EDUCATION POLICY & SOCIAL ANALYSIS

A EPSA Guide for Students and Alumni
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I. What is Education Policy & Social Analysis?

II. Is the Field of EPSA right for you?

III. EPSA degrees at TC

IV. What Can I do with a Degree in EPSA?

V. EPSA Position Types

VI. Beginning the Job Search Process

VII. Networking

VIII. Informational Interviews

IX. Utilizing Social Media

X. Interviewing

XI. Salary Negotiation

XII. Professional Associations

“Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world”

~ Nelson Mandela
What is Education Policy & Social Analysis?

Education policy & social analysis focuses on how governments, markets, and societal conditions shape schooling and the broader enterprise of creating a population that is informed about the challenges and opportunities it confronts. It critically analyzes needs and interests, and prepares individuals to work together to make a better world. It includes attention to the nature of educational challenges, the origin of governmental policies to address those challenges, policy implementation, and policy consequences.

“If curriculum and classroom teaching are the meat and potatoes of schooling, education policy is the supply line that determines whether the basic ingredients are available, affordable, fresh, and of high quality.”

~Jeffery Henig
Is the Field of EPSA Right for You?

Are you interested in education policy and educational practices? Do you want to conduct educational research that will serve as a valuable resource for educators, administrators, and policy makers? More importantly, are you passionate about education reform? These questions are critical in determining if EPSA is the right field for you as they require an honest assessment of your interests, skills, and long-term plans. What is it about education policy and social analysis that interests you? What type of skills can you contribute to support effective advocacy movements? How will you create and implement action for meaningful education reform? If these questions fuel the passion you have for education, you may want to consider pursuing the field Education Policy and Social Analysis!

EPSA Degrees at TC

The Department of Education, Policy and Social Analysis offer the following degree programs:

- Economics & Education (M.A., Ed.M., Ph.D.)
- Politics in Education (M.A., Ed.M., Ed.D., Ph.D.)
- Sociology & Education (M.A., Ed.M., Ed.D., Ph.D.)

If you currently have your masters, you probably should aim to get a doctorate. A master’s degree is best suited for individuals who want to commit 2 years specializing in EPSA. A doctorate degree is more comprehensive, research-oriented and is designed to give you extensive expertise in EPSA. The general rule of thumb is the more research-oriented you want to go, the higher the degree you need to obtain.
What Can I Do With a Degree in Education Policy & Social Analysis?

A degree in EPSA is best suited for leaders and skilled analysts who are able to solve problems, make informed decisions, and help improve practice. This degree allows you to choose between many different career paths to address education reform.

Below are the popular employment areas within Education Policy and Social Analysis that people work within:

- National/State/Local Government Education Agencies
- Think Tanks/Research-Based Advocacy Groups
- Not-for-Profit Organizations
- Higher Education

“We have an obligation and a responsibility to be investing in our students and our schools. We must make sure that people who have the grades, the desire and the will, but not the money, can still get the best education possible.”

~ Barack Obama
## EPSA POSITION TYPES

### National/State/Local Government Education Agencies

*Responsibilities are centered on providing academic and financial support to economically and educationally disadvantaged students*

- Accounting, Finance and Budget
- Campaign Organizer
- Data Collectors
- Education Specialist
- Grants Coordinator
- Financial Associate
- Policy Analyst
- Research Analyst
- Research & Development
- Superintendent

### Think Tanks/Research-Based Advocacy Groups

*Responsibilities are centered on discovering the causes of educational inequality and its implications for the future of education. Also responsible for designing potential strategies/solutions for implementation*

- Creative Director
- Database Coordinator
- Designer
- Intelligence Analyst
- Policy Analyst
- Project Manager
- Research Analyst

### Higher Education

*Responsibilities are centered on educating the generation that will take on the challenges of education policy.*

- Academic/Administrative Vice Presidents
- Admissions & Enrollment
- Assessment, Accreditation & Compliance
- Development and Fundraising
- Deans
- Director
- Provosts
- Presidents & Chancellors

### Not-for Profit Organizations

*Not-for profit jobs in EPSA are centered on serving the community and bridging the economic gap.*

- Communications Officer
- Program Director
- Project Coordinator
- Research Analyst
BEGINNING THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS

Preliminary Self-Assessment

- What is your area of interest in the field of education policy & social analysis?
- What type of organization would you like to work for? (For-profit vs. Not for profit)
- Are you willing to relocate? (Washington D.C, Boston, San Francisco?)
- Is your resume, cover letter or CV up to date?
- Who are your references? Are they in the field of EPSA?

