

## Careers in Fields Related to Communication

Knowledge of communication can be beneficial to any career. If you enjoy studying communication, but do not plan on pursuing it as a career, consider taking as many communication courses as you can fit into your elective selections. If your school permits it, you might choose to double major or minor in communication. Here are some career fields and occupations in which communication is important.

### **BUSINESS:**

It is well recognized that communication plays a vital role in the functioning of any government, business, or industrial organization. A national study indicates that the essential skills needed by a competent employee to get a job and to succeed and be promoted are primarily communication skills.<sup>24</sup>

***Careers in business and communication include:*** sales representative, executive manager, personnel manager, public information officer, industrial and labor relations representative, negotiator, director of corporate communication, customer service representative, newsletter editor, communication trainer, human resources manager, mediator, and buyer. (Also see Law, Media, and Public Relations and Advertising.)

***Communication subjects that can enhance a business career include:*** public speaking, interpersonal communication, introduction to mass media, business and professional communication, organizational communication, small group communication, interviewing, and listening.

### **EDUCATION:**

A teacher of any subject has to effectively organize and deliver material to students. Communication skills are necessary to facilitate comprehension and understanding no matter whether the subject is math, science, reading, or English. Great teachers are great communicators. Besides teaching, there are other education-related careers.

***Careers in education include:*** teacher (elementary and secondary), school counselor, educational researcher, audiovisual specialist, educational administrator, school/university information specialist, director of college news, director of a collegiate information center, educational tester, development officer, educational fund-raiser, alumni officer, college placement officer, college admissions director, and college recruiter.

***Communication subjects that can enhance an education career include:*** oral communication, public speaking, interpersonal communication, introduction to media systems, communication theory, communication research methods, communication in the classroom, intercultural communication, teaching the language arts, linguistics, sociolinguistics, nonverbal communication, small group communication, performance studies, forensics, family communication, conflict resolution, argumentation,

communication ethics, rhetorical theory and criticism, listening, persuasion, and communication disorders.

### **GOVERNMENT/POLITICS:**

Communication skills are essential to address the issues that challenge political leaders and our systems of government. Communication is the basis for gaining understanding between people, discussing similarities and differences, and settling disputes.

***Communication and government/political-related careers include:*** public information officer, speech writer, legislative assistant, campaign director, research specialist, program coordinator, negotiator, lobbyist, press secretary, and elected official.

***Communication subjects that can enhance a government career include:*** public speaking, journalism, interpersonal communication, introduction to media systems, mass communication, communication theory, communication research methods, organizational communication, argumentation and debate, rhetorical theory and criticism, political communication, persuasion, media performance, listening, communication ethics, performance studies, and acting.

### **HIGH TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRIES:**

The link between computerization and communication has become the subject of extensive research by communication specialists. Many departments of communication offer a specialization in information sciences, human information theory and processes, or communication technologies, often dealing with communication by computer, compressed video, and teleconferencing.

***Careers in technology and communication include:*** trainer for communication technologies, closed circuit television producer/director, systems analyst, technical copywriter, language specialist, speech synthesizer, cognition researcher, audio and visual computer display specialist, and performance assessor.

***Communication subjects that can enhance a high technology career include:*** oral communication, public speaking, interpersonal communication, introduction to media systems, communication research methods, communication theory, listening, communication ethics, and organizational communication.

### **HEALTH CAREERS:**

Communication is a key tool that health care providers must use in dealing with clients and patients to prevent illness, diagnose disease, and manage treatment and patient care. It is necessary for developing and maintaining trust between provider and client, their families, and other health care providers.

Equally important in health careers is the use of communication to educate and train a population in healthy behaviors such as nutrition, sexual health, and family planning.

***Careers in health and communication include:*** health educator, school health care administrator, medical grants writer, hospital director of communication, clinic public relations director, health communication analyst, research analyst, medical training supervisor, communications manager for federal health agencies, health personnel educator, medical center publications editor, hospice manager, drug rehabilitationist, health care counselor, activities director, marketing director, and health facility fund raiser.

