



## APPLYING TO GRADSCHOOL IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

**5  
COMMON  
MISTAKES  
TO AVOID**

**TIPS  
FROM  
ADMISSIONS  
EXPERTS AT  
LEADING  
SCHOOLS**

**"HIGHLIGHT  
YOUR RESILIENCE,  
YOUR GRIT, YOUR  
FLEXIBILITY AND  
ADAPTABILITY.  
THERE ARE MANY  
DIFFERENT WAYS TO  
BE OF SERVICE IN THE  
PUBLIC, PRIVATE,  
AND NONPROFIT  
SECTORS."**

—Carmen Iezzi Mezzera,  
Executive Director,  
APSIA

### HOW TO STRENGTHEN YOUR GRAD SCHOOL APPLICATIONS



A strong grad school application begins with the basics: Be clear about your goals and your reasons for applying. Show openness as well as direction.

"The world is changing, and the job market is changing," says Carmen Iezzi Mezzera, executive director of the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA). In explaining your career goals to schools, Mezzera says to think both short term and long term. "Highlight your resilience, your grit, your flexibility and adaptability," she suggests. "There are many different ways to be of service in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors."

Consider how a program that interests you would help you develop the skills to ride the waves of future job markets. Aspiring international affairs professionals will need more than just knowledge, expertise, cultural sensitivity, and a passion for the greater good: They also need to develop thinking skills such as the ability to read a document and determine its point of view, and the ability to look at a data set and discuss the trends it reveals.

Naturally, schools will want to know what you have learned from your work experience and international experience. To be sure, a strong academic record and high GRE scores are also helpful, but the quality of your personal essay and writing samples might matter more. "Writing skills separate people quickly," says Mezzera.

No matter how well you tell your story, however, also take care to avoid simple slip-ups. Mezzera identifies five common mistakes that can make even the best applicants vulnerable:

1. Not following directions. If an application asks for three letters of reference, send exactly three, not two or four.
2. Missing deadlines. Sometimes a deadline for financial aid applications may precede admission application deadlines.
3. Things you think you would never, ever do, like not correcting a typo on your application, or mailing it to the wrong school.
4. Not being honest with yourself or with the admissions committee. If you got a D in a history class, explain why. Don't try to hide it.
5. Failing to consider the entire financial picture: How much financial support will you need beyond the first year? What is the anticipated cost of living? Find out whether students often work while studying full-time and determine whether support is available for internships.

*This fall, APSIA will host seven admissions fairs at U.S. and international locations, where you can meet representatives from a variety of international affairs programs, as well as an online admissions fair on November 15. APSIA also hosts monthly webinars on "Best Practices for Applying to Grad School." See page 10 for admissions fair locations, dates, and other details.*

# Georgetown University

## WALSH SCHOOL OF FOREIGN SERVICE

**“NOTHING IS BETTER THAN VISITING CAMPUS, CHATTING WITH FACULTY AND STUDENTS, VISITING THE CAREER CENTER, AND SITTING IN ON A CLASS.”**



**-ANTHONY AREND,**  
SENIOR ASSOCIATE  
DEAN FOR FACULTY  
AND GRADUATE  
AFFAIRS, WALSH  
SCHOOL OF FOREIGN  
SERVICE, GEORGETOWN  
UNIVERSITY

“We want students who are passionate about studying international relations,” says Anthony Arend, senior associate dean for faculty and graduate affairs at Georgetown University’s Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS). “We also value practical experience in a related field, broadly defined, such as military experience, journalism, Peace Corps service, or a private sector job with an international relations connection.”

Each master’s degree program at SFS manages its own admissions and financial aid processes. Prospective students apply directly to one of the following programs: the Master of Science in Foreign Service (MSFS), MA in Security Studies, Master of Global Human Development, MA in International Business and Policy, or any of five regionally focused MA programs (Arab Studies; Asian Studies; Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies; German and European Studies; or Latin American Studies). Applicants should explain why they are interested studying at SFS and in the particular program they are applying to. Most classes in the MA in Security Studies program are offered in the evening, giving students an option for full-time or part-time work while pursuing their studies.

Students who do well at SFS often have strong strategic skills, such as leadership, creativity, and networking skills. They also understand the need to take ownership of their educational trajectory and career path. Successful students are able to apply their knowledge and use it to move to the next level.

“GRE scores are a factor in admissions, but they are not decisive,” says Arend. “It’s not like LSAT scores for law school admissions.” Strong performance in college economics classes may compensate for a low quantitative GRE score, and strong writing samples may compensate for a low verbal score. For international students, SFS focuses on TOEFL scores and writing samples.

While SFS does not interview graduate-level applicants, they are strongly encouraged to visit. “Nothing is better than visiting campus, chatting with faculty and students, visiting the career center, and sitting in on a class,” says Arend. International applicants often talk with SFS representatives at a graduate school fair, such as APSIA’s upcoming fairs in Vancouver, Tokyo, Taipei, and Seoul.

Arend, who previously served as director of the MSFS program, says the most helpful recommendations come from a person who knows you well and can comment on an aspect of you they know well, such as a professor who knows your academic work or a former job supervisor. “Ideally, the person writing the recommendation is familiar with the program at SFS. If they are an alumni of the program, all the better,” he adds. “Avoid recommendations from big names who don’t know you.”



