

OPTIONS

FOR

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS MAJORS



*What can I do with an IR major?
What have students done after graduation?*

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INTRODUCTION

So you're thinking about majoring in international relations? You've read our program information and think it sounds like a fun, interesting, and challenging major – it could be the one that's right for you. Although one question is holding you back: “What exactly can I do with it?” After all, pre-med students go to medical school, while those concentrating in finance work for investment firms. Truth is there is no single path for a student of IR to follow. But herein lies one of the major's distinct advantages: an array of opportunities await you after graduation!

In this era of “globalization,” there is great demand from business, government, and academia for people whom possess specialized knowledge of international affairs and “core” research, writing, and analysis abilities. Upon completing the International Relations Program's curriculum and senior thesis – the latter being the capstone of the IR major – not only will you possess these, you will have reached a level of proficiency in them that is unrivaled by your peers. The upshot: the IR major at Penn will challenge you to become the ideal candidate for the very career options this booklet outlines. Indeed, after reading through it, we hope you see that the real question here is not what options exist, but which of these to choose!

Our very best wishes for your success,
The International Relations Program

PRIVATE SECTOR

Overview

With the onset of globalization, private sector firms are seeking to expand by attracting diverse, international clients. In this environment, there are many opportunities for students studying international relations to choose from. Positions involving marketing, sales, finance, operations, or strategic planning are widely available both home and abroad. So keep an eye-out for American companies with branches overseas, or foreign companies with subsidiaries located domestically.

Many IR majors in recent years have pursued options in business directly after graduation. They are often able to secure positions with top consulting and investment banking firms – such as Goldman Sachs, A.T. Kearney, KPMG, McKinsey, and Merrill Lynch – because of their prized communication and analytical skills.

In some cases, IR majors take positions overseas so as to apply and thereby enhance their knowledge of a country, region, issue, or language. Graduates are widely dispersed: from the United Kingdom, France, and Czech Republic, to China, Japan, Malaysia, India, and Brazil. Below is a sampling of areas within business where IR graduates have found success.*

Consulting

Consultants make their careers by solving problems with techniques learned from special training. They help clients understand and / or mitigate problematic issues – from acute to chronic, profit maximization to sustainable development. Companies hire consultants not only for their critical thinking skills, but also for their objectivity. Such a quality lends credibility to research, analyzing data, preparing reports, and presenting findings.

Research Analysis

In today's world the ability to synthesize a vast amount data and draw meaningful conclusions is critical. Research analysts are individuals whose roles are designed specifically for this task.

*Data from other universities has been pulled from the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs *Career Opportunities in International Affairs*.

They rely on talent in analysis to separate, refine, and articulate relevant information from proverbial chaff. Graduates of IR are employed as analysts in public and private sectors alike for entities such as intergovernmental organizations, investment banks, and “boutique” hedge funds.

An example of this kind of job is in political risk analysis – an emerging field that has attracted much attention as of late. It entails assessment of a country’s political, financial, economic, and environmental dynamics in advising clients of levels of risk posed to particular investments or corporate interests.

IR ALUMNI SURVEY

Year	Position	Corporation
2012	Analyst	Promontory Financial Group, LLC
2012	Analyst	BlackRock
2012	Analyst	Cornerstone Research
2012	Business Analyst	Deloitte Consulting LLP
2012	Merchandise Planning Business Analyst	Target Corporation
2012	Project Analyst	Expedia, Inc.
2012	Corporate Development Analyst	JP Morgan
2012	Research Analyst	Fortress investment (Logan Circle Partners)
2012	Associate	Boston Consulting Group
2012	Associate	PricewaterhouseCoopers
2012	Associate	Avalere Health
2012	Consultant	Booz and Co.
2012	Consultant	Alvarez & Marsal
2012	Associate Consultant	Bain & company
2012	Business Consultant	IBM
2012	Finance Associate	Diageo
2012	Utility player	GameChanger
2012	Entry-level Trainee	Kit Capital

GOVERNMENT

Overview

A sentiment all IR majors share is passion for international affairs. Therefore many of them choose to serve in government, military, or work in the arena of policy-making for contractors. As one may expect, the U.S. Department of State is the most sought-after employer for reasons of nationalism and the institution's prestige and ability to affect change. Students often apply to the Foreign Service with desire to see the world while being instrumental in the advancement of ties between the U.S. and foreign nations. And so a yearly ritual among many IR students is preparation for the Foreign Service Officer Test, the first step of the application process.

