

# Careers in Political Science

When we think of jobs you can get with a degree in political science, we typically think of things like a politician, lawyer, or maybe a teacher. While this is the case, there are many more professions and career paths available than the ones you've probably thought of before. The key reason this is the case is because of the wide variety of skills that you learn as a political science major. Research, writing, teamwork, critical thinking and analysis, critical reading, debate, and argumentation skills can all be parlayed into valuable career fields that will have you living on your own in no time.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the types of career paths, both public and private, that you can pursue with a degree in political science. While this won't be a complete guide to everything you can do, we hope to give you some resources and ideas for further education. We'll start off with the more obvious careers, such as those that will take you to the halls of government, and then move into the private sector, where jobs can be had in everything from business and finance to administration, the media, and non-profits. Finally, we'll discuss the academic path that can take you (back) into the classroom.

## Government Careers

When talking about careers in government, the typical ones come to mind: a politician, a staff member for an elected official, or some sort of administrative job. But there are so many more opportunities available in the government and not only the federal government. Although the federal government employs over 2.5 million people (not including the military),

state and local governments employ almost 16 million more people! In looking just at the federal government, a good way to think about the job opportunities available is from the top down.

### **Working for Elected Officials**

Elected officials can't do it alone. They rely on a small army of staff members to support their activities and foster relationships with constituents and other politicians. Every member of Congress is allocated a budget with which to build their office and attract personnel, allowing them to decide how many staffers to hire and for what functions. You could be an advisor on specific policy areas or a communications aide, assisting members of Congress with outreach to the public, the media, and their constituents. You will also assist members with researching and creating legislation, negotiating with other members of Congress, and being a liaison with committees and their work.

On the home front, members of Congress create offices in their districts and states to facilitate contact with their voters. Part of the work of these staff members is something called constituent service. Whenever you are having a problem with some area of government, be it Social Security, immigration, or the military, you can contact your member of Congress, and he or she will attempt to intercede on your behalf. This valuable function not only assists voters with their everyday problems but makes it more likely that they will vote for that congressman or woman in future elections. This is just another task you could be hired to do when working for members of Congress.

Outside of members' offices, Congress requires a multitude of others to get their work done. Staff members are hired for individual committees, and party organizations also hire staff. For example, the Judiciary Committee in either the House or the Senate hires people whose sole job is to work on issues related to that committee. Both the Democratic and Republican caucuses and their respective campaign committees also hire staff to coordinate activities among their members. These types of jobs require good communications skills, the ability to process and understand political issues, and the ability to work together as part of a team. Although many of these jobs come with hard work and long hours, you'll have the opportunity to see the political and legislative process up close and personal.

Congress also has nonpartisan organizations that assist members in getting their work done. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) are two such agencies. The CBO provides independent, nonpartisan budgetary information to members to help them in the annual budgetary process. It provides estimates of annual revenue and program costs and calculates the official cost of pending legislation. The GAO performs investigations into the performance and activities of executive branch agencies. Members of Congress can request that the GAO investigate certain policies, programs, or organizations and the GAO will report back its findings to the member and the rest of Congress.

These organizations provide several job opportunities for political science majors who are interested in the nuts and bolts of budgetary and government policy and can be effective in their ability to communicate.

Job opportunities also abound in the White House, where you can work on domestic policy, communications, outreach and the media, working with the Congress, and so much more. While we normally only see a few select top advisors on TV representing the president, there are hundreds more individuals working in the West Wing organizing everything the White House and the president do. The White House also contains agencies like the Office of Management and Budget, which assists the president in constructing his or her annual budget. Like the Congress, White House staffers are likely to spend long hours at the office, but it doesn't hurt that the office is the White House.

Don't forget about the elected officials at the state and local level. Members of state legislative bodies in all fifty states require the help of others to complete the job they were elected for, and many of the same responsibilities that members of Congress give to their staff members are also reflected in state legislatures. This means that by working for a state legislator, you have the opportunity to contribute to issues that are likely to be important to your fellow citizens and have a far more immediate impact. For example, the state of California has an economy that rivals some of the largest economies around the world; the immediacy of monetary policy and government spending makes it so that the actions of state legislators are likely to impact Californians quite directly. State governors also require a large amount of assistance in formulating policies and carrying them out. Since state governments carry out most of the day-to-day activities of governing, these types of jobs can have a very real impact on your community and state.

