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## What is a political scientist?

A political scientist studies political concepts and analyzes how politics influences societal development. They research past trends to provide insight on the possible effects of different policy decisions or events. Many political scientists work for the government, and they can work in almost any field, including education, non-profit work and technical services.

Political scientists can also perform many roles, often specializing in a particular area of politics like international relations, political philosophy or civics. Some common jobs for political scientists are:

- Lobbyist
- Campaign manager
- Market researcher
- Public relations specialist
- Journalist
- Political analyst
- Professor
- Political consultant

## Political scientist responsibilities

The specific responsibilities of a political scientist may vary depending on where they work, but most political scientists have similar duties overall. Political scientists stay up-to-date in their field to advise others and provide an overall analysis of politics as they relate to their organization. The key duties of a political scientist include:

- Researching the current political climate
- Looking for patterns and trends in policy
- Publishing books, articles and reports based on political research
- Giving strategic advice on policy
- Collecting and sorting data
- Predicting social and economic trends based on policy
- Staying current with changes in government policies and regulations
- Generating public support for an idea or policy

When conducting research, political scientists analyze historic documents, public records, election results, surveys and economic data. They identify trends in information and make recommendations on how those trends could influence their employer.

## Political scientist qualifications

As experts in their field, political scientists should have a master's or doctoral degree in political science or a related field like public policy or law. During their education, political scientists build their understanding of policy through internships, research assistantships and independent studies. In addition to their formal degrees, political scientists should have a history of demonstrating several key skills:

- **Communication:** Political scientists must be able to explain complicated political concepts. They often collaborate with lawmakers, researchers, activists and community groups, which requires clear verbal and written communication.
- **Analysis:** Political scientists use their analytical skills to notice trends and patterns, then make informed suggestions based on the data. Political scientists should be proficient in gathering statistics and interpreting their meaning.
- **Problem-solving:** Political scientists use their understanding of politics to improve political systems and further the goals of their organization. Creative problem-solving is an essential skill for political scientists who want to make policy changes.



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## **Sample interview questions**

When interviewing candidates, ask open-ended questions that encourage them to relate their skills to the job. Create specific questions about the job and general questions to determine their working style and subject knowledge. Here's a list of sample questions that you can use to guide an interview for a political scientist:

### **Describe a project where you had to work with large amounts of data and report your findings.**

This question can show you concrete examples of how the candidate categorizes data and discovers trends.

### **What is your experience with public speaking?**

Political scientists need to share their insight with others, so top candidates should have polished public speaking skills.

### **How would you create a cost-benefit analysis of a new company policy?**

Having the candidate explain a common type of analysis can show their ability to present concepts to others and confirm their expertise.

### **What interests you about working in politics?**

Asking about what inspires each candidate may help you choose a political scientist who would support your organization's mission.

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