What Skills Does a Degree in History Provide?

History majors will develop a variety of skills that are attractive to employers across all fields. Some of the top skills a History major will develop include:

- Effective writing and oral communication skills
- Finding solutions to intricate problems
- Perceiving the world from multiple points of view
- Creating persuasive messages
- Influencing and persuading
- Gathering information
- Ability to read, reflect, and critique
- Using original sources
- Working with others
- Interpreting data
- Meeting deadlines and managing time
- Summarizing and presenting information
- Understanding components of complex problems
- Evaluating results
- Analyzing texts and information
- Perceiving patterns/structures
- Creativity
- Comparing/contrasting
- Synthesizing information
- Managing a project from conception to completion

In the National Association of Colleges & Employers’ (NACE) 2011 Job Outlook, the skills and abilities such employers are seeking were listed in order of importance. The top ten skills were:

- Communication (verbal)
- Strong work ethic
- Teamwork
- Analytical skills
- Initiative
- Problem-solving skills
- Communication (written)
- Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
- Computer skills
- Flexibility/adaptability

Organizations consistently seek candidates who possess a collection of “transferable skills” - skills acquired through your classes, extracurricular involvement, experience, and hobbies that are applicable to virtually any position. The skills listed above all fit into this category and students in the Arts & Humanities, as noted by professionals and academics alike, participate in a rich curriculum that develops their skills in many, if not all, of these areas and beyond, making them extremely marketable and valuable to potential employers. In the current Recruiting Trends report put out by the Collegiate Employment Research Institute, nearly 40% of employers indicate that they will seek candidates across “all majors,” focusing more on the skills and abilities needed in the organization than on a specific academic discipline.

Why History?

The department’s emphasis on critical thinking, reading, and writing skills offers top-notch preparation for students pursuing careers both inside and outside the academy. Graduates serve as history professors and historians of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, while others pursue careers in business, communications, secondary education, sociology, entertainment, and law.

Each year about 200 graduate students, 600 majors, and scores of non-majors can be found enrolled in history classes or engaged in independent research projects under the guidance of faculty members. Top undergraduate majors are invited to participate in a rigorous, two-year Undergraduate Honors Program in History, which culminates in the research and writing of a substantial thesis. The department is a leading place for graduate study in African American history, women’s history and gender studies, and twentieth-century history.
What Can I Do With a History Degree?

A History degree can be shaped to fit a variety of disciplines and the broad skill set you acquire allows you to apply your knowledge in many exciting areas. From the University Career Center’s most recent graduate survey, upon graduation ARHU students entered into a range of dynamic industries including: Arts, Government, Academia/Education, Non-Profit, Communications/Media, Advertising, Technology, Food & Hospitality Services, Entertainment, Social Services and more!

Sample job titles include:

- Archivist
- FBI/CIA Agent
- Biographer
- Museum Curator
- Lawyer
- Archeologist
- Congressional Aide
- Research Assistant
- Foreign Service Officer
- Historic Preservationist
- Intelligence Analyst
- Librarian
- Park Ranger
- Urban Planner
- Lobbyist
- Professor
- Writer/Author
- Demographer
- Counselor
- Editor
- Economist
- Public Relations Specialist
- Market Research Analyst
- Sales Representative
- Consumer Advocate
- Travel Agent
- Teacher

Gaining Experience With Your Degree

It’s never too early to start your search for experience. Ideally, you should begin at least one semester in advance. Make an appointment to talk with the University Career Center & The President’s Promise and/or your department internship coordinator and faculty advisor. Research shows that having an internship (or multiple internships) drastically increases your ability to obtain a full-time position upon graduation, especially since most employers use their intern pool as a direct talent pipeline. The most recent NACE Internship & Co-op Survey reported that 44.6% of employers’ hires came from their internship programs. The College of Arts & Humanities ensures that students can have an internship experience prior to graduating, offering numerous credit-granting courses for experiential education at the college and departmental level.

Internships enable students to gain a sense of what it would be like to work in a particular field as they develop marketable skills and establish contacts that may lead to a job offer upon graduation. To get started, visit the University Career Center & The President’s Promise website (www.Careers.umd.edu) and sign up for a Careers4Terps account, a free web-based job posting service, to search for internships and employment.

Have questions? Need an appointment?
Contact Kate Juhl, Program Director
University Career Center & The President's Promise
kjuhl@umd.edu
www.Careers.umd.edu