THE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
MAJOR STUDENTS AFTER GRADUATION

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ABSTRACT: International relations is a wide-ranging subject that students can investigate and research the relationships between countries and governments. In many universities, it’s called international studies, international affairs, or global studies, and it can be studied and developed in humanities and social science departments. The course of International Relations is often categorized as either political science or interdisciplinary. Students can get degrees cover areas of politics, law, history, geography and economics after graduation. Nowadays, international relations has taken on an important significance because of our increasingly interconnected world. In this paper, we shall discuss the International Relations major and paths of study that a student of International Relations can take. We will discuss common curriculum, common international relations fields of study, as well as different requirements that go into the International Relations major. The paper also provides a broad knowledge base that students can use to excel in a variety of career fields. The paper is consider as a general information for who are interested in career opportunities for International Relations students. It is referenced from the curriculum and career orientation of universities around the world.

Keywords: international relations, career opportunities, global studies, international studies

I. INTRODUCTION

International Relations (IR) or International Affairs (IA) commonly also referred to as International Studies (IS) is the study in interconnectedness of politics, economics and law on a global level. Depending on the academic institution, it is either a field of political science, an interdisciplinary academic field similar to global studies in which students take a variety of internationally focused courses in social science and humanities disciplines. International relations also is an academic and a public policy field, and so can be positive and normative, because it analyses and formulates the foreign policy of a given state.

International Relations is certainly not a new concept. Historically, the establishment of treaties between nations served as the earliest form of international relations. Nowadays, international relations has taken on a new significance because of our increasingly interconnected world. Why international relations is important, is that it goes beyond peace and war, past poverty and business; rather it explores the key players in world politics, intrinsic political patterns, and identifies the theories for how resolution and cooperation can be reached. As the world becomes increasingly globalized, it is essential for us to develop the ability to understand the effects of globalization and other forces, and how they impact regions, and thus the decision of policy makers and leaders.

So, why should you study International Relations major?

International relations knowledge and skills enables students to interpret and navigate global affairs. This program effectively analyses how it impacts the development of the countries’s economies in the world. International relations provides transferable skills in history, politics, analysis, and research. These skills also help students to critically interpret the contemporary world, and analyze the shifting complexities that dynamically occur in politics. Besides, the study and practice of international relations nowadays is very valuable because of many reasons: promotes successful trade policies between nations; encourages travel related to business, tourism, and immigration, providing people with opportunities to enhance their lives; allows nations to cooperate with one another, pool resources, and share information as a way to face global issues that go beyond any particular country or region. Contemporary global issues include pandemics, terrorism, and the environment; advances human culture through cultural exchanges, diplomacy and policy development, etc.

Students that are thinking of going to International Relations programs are often thinking about what sort of requirements exist for an International Relations major. This is an important question, since students want to be versed in expectations for their studies. In this paper, we shall discuss the International Relations major and paths of study that a student of international relations can take. We will discuss common curriculum, common international relations fields of study, as well as different requirements that go into the International Relations major. The paper also provides a broad knowledge base that students can use to excel in a variety of career fields.

A. What can students get from curriculum of International Relations major?

Our richly connected, complex world demands professionals skilled in international relations, an exciting field of study that presents a globally oriented perspective on issues that transcend national boundaries. Many of the International
Relations majors can either be specific majors, or can be subfield majors within the political science major. Sometimes, there are instances where an International Relations major might have strong similarities to an international studies major. Therefore, the study and practice of international relations is interdisciplinary in nature, blending the fields of economics, history, and political science to examine topics such as human rights, global poverty, the environment, economics, globalization, security, global ethics, and the political environment.

During a Bachelor’s in International Relations, you can expect to take classes on economics, politics and government, explaining society, public policy, business behaviours, global conflicts, global security, environmental sustainability, etc. Many International Relations major programs might also have students concentrate on either Foreign Policy, Regional issues related to international relations, Diplomacy, Human Rights and Development, or International Relations Theory. Students studying for the International Relations major are often expected to take courses in these different fields. Then, there are also opportunities to take international relations internships (and take such courses for credit). Students can also write an International Relations thesis, and sign up for thesis credits, so that they can write their thesis on an international relations topic.

Because International Relations is a relatively new discipline, the academic approach, curriculums, and courses can vary significantly from one university to another. International Relations (often referred to International Affairs) has a broad purpose in contemporary society. For example, It seeks to understand: The origins of war and the maintenance of peace; The nature and exercise of power within the global system; The changing character of state and non-state actors who participate in international decision-making, etc. This means the study of international relations also focus on interdisciplinary research that addresses, anticipates, and ultimately solves public policy problems.

It is important to investigate several colleges and universities to find the one that takes an approach to International Relations that will allow students to reach their career goals. The interdisciplinary approach many colleges and universities favor means those who are working toward a degree in international relations take a diverse range of courses. Some of the general classes as well as those in each of the disciplines many colleges incorporate into their curriculum: political science, geography, economics, and history. Some programs also include classes in anthropology, international law, and religious studies.

Here are some international relations course titles at various schools:

- International Relations: Theory and Practice
- History of International Relations
- Globalization and World Order
- Non-Violent Conflict and Resolution
- Peacemaking and Negotiation
- Globalization and International Development
- Challenges and Dilemmas in American Foreign Policy
- Schools of Thought in International Relations
- Global Security
- Diplomacy and Statecraft
- Politics in the United States
- International Politics: Methods of Analysis
- Politics of Third World Nations
- Comparative Politics
- The Politics and Psychology of Persuasion and Prejudice
- Money and Power in the International Political Economy
- Middle Eastern Political Systems
- Human Rights in World Politics
- Electoral Systems

Source: Dawn Rosenberg McKay, 2019

The International Relations profession exposes individuals to working with foreign nations across cultural and political divides that requires professionals working in the field must possess these critical skills to maximize their effectiveness. A good job in International Relations requires a core set of fundamental skills that can help an individual to nurture positive relationships in order to advance overarching organizational goals. The skills you will develop while studying International Relations can be applied in many other areas and industries. Even if you have a change of heart
and decide that you no longer want to work in the International Relations field, your abilities will help you succeed in any other career.

