

What does it take to transition to a career in science policy? SCI interviewed individuals working in various science policy sectors to identify skills and experiences that led to successful careers in science policy. Benefits and gaps of an academic training were also identified.

## PROFILE OF A SCIENCE POLICY EXPERT



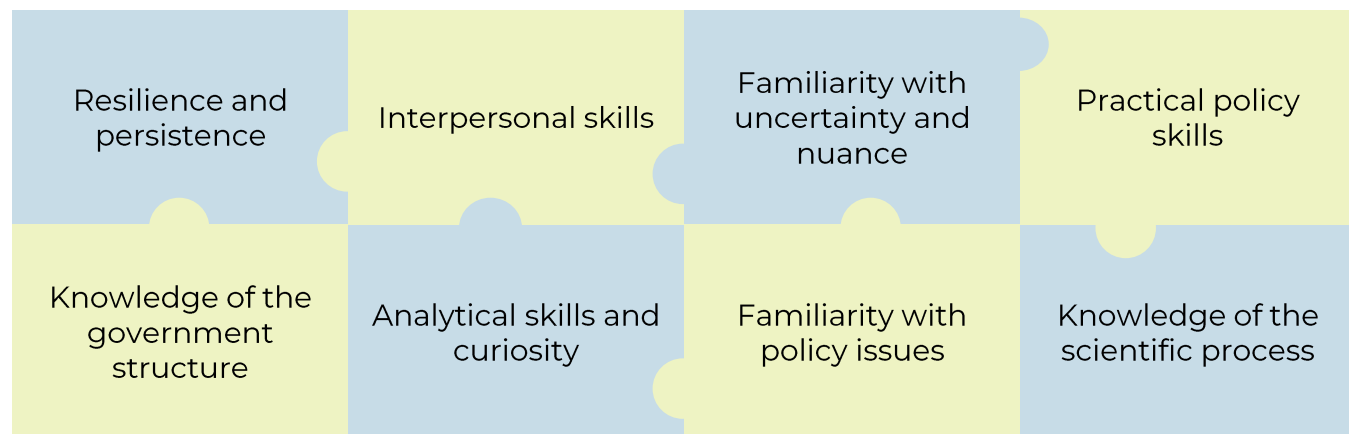
Virtually all respondents actively participated in **extracurricular activities** during their time in graduate school. They identified these activities, especially **internships and fellowships** outside of academia, as important elements for a successful transition to a career in science policy.



Among respondents, the most important skills needed for career success in science policy were communication abilities, both oral and written. Study participants frequently discussed the necessity of humility and respect to ensure a successful transition from academia to science policy.

## PERFECT FIT BETWEEN SCIENCE AND POLICY SKILLS

Interviews for this report found that the skills developed through scientific training (blue) complement those provided in a policy background (lime) and that a successful career in science policy needs a combination of both.



### Benefits of science training

- ✓ Resilience and persistence
- ✓ Analytical skills and curiosity
- ✓ Familiarity with uncertainty and nuance
- ✓ Knowledge of the scientific process

### Gaps in science training

- ✗ Unfamiliarity with how the government works
- ✗ Insufficient communication skills training
- ✗ Reduced interpersonal skills practice
- ✗ Misunderstanding of policy inputs

### 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 policy training

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

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