## **The Military**

Political science degrees can also lead to excellent careers in the U.S. military. In order to be an officer in most branches of the armed forces, you must hold a bachelor's degree, and although the military does not specify what that degree must be in, political science provides future military officers with the knowledge of world affairs and domestic politics that help sharpen their analytical skills.

As the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz wrote, "War is the continuation of politics by other means." The military is ultimately a tool of foreign policy that is placed under the control of a civilian, elected leadership. Being able to understand not only the history of international affairs and its effect on military doctrine but current events is crucial to understanding the role the military plays and what it's capable of doing. For example, an understanding of the rise of the Islamic State in the Middle East can be important but so is understanding how other militaries have fought terrorist insurgents. This is part of the reason that military history is often a required class for ROTC cadets in college.

Sometimes, in the course of duty, troops will be asked to work with soldiers from other states, the United Nations, or NATO. Often, international soldiers come to American military schools for additional training, and this is a tool of furthering relations with those states. Cooperating with individual soldiers from other places may be easy, but often, dealing with the foreign military machinery may be hard. An understanding of those countries and their geopolitical situations will ease those situations and further American military and diplomatic goals.

## The Bureaucracy

Not only are there fifteen major cabinet departments in the federal government, but there are countless smaller agencies and offices that deal with everything from getting Social Security checks out on time to regulating the stock market. If there is something you're interested in, chances are there's a bureaucracy that's involved in that policy area. You can be a federal agent with the FBI; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; or the Drug Enforcement Agency. You can be in the diplomatic corps of the Department of State or a doctor in Veterans Affairs. While many of these jobs may require more specialized education, there are any numbers of interesting jobs available.

The first stop when looking for a job with the federal government is the website USAJobs.gov, which provides an updated list of positions available and maintains an application system you would use to apply for those positions. (USA Jobs will be covered in further detail in Chapter 3.) USA Jobs provides a quick reference list of jobs available by major in college, and while political science does appear on the list, there are a number of other related career paths you can also consider:

- Business or commercial law
- Community planning/development
- Economics
- Global public policy
- History
- International trade, finance
- International relations
- Humanities
- Administration
- Statistics
- Urban planning

What is intriguing about many of these positions is that you don't have to live in Washington, D.C., to pursue a career in the federal bureaucracy. Many agencies have offices located throughout the United States at which you can find appointments. Larger communities will often have Social Security offices, or if you live near a military post, you can find jobs on base or with the VA.

One line of bureaucratic work that you may find interesting is that of regulatory work. Examples of regulatory agencies include the Securities and Exchange Committee (SEC), which oversees banks and the stock market; the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which regulates environmental issues; the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), whose responsibilities include approving prescription drugs

and overseeing food preparation and labeling; and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which regulates airports and airlines. The main purpose of regulatory agencies is to take the laws that have been passed by Congress and turn them into actual workable rules that industry must follow. Not only do regulators write these rules, but it's also up to them to investigate compliance with and enforcement of them.

Another example of interesting and exciting work can be found in the U.S. Foreign Service. The Foreign Service comprises the diplomats carrying out U.S. foreign and diplomatic policy around the world. An understanding of languages, cultures, and customs is requisite, but being a Foreign Service officer provides you with the opportunity to travel throughout the world and be stationed at one of hundreds of embassies or consulates, actively contributing to the mission of the United States at home and abroad. You can specialize in a functional area, like politics or economics, or in a geographical area, depending on your experience and education. Becoming a Foreign Service officer is a demanding and rigorous process, with the Department of State looking for those individuals who possess a wide array of knowledge and significant international experience. While there is no specific educational requirement to become a Foreign Service officer, a degree in political science can provide the political and economic background that is often tested in the Foreign Service Exam. Participation can lead to a fulfilling career, with the top echelons of the Foreign Service often serving important and high-placed diplomatic roles throughout the world.

Jobs in the bureaucracy, especially in the federal civil service, provide lots of room for career advancement. Once in, you can compete for higher pay and promotions, and if positions are available, you have the option of moving to different areas. Although bureaucrats are often maligned, these types of jobs are necessary for the everyday functioning of American government. It might seem boring, but the jobs these bureaucrats are carrying out can be exciting and rewarding.

