

# Science Policy Jobs

## PhD Career Insights

Science policy analysts observe and influence the direction of local, state and national science policy by working directly with lawmakers or establishing and advising government programs. They serve as the communication bridge between researchers, the public and policy makers. Science policy is critical for global health, world policy, and the continued funding of research. Science policy analysts are currently working on hot topics like the response to Zika and Ebola, improving healthcare, advocating for continued funding for scientific research, and the ethical implications of new technologies like stem cells, genome editing and synthetic biology.

## What would I do?

- Summarize scientific findings for policymakers and interest groups
- Communicate scientific ideas clearly to non-scientists
- Communicate policy initiatives clearly to scientists
- Advocate for funding in specific areas of science
- Compile current positions and background information on proposed science policy on short deadlines
- Assess the uses, benefits and drawbacks of scientific advances
- Interpret laws, regulations, policy manuals and directives to predict how these regulations may impact potential scientific developments
- Monitor current events and legislation relevant to science and scientists
- Organize conferences or panel discussions, where scientific experts present the latest results in a particular field
- Assess the uses, benefits and economic impacts of technology or programs, by collecting and analyzing data on effectiveness
- Manage legislative efforts on behalf of patients and industry in the disease community
- Lead congressional advocacy initiatives, program development, and science policy efforts
- Act as a liaison between researchers and policymakers to ensure policies are evidence-based and reflect the most current information

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## **Where could I work?**

- Federal Government
- State Governments
- Professional Organizations
- Lobbying Groups
- NGOs
- Think Tanks
- Scientific Societies
- Universities
- Foundations
- Industry

## **What skills should I have?**

- Love of writing and ability to translate complex ideas into simple, clear language
- Interpersonal skills to build relationships with key people
- Diplomacy to work with people with whom you disagree
- Ability to see the big picture
- Analytical skills to critically evaluate all sides of an issue (scientific, political, economic, etc.)
- Excellent command of English grammar and style rules
- Ability to work under time pressure
- Knowledge of government structure and procedure
- Awareness of current events and policy developments that affect science
- Ability to conduct thorough research quickly and independently
- Interest in a wide variety of scientific issues
- Strong communication skills

## **What is the salary range?**

Entry-level salary - \$40-70K

Average salary - \$70-\$90K

Experienced or senior-level salary - \$90-\$200K

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## **Where can I find out more about Science Policy careers?**

- [Making the Move into Science Policy, Nature](#)
- [Paths to Science Policy, Science](#)
- [The Skills You Need for a Career in Science Policy, ASBMB Today](#)
- [Overview: Science Policy, American Chemical Society](#)
- [Videocast by NIH OITE: Careers in Science Policy](#)

## **How can I gain skills and experience for a career in Science Policy?**

- Join the JHM SPACE science policy group (contact Richard Sima and Chanel Matney)
- Find opportunities to practice writing to build your portfolio of writing samples, or “clips.” The JHM [Biomedical Odyssey](#) blog is a good place to start.
- Attend an [advocacy day](#) at the US Capitol:
  - [Rally for Medical Research](#)
  - [Coalition for Life Sciences Hill Days](#)
  - [American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Hill Day](#)
  - [AACR Hill Day](#)
- Read the news to stay abreast of current events that may affect science policy.
- [Read](#) publically available policy memos.
- Practice writing different types of policy documents, including memos, position papers, and op-eds.
- Practice writing about your own research for different audiences, including expert scientist, non-expert scientist, and lay audiences.
- Edit research paper manuscripts for your classmates or lab-mates, or by working with a company such as American Journal Experts.
- Start a blog or podcast where you talk about the interplay between science and medical research and government regulation.
- Familiarize yourself with the [structure](#) of a policy memo.
- Volunteer for a Scientific Society or the Graduate Student or Postdoc Associations at Johns Hopkins
- Practice outreach and communicating to non-scientists with [Project Bridge](#), [TEDx Baltimore](#) or the [Baltimore Brain Festival](#)

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- Earn a [Risk Sciences and Public Policy Certificate](#)
- Take the [AAAS Leadership Seminar in Science and Technology Policy](#)
- Attend the [AAAS Forum in Science and Technology Policy](#)
- Take an online course in [Public Policy Management and Advocacy](#)
- Join a listserv of Science Policy jobs (email [Carrie Wolinetz](#))
- Join a [DC Science Policy Happy Hour Networking Session](#)

## **Science Policy Internships**

[AAAS Center for Science,  
Technology and Security Policy  
Internship](#)

[American Progress Internship  
Program](#)

[Research!America Science Policy  
Internship](#)

[Health Communication Internship  
Program at NCI](#)

[American Psychological Association  
Public Interest Policy Internship](#)

[New York State Policy Internship \(New  
York Residents\)](#)

[National Center for Health Research  
Policy Internships](#)

## **LinkedIn Groups**

[Science, Technology and Innovation Policy](#)

[Government and Civil Society](#)

[Center for Science, Technology and Public Policy](#)

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## **Science Policy Fellowships**

[AAA Science Policy Fellowships](#)

[Christine Mirzayan Science & Technology Policy Graduate Fellowship Program](#)

[Jefferson Science Fellowships](#)

[Hellman Fellowship in Science and Technology Policy](#)

[California Science and Technology Policy Fellows](#)

[Health and Aging Policy Fellowship](#)

[Research!America Science Policy Fellowship](#)

[David A. Winston Science Policy Fellowship](#)

[ASBMB Science Policy Fellowship](#)

[American Society for Microbiology Congressional Science Fellowship](#)

[National Human Genome Research Institute - Genetics and Public Policy Fellowship](#)

[American Society of Human Genetics - Genetics and Public Policy Fellowship](#)

[Presidential Management Fellows Program](#)

[American Institute of Biological Sciences Graduate Student Policy Intern and Fellowships](#)

[American Chemical Society Science Policy Fellowship](#)

[Health Security Partners Health Security Fellowship](#)

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International Policy Fellowships may be found in [this report](#)

## **Science Policy Professional Organizations**

[The National Science Policy Group](#)

[Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management](#)

[American Society for Public Administration](#)

[The Engaging Scientists and Engineers in Policy Coalition](#)

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**Laura Koontz, Ph.D.**

**Director of Policy, Ovarian Cancer National Alliance**

"If you're interested in a career in science policy, be prepared to write, write, and then write some more! As a policy analyst, you may be called upon to read and summarize, analyze, and comment upon how specific legislation, federal and state regulations, and policy proposals may impact your organization or constituency. You may even be the person drafting those proposals and will need to clearly and effectively explain to others why they should support your policy. In any position, you'll likely work in close collaboration with other stakeholder groups."

**Pamela Bradley, Ph.D.**

**Personalized Medicine Staff, Office of In Vitro Diagnostics and Radiological Health, Center for Devices and Radiological Health, U.S. Food and Drug Administration**

"It's tough to describe a typical "day in the life," since life in the policy world is unpredictable and varied. Some days I spend all day glued to my desk, only writing and reading emails. Other days, I delve into primary scientific literature or write technical documents. Still other days, I am focused on our communication and outreach efforts to help educate industry about the current thinking of the Agency, which may involve informal meetings, oral presentations or developing written material. It helps to be flexible because my to-do list frequently gets shoved aside for a more pressing matter. People skills also come in handy since identifying appropriate policy solutions often requires working collaboratively to find consensus among stakeholders whose goals are divergent and often not well aligned. A warning to scientists: policy change often happens at the same glacial pace as research advances in a lab, so you will need patience, flexibility and the ability to compromise! I have found science policy to be a rewarding career path, with exciting opportunities to contribute to public health on a broader scale."

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