

PUBLIC RELATIONS

What can I do with this major?

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

Sales
Development
Marketing
Administration
Event Planning
Employee or Member Relations
Media Relations
Customer Service
Research

Public relations firms representing:
Private and public organizations, individuals,
and events
PR departments in large corporations
Public opinion research firms
Advertising agencies
Radio and television companies
Sports and entertainment organizations
Hospitality and tourism industry
Nonprofit organizations
Government agencies
Labor unions
Consulting firms
Freelance

Strengthen verbal communication skills by taking speech communication courses.
Enhance writing skills through additional coursework.
Learn to work well with teams.
Serve as public relations officer of an organization.
Get involved with related professional associations as a student member.
Acquire one or more public relations internships even if unpaid.
Be prepared to start at the bottom and work up to higher positions.
Consider a master's degree in public relations for higher level positions, especially at the executive level.
Find a mentor in the field to guide your own career planning.
Be willing to move to locations with more job opportunities.

MEDIA

Writing
Editing
Copywriting
Reporting
Broadcasting
Producing
Managing/Directing
Research
Media Sales
Media Planning

Publishing firms including:
Newspapers, magazines, and books
Wire services and syndicates
Newspapers
Magazines
Literary agencies
Internet sites/online news providers
Television and radio stations
Film industry
Freelance

Develop the ability to work under the pressure of deadlines in a fast-paced environment.
Work for campus or local newspaper, radio station, or television station.
Complete internships in relevant settings.
Learn applications related to web page design, desktop publishing, and other relevant technology.
Obtain sales experience.
Get involved with national and campus professional associations.
Develop excellent interpersonal, presentation, and research skills.
Be willing to take any job you can to get a foot in the door with an organization of interest.
Develop a portfolio or audition tape depending on the industry.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Advertising Sales
Sales
Marketing
Customer Service
Management
Insurance Underwriting and Claims
Training and Development
Human Resources
Labor Relations
Writing/Editing

Public and private corporations
Marketing companies
Internet marketers
Sport and athletic organizations
Retail stores
Hotels
Restaurants
Hospitals and other healthcare organizations
Financial companies
Insurance firms
Real estate companies
Print and electronic media
Other product and service providers
Consulting firms

Earn a minor or double major in business.
Obtain sales and marketing experience through part-time or summer jobs.
Develop strong verbal and written communication skills.
Complete internships in fields of interest to build the skills and experiences valuable to employers.
Hone computer skills and learn applications such as databases, spreadsheets, and presentations.
Demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills and learn to work well on a team.
Get involved in student professional associations and other campus organizations.
Consider earning a graduate degree in business to increase opportunities for advancement.
Stay current with business and industry literature and news.
Become knowledgeable about corporate social responsibility.
Build a network of contacts.

GOVERNMENT

Public Affairs
Risk and Crisis Communication
Campaign Marketing and Fund Raising
Campaign Management
Media Relations
Public Information
City or Town Management
Programming
Research
Lobbying
Conflict Negotiation
Program Administration
Community Affairs
General Services
Legislative, Executive, or Judicial Services

Federal government:
There are over 170 departments and agencies
State governments
Counties
Municipalities
Townships
School districts
Court system
Campaign committees
Special action committees
Elected officials
Political parties
Lobbying firms

Take courses or minor in applicable interest area(s).
Develop strong research, writing, conflict management, and negotiation skills.
Work on student government or local political campaigns.
Join related campus organizations and seek leadership roles.
Develop multi-cultural competence and learn to work well a variety of people.
There are a large number of specialized agencies within local, state, and federal government. Do extensive research to find the area that best fits your interests and goals.
Complete an internship with a government agency.
Maintain a strong GPA as many government programs are competitive.

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STRATEGIES

GOVERNMENT CONTINUED

Learn government job application processes. Seek assistance at your college career center.
Develop a network of contacts through referrals and informational interviews.
Consider earning a graduate degree in public policy/affairs, public administration, or related areas.

NON-PROFIT

Public Relations
Promotion
Event Planning
Service Marketing
Administration
Community Affairs
Fund Raising/Development
Research
Program Coordination
Grant Writing
Writing/Editing
Volunteer Coordination
Training

Local and national nonprofit organizations
Charities and foundations, e.g. within the areas of environment, arts, multicultural initiatives, religion, and health
Hospitals and healthcare providers
Educational institutions
Museums
Historical sites and societies
Libraries
Chambers of commerce
Professional associations
Special interest groups
Labor unions

Gain experience through internships or volunteer positions with non-profit entities.
Get involved planning events or fund raising for campus or local organizations.
Demonstrate knowledge and experience in a specialty area, e.g. public health, environment, urban issues. Consider a minor or specific courses to develop this expertise.
Learn to work well with different types of people.
Develop a wide array of skills including writing, speaking, budgeting, grant writing, and leadership.
Consider earning a graduate degree in public administration or nonprofit management to position yourself for great opportunities.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

EDUCATION

Teaching
Research
Administration
Student Affairs, e.g. Student Activities, Leadership Development, Admissions, Orientation, Career Services, Residence Life, Multi-cultural Affairs, Study Abroad, International Student Services
Academic Affairs, e.g. Academic Support Services, Advising, Educational Advancement Programs, Honors Programs
Library Sciences

Colleges and universities
Professional or graduate schools, including medical
Adult education programs
Vocational-technical educational programs

Obtain a doctorate degree to teach at colleges and universities.
Earn a master's degree in a specialized area e.g., College Student Personnel, Higher Education Administration, or Library and Information Sciences to work in other roles at post-secondary institutions.
Maintain a high GPA and secure strong faculty recommendations to prepare for graduate school.
Seek campus leadership positions such as peer mentor, orientation leader, or resident assistant.
Build strong interpersonal skills.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Develop excellent communication skills, both verbal and written. Creativity and good judgment are also critical skills in this field.
- Demonstrate enthusiasm and energy for the field.
- Obtain part-time, summer job, internship, or volunteer experience within an area of interest. Public relations is a competitive field and related experience is essential to break into the industry.
- Explore specializations within major and field. Select electives or earn a minor to enhance knowledge in area(s) of interest.
- Participate in co-curricular activities to develop skills such as public speaking, team work, leadership, event planning, and fund raising. Join professional associations related to public relations.
- Make the most of public relations campaign classes to learn as much as possible and to generate items for a portfolio.
- Be prepared to start at the bottom and work up to positions of greater responsibility. Expect to complete administrative tasks in entry-level jobs.
- Develop and utilize a personal network of contacts. Once in a position, find an experienced mentor.
- Obtain additional or advanced degrees to enhance knowledge of specific area of interests. For instance, a Master of Public Policy (MPP) will increase employability in government and non-profit agencies.