Beyond the State Department, IR grads have gone into positions with an array of government employers, including: the Department of Labor, Department of Justice, Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and various Congressional committees. Below are some areas within government where IR graduates have found success.

Federal Government

The US federal government is the largest employer in the United States and one of the first places IR graduates look to, as a number of agencies maintain an international affairs division. In some cases, federal employers recruit independently. Applicants therefore should view them as individual opportunities. But the hub for federal recruitment is USAJOBS.gov, which hosts with a myriad of postings. Alongside these, the site provides general information on working for government and the application processes; making it an essential resource for anyone seeking public service.

Government Relations

Government relations, colloquially known as “lobbying,” is another way for IR graduates to work directly with government. A “lobbyist” is a representative who can speak to the interests of foreign governments, industries, firms, or interest groups. Individuals can also choose work for Political Action Committees – known as PACs – centered on issues and / or individuals.

Capitol Hill

Positions on Capitol Hill typically include working in one of the 535 Congressional offices or for legislative committees and ancillaries. Capitol Hill staffers often perform several functions while representing their officeholder. They respond to inquiries from the general public, conduct research, draft bills and public statements, and monitor upcoming events on the legislative calendar.

Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs)

Inter-governmental institutions are legally recognized transnational actors in global affairs. The number and influence of these organizations has been increasing ever since the end of the Cold War. Known as “IGOs,” they are founded on a wide range of global issues, like ensuring regional security or facilitating international economic or environmental collaboration. The United Nations (UN), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) are just few examples.

IR ALUMNI SURVEY

Year	Position	Corporation
2012	Intern	White House NEC
2007	Paralegal Specialist	Department of Justice, Office of International Affairs
2007	Analyst	Office of Naval intelligence
2006	Staff Assistant	U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
2005	Field Representative	Congressman Brad Sherman
2003	Staff Assistant	U.S. Senator Graham
2003	Middle East Analyst	Unitarian Universalist UN Office
2002	Foreign Service Officer	U.S. Department of State
	2 nd Lieutenant in US Army	U.S. Army
	Special Assistant to Secretary of Commerce & Trade	Commonwealth of Virginia
	Congressional Fellow	Congressman Mike Honda’s Office
	State Representative	State of Texas
	Teaching Assistant	Embassy Of France
	Researcher	National Commission for Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill
	Research Associate	U.S. Commission on National Security
	Intelligence Analyst	U.S. Department of Defense

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Overview

While most students choose to defer graduate school for a few years in preference for work experience, a majority eventually do return to academia to pursue advanced degrees in international relations disciplines: social sciences, economics, business, and law. This is not to say you are limited to such fields. Indeed, students have furthered their education in pre-med, language, veterinary, and even divinity programs.

Within the U.S., students attend such high-ranking schools as Harvard, Johns Hopkins SAIS, Georgetown SFS, University of California system, New York University, Duke, Boston University, and Northwestern.

Our majors have also leapt at the opportunity to study abroad, most commonly in Europe and Asia. Supporting these endeavors, some have notably national awards level, such as Fulbright Scholarships and Pickering Fellowships. Also not to be overlooked are award schemes offered by institutions directly or their native countries. Your rigorous training from Penn's IR Program makes you strong candidate for any award scheme conceivable. So while the notion of applying for national awards is understandably intimidating, rest assured you are qualified and deserving. You simply need to give yourself a chance by applying.

Programs of Study

Among the many subfields of study IR graduates can pursue, some popular programs include peace and conflict resolution, international security, and public policy.

