Where do History majors go?

According to the 2015 Graduating Student Survey (with a 68.1% response rate for undergraduates in the History department):

- 90.7% of graduates were employed or going to graduate school.
  - 75.0% were employed
  - 14.1% had secure plans to attend grad school
  - 1.6% had a fellowship

Here are some examples of organizations that have hired Columbia History majors in recent years:

Examples of graduate schools and fellowship programs that have accepted Columbia English majors in recent years include:

- Yale University
- University of Oxford
- University of Pennsylvania
- Columbia University
- Juilliard School
- Yale Center Beijing Fellowship

What jobs do History majors do?

A degree in history provides knowledge and skills relevant to a wide variety of jobs across the career spectrum, including:

- **Local, State, Federal Government**: Public Policy, Regional Planning, Research, Intelligence, Foreign Service, City or Town Management, Legislative, Executive, or Judicial Services, Program Administration, Community Affairs
- **Politics**: Elected or Appointed Leadership, Campaign Management, Staff Administration, Special Interest Advocacy, Political Advising, Lobbying
- **Law**: Prosecution, Defense, Contractual, Corporate, Nonprofit or Public Interest, Government, Mediation
• Nonprofit: Administration, Public Relations, Program Coordination, Fundraising/Development, Grant Writing, Community Education
• Curatorial and archival management: Acquisition, Preservation, Exhibition/Installation, Research, Gallery and Museum Curation
• Education: Teaching, Curriculum Development, Higher Education Student Services, Administration, Advising/Counseling, Fundraising and Development, Information/Library Services
• Business: Financial Services, Consulting, Sales, Management, Human Resources, Public Relations, Training and Development
• Media: Reporting, Editing, Publishing, News Programming, Sales, Blogging, Investigative Journalism
• International Affairs: Governance, Policy Making and Analysis, Public Sector Reform, Poverty-Reduction Strategy, Ethics and Anti-Corruption, Human Rights, Public Law

Use CCE’s Industry Exploration webpages to learn more about these, and other fields.

What do employers want?

Most of the skills/qualities sought by employers are transferrable and/or soft skills that students can gain through classes, extracurricular activities, internships, volunteer experiences, or part time jobs including:

1. Ability to work in a team structure
2. Ability to make decisions and solve problems
3. Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization
4. Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work
5. Ability to obtain and process information
6. Ability to analyze quantitative data
7. Technical knowledge related to the job
8. Proficiency with computer software programs
9. Ability to create and/or edit written reports
10. Ability to sell or influence others

Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2015 Job Outlook

Your major can definitely demonstrate relevant coursework and knowledge to a prospective employer, but your studies aren’t the only aspect of your experience that employers are evaluating. They select people who they believe can do the job (have the right skills), want the job (have demonstrated an interest in the field) and are a personality fit for the team and organization.

What value do History majors bring?

According to the History department at Columbia, the history curriculum helps you to develop the following skills:

• Analytical skills
• Ability to think historically and critically
• Research and writing skills
• Ability to investigate hypotheses, analyze and debate arguments
• Verbal and written communication skills
• Collaboration and teamwork skills
• Language and cultural expertise

What if I’m an international student?

For international students at Columbia under student visas, selecting your major can play a significant role if you plan to work in the US after completion of your degree. Optional Practical Training is a work authorization that allows an international student to work in a job directly related to the student’s major area of study either before or after degree completion. Employer sponsored H1B Visas also have similar strict requirements. Students with more questions about this should visit the International Student & Scholars Office (ISSO) and view CCE’s International Students webpage at careereducation.columbia.edu/students/International-Students.