### **Peace Corps**

Established by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, the Peace Corps is an esteemed volunteer program that provides needed assistance throughout the world in areas ranging from health and agriculture to economic development. With almost seven thousand volunteers serving worldwide, the Peace Corps is an attractive postcollege option but can be quite competitive to get into. There is no general application for the Peace Corps; instead, potential volunteers apply for specific positions in designated countries. This allows potential volunteers to choose which projects interest them the most and which projects they can most directly benefit. Most volunteers serve in a two-year program, but quick-response teams are also open to past volunteers. A political science degree can provide excellent preparation for a stint in the corps, as understanding global dynamics, institutions, and development are key when participating in Peace Corps projects.

## Lawyers

One profession often crosses the boundary between public and private: the law. Not only can you practice in private, lawyers are in demand in the public sector. While being a lawyer in court is what usually comes to mind when you think about the law, there are plenty of other positions for lawyers in the government. Lawyers can be used when crafting and creating legislation, when analyzing legal implications for policy, and for interpreting and implementing legislation.

The most obvious place for lawyers in government is the Department of Justice, which is responsible for investigating and prosecuting federal crimes. However, most bureaucracies have legal departments whose responsibilities include analyzing legislation, writing regulations, ensuring that all laws are being followed, and recommending policy directives. Lawyers also have a role to play in the Department of Defense, as they can provide guidance on the interpretation of international agreements like the Geneva Convention. Similarly, lawyers are instrumental in crafting diplomatic agreements and treaties, centered in the Department of State.

One area of law that is particularly important for the bureaucracy is called administrative law. Administrative law involves the body of law that governs how the government is organized and run. Administrative law includes things like regulations that bureaucracies craft and administer and how those regulations are carried out. The major piece of legislation that governs administrative law is the Administrative Procedures Act of 1946. The APA requires that bureaucracies wishing to publish new regulations must follow certain procedures to not only inform the public of those regulations but to give the public an opportunity to comment on them before they are put into effect. Many challenges to regulations today come out of the APA and the requirements it lays out for making and implementing regulations. In fact, this is so consequential that there is an entire court system, the administrative courts, that hears cases related to administrative law.

## Private-Sector Jobs

By the term *private sector*, we mean nongovernment jobs. Believe it or not, as many job opportunities that exist in the government for political science majors, there are even more in the private sector. Since we left off talking about lawyers in government service, we'll pick up with that topic here.

## Lawyers

If you watch much television, you're probably quite familiar with the sight of the courtroom lawyers. They either work for government to prosecute crimes or are defense attorneys, defending their clients from a charge or set of charges. While this is certainly a legitimate area of law, there are far more other areas of law that

you could become interested in if you choose to become a lawyer. Here's just a sampling:

- Animal law
- Antitrust law
- Banking law
- Business law
- Communications law
- Constitutional law
- Contract law
- Entertainment law
- Family law
- Health law
- Immigration law
- Juvenile law
- Marital law
- Music law
- Patent law
- Space law
- Sports law

Law degrees can also lead to jobs in entertainment or sports as an agent or representative for business affairs or contracts. It can also be parlayed into teaching constitutional law or writing on judicial issues for the media. Just because you get a law degree does not mean you're limited in the types of things you can do with it.

### **Campaigns and Elections**

Just as there are opportunities for lawyers both in and out of government service, jobs in the realm of campaigns and elections straddle the border as well. Due to laws restricting the use of governmental staff in the service of campaigning, when politicians run for office, they require a whole separate apparatus to organize and run their campaigns. Opportunities to work on political campaigns are wide and varied but unfortunately ebb and flow with the coming and going of election season. Campaign operatives are needed to assist in organizing travel for both the candidate and needed staffers, communicating with the press, establishing a message to potential voters, mobilizing potential voters, writing speeches, testing public opinion, and, perhaps most importantly, raising money. Today's modern campaigns require staffers to address new dimensions of life and society, including social media and rapid reaction to comments made by others. Often, jobs with candidates can be parlayed into government positions, if and when the favored candidate wins election.

The importance and scale of campaigns and elections are such that cottage industries specializing in all of these tasks have grown to behemoth scale. These policy shops provide specialized advice to candidates and their campaigns about what their message should be or sound like, the appearance of the candidates themselves, public-policy issues, and public opinion. In fact, pollsters, those who construct and conduct public-opinion polls are in high demand not just for those seeking public office but those already in it. Other firms provide services such as crafting media messages and campaign commercials. One of the most important services that these operatives can offer is on how to raise the enormous amounts of money that are often needed to run successful campaigns. A political science degree is excellent preparation for these professions because, in addition to the basic knowledge gained, many

programs require courses in research methods and statistical methods that impart strong analytical research skills.

