong organizational and project management skills with an ability to plan strategically prioritize and manage a number of projects simultaneously
- Established research abilities and strong proficiency in problem-solving
- Exceptional interpersonal skills with a team-player attitude
- Interest in and/or knowledge of disability issues an asset
- Basic understanding of press production

Special Considerations

- Office setting with regular travel within Atlantic Region and attending National meetings and conferences
- Occasional evening and weekend work

Make sure you tailor your resume to the position by identifying the responsibilities and matching your experiences with them. By examining job ads you can identify skills/experience gaps you should develop throughout school.

Experiences that can be developed by:
- Joining a Dalhousie Society
- Skills you can hone while volunteering or by doing an internship
- You may want to list a class that you learned these skills in
- Networking skills you can develop by attending CLIC workshops and home at conferences
- Skills you will have developed throughout your education and can further develop at a summer job
- May want to focus attention on any major work you have put together inside or outside school
- Soft skills that can be explored by attending Dalhousie workshops
- Experience can be developed through volunteer work
- Would be valuable to include any conferences you attended on your resume
Example Resume

Pascha Political Science
226 Vernon Street • Halifax, NS • B3R 5T9
Phone: (902)-472-9760 • Email: pascha.political.science@dal.ca

Skills Summary

- Demonstrates strong time management through never missing a deadline
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Publisher
- Exceptional oral and written communication skills
- Team player: excels in collaborative and individual settings
- Shows initiative, reliability, and excellent problem throughout several leadership roles

Education

Bachelor of Arts, Major in Political Science (Honours) 2012-2016
Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS
- GPA 3.6

Relevant Experience

Campaign Volunteer Jul-Sept 2015
MP Candidate Paul Saggard, Halifax, NS
- Contacted 300 community members using telemarketing strategies to inform them about the campaign’s goals
- Participated actively in team meetings to discuss current poll standings and ways to promote community engagement
- Moderated social media websites with daily updates on current events, upcoming rallies, and up to date election statistics

Presenter Feb 2015
Dal Lead, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS
- Prepared and presented a 45 minute workshop to 40 university students on conflict management
- Listened and respectfully responded to student’s questions regarding the presentation
- Fostered a safe and inclusive environment in which students felt they were able to share personal stories

Sports Editor 2013-2015
Dalhousie Gazette, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS
- Reviewed biweekly submissions to the Gazette for accuracy and grammar
- Collaborated with team of 8 other writers/editors to select an article to be the focus of the issue
- Mentored volunteer writers and assisted with editing operations online and in print
Head Leader - Orientation Week  Sept 2013-2015
Leader - Orientation Week  Sept 2012
DSU, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS
- Coordinated a diverse team of 6 orientation leaders where we created, organized, and implemented various strategies that were aimed to engage first year students which included inclusive house cheers and social gathering to promote a welcoming and respectful environment at Dalhousie.
- Communicated actively to students by developing a strategic marketing strategy involving the orientation leaders which resulted in an increasing number of students attending each event

Law Firm Office Intern  2013-2014
John & Smith Associates, Halifax, NS
- Organized over 200 personal client files using Microsoft Office to ensure secure, quick, and easy access to client information.
- Shadowed multiple lawyers and observed daily activities to learn protocols and communication strategies.
- Researched information regarding casework and communicated the findings both verbally and through a written report.

Awards and Certifications

Dean’s List  2012-2015
Dalhousie University

Change Agent Certificate  2015
DALConnects, Dalhousie University
- Volunteered more than 60 hours, attended workshops, and wrote a reflective assignment.

DSU Certificate of Distinction  2014
Dalhousie Impact Award
- Awarded based on demonstration of significant contributions to campus life.
For more information, comments, or questions please contact:

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