One of the most commonly asked questions about any major is “what job will this major get me?” This type of question assumes that the field of study directly equates to a specific job category. While this assumption may be true in fields like engineering or business, students in the liberal arts are preparing to enter a wide array of job possibilities. Some more effective questions are “by majoring in Political Science (or any major), what skills can I develop that will be useful in later careers?” and “how can I prepare for getting a job after I graduate?”

Dependable Strengths and Transferable Skills

In job listings and information about qualities that lead to success in different careers, there are multiple skills and strengths that employers value: analytical thinking, effective written and oral communication, logical reasoning, creativity, deep reading, and research skills. As a student studying political science, you regularly practice these transferable skills. In addition, political science students learn how to use data and evidence to support arguments, analyze current and historical events, understand how power is created and used, and evaluate arguments. As a student you also have additional strengths that translate well to the job market: the ability to focus on a task, understand different viewpoints, work with others, negotiate agreements, and manage multiple tasks and deadlines. Keep these broad skills and strengths in mind and you pursue your degree. When you actually apply for a job, they will help you explain what you have actually learned and give you examples. Potential employers are much more interested in what you can do for their organization than in what you have on your transcript, so being able to understand your capabilities and explain them is vitally important.

Preparing for a Job After You Graduate

The University of Washington provides a number of tools and tactics for preparing for a career after you graduate. One of the most important of these is The Career Center, which provides advice, training, workshops, events, job listings, publications, and classes about how to make the step from college to career. Take advantage of the Career Center’s resources as early as possible rather than assuming that you can just jump into this knowledge right before you graduate. You will make a smoother and less stressful transition from school to career if you learn how to look and prepare for a job while pursing your education.