Scholarships

Students looking to advance their studies of international relations will find a number of relevant scholarships, of which the U.S. Department of Education's Foreign Language and Area Studies Program and the State Department's Fulbright award are just two examples. Both of these provide undergraduate or graduates students with funding to undertake language training or conduct research abroad. For additional information on IR-related scholarships at <http://www.upenn.edu/curf/>

IR ALUMNI SURVEY

Year	Position	Institution	Location
2012	Master of Public Policy	Harvard Kennedy School of Government	Cambridge, MA
2012	Master of Public Policy	Georgetown University	Washington, D.C.
2012	Master in Security Studies	Georgetown University, School of Foreign Service	Washington, D.C.
2007	Fulbright Fellowship	U.S. Department of State	Washington, D.C.
2006	Latin American Studies	Stanford University	Stanford, CA
2006	Modern European History	Cambridge University	England
2006	MSc in Nonprofit / NGO Leadership	University of Pennsylvania	Philadelphia, PA
2006	Business	Monterey Institute of International Studies	Monterey, CA
2006	Asian Pacific Studies	Graduate Institute of Peace Studies, Kyung Hee University	South Korea
2005	MSc in Foreign Service	Georgetown University	Washington, D.C.
2005	Fulbright Scholar	U.S. Department of state	Turkey
2004	MSc in Development Studies	University of Cape Town	South Africa
2003	MSc in International Relations	London School of Economics	England
2003	MA in Political Science	Bar Ilan University	Israel
2002	MSc in Social Anthropology	Oxford University	England
2002	MSc in International Relations	London School of Economics	England
2002	MSc in Political Sociology	London School of Economics	England
2002	PhD in Sociology	University of Michigan	Ann Arbor, MI

LAW

Overview

Many of our graduates have chosen to continue their education in law school. IR majors are well-rounded, intelligent, and skilled candidates for highly-ranked programs, which include: Penn, Harvard, Cornell, and Columbia.

Since law schools are increasingly competitive and value experience, many of our majors work in the field immediately after graduation. Many get offers in New York City and Washington D.C. for private firms. Public law opportunities are also attractive, with graduates taking positions with, for example, the Department of Justice and the New York County District Attorney's Office. Naturally, majoring in IR also facilitates those interested in gaining experience abroad.

IR ALUMNI SURVEY

Year	Position	Institution
2012	Paralegal	Ward, Greenberg, Heller, & Reidy, LLP
2012	Law Student	Columbia Law School
2012	Law Student	Cornell University
2012	Legal Assistant	Spiegel and McDiarmid, LLP
2012	Corporate Finance Legal Assistant	Sullivan & Cromwell, LLP
2012	Litigation Legal Assistant	Sullivan & Cromwell, LLP
2007	Law Student	University of Pennsylvania
2007	Law Student	New York University
2006	Law Student	Harvard University
2006	Law Student	George Washington University
2006	Law Student	University of Maryland
2006	Law Student	University of Virginia
2006	International Law Student	Ecole Des Hautes Etudes Internationales
2006	Law Student	Syracuse University
2006	Paralegal	Cooper Levenson, LLP
2006	Legal assistant	Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher, & Flom

NON-PROFIT

Overview

IR majors are well-suited to apply their unique undergraduate experience to all kinds of non-profit organizations in various locales and positions. Many choose this path to dedicate themselves to causes ranging from humanitarian aid to curbing nuclear proliferation. They may work for think tanks in D.C., researching solutions for global security or development issues. In some cases, they are stationed “on the ground” – providing critically-needed social services to the local population. Either way, they will continuously rely on their knowledge and training from completing the IR curriculum and senior thesis.

Also not to be overlooked, teaching is a popular choice among IR graduates. Over the years many of our students have worked with the JET Program teaching English in Japan or other programs all over the world. Others have chosen to serve at home through Teach for America.

IR ALUMNI SURVEY			
Year	Position	Institution	Location
2012	Assistant Director for Operations and Logistics	International Humanity Foundation	Nakuru, Kenya
2012	Project Associate	IDinsight	Lusaka, Zambia
2012	Missionary	Athletes in Action	Nairobi, Kenya
2012	Site Coordinator	LIFT	Boston, MA
2012	Teacher	Teach for America	Miami, FL
2012	Teaching Fellow	Teach for China	Yunnan, China
2012	English Teaching Assistant	University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong
2012	Public Health Program Manager	Hope for Haiti	Les Cayes, Haiti
2005	Teacher	NYC Teaching Fellows	New York, NY
2005	Grant Management	Aga Khan Development Network	New York, NY
2004	Client Services Coordinator	ACCION New Mexico (AmeriCorps VISTA)	Washington, D.C.
2003	Correspondent	Oil and Gas Eurasia	Moscow, Russia

SO WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING NOW?

