What Can You Do with a Political Science Degree
Melinda Snyder, Assistant Director, Public Service & Nonprofit Pre-Law Advising
Plan for Today

● Possible post-graduation paths
● Exploration & Career Readiness for POLI majors
● Resources for job search
How does Career Services help students?

1. Career Exploration
   - Discuss or explore career interests
   - Discover and research their skills and values
   - Network and manage professional relationships
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3. Continuing Education
   - Explore and plan for graduate and/or professional school
   - Create short and long-term career goals
Post Graduation Plans

Further Education/Graduate School

Work

Other
Should I go to Grad School?

- What is your goal for graduate or professional school?
- What makes you want to go to graduate or professional school?
- What would you study specifically?
- What would you do afterward?
- Do you need this degree to do what you want?
What is the cost?

- Tuition?
- Housing?
- Lost income?
- Student loans or cash flow?
- Are there assistantships/funding?
- Would an employer offer tuition assistance?
## Pro/Con List: Grad School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROS:</th>
<th>CONS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting it done; it’s required for the career I want</td>
<td>I will need cash flow books, housing, phone, groceries, utilities, car maintenance, gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistantship will pay full tuition; assistantship is guaranteed</td>
<td>Won’t be making $ like friends from undergrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live on my own at school</td>
<td>Won’t have a lot of free time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Pro/Con List: Working

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROS:</th>
<th>CONS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make money</td>
<td>Would employer help pay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop experience to confirm what I want to do for grad school</td>
<td>May feel out of practice from studying/writing/academic experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break from school</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What skills have I developed as a POLI major and at VCU?

- Written Communication
- Leadership
- Cross-cultural knowledge
What is Career Readiness?
Career readiness is a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management.

naceweb.org/career-readiness-competencies

Competencies for a Career-Ready Workforce Overview

Competencies
There are eight career readiness competencies, each of which can be demonstrated in a variety of ways.

- Career & Self Development
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Equity & Inclusion
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Technology
- Professionalism
1. **Career & Self-Development**—Proactively develop oneself and one’s career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one’s strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one’s organization.

2. **Communication**—Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.

3. **Critical Thinking**—Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.

4. **Equity & Inclusion**—Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.

5. **Leadership**—Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.

6. **Professionalism**—Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.

7. **Teamwork**—Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.

8. **Technology**—Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.
Activity

Select 1 competency. Think about how you’ve developed this competency during your time at VCU.

Share how you’ve developed the competencies with a partner. Partners prompt for specific examples if not given.
What can do I do with a POLI Major?

Career Exploration Resources

- What Can I do With This Major?
- Candid Career

Trace VCU Alumni Career Paths

- LinkedIn Alumni Search
Where Can I Search for a Job?

- **Handshake** at VCU
- Organization’s jobs/careers pages
- **Public service search resources**
- Nonprofit job search resources
  - Idealist
  - ConnectVA
- **Other search resources**
Networking
Making Connections

Reach out to existing contacts and let them know you’re looking for work

Make new connections and ask for an informational interview
Not So Obvious Job Search Techniques

See where others have gone before you and/or create opportunity

- Network with people on VCU Link
- Network with people on LinkedIn
- Join groups on LinkedIn that are related to your industry

Attend Career & Industry Events

Professional associations

- Young Nonprofit Professional Network
- American Society for Public Administration
Create Tailored Documents

● Avoid templates, pictures, color

● Job description = problem statement. How can your skills solve their problem?
Create Tailored Documents

Update your resume
- Resume Guides - Recommend Junior/Senior Example on General Guide
- CV Guide

Begin writing cover letters for the positions you're interested in
- Cover Letter Guide

Personal Statements
- Guide
Upcoming Employer Connection Opportunities

RVA Internship & Experiential Opportunities Fair
Wed., Mar. 1, 1-4p.m. | Richmond Salons and Commonwealth Ballroom

Social Impact Career & Internship Fair
Wed., Mar. 29, 1-4p.m. | Richmond Salons and Commonwealth Ballroom

Spring Career & Internship Fair
Wed., Apr. 12, 1-4p.m. | Richmond Salons and Commonwealth Ballroom
Students may take up to 4 pieces of gently used professional clothing for free!
FIRST FRIDAY PHOTOS

Headshots are back!

We at Career Services like to see students prepared for job searching, and what better way to start than with a professional headshot?

Book an appointment on Handshake today!

2/3/23  3/3/23
4/7/23  5/5/23
Is your ideal summer internship unpaid or underpaid? Apply for financial support to maximize your options.

Apply between 1-24-23 and 4-2-23

Visit careers.vcu.edu for more information.
Connect with Us!

Appointments (in-person, virtual, phone, & email): Monday - Friday, 8 am - 5 pm
Drop-ins: Tuesday-Friday, 11 am - 2 pm

careers.vcu.edu  @VCUCareers  (804) 828-1645
Thank you! Any questions?

Enter Number: 136

OR enter this into a browser:

https://tinyurl.com/vcs2023

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