Identifying Skills/Qualifications Needed for Your Desired Position:

Take a self-inventory and assess your own skills to focus on qualifications needed for a position in EPSA. Ask yourself, “Do I have…”

- Great knowledge on education policy, public policy/public administration
- Experience working with federal government programs
- Ability to engage in strategic, creative, intellectual, conceptual and theoretical thinking
- Ability to multitask under strict deadlines in a fast-paced, client oriented environment
- Great research, analytical (qualitative and quantitative), communication and writing skills
- Passion and a strong command for policy analysis
- Ability to work collaboratively and independently
- A strong understanding of self in relation to cultural identity and society

If you are confident that you possess the skills mentioned above, begin searching for jobs!

To learn more about networking, visit Job Search Tip Sheet on the TCCS Website
Once you’ve completed a preliminary self-assessment, identified the necessary skills and qualifications, and updated your cover letter, resume or CV, it is time to start searching for jobs. Searching for jobs can become overwhelming, especially when you don’t know where to begin. Below are some general popular search engines for job postings:

- Indeed.com
- Idealist.org
- Simplyhired.com
- Monster.com
- The Chronicles of Higher Ed
- Inside Higher Ed
- Careerbuilder.com

Here are some popular key words that you can type into the search engine as you begin your job search!

**Key words**: education, education policy, policy analysis, education reform, advocacy, research analyst, education specialist, etc.

The following sites are specific to education policy:

- Fritzwire.com - [http://www.publicprivateaction.com/fritzwire](http://www.publicprivateaction.com/fritzwire)
- Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management - [http://www.appam.org](http://www.appam.org)
- USA Jobs - [https://www.usajobs.gov/](https://www.usajobs.gov/)
- NAFSA Job Postings – [http://jobregistry.nafsa.org/jobs](http://jobregistry.nafsa.org/jobs)

Researching employment opportunities on search engines is not the only way to learn about job openings. Joining a professional association is a great resource, keeping you updated on job opportunities as well as current events in the field. LinkedIn is another great platform to assist with the job search process. If you decide to use LinkedIn to search for jobs, remember to modify the search engine with key words that are specific to your interest area in EPSA.
Learning how to network effectively is one of the most powerful tools an individual can use to advance their personal and professional career.

**How Do You Network Effectively?**
If the idea of networking intimidates you, start out by seeking familiar faces and practice, practice, practice!
- Engage in small talk
- Build real relationships
- Follow Up
- Maintain connection- constantly reach out!

(i.e. “Hi, my name is Jane Doe and I am an M.A. student in Education Policy & Social Analysis at Teachers College. My interests are centered on education reform and providing access to underrepresented students from urban communities. I researched your company and learned that a lot of the work you do strives to provide access, academic and financial support to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. I would like to schedule time where we can discuss…”)

At TC, the EPSA department has several opportunities for you to build your professional network. You can get involved in…
1. The various centers led by EPSA Professors, or
2. EPSAlouge, the department newsletter

**Who Should You Keep in Your Professional Network?**
- Professors
- Mentors
- Cohort
- Professionals in the field
- Employers

Once you’ve established a connection with someone, it’s important to build and maintain that connection. Reach out. Conduct informational interviews. Learn as much as you can about the field from people who are already working in the field, and keep in mind that a network is an investment with benefits that outweigh the costs.

*To learn more about networking, visit Networking on the TCCS Website*
Develop your network by conducting informational interviews! Informational interviews allow you to connect with professionals to gather information and hopefully add people to your professional contact list.

**Tips for conducting informational interviews:**

- Introduce yourself and state that you are not expecting them to have a job for you, but you would appreciate 20 minutes of their time to talk about their field, opportunities available and/or the way your skills might be applicable.
- Have questions and materials prepared and figure out what information would be most beneficial as you explore your career options.
- Present yourself in a businesslike manner. Allow the person being interviewed to do most of the talking. Do not dominate the conversation. Be positive and assertive – not overly flattering or obnoxiously aggressive.

**What types of Questions Should You Ask during an Informational Interview?**

- Why did you decide to enter the field of education policy & social analysis?
- What did you find the most challenging when you first started this position?
- What did you wish you knew before you started that could have helped you?
- What does a typical day look like for you?
- What types of limitations come with your position?
- What do you think is the most pressing issue in education policy today?
- Will I need additional training/degree?

*Know Yourself ● Know the Mentor ● Know the Organization ● Be Professional*
Social media can be an instrumental tool to your job search! Utilizing social media can help you better market yourself to employers and help you connect to alumni & professionals in your field!

**Information:** Facebook “Info” tab can act as a resume. Make sure all your social media accounts are consistent with the same school and job information.

**Status Update:** Use your status updates to keep your connections informed on your job search.

**Groups & Fan Pages:** Follow groups and fan pages within the field (i.e. The Education Policy & Leadership Center, Education Policy Analysis Archives etc.)

**Tweeting:** Tweet updates about your job search. (i.e. “I am looking for a Policy Analyst position in NYC”)

**Hash Tags:** Use hash tags in order to filter results, using # as a prefix. It acts as a tag that will show up for those who are looking for it. For example, if you are looking for a Research Analyst position, you may use #jobsearch #researchanalyst etc. and an employer may post a job using the same tags, creating a filter.