Some of the most important skills you will develop and improve as an International Relations students: public speaking, verbal & written communication; gather, organize and analyze data to gain insights; cooperate with people who have different personalities, jobs, and goals; evaluate ideas, concepts, and proposals and offer constructive feedback; find solutions taking into account different cultures, interests, and mentalities; handle conflicts, find common ground, and reach mutual agreements, etc. A degree in International Relations enables you to develop an awareness of states and organizations and how they connect in the world. However, students need to gain skills in:

- Communicating effectively and fluently, both verbally and in writing, including an ability to translate complex ideas to a wide audience.
- Gathering, organizing and presenting information and data from a variety of sources.
- Critically analyzing information in order to form an argument and find possible solutions to problems or issues.
- Developing intercultural and global awareness, which is of value in a global job market.
- Working with others to achieve common goals through group work, group projects and group presentations.
- Time management and independent study skills, as well as an ability to reflect on your learning, and ethical considerations when using and presenting information.
- Using technology to research and present information and data.

Source: Clare Dawson, 2018

In this interconnected world, being able to communicate ideas clearly and powerfully is vital to success - particularly and ability to explain theoretical and practical approaches to political and government functions. Applying these skills to real world learning opportunities yields a more robust and balanced career.

B. Career opportunities for students graduating from International Relations

International Relations is a diverse degree which allows you to investigate the complexities of relationships between different countries and apply this understanding to the world of work. International Relations jobs are in high demand. This is not surprising, considering the ongoing development of the globalization process and the way in which companies cooperate across borders and try to expand in new markets and countries. International relations majors, in addition to graduating with an in-depth knowledge of world affairs, politics, economics, culture, geography, history, and language, also leave school with several valuable soft skills. They include listening, speaking, critical thinking, problem-solving, and writing skills. This strong foundation will qualify you to work both in the corporate and non-profit sectors. International Relations majors go on to have careers in government, law, politics, business, education, media, and international affairs.

With a strong foundation in the liberal arts, International Relations majors are suited for a variety of careers: campaigns, public policy, business, government administration, non-profit organizations, and even journalism. But remember that college isn't job training. It's important to get relevant work experience to complement your degree. Volunteering can be a useful way of developing experience either in the country or overseas. But what are your International Relations career options? International Relations graduates can work in a wide range of career areas in the commercial, public and charity sectors. Typical employers include:

- IGOs, such as the UN, UNICEF and The World Bank
- NGOs, such as Oxfam, Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)
- Charities
- Local and national government
- Media companies
- Law firms
- Banks
- International businesses

Source: Clare Dawson, 2018

Here are several job titles for which you may qualify after graduation:
Your adaptable skills as an International Relations major’s makes you suitable for almost every field, so it's up to you to narrow your focus. And if you are not fortunate enough to network your way into a position, it might be worth taking a look at what sort of internships you might be qualified for, even if you've already graduated. If you're interested in using your degree to work in the media, try writing for your university newspaper, blogging or writing for an online publication. For careers in other areas, such as teaching, business or law, you’ll also need relevant experience. It is not uncommon for people in international affairs to move from one type of career to another, from government to business, for example.

While a degree in International Relations does not lead to a specific career in the way that, accounting or engineering does, a major in International Relations, by emphasizing clarity in speech and writing, analytical skills and a detailed knowledge of world politics prepares students for careers in government, journalism, law, non-governmental organizations, international business, and teaching and research. Some graduates choose to study for further qualifications such as a Masters Degrees, PhD or Vocational Postgraduate course. A Masters course in International Relations is an option, but you could also specialize in areas such as security studies, diplomacy or global governance. Alternatively, you can focus on a specific geographical area, such as Europe, the Middle East or Asia.

As international connections, communication and collaboration become increasingly important across all areas of life, it’s unsurprising to find a corresponding increase in demand for graduates from the field of international relations. The most-coveted international relations careers – such as positions in high-profile international organizations – are hotly contested, and studying a specialized Masters in International Relations is a definite asset, particularly if combined with international experience. The Master of International Relations will help you make sense of the complexity of global politics and economics by giving you the analytical perspectives and skills to see both the “bigger picture” and detailed aspects of specific issues, with a solid intellectual grounding in key debates, historical events and political institutions.

Depending on your experiences, interests and aspirations, career opportunities related to International Relations in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors are in abundance. Whatever role you pursue, you will have the skills and knowledge ready to implement positive change. Working within an international relations setting means your interpersonal, analytical, decision-making and negotiation skills must be unparalleled.
II. CONCLUSION

International Relations courses explore a range of issues, including the nature of power and security, globalization and global governance, foster a better understanding of conflict and cooperation, war and peace in contemporary international politics. You should study a Bachelor’s in International Relations if you consider that the current socio-economic problems around the world can only be fixed through the direct involvement and cooperation of governments and private and public organizations. International Relations is the ideal discipline if you want to create a better society for future generations. It also allows you to prove that we have all the tools and resources necessary to address fundamental issues like hunger, lack of shelter, healthcare, education, etc.

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III. REFERENCES


