

What can I do with a degree in Political Science and International Relations?

Political Science and International Relations.



What is Political Science and International Relations?

Are you interested in making a difference to the world around you? Does the future of Aotearoa New Zealand's democracy interest you? Does news about politics and elections in other countries capture your interest? Are you concerned about major issues in international politics and international security? How about issues such as human rights, health, environment, foreign policy or conflict? Do you want to critically analyse these questions and pursue a career based on your interest? If so, you should study Political Science and International Relations.

Political Science is often called the study of who gets what, where, how and why. Political scientists use a variety of theories, ideas, tools, and methods to conduct an independent and informed study of our communities.

Learn more

It is important to do some research when planning a future career. Speak with, ask questions of, and follow relevant professional bodies, organisations, companies, thought leaders and industry professionals to learn more about:

- Career opportunities, work environments and salary information
- Education and training requirements.

Examples of professional bodies

- Te Kāhui Tātai Tōrangapū o Aotearoa
The New Zealand Political Studies Association
www.nzpsa.com
- Australian Political Studies Association
www.auspsa.org.au
- New Zealand Studies Association
www.nzsa.co.uk
- International Political Science Association
www.ipsa.org

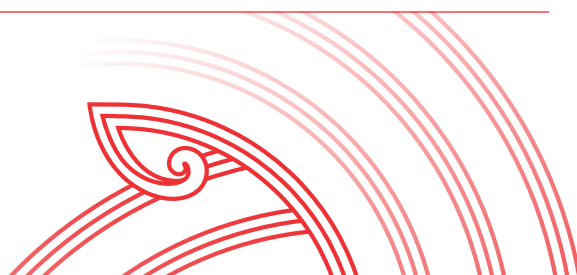
Career and study information

Some study pathways and degrees have a recommended school background, and some careers may require further study beyond a first degree or additional experience.

Gather helpful information from:

- Subject-specific content at
www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study/subjects/political-science-and-international-relations
- Job profiles on career websites like
www.careers.govt.nz
- Job adverts/vacancy descriptions
- Industry professional bodies.

This resource is part of a set of brochures focused on subject majors; many can also be studied as minors.





What skills can graduates gain?

Through studying a degree in Political Science and International Relations, graduates develop a valuable set of skills that are transferable to a range of careers. These skills can include:

- Political analysis
- Understanding the ways that laws and economic policies are developed
- Understanding globalisation and its effects on our politics and economy
- Policy formulation and analysis
- Understanding international relations, international law and diplomacy
- Interpretive thinking
- Thinking critically, creatively and challenging ideas
- Logical and quantitative reasoning
- Problem solving skills adaptable to differing contexts
- Oral and written communication
- Research and computing.

What do employers look for?

Many employers look for generic skills such as communication, client/customer-focus, bicultural competence, cultural awareness, teamwork and initiative.

With technology, globalisation, and other drivers changing society, skills such as resilience, problem solving, and adaptability are important.

Skills that are likely to grow in importance include analytical and creative thinking, systems thinking, technological literacy, AI and big data.*

*World Economic Forum: www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/05/future-of-jobs-2023-skills

How can these skills be developed?

- Some skills are gained through studying
- Extra-curricular activities can help, such as getting involved in clubs, mentoring, cultural groups, part-time work or volunteering
- Be open to professional and personal development opportunities, whether it is undertaking work experience, overseas exchange, skills seminar, or joining an industry group.

Where have graduates been employed?

Political Science and International Relations students gain skills that can be applied in a wide range of exciting careers within politics and in areas such as law, business, education and journalism.

UC graduates have been employed in:

- Aotearoa New Zealand government agencies such as the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Health NZ, Business, Innovation & Employment, as well as the Treasury, Te Puni Kōkiri, Immigration New Zealand, Parliament, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Iwi and Māori governance bodies for example Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu
- Regional councils
- Tertiary institutions
- International agencies such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- Not-for-profits like St John and the Red Cross
- Private companies in banking, insurance, media, legal, finance, recruitment, and education sectors
- Public and private organisations in other countries such as Australia, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

What jobs and activities might graduates do?

Graduates with this degree are employed in a range of jobs — see some examples below.

Note: This list is not exhaustive, and some jobs may require further study, training or experience. It is recommended to start with the section 'How can I gain a sense of career direction?'

