

Career Connections

Foreign Service

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

Foreign Service as a branch of the U.S. Department of State pursues diverse U.S. foreign policy objectives through Foreign Service Officers, who conduct relations with foreign governments and international organizations. Foreign Service Officers represent the U.S. government abroad and in international organizations, analyze and update political and economic developments in their host country, promote U.S. trade and commercial interests abroad, administer U.S. diplomatic and consular posts abroad, help and protect U.S. citizens abroad, provide consular services to foreign nationals, and disseminate information about the U.S. There are several career tracks within Foreign Service: administration, consular, economic, political, and public diplomacy. Not all Foreign Service Officers are abroad; some are posted in Washington, D.C. U.S. citizenship is required for Foreign Service.

The purpose of this program is to introduce you to the field of Foreign Service. It will prepare you for the Foreign Service examination, or for a graduate program in international affairs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Exploring Options

Many career paths can develop from this Foreign Service Career Connections program. You might become an international civil servant at the United Nations (UN) Secretariat or one of the UN affiliated organizations, an activist or an administrator of a non-governmental organization with international focus, a college or university professor, an English teacher in a foreign country, an employee in a multi-national corporation, or a Peace Corps volunteer.

The *Foreign Service Journal*, published by the American Foreign Service Association, offers some insights into the Foreign Service. The U.S. Department of State website (<http://www.career.state.gov/officer/index.html>) has helpful information about Foreign Service: functions of and how to become a Foreign Service Officer. In addition, the Career Center has many sources of information related to Foreign Service: *Careers in International Affairs*, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, *Inside a U.S. Embassy: How the Foreign Service Works for America*, *Realities of Foreign Service Life*, and *Bush Hat, Black Tie: Adventures of a Foreign Service Officer*. You might want to spend a few hours a month to explore the resources the Center has. A few Hanover alumni have gone into a foreign affairs field relevant to Foreign Service. You could contact them for information or assistance through the Career Center. They could become valuable resources for you.

If you want to know whether Foreign Service is right for you, you might do an internship with the U.S. mission to the United Nations in New York City, with the Department of State, or with one of the U.S. embassies or consulates abroad. The Department of State has programs that enable students to have some job experience in a foreign affairs environment. *United Nations Field Study* (PLS 337), taught in New York City, also offers a good opportunity for you to experience the field because it includes dozens of interviews with UN, U.S. and foreign diplomats in their offices.

Academics

Students interested in Foreign Service are expected to have a broad knowledge of the history, politics, economics, and culture of the U.S. and of the world. Follow current world events and domestic news on a daily basis. You should be an excellent communicator both verbally and in writing. Proficiency in a language(s) other than English is a big advantage. To broaden and deepen your understanding of other peoples, cultures, and societies, take a few spring term off-campus courses offered abroad and/or take advantage of Hanover's semester-long study abroad program. Following is a list of recommended courses that would be helpful to a career in Foreign Service:

Recommended Courses

COM 328	Cross-Cultural Communication
ENG	Any 200-level English course
ECO 113	Principles of Microeconomics
ECO 114	Principles of Macroeconomics
PLS 115	Introduction to American Politics
PLS 211	Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa
PLS 212	American Foreign Policy
PLS 215	American Political Thought
PLS 217	Latin American Politics
PLS 218	European Politics
PLS 219	Middle Eastern Politics
PLS 220	Politics and Society in Contemporary Asia
PLS 222	U.S. Legislative Process
PLS 231	World Politics
PLS 328	The Challenge of the American Founding
PLS 331	International Law and Organization
PLS 335	International Political Economy
PLS 337	United Nations Field Study

Foreign Service Examination

To become a Foreign Service officer, an applicant has to pass a series of steps (a written examination, an oral assessment, a security clearance, and a medical examination). The written examination consists of multiple-choice questions and an essay question. Only those who pass the written examination move on to the oral assessment. You can find

information about preparing for the oral segment at <http://www.careers.state.gov/officer/oralprep.html>. The Foreign Service examination is administered in April with a March registration deadline. You can obtain the registration information by visiting www.careers.state.gov. You can find test preparation materials at http://www.act.org/fswe/index_s.html. The 2004 edition of *Foreign Service Written Exam Study Guide* has information about written examination and oral assessment procedures as well as sample test questions and suggested study materials. *American Foreign Service Officer Exam* has model written examinations and information about test taking techniques. Both are available at the Career Center.

Co-Curricular Activities

Some on- and off-campus activities can help you develop skills necessary for Foreign Service.

On-Campus Activities

For communication skills: Admission Ambassador, Communication Club, and *Triangle*

For foreign language ability: French Club, German Club, and Spanish Club

For cultural understanding and sensitivity: International Club and Kaleidoscope

For knowledge about the U.S. and world: History Club

Off-Campus Activities

Activities such as the International Rotary Club and International Habitat for Humanity will deepen your understanding of other peoples and cultures. You may also benefit from a service learning trip to Jamaica or Mexico. Taking advantage of Hanover's study abroad program would also be good experience for a career in Foreign Service, as would applying for a study abroad grant during the summer. Whenever possible, you should take the opportunity to immerse yourself in other cultures so you will know how well you interact with others in foreign environments.

Work Experience

On-Campus Jobs

I-Pal: The Haq Center hires 10-15 volunteer I-Pals in the summer to assist in orienting new international students and to help them adjust to the new environment. Each I-Pal will work with two international students. This work experience will help you improve your communication skills with peoples from different cultures.

Faculty Research Assistant: Some professors have research interests in foreign countries; by assisting their research, you can expand and deepen your understanding of other countries.

Writing Center Tutor: This work experience will prepare you well for the Foreign Service examination, which tests your English grammar and composition skills.

Internships

As was mentioned above, the Department of State offers paid and unpaid summer internships for students. You can apply for an internship on-line at http://www.careers.state.gov/student/prog_intrn.html. Some non-governmental organizations with an international focus also hire undergraduate interns. The Washington Center, affiliated with Hanover College, where students may spend a semester offers internships closely related to Foreign Service.

Some other sites that offer internships related to Foreign Service are:

Central Intelligence Agency
U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee
U.S. House International Relations Committee
U.S. Department of Defense
American Academy of Diplomacy
American Foreign Service Association
Council on Foreign Relations
Foreign Policy Association
Kentucky World Trade Center
Middle East Policy Council
Nixon Center
World Affairs Council of Washington

Visit their websites for information. You may also consult *Directory of International Internships* and *International Internships and Volunteer Programs*, and *Internships in Federal Government*, available at the Career Center, to know about other internships relevant to Foreign Service.

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