



# So you want to work in ... the Diplomatic Corps?

The U.S. Department of State hires Foreign Service, Civil Service and student employees to work in the United States and at embassies, consulates and diplomatic missions at posts around the world. This factsheet will help you learn more about these roles and what steps you can take to join the diplomatic corps. The following information is provided in detail at the U.S. Department of State's career website: <http://careers.state.gov/>.

## FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER

Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) promote peace, advocate American foreign policy, protect American citizens and promote American business interests throughout the world.

### *Foreign Service Officer Career Tracks*

- Consular Officers: Manage crisis situations within the country, lost passports, international child custody disputes, arrests, medical emergencies, etc.
- Economics Officers: Help foreign countries develop free market economies, negotiate trade agreements, protect intellectual property rights, etc.
- Management Officers: Develop personnel, negotiate bilateral work agreements, establish or implement reciprocal tax treatment, manage financial assets, etc.
- Political Officers: Develop expertise and analyze political events in the country or region of his or her post, engage in negotiations, advise on international affairs etc.
- Public Diplomacy Officers: Build relationships to conduct public awareness services to promote U.S. interests overseas.

### *Foreign Service Officer Application Process*

The FSO application can take up to a year to complete, beginning with an online application. Once you submit your application you should take the Foreign Service Officer Test that, if passed successfully, is followed by an evaluation, oral assessment, medical and security clearance and a final review. For details, please visit <http://careers.state.gov/work/foreign-service/officer/test-process>.

### *Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT)*

The FSOT is offered twice a year and evaluates your writing skills, general background, experience and education, and measures knowledge of English expression and other subjects important to the Foreign Service. The FSOT Study Guide is available in the Liberal Arts Career Library (FAC 18). Register for the test at <http://www.pearsonvue.com/fsot/>.

## FOREIGN SERVICE SPECIALIST

Foreign Service Specialists (FSS) provide technical, support or administrative services at posts overseas, in Washington, D.C., or elsewhere in the United States.

Foreign Service Specialist positions are available in the following categories:

- Administration
- Office Management
- Construction Engineering
- Security
- International Information and English Language Programs

## WHAT IS THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE?

The U.S. Department of State is the lead federal agency responsible for U.S. foreign affairs through formulating, representing and implementing the President's foreign policy.

## AM I ELIGIBLE?

Most positions with the U.S. Department of State require applicants to meet the following criteria by the date of application:

- U.S. Citizen
- aged between 20 and 59 years of age
- available for D.C. and worldwide assignments



### *Foreign Service Specialist Application Process*

FSS positions are posted online as jobs become available. In addition to the extensive application, interview and background check, the FSS application process includes an oral assessment based on a job analysis of the work of the Foreign Service and the skills and personal qualities deemed essential to the performance of that work. You can search current openings and apply online at: <http://careers.state.gov/work/foreign-service/specialist>.

### **CIVIL SERVICE OFFICER**

Civil Service Officers (CSOs) support the U.S. Department of State in a variety of activities, including improving trade opportunities for U.S. businesses, helping American couples adopt children from overseas, monitoring human rights issues and providing management supervision. Civil Service Officers work in the following areas:

- Business/Finance/Economics
- Foreign Affairs/International Policy/Operations
- International and Domestic Security
- Senior Executive Service
- Engineering
- Human Resources/Information Technology/Legal
- Office Support Professionals

### *Civil Service Application Process*

CSO positions are posted online as jobs become available. The application process for the majority of Civil Service positions begins with an online application and is time-intensive due to background checks. You can search current openings and apply online at: <http://careers.state.gov/civil-service/>.

### **INTERNSHIPS**

The U.S. Department of State offers a variety of student programs to participate in foreign policy projects overseas or in Washington D.C. To view the full list of programs, visit <http://careers.state.gov/students/programs>.

The internship program provides an inside look at the different types of positions and responsibilities available in foreign affairs. Internship application deadlines typically fall six or more months prior to the semester/summer in which you intern. For the full list of internship areas, including scholarship options via the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Program, and to apply, visit: <http://careers.state.gov/intern>.

### **QUALITIES & SKILLS NEEDED TO SUCCEED IN THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT**

The U.S. Department of State has identified 13 dimensions that reflect the skills and backgrounds essential to the work performed by Foreign Service Officers.

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|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Composure                          | 5 Initiative & Leadership | 8 Oral Communication    | 11 Working with Others   |
| 2 Cultural Adaptability              | 6 Judgment                | 9 Planning & Organizing | 12 Written Communication |
| 3 Experience & Motivation            | 7 Objectivity/Integrity   | 10 Resourcefulness      | 13 Quantitative Analysis |
| 4 Information Integration & Analysis |                           |                         |                          |

### **SO...WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BREAK INTO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS?**

1. Take a variety of Department of State **recommended courses**: English Composition, Western Civilization, U.S. History, U.S. Political Systems, Comparative Politics, Geography, Economics, Non-Western History, International Trade/Economic Development, U.S. Political System, U.S. Economic & Social History, International Affairs, U.S. Foreign Policy and International Relations.
2. Visit the LACS Library in FAC18 to read “**Inside a U.S. Embassy: How the Foreign Service Works**” by Shawn Dorman to learn more about the different areas within the Department of State and life overseas. Also read the **Foreign Service Officer Test Guide** to help prepare you for the FSOT. Our career coaches can help you strategize your full application process.
3. Explore the wealth of information on the **Department of State’s career website** to read testimonials and to review the details of all employment options (<http://careers.state.gov>). Also visit the **Diplomat in Residence at UT** to speak in person with a Foreign Service Officer about a DoS career. And check out the Foreign Service suggested reading list at <http://1.usa.gov/1pwEcFF>.