Policy analyst / advisor

- Identify and investigate issues and opportunities e.g. in society, law or governance
- Interpret existing policies and consult with stakeholders or brief leaders
- Prepare and present reports and recommendations for policy development

Governance manager / support officer / advisor

- Support and advise appointed leaders such as councillors or members of parliament
- Ensure compliance with public sector and/or local government legislation
- Manage multiple relationships and interactions

Executive assistant / MP assistant, legislative aide to an MP

- Liaise with constituents, other politicians, the media, lobbyists, community groups
- Draft materials informed by local, regional, national and international issues
- Promote the politician's work

Parliamentary officer

- Keep and maintain records
- Assist in the development of policies
- Prepare reports and make recommendations to support senior members

Diplomat, foreign Policy Officer

- Promote Aotearoa New Zealand's interests overseas
- Report on affairs and develop foreign and trade policies
- Liaise with local authorities and negotiate agreements with other countries

Immigration officer / manager

- Examine documentation such as passports
- Approve or reject entry into a country
- Organise the removal of people who have broken immigration law

International aid worker

- Manage and assess projects
- Support long-term development
- Evaluate responses to emergency situations

Iwi relationships manager

- Develop strategic direction and objectives to build successful and enduring partnerships with iwi/Māori
- Provide advice and support to boards and senior leadership teams
- Develop cultural capability and manage relationships risks

Community development officer

- Promote the well-being and engagement of diverse communities
- Support people to create and implement plans to make improvements in their community

Communications / media advisor, journalist

- Develop information, media and communication strategies
- Research, write, edit and produce content for various audiences and mediums

Export / customs coordinator

- Specialise in domestic and international markets or laws
- Inspect or coordinate mail, import and export goods
- Administer documentation and ensure adherence to the law

Examples of other job titles and careers include:

- Advocate
- Research analyst / assistant
- Business development advisor
- Court registry officer
- Environment protection officer
- Client onboarding coordinator
- Comment moderator
- Social media coordinator
- Intelligence support officer
- Judges' clerk
- Legal aid debt officer
- Library assistant
- Performance auditor
- Policy and procedure writer
- Technology specialist.

Further study options

Political Science and International Relations graduates can undertake further study from honours through to PhD-level, which can lead to a career in tertiary teaching and research. UC offers a Master of Policy and Governance, and a Master of International Relations and Diplomacy. Many Arts graduates go on to study teaching, journalism or management.

Further study may facilitate career benefits such as specialist skills, entry into a specific

occupation, higher starting salary, faster progression rate, and advanced research capability.

It is important to determine which, if any, further study options align with future career aspirations.

For further UC study options visit:

www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study

How can I gain a sense of career direction?

Understanding yourself and others is important to gain a sense of direction. This grows with experience; therefore, trying new things and reflecting on an ongoing basis is important.

Career planning checklist

Discover and reflect on:

- Your values, interests, strengths, abilities, and aspirations
- Your connection to whānau, people, and places
- Lifestyle preferences and location
- The skills you want to gain, use, or enhance

Engage in a variety of experiences to learn about:

- How you want to contribute to society, the environment, and global challenges
- The tasks, responsibilities and work environments you prefer
- Your work values, priorities and interests

Learn more and gather career and study information

(refer to page one of this resource)

- Speak with people working in careers that interest you; check the realities of a job/career
- Gather information from various sources

Identify your next steps

- Talking to a career consultant can help you to identify your next steps. Visit: www.canterbury.ac.nz/life/jobs-and-careers

What have other students and graduates done?

Explore career stories of students' university experiences and UC alumni who make a difference globally in varied ways.

Visit: www.canterbury.ac.nz/about-uc/why-uc/our-students/student-stories



Clive

Director, Mates Social Media

Master of Business Management Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with a minor in Philosophy

What do you enjoy about your work?

I get to meet different people on a daily basis and help to solve commercial marketing problem with a creative lens. Every day is just totally different.

How does your degree relate to your work?

If you love what you are studying, you'll be that much more motivated to find a way to use your degree. Political Science has lots of traditional pathways but the skills you learn are also extremely transferable into other industries. My social media specialisation is in the political sphere. I'm lucky enough to speak to political organisations and consult them on how to further promote democracy!

How did the PACE course impact your career?

It was a good way to get to know Christchurch businesses better and learn in a more practical environment. In a full circle moment, my business took on a PACE student over the summer. It was such a good way to give back to the University, and this particular student provided so much value to the company she's now coming on as part-time employee!

What are your goals for the future?

I'm really privileged to be an employer ensuring that my team has a really good environment to work in and that I'm creating a culture and business that they continually want to be a part of. I want to keep growing my business to reach a stage where we get to work on flagship, high production advertising material.

Career guidance

Career services are available for future and current students, and recent graduates. To learn more, contact:

Te Rōpū Rapuara | Careers

T: +64 3 369 0303

E: careers@canterbury.ac.nz

www.canterbury.ac.nz/life/jobs-and-careers

Helpful career insights

- Speaking with employers is key to finding opportunities; not all jobs are advertised
- Developing an online presence is useful as employers can search for future employees online
- Learning about recruitment patterns and where to find opportunities is important.

Study advice

Student Advisors at UC help with questions focused on starting, planning and changing studies. To connect with Student Advisors, visit:

www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/study-support-info/study-support

Future students – contact:

The Future Students team

T: 0800 VARSITY (0800 827 748)

E: futurestudents@canterbury.ac.nz

First year students – contact:

Kaitoko | First Year Student Advisors

T: +64 3 369 0409

E: firstyearadvice@canterbury.ac.nz

Continuing students – contact:

Toi Tangata | Arts

T: +64 3 369 3377

E: artsdegreeadvice@canterbury.ac.nz

www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/academic-study/arts

