

Policy officer

As a policy officer you will build networks, gather information and analyse data to gain a deep understanding of the field in order to be able to confidently advise government departments on various matters, including things such as policy, strategy and investment.



What does the role involve?

- Keeping up to date with advances in the field
- Meeting and networking with a variety of people within the field e.g. academics and members of industry
- Attending events
- Gathering data
- Analysing data
- Writing reports
- Giving presentations
- Advising government officials
- Contributing to draft policy documents or strategies
- Developing proposals for new activities which support policy



What subjects should I do well in at school?

English, Mathematics, Science as a minimum. Other useful subjects include: Economics; Sociology; Philosophy; Psychology; Religion, Society and Ethics.



What qualifications do I need?

Strong GCSE qualifications in the core subjects including English, Mathematics and Science are essential. An undergraduate degree is usually required; however, this does not have to be in Science. Clearly a good understanding of Physics or quantum would be helpful, however, it is not vital. Many policy officers have degrees in Economics, Politics, Sociology or other Science disciplines not directly related to Physics e.g. Healthcare.



Where would I work?

Government offices. Sometimes remote working. Travel (domestic and international) is common.



What skills and attributes are required?

Good communications skills (verbal and written), presentation skills, networking, good organisational skills, interpersonal skills, ability to prioritise, be flexible, self-motivated, data analysis, ability to see the bigger picture, forward thinking.



What work experience would be helpful?

Work experience in government offices through an internship or summer placement would be beneficial. Many local councils and the Civil Service run paid summer internships for undergraduate students.



What about career progression?

There is the potential for policy officers to progress to senior positions such as senior policy officer or advisor and eventually to roles such as policy managers which oversee teams of policy officers working on different policies. You could also progress to becoming head of a particular policy area, being responsible for strategic decisions as well as managing several teams.

CASE STUDY



Kathryn Chen

Having originally studied Health Sciences and Public Health, Kathryn Chen decided to pursue a career in science policy. She is currently Head of Science, Innovation and Policy at the British Consulate-General in Toronto and has a specific remit of developing collaborations between the UK and Canada, in the field of quantum. Find out more about Kathryn's journey at tinyurl.com/careersinquantum



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