***Communication subjects that can enhance a health career include:*** health communication, interpersonal communication, family communication, interviewing, business and professional communication, public speaking, research methods, small group discussion, conflict resolution, public relations, listening, nonverbal communication, persuasion, and communication ethics.

### **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS and NEGOTIATIONS:**

International relations and negotiations are communication-centered. Understanding the effect of internationalism and how it affects communication is fundamental to dealing with others in the world arena. In an increasingly diverse world economy, essential communication skills are: problem-solving, speaking, listening, writing, and the abilities to analyze information and interact among multiple cultures.

***Careers in international relations and negotiations include:*** on-air international broadcasting talent, corporate representative, translator, student tour coordinator, diplomat, foreign relations officer, host/hostess for foreign dignitaries, and foreign correspondent.

***Communication subjects that can enhance an international relations/negotiations career include:*** intercultural communication, international communication, nonverbal communication, public speaking, interpersonal communication, introduction to mass communication, communication theory, language and social interaction, public relations, political communication, and conflict resolution and negotiation.

### **LAW:**

Law is a profession which is essentially about communication. It involves establishing meaning and community through language. With a field so steeped in verbal and nonverbal skill requirements, a background in communication can serve as an effective beginning to a career in law. Communication training, or a degree in communication, can be useful for admission to law schools, as well as providing skills for use after law school. It is also valuable to paralegals and legal secretaries.

**Careers in law and communication include:** public defender, corporate lawyer, district attorney, public interest lawyer, private practice lawyer, legal researcher, mediation and negotiation specialist, paralegal researcher, legal secretary, legal reporter, and legal educator.

**Communication subjects that can enhance a legal career include:** public speaking, interpersonal communication, legal communication, media law, media regulation, argumentation and debate, listening, small group communication, conflict resolution and negotiation, persuasion, interviewing, communication ethics, nonverbal communication, performance studies, and acting.

### **SOCIAL AND HUMAN SERVICES:**

The way human services are communicated can affect how people use and evaluate those services. Social workers, counselors, and other similar professionals must be effective communicators.

**Careers in social and human services include:** public administrator, social worker, recreational supervisor, human rights officer, community affairs liaison, park service public relations specialist, philanthropic representative, religious leader, and mental counselor.

**Communication subjects that can enhance a social services or human services career include:** public speaking, business and professional communication, interpersonal communication, introduction to media systems, family communication, discourse analysis, cross-cultural communication, organizational communication, listening, relational communication, small group communication, communication ethics, crisis communication, and nonverbal communication.

### **Getting a Job in Communication**

- Your job search should include reading want ads, going to the college or university job placement service, listing with an employment agency, and networking with people who may be aware of possible job availability. Other suggestions for communication majors include:
- Become a member of the National Communication Association's Placement Service. Members can place their credentials on file which include a resume and letters of recommendation. Upon request the materials are sent to any prospective employers. A listing of openings in the field appears in Spectra, the monthly NCA newsletter. Most of the members of the placement service are graduate students who are pursuing careers in college or university teaching, and most of the job listings are for academic positions.

- Internships, part-time jobs, and volunteer positions while you are a student often lead to future job placements. These positions often build networks in which you get to know people who hire or know of possible openings. It is strongly recommended that communication majors obtain a position, whether paid or voluntary, which allows for “hands-on” experience in the field.
- Talk to your department’s instructors. They often are aware of job opportunities.
- Do informational interviews. Make appointments with people in your field who hold positions similar to your career desires. Ask them to describe the pathway they followed to obtain their position.
- While studying for your degree, assemble information that shows your talents. A portfolio of writing samples, audio and video tapes, and copies of reports and group projects, all can be valuable in showcasing your talents.
- Get to know your professors well enough so that they will be able to write recommendation letters for you that contain personal information.
- When asking anyone to write letters of recommendation, provide them with the documentation they will need to write about you with examples and illustrations. At a minimum, give them a résumé which lists your school activities, work record, and other information that they may not have about you.