**Establish an Active Twitter Presence!** Post relevant articles, trends & don’t forget to use industry hash tags!

**Send a request** to a LinkedIn friend to ask him/her to introduce you to one of their LinkedIn friends

**Contact potential employers** and contacts in your network to conduct informational interviews!

**Connect with Alumni!** See where TC Alums in your field are currently working.

**Join Groups!** (i.e. Education: Public Policy Network, PIE Network, The Education Policy Fellowship, Special Education Consultants-Law, Policy & Practice, Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management etc.)
When interviewing for a position in Education Policy & Social Analysis remember the following tips:

1. **Theoretical & Practical Experience:** Highlight your in *and* out of the classroom experience and how they have shaped your views.
2. **Bring Ideas/Concrete Examples:** Be prepared to provide specific examples and discuss innovative ideas you can bring to the organization.
3. **Relate your Skills & Experiences to the Organization:** When you are discussing your experiences, remember to relate them to the mission of the organization and the population they serve.
4. **Ask Questions:** Know the position well by asking questions!

Here are some sample questions that you may come across during an interview for a position in education policy & social analysis:

1. Why are you interested in education policy/education reform?
2. What are your thoughts on education equity?
3. Speak about a current problem in education and an untried solution to the problem.
4. Describe how you assess the needs of an organization.
5. Describe one organizational change that you have made and the process you have used to make that change.
6. How do you assess and measure progress?
7. What is your experience working directly with students and teachers?
8. How do you build relationships with various stakeholders within an organization?

For a list of potential questions and more information on interviewing visit the resource section on our website and click on: Interview Tips and Preparation
When evaluating a salary offer or choosing between offers, consider the net value of all monetary benefits and expenses. When beginning a Salary Negotiation, remember to know your value and the position you’re applying for. Depending on the position level, you can better assess its value.

**Things to Consider:**

- **Type of Position:** An entry level position typically has a lower salary range
- **Research the Position:** Remember to research the position and its value. You can begin by visiting: [http://salary.com/](http://salary.com/) or [www.payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com)

***Most salaries are commensurate with experience***

Keep in mind that salaries differ depending on environments. Government jobs usually have a set salary while a nonprofit job may vary depending on size or funding

For more information on Salary Negotiation, visit the resource section our website and click on: Salary Negotiation
Joining a professional association is a great way to stay connected to the field and meet professionals who you can add to your network!

*Here is a list of some professional associations that you may want to consider looking into:*

- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
- American Educational Research Association (AERA)
- American Educational Studies Association (AES)
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- Association of Teacher Educators (ATE)
- Children's Defense Fund (CDF)
- Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)
- National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
- National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
- National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
- National Education Association (NEA)
- National School Boards Association
- Parent Teachers Association
- Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)
- Council of the Great City Schools
- Education Commission of the States
- Education Policy Analysis Archives
- Education Week on the Web
- EDUCAUSE World Wide Web Server
- National Academy of Education (NAEd)
- National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)
- National Staff Development Council (NSDC)
- Excelencia in Education
- Academy for Educational Development
- Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance
- America's Promise Alliance
- American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
- American Association of Community Colleges
- American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- American Association of University Professors
- American Association of University Women
- American Council on Education
- Community College Research Center
- Council for Aid to Education
- Council for Opportunity in Education
- National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
- National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education
- The Institute for College Access and Success
Here is a list of the top 5 things that you should remember as you embark on a career in Education Policy & Social Analysis:

1. **Know the field:** Education policy & social analysis focuses on how governments, markets, and societal conditions shape schooling and the broader enterprise of creating a population that is informed about the challenges and opportunities it confronts.

2. **Determine if this is the right field for you:** Do an assessment of your interests, skills and long-term plans to determine whether the field of education policy and social analysis is a good fit.

3. **Do Your Homework:** Stay up to date with what’s happening in the field. Research the various career options that are prevalent and decide on a career path within the field that you are most passionate about.

4. **Network:** Begin networking with professionals in the field. Develop meaningful relationships. Remember that each person you add to your network can be very resourceful as you begin your job search process. Utilize social media to connect with professionals in the field.

5. **Join Professional Associations:** Professional associations keep you up to date with what’s happening in the field. It is also a great networking and job searching tool!

“The only thing more expensive than education is ignorance.”

-Anonymous
Adopted from:
Teachers College Education Policy & Social Analysis Homepage http://www.tc.edu/EPSP/
Frame Works Institute:
Sage Journals: Education Policy - http://epx.sagepub.com/
Education Policy Institute: http://www.educationalpolicy.org/

Teachers College, Career Services

44 Horace Mann Hall
Phone: 212-678-3140
Email: careerservices@tc.edu
http://www.tc.edu/careerservices

Follow TCCS on

[Social media icons for Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter]