What does it take to forge a career in Science Policy? SCI interviewed individuals working in various science policy sectors to identify skills sets, attributes, and experiences that lead up to successful careers in Science Policy. Skill gaps for scientists willing to transition to a policy-related job were also identified.

**ATTRIBUTES OF A SCIENCE POLICY EXPERT**

Virtually all respondents actively participated in extracurricular training during their time in graduate school. They recall these activities, including internships and fellowships, as basic elements for a successful transition to a career in Science Policy.

Most participants also recommended engaging in additional activities during graduate school, including science outreach, teaching and mentoring and founding extracurricular organizations.

**MOST VALUABLE SKILLSET**

- Discipline-specific technical skills

**MOST VALUABLE QUALITIES**

- Humility and respect

*Where did you learn...?*

- Discipline-specific technical skills
  - In class and/or lab
- Interpersonal skills
  - During extracurricular activities

**TOP 10 SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES FOR SCIENCE POLICY SUCCESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral communication</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing projects</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humility and respect</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity and openness</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigate the government</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasion and influence</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working within teams</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing people</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SCIENCE BACKGROUND vs POLICY BACKGROUND

Benefits of science training
✔ Resilience and persistence
✔ Analytical skills and curiosity
✔ Familiarity with uncertainty and nuance
✔ Knowledge of the scientific process

Benefits of policy training
✔ Understanding how the government works
✔ Interpersonal skills training (e.g. persuasion)
✔ Broad exposure to policy issues
✔ Practical policy skills (e.g. memo writing)

Gaps in science training
❌ Unfamiliarity with how the government works
❌ Insufficient communication skills training
❌ Reduced interpersonal skills practice
❌ Misunderstanding of policy inputs

Gaps in policy training
❌ Partial topic-area expertise
❌ Unfamiliarity with the scientific method
❌ Poor knowledge of the university research system
❌ Limited exposure to science policy

“There is no single right way to have success in science policy but having a diverse range of skills from both technical and interpersonal realms is vital.”

12 WAYS TO PREPARE FOR A SCIENCE POLICY CAREER

- Enroll in fellowships
- Take cross-registered courses
- Join professional societies
- Engage with university government relations
- Read science policy foundational texts
- Teach and mentor others
- Take part in student government
- Find a mentor outside the lab
- Read the news
- Lead and found extracurriculars
- Participate in informational interviews
- Engage in science outreach and communication

METHODOLOGY: Semi-structured in-person and phone interviews conducted between July 22nd and August 15th 2019 to 26 individuals working in science policy jobs. Respondents were divided in three (3) cohorts: 1) PhD-trained scientists working in science policy; 2) Masters or PhD in policy working in science policy, and 3) mid-late career science policy professionals from varying academic backgrounds who have extensively hired, mentored, and/or managed individuals transitioning to a science policy career. See full report for differences between each cohort.