

# Find out how to prove — and improve — the effectiveness of your Political Science program with the *ETS*® Major Field Tests.

## Content Validity

The *ETS*® Major Field Test (MFT) in Political Science, first administered in 1989, assesses mastery of concepts, principles and knowledge by graduating Political Science students. To ensure fairness and content relevance, the test is revised approximately every four to five years.

## Developed by Leading Educators in the Field

Experienced faculty members representing all the relevant areas of the discipline determine test specifications, questions and types of scores reported. *ETS* assessment experts subject each question to rigorous tests of sensitivity and reliability. Every effort is made to include questions that assess the most common and important topics and skills.

In addition to factual knowledge, the test evaluates students' abilities to analyze and solve problems, understand relationships and interpret material. Questions that require interpretation of graphs, diagrams and charts are included. Academic departments may add up to two subgroups and as many as 50 additional locally written questions to test areas of the discipline that may be unique to the department or institution.

## National Comparative Data

A *Comparative Data Guide*, published each year, contains tables of scaled scores and percentiles for individual student scores, departmental mean scores and any subscores or group assessment indicators that the test may support. The tables of data are drawn from senior-level test takers at a large number of diverse institutions. Nearly 1,500 colleges and universities employ one or more of the Major Field Tests for student achievement and curriculum evaluation each year.

### Who Develops the MFT in Political Science?

Individuals who serve or recently have served on the Committee for the MFT in Political Science are faculty members from the following institutions:

**Clemson University**  
**Hofstra University**  
**Metropolitan State College of Denver**  
**Swarthmore College**  
**Texas Christian University**  
**University of California, Los Angeles**  
**University of Evansville**  
**University of Vermont**

### For more information about the MFT in Political Science:

Phone: **1-800-745-0269**  
Email: **higherred@ets.org**  
Visit: **www.ets.org/mft**

Educational Testing Service  
Rosedale Road  
Princeton, NJ 08541

# Test Content — Political Science

The Major Field Test in Political Science consists of 130 multiple-choice questions. The questions are drawn from the courses of study most commonly offered in undergraduate programs; the diversity of curricula is taken into account. Programs can choose when and where to administer the tests. It is designed to take two hours and may be split into two sessions. This test must be given by a proctor.

Fifteen to 20 percent of questions in the test must qualify as “Critical thinking and analysis” questions. These questions can have content grounding in any of the five major content areas. The questions will be stimulus-based, using reading passages, tables, or graphs and may cover any or all of the following skills: identification of salient data and facts, comparisons and making associations, drawing inferences and evaluation.

The outline below shows the content areas covered on the test and the approximate distribution of questions among the areas. Numbers in parentheses represent the proportion of the test devoted to a particular content category or subcategory.

## The Test Outline

### I. United States Government and Politics (37–43%)

- A. Foundations of United States Politics (7–13%): constitutional principles (freedom and equality; individual and community), systemic change (the nature of federalism, separation of powers, civil rights and civil liberties, constitutional law); political economy and political culture.
- B. Dynamics of Institutional Interaction (17–23%): presidential politics, legislative politics, judicial politics, bureaucratic politics, political party politics, interest group politics, state and local government and politics, domestic public policy, foreign and defense policy, media, social movements, United States in comparative perspective
- C. Political Beliefs and Behavior (7–13%): public opinion, political socialization, political participation, group-based politics

### II. Comparative Government and Politics (17–23%)

- A. Political Institutions (3–9%): legislative and executive (and relationships between), judiciary and judicial forms, regime types, supranational organizations, parties and party systems, electoral systems
- B. Comparative Political Economy (2–8%): globalization and opposition, regionalization/free-trade zones (e.g., EU, NAFTA), transition to market economy, market-state relationships, politics of economic policy, factors contributing to development
- C. Political Change (2–9%): regime change (e.g., democratization), challenges to sovereignty/regionalization, civil war/revolution, religious fundamentalism, transnational diffusion of information and values

- D. Citizens and Social Movements (1–6%): politicization of ethnicity and religion, interest groups, social capital/civil society, legitimacy (e.g., challenges to, sources of), media, human rights

### III. International Relations (17–23%)

- A. Theories of International Relations: (2–8%) realism/neorealism, liberalism/neoliberalism, alternative theories (e.g., neo-Marxism, transnational norms, feminist)
- B. Security Studies/Peace Studies (1–7%): interstate conflict; alliances, strategy, collective security; conflict resolution; terrorism; human security (e.g., refugees, spread of disease, famine, environment); intrastate conflict
- C. International Political Economy (2–8%): globalization and opposition, neoclassical theories, politics of trade and finance, international economic institutions (e.g., International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, World Bank, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), intellectual property rights
- D. International Organization (1–6%): inter-governmental organizations (e.g., United Nations, European Union, Organization of African Unity), non-governmental organizations (e.g., Amnesty International, Greenpeace)
- E. International Law (1–6%): humanitarian

law (e.g., human rights, humanitarian intervention), law of the seas, environment, sources of international law, settlement of disputes (e.g., arbitration, adjudication)

### IV. Political Thought (9–15%)

- A. Pre-Modern (1–7%): Classical (Greek and Roman), Medieval through Renaissance and Reformation, non-Western political thought
- B. Modern (5–11%): American political thought, Black political thought, conservative political thought, contemporary liberalism, critical theory, feminist political thought, liberalism/communitarian debate, liberalism and the social contract, libertarianism, postmodernism, progressivism and pragmatism, the German tradition

### V. Methodology (5–11%)

- A. Epistemology
- B. Research Design
- C. Formal Modeling and Rational Choice
- D. Quantitative Methods
- E. Qualitative Methods

#### How scores for the Major Field Test in Political Science are reported

**Total Score** – Reported for each student and summarized for the group

**Subscores** – Reported for each student and summarized for the group

– Comparative Government and Politics (22–30)

– International Relations (22–30)

– United States Government and Politics (48–56)

**Assessment Indicators** – Reported for the group\* only

– Analytical and Critical Thinking (20–26)

– Methodology (7–14)

– Political Thought (11–20)

Numbers in parentheses are the approximate number of questions in each category.

\* A minimum of five (5) students is required for assessment indicators to be reported.