One final area of employment in the arena of campaigns and elections is that of campaign finance law. Given the flow of money into politics today and the complicated laws and regulations about what can and cannot be accepted, campaign finance lawyers are often needed to advise campaigns on what is acceptable or not and to file the required disclosures that most all candidates must file revealing who has given what to their campaign. These lawyers can play powerful roles in the outcomes of elections themselves not only by advising candidates but shaping the interpretation of campaign finance law.

### **Business and Finance**

Political science degrees can also lead to promising positions in business settings, particularly businesses that have interactions with governments, domestic or foreign. Think about what you learn as a political science major. Your knowledge of global affairs, international organizations, and international politics can assist major global corporations in navigating international hurdles when foreign governments must be considered or dealt with. Many large businesses and financial institutions undoubtedly have foreign dealings, particularly in countries with favorable tax laws.

One of the areas in which political science degrees can be useful is in global trade. The recent negotiation and signing of the Trans-Pacific Partnership is a work not only in politics but economics and trade. It takes quick thinking and a solid foundation of knowledge to be able to negotiate issues not only between countries but between businesses and states. If this line of work sounds interesting, you may wish to consider a minor in business or economics along with a political science major (or admittedly, vice versa).

Businesses often require expertise in the areas of administration and evaluation. An education in the fields of public policy and/or public administration can provide a potential employer with a way to understand their business from a cultural or institutional perspective. Experts in public administration not only help in the everyday functioning of the organization but provide advice on how organizations should be structured or reformed to make them more efficient and effective.

Policy evaluation, or the analyzing of outcomes and outputs of policy to determine if and how well they are solving the intended problems, can help industry understand their own policy initiatives and ensure that they are implemented in a sensible fashion. Any time a company institutes a new policy, the skills of a good evaluator can be used. Program and policy evaluators are often hired on by a company to perform in-house evaluations of their operations and provide policy advice. While evaluators can also form their own operation that can then be contracted to perform evaluations, they are equally as likely to be hired to be on staff.

## **Nonprofits, Nongovernmental Organizations, and Foundations**

Interest groups are those organizations which seek to influence public policy in ways other than getting candidates elected. Examples of these include the National Rifle Association (NRA), People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), or the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). These organizations are only the beginning of the different types of organizations you can work for with a political science degree—interest groups, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), political action committees (PACs) and super PACs, charity foundations, and other nonprofit organizations can benefit from your knowledge.

For interest groups, in particular, you could go to work as a lobbyist working to influence government on that group's issues. Lobbyists work to persuade government officials to support and pursue an interest group's desired policy direction. They are involved in shaping public thought on major issues and proposing policy solutions and can be intricately involved in crafting legislation. In joining an interest group, you can also provide advice on the direction of their public campaigns and informing the public without necessarily becoming a lobbyist. There are thousands of interest groups out there, so chances are you can find a group that aligns with issues you're interested in, from animal welfare to salt and sugar in processed foods to veterans' issues.

If you are interested in lobbying government, there are also firms in Washington, D.C., and in state capitols across the country whose only job is lobbying. Other organizations will pay money to the lobbying firm to represent their interests in Washington. As a lobbyist working for one of these firms, you would likely be representing a handful of interests and organizations not only to lawmakers but also as a communicator alerting your clients to issues going on that might affect them.

PACs and super PACs are organizations that represent groups or individuals and raise money on behalf of an issue or a candidate. Working for one of these groups would bring you into contact with electioneering activities like raising money, crafting a message, creating a public-relations plan, and campaigning on behalf of your topic or candidate. In recent election cycles, the role of super PACs has only been growing, and some have raised millions of dollars on behalf of their issues and candidates. In fact, you could even create your own super PAC with a relatively small amount of time and effort. The same is true of interest groups!

Nongovernmental organizations are nonprofit citizen groups that can be organized locally, nationally, or internationally. Some examples of these include the American Red Cross and the International Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, CARE International, and Greenpeace. These types of organizations provide services that governments either cannot or would not provide or advocate for specific issues; for example, Doctors Without Borders was instrumental in fighting the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Because these organizations often work with governments and international organizations like the United Nations,

knowledge of governmental affairs is requisite for the easy functioning of these organizations.