You can start working toward the career of your dreams now – irrespective of your class standing. The key word is “*engagement*.” Starting with Penn’s resources, under and upper-classmen alike may seek guidance from the various services offered here, at Penn. Of these are the Career Service and Fox Leadership Program. Furthermore, the Alumni Relations Office will often host “meet and greet” events attended by Penn alumni. You can also get in touch with alumni through email using the Career Service’s PACnet, a network of graduates willing to offer advice.

To keep abreast of events as they are posted, you need to be proactive. First thing’s first: request to be added to the listservs of relevant programs and departments on campus. You should try to engage with the university community by attending as many events as reasonable. Some of these may not be overtly premised by “career development.” But by simply attending, you will absorb lessons from world-leading experts based at, and visiting, Penn. Furthermore, building the confidence necessary to approach speakers with questions is essential practice in accomplishing your goals. Speakers, after all, enjoy interacting with curious and driven students.

The IR Program hosts several extracurricular clubs and activities that serve to broaden your knowledge and perspective beyond the confines of a classroom. You are welcome to participate in as many of the following as you wish: the International Relations Undergraduate Student Association (IRUSA), the Epsilon Chapter of Sigma Iota Rho (Penn’s chapter of the Honor Society for International Studies), or play a role on the committee that annually produces the premier undergraduate publication in international affairs, Sigma Iota Rho’s *Journal of International Relations*. By participating in any of the aforementioned, you are constructively working on skills that will be demanded of you in your professional life. Perhaps even more, you most certainly will have fun working with peers, whom hold similar passions and interests in producing a result, collectively, you can feel proud of.

Last but not least, you should take advantage of what the IR Program itself offers. If your interest is in, say, international security, then take a specialized class on a particular aspect of the topic. The IR Program routinely offers two classes that speak to directly to this area: political risk analysis and counterintelligence, both of which are taught by Co-Director of the Program,

Dr. Frank Plantan. Furthermore the Program carefully maintains an internship database pertinent to a variety of career paths. This is accessible through our website (<https://www.sas.upenn.edu/irp/>), using your PennKey. Alternatively a hardcopy may be located in the IR Office in 635 Williams Hall. And if you wish to drop-in sometime: call us at 215.898.0452 to book an appointment with an advisor. Advising is the hallmark of the IR Program. We would be delighted to meet and speak with you in-person for bespoke advice on how you can unlock your goals at Penn and beyond.

CAREER RESOURCES

AFSA

American Foreign Service Association. Find jobs in the field of International Relations.
<http://www.afsa.org/jobs.cfm>

Career Diplomacy: Life and Work in the U.S. Foreign Service

Harry W. Kopp & Charles A. Gillespie, Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C.
2008

Careers in International Affairs

Maria Pinto Carland and Candace Faber (Eds). Georgetown University Press,
Washington D.C., 8th Ed. 2008

Federal Government

www.usajobs.gov (job and internship opportunity with the federal government)

Foreign Policy Association

“Job Board” (website) http://www.fpa.org/jobs_contact2423/jobs_contact.htm

Foreign Affairs

“Job Board” (website) <http://jobs.foreignaffairs.com/>

International Jobs: Where They Are, How to Get them

Eric Kocher and Nina Segal, Basic Books, New York, NY, 6th Ed. 2003

Penn Office of Career Services

<http://www.upenn.edu/careerservices/> (Visit for more generic career advice and resources)

U.S. State Department

Information and applications for becoming a Foreign Service Officer, Foreign Service Specialist or Civil Service employee for the U.S. Department of State
<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/hr/>

Vault

Find career descriptions, look for job openings. Accessible free of charge from the career service website.
<http://www.vault.com/>

Young Professionals in Foreign Policy

Website: <https://ypfp.org/>