Positive Prospects
Careers for Politics Graduates and Why Number and Data Skills Matter

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Campaign for Social Science

#SocialScienceCareers
@CfSocialScience
Overview

• Prospects
  – Employment, sectors & occupations, Earnings, Institutions
• Futures
• Pathways
  – AS/A level maths, impact of number & data skills on earnings
• Conclusions
What we’re NOT saying

• This is NOT a full causal analysis
  – Self-selection of students, complex pathways
  – Most important, IMMEDIATE employment outcomes

• NOT saying all social science studies should be number-based
  – Appreciate political theory, international comparisons, elite studies, etc.

• NOT saying ALL students need same level of number and data skills

• But ARE saying we need more social science undergraduates with these skills
Almost 4 out of 10 students graduate from university with a *social science* degree.*

Just 5% of social science graduates, or 2% of all graduates receive *politics* degrees. *
Year: 2015

Employment Prospects

- Politics graduates have generally good employment prospects.
- One year after graduation:
  - 55% in work in the UK or abroad
  - An additional 6% in a combination of work & study
  - An additional 27% in further study alone
- In other words: 88% are in some form of work and/or study
Destinations of full-time politics graduates, 2015/16

- 51% in UK Work
- 6% in Overseas Work
- 27% in Further Study
- 6% in Work & Further Study
- 4% in Overseas Work
- 6% Unemployed
- 5% Other

Legend:
- UK Work
- Overseas Work
- Work & Further Study
- Further Study
- Unemployed
- Other
However, politics graduates’ immediate employment rates are slightly lower than those of the other social sciences combined.
Politics graduates’ immediate employment rates are also low in comparison to the rest of the social sciences disciplines—though this can be explained by the higher number that go on to further study.

### Employment Prospects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Full-Time Work (UK &amp; Abroad)</th>
<th>Work &amp; Further Study</th>
<th>Further Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training Teachers (X1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building (K2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing (N5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounting (N4)</td>
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<td>Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, ... (N8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Work (L5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Architecture (K1)</td>
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<td>Finance (N3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management Studies (N2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Studies (N1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economics (L1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sociology (L3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Policy (L4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthropology (L6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychology (C8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human &amp; Social Geography (L7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Studies in Education (X3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politics (L2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law by Topic (M2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broadly-Based Prog. within Law (M0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law by Area (M1)</td>
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</tbody>
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0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Politics graduates go on to work in a wide range of sectors and occupations, confirming that their skills are useful in a range of fields.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sectors and Occupations</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific &amp; Technical Activities</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information &amp; Communication</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale &amp; Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles &amp; Motorcycles</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration &amp; Defence; Compulsory Social Security</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative &amp; Support Service Activities</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; Food Service Activities</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Service Activities</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial &amp; Insurance Activities</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Health &amp; Social Work Activities</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate Activities</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Politics graduates go on to work in a wider range of sectors than many other social science fields, where graduates tend to concentrate on specific industries.

**Psychology Graduates**
- Human Health & Social Work Activities (28%)
- Education (17%)
- Wholesale & Retail Trade (10%)

**Economics Graduates**
- Financial & Insurance Activities (28%)
- Professional, Scientific & Technical Activities (27%)
- Information & Communication (9%)

**Human & Social Geography Graduates**
- Professional, Scientific & Technical Activities (21%)
- Wholesale & Retail Trade (13%)
- Education (10%)

**Politics Graduates**
- Professional, Scientific & Technical Activities (15%)
- Public Administration & Defence (13%)
- Financial & Insurance Activities (10%)

**Finance Graduates**
- Professional, Scientific & Technical Activities (29%)
- Financial & Insurance Activities (26%)
- Wholesale & Retail Trade (8%)

**Sociology Graduates**
- Public Administration & Defence (16%)
- Human Health & Social Work Activities (13%)
- Education (12%)
Politics graduates also go on to a range of occupations.

- Business and public service associate professionals 40%
- Business, media and public service professionals 17%
- Administrative occupations 9%
- Corporate managers and directors 4%
- Elementary administration and service occupations 4%
- Sales occupations 4%
- Health and social care associate professionals 3%
- Teaching and educational professionals 3%
- Science, research, engineering and technology professionals 3%
- Customer service occupations 3%
76% of politics graduates go on to work in professional occupations.

The most popular professions are:

- Business & public service associate professionals: 40%
- Business, media & public service professionals: 17%
- Corporate managers and directors: 4%

The most popular non-professional occupations are:

- Administrative occupations: 9%
- Elementary administration & service occupations: 4%
- Sales Occupations: 4%
60% of global leaders have undergraduate degrees in social science.

Social science graduates account for large percentages of those in leadership positions in many career fields.
Social scientists generally do well in terms of earnings.

- One year after graduation, the median salary of all UK domiciled full-time graduates in the social sciences was broadly similar to the median salary of all subjects combined.
Politics graduates do well in terms of earnings relative to many other social science disciplines.

Yet, they do not do as well as those with social science degrees that are either more professionalized or more likely to have number and data skills.
Politics students graduating from Russell Group universities do better on average – and at the lower and upper quartiles – than others in terms of reported earnings one year after graduation.

Notably, this effect is not as big for politics graduates as it is for students in some other social science disciplines where students are expected to have number and data skills – like economics, finance, and accounting.
Social science graduates have analytical skills making them valuable to employers.

But as the nature of work changes, social scientists are likely to need to enhance their number and data skills in the context of the digital revolution.

- This will help them successfully compete in tomorrow’s job market
- It will also allow them to play their part in solving the society’s grand challenges.

This is especially true for politics students, who have great potential to combine astute political and social understanding with big data to help address critical challenges facing the UK and society today.
Recall: Politics graduates often go into professional occupations across an array of industries.

- Mason et al. have found that an increasing percentage of 20-60 year-olds feel that advanced mathematical and statistical skills were important to their work.
- And that advanced mathematical and statistical skills are ‘essential or very important’ for managers and professionals.
The numbers of social science undergraduates who have completed AS or A levels in mathematics varies by the subject of their degree.

Fewer than one in ten politics students in the UK had an A level in mathematics in 2007 or 2010.
Impact on Earnings

• Social science graduates who are more likely to have number and data skills, and to have A level mathematics, do particularly well in terms of earnings.
• Politics students’ earnings may be affected by lower levels of these skills.

*Estimate earning returns to university degrees by subject (Index by Sloane and O’Leary 2004)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Science Subjects</th>
<th>Other Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountancy</td>
<td>Accountancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths &amp; Computing</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine &amp; Related</td>
<td>Electrical Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
<td>Maths &amp; Computing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Financial Studies</td>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture &amp; Related</td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>Geography</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>History</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Politics</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

• There is about as much variation in STEM employment and earnings as there is in social sciences.
• Politics students have good prospects
• These will be enhanced if students can show number and data skills
• This is an issue for undergraduate teaching
• BUT ALSO schools policy could help make continuing engagement with number more common
  • Early specialisation, multiple pathways, clear signalling