### **Think Tanks**

A relatively new type of organization has also become influential in politics: think tanks. Think tanks are organizations that hire teams of people to research and write in particular areas of policy. Think tanks have become significant in some policy circles because of their thorough research reports on current policy issues. The proposals they put forward are often adopted by politicians who then integrate them into legislation. Given that the focus of think tanks is on current policy problems, think tanks may be an ideal profession for the political science major that enjoys research and writing.

Typically, think tanks will focus on a particular policy area and prepare written reports on what the government is doing or not doing or what the think tank believes the government should be doing. In addition, they craft policy documents that they hope to use to influence policymakers and thought leaders. Other think tanks are organized around particular ideologies. The Heritage Foundation is a conservative think tank; they tackle multiple policy areas but from a conservative, Republican angle. On the liberal side of the spectrum, the Center for American Progress uses the motto “Progressive ideas for a strong, just, and free America.” Of course, there are any number of think tanks that are nonpartisan or nonideological, like the Brookings Institution, the Carter Institute, Freedom House, or RAND.

### **Media**

The media is a fantastic outlet for work in political science. Many political science graduates have turned their degrees into careers in journalism precisely because they understand the intricacies of government and how the system operates. In addition to the major news outlets that you can think of, there are some news-gathering operations that exist solely to track the comings and goings in the political world. Some of these include *Politico* and *Congressional Quarterly*. Most large news organizations will have Washington bureaus to cover and report on the federal government. Local news channels and newspapers will often find the occurrences of their state and local governments as front-page news. Additionally, the skills you develop in researching and writing as a political science major will add to your appeal.

Today, the media doesn't just consist of the radio, newspaper, and television outlets. Social media has thrown open the doors to different types of media and journalists. Twitter has a handle dedicated specifically to government in the U.S. and across the world. Facebook has become a major source of political information, for better or for worse. Blogs and independent reporting also have a major impact;

for example Erick Erickson, a conservative commentator, made his mark with the blog and news site redstate.com. While news coverage on the *Huffington Post* has broadened into pop culture and entertainment, the website started by Arianna Huffington started out as a liberal news site. The openness of the Internet has not only revolutionized the media but has allowed independent journalists to make a mark on their profession.

In addition to becoming a journalist, you could also go to work as a communications advisor for politicians, parties, or other organizations. Particularly with the growth of social media, the ability for people and organizations to be able to communicate effectively with citizens has become even more important. Politicians find they must monitor feeds on Twitter and Facebook to get a good feel of the public pulse. New social-media sites are popping up all the time, and young people are in the perfect place to understand not only their usefulness but how to use them to their fullest advantage. Combined with knowledge of politics, you can make yourself an attractive job candidate.

## Teaching

Unfortunately, teaching is an undervalued field; state requirements are steep, parents demanding, and students are often difficult. Despite this, teaching the next generation of citizens is a rewarding and fulfilling career option. While teaching at the college level will be taken up shortly, teaching in middle and high schools is another option for those with a political science degree. These formative years are important for imparting a basic knowledge of government to children and to stoke interest in political affairs. High school civics and government courses are often required of all students, and a good teacher can prepare his or her students for citizenship by being an effective communicator, as well as being knowledgeable about her or his subject area.

Many educators find their way to teaching through an education degree; however, you can still enter the field without it. Some universities offer an education or educational studies minor; pairing that with a political science degree will give you not only needed knowledge in politics but also prepare you for the rigors of the classroom, including lessons plans, classroom management, and assessment. Depending on the state in which you plan to teach, there may be alternative-certification programs, where those without an education background take classes and exams that will certify them to teach after they have already gotten into the classroom. Additionally, you may enter the teaching profession and then decide to pursue a graduate degree in education.

If you are interested in a career in education and either wish to serve in underperforming communities or are perhaps unsure about it long term, you can participate in a national program called Teach for America. Upon being accepted into the program, you will be hired by a school in an underperforming area for two years throughout which Teach for America will provide you training in education and

teaching. By participating, you will not only gain valuable experience but you will be putting your education to good use by educating the next generation in some of the areas around the country that are most desperate for good teachers. Additionally, the experience will bolster your résumé for employers and other professional and graduate programs you may wish to enter.

## Academics

Once you have achieved an undergraduate degree in political science, you may begin to think about furthering that education and perhaps eventually becoming a university professor or academic. This means you not only conduct your own research into and about politics but you also teach at a university, college, or community college. Within academia, there are different activities you can undertake that require different degrees. The best way to explore these is to discuss what you can do in academia with what degree you achieve. A bachelor's degree would be what you pursue as an undergraduate. Although you could use that to become a teacher in K–12, you'll need an advanced degree to work at the college level.

The next level is a master's, and it usually requires between thirty and forty hours of graduate credit, depending on the institution. These classes provide you with more in-depth knowledge of political science and the research that has already been completed in the field. You will be asked to select a concentration where you will focus your studies. Some degrees require the completion of qualifying exams, a thesis, or both. Qualifying exams or comprehensive exams vary depending on your school, but in general, they consist of a set of questions you will be asked to answer either in written form, orally, or both. A thesis is an independent research project you will undertake under the guidance of a faculty advisor and faculty committee. The length will vary, but it will generally contain a number of chapters and extensive independent research.

The completion of an MA in political science allows you to teach at the college level. The classes you are qualified to teach often depends on the concentration you selected. If you selected international relations as your field of study, you'll be better qualified to teach classes in that area than you will be in political theory. While instructors with MAs find jobs at community colleges, junior colleges, and state universities, most faculty positions require even more education.

A PhD in political science amplifies the requirements of the MA. Depending on your school, you'll need somewhere around ninety hours of graduate course work, inclusive of dissertation credit hours. At this point, you'll need to pick your major field of concentration and one or two minor fields. These fields should be selected depending on what you find most interesting since, after all, you'll be spending many years studying this. Like the MA, you'll also be asked to take qualifying exams before you are admitted to PhD candidacy. PhD candidacy means you have completed all of the requirements for a PhD except for a dissertation. (This status is also known

as ABD, or “all but dissertation.”) A dissertation is a book-length work of individual research, again conducted under the supervision of a committee of faculty headed by your main dissertation advisor.

A dissertation is usually what takes the longest to complete; some PhD candidates take upwards of three to four years to complete it! This does not mean it *will* take that long, however. It often takes that long because brand-new research projects take time to establish, and assembling data and research takes even longer. On average, PhD candidates complete their dissertation in two years’ time. Once your dissertation is complete, you will be subjected to an academic ritual called the defense. In front of your committee (and others, if invited), you will have to defend your work. If your advisor is smart, he or she will not let you defend until you are ready, but sometimes, defenses can be difficult. Only once you successfully defend your dissertation are you granted the PhD.

A PhD, as the terminal degree in political science, allows you to teach at colleges and universities. There are two types of job tracks in academia, tenure track and non-tenure track. Non-tenure track jobs will not confer tenure (essentially a long-term, guaranteed contract for your job), nor will they allow much room for promotion. However, the requirements to perform research will be much less or nonexistent. In other words, non-tenure track positions are usually focused solely on the teaching of undergraduates and, in some cases, graduate students. A tenure track position allows you entrance into the hierarchy of professors. The entry-level professor is what’s called an assistant professor, and she or he is non-tenured. Depending on the school you work at, you will not only teach but perform significant amounts of research and school service. On average, after five to six years, you are reviewed by the faculty at your school and considered for tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor. Again, after five to six years of continued teaching, research, and service, you can be promoted to the top rank, a full professor.

The bottom line to any university, tenure track job is that you will be performing multiple tasks in addition to teaching. You will need to publish research articles in peer-reviewed academic journals or even books. Additionally, you will be expected to provide service in your school and your discipline. This can take the form of serving on faculty committees or working within your own department advising student groups or providing career services. Service in the discipline can include serving as a peer reviewer for a journal or for textbooks or serving as a discussant or chair at conferences.

Once in academia, professors often have the option of moving into administration. Administration includes all of those people who are responsible for running the school: the department chairs, deans, provosts, and even the school presidents. Sometimes, these positions come with teaching and research responsibilities, but often, they do not. But they do offer the opportunity to be deeply involved with the operations of your school and give you the chance to see and make major changes at a larger level.

It is worth noting that sometimes those who go into academics expect one thing and find something else they weren't expecting. Some get into academia to research but neglect their teaching while others focus on the teaching without performing independent research. The quality highly valued in academia is the rare person who can communicate effectively in the classroom and perform innovative and interesting research.

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