### Master’s Degree Program Options:

Master of Science in Foreign Service (MSFS)  
MA in Security Studies  
Master of Global Human Development  
MA in Arab Studies  
MA in Asian Studies  
MA in Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies  
MA in German and European Studies  
MA in Latin American Studies  
MA in International Business and Policy

### Application Deadlines, Standard Exam Scores, and Recommendation Letters:

See <http://sfs.georgetown.edu/graduate/graduate-admissions> for links to individual program admissions pages.

**Application Checklists:** See <http://sfs.georgetown.edu/graduate/graduate-admissions> for a list of materials required for all SFS programs. Program-specific materials are also required: See individual program admissions websites.





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Walsh School of Foreign Service

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Graduate and Undergraduate Degrees  
in International Affairs

# University of Denver

## JOSEF KORBEL SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

**“VISITING CAMPUS BEFORE YOU APPLY CAN MAKE A CONSIDERABLE IMPACT ON YOUR CONSIDERATION FOR ADMISSION AS WELL AS FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES.”**



**-ROBERT MACDONALD,**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OF GRADUATE  
ENROLLMENT,  
UNIVERSITY OF  
DENVER, JOSEF  
KORBEL SCHOOL  
OF INTERNATIONAL  
STUDIES



Faculty at the University of Denver’s Josef Korbel School of International Studies want to see a record of academic and professional success as well as three other key qualities:

- A clear explanation of your objectives and how the Josef Korbel School will help you achieve them
- Demonstration of how your work experience has informed your ambitions for graduate school and beyond
- Goals and interests that will make for a successful fit with the unique learning experience at the Josef Korbel School

“That said, we know students’ interests change,” says Robert MacDonald, executive director of graduate enrollment. “We help students redirect their interests and objectives in a strategic way to make the most of their time in graduate school.” For example, the MA in Global Finance, Trade and Economic Integration typically attracts the smallest number of new students, but it is among the programs graduating the most students. Many students take advantage of the Josef Korbel School’s wide choice of interrelated programs to explore new skills and interests.

“Visiting campus before you apply can make a considerable impact on your consideration for admission as well as funding opportunities,” says MacDonald. The school also encourages potential applicants to attend an open house or alumni event in their area and to feel free to call the Office of Graduate Enrollment to ask questions.

The Josef Korbel School takes a holistic approach in reviewing applications. Generally speaking, GRE scores carry less weight than the total sum of an applicant’s profile. If a student has a low GPA, strong GRE scores can help reveal their academic potential. But a weak GRE score will not ruin the chances of admission for a strong applicant with a high GPA.

Regardless of what undergraduate institution an applicant attended or their GRE scores and GPA, work experience can illuminate their potential. “We are less interested in an applicant’s number of years of work experience than in their accomplishments,” says MacDonald. For example, the experience of working abroad in a field of interest, whether at age 22 or age 30, can help to demonstrate that one has the dedication and stamina to work in international affairs.

The most helpful recommendation letters come from someone who can attest to an applicant’s strengths—and experience or academic preparedness—that cannot be demonstrated elsewhere on the application. For example, if you are an applicant who has no demonstrable work experience outside of internships, it would be wise to seek a professional recommendation from a previous supervisor who knows you well and can attest to your motivation, performance, and accomplishments.

The Josef Korbel School offers a variety of scholarship opportunities, including the full-tuition Sié fellowship, awarded each year to 10 incoming students. Returning Peace Corps volunteers are also eligible for Coverdell Fellowships. Applying before the admissions priority deadline (November 15 for spring enrollment; January 15 for fall enrollment) helps maximize one’s chances of receiving an award.

**Master’s Degree Program Options:** MA, Conflict Resolution; MA, Global Finance, Trade and Economic Integration; MA, International Administration; MA, International Development; MA, International Human Rights; MA, International Security; MA, International Studies; Master of Public Policy. Dual degrees include the MA/JD (law) and MA/MSW (social work). The school also offers a PhD in International Studies and five certificate programs.

**Application Deadline:**

- Winter 2017 Enrollment – Priority deadline: November 15, 2017
- Fall 2018 Enrollment – Priority deadline: January 15, 2018, rolling until August 15, 2018

**Standardized Exam Scores:** GRE or GMAT (may be waived in special circumstances). For English language requirement for non-native speakers of English, see [www.du.edu/korbel/media/documents/adm-intl-student-app-checklist.pdf](http://www.du.edu/korbel/media/documents/adm-intl-student-app-checklist.pdf)


**Recommendation Letters:** Two required (three for PhD candidates)

**Application Checklist:** [www.du.edu/korbel/media/documents/admissions/korbel-ma-application-checklist-august-2017.pdf](http://www.du.edu/korbel/media/documents/admissions/korbel-ma-application-checklist-august-2017.pdf)

**Contact:** [Korbeladm@du.edu](mailto:Korbeladm@du.edu); 303-871-2544

*Participates in the Paul D. Coverdell Program for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.*



A photograph of Professor Erica Chenoweth, PhD, a woman with short curly brown hair and glasses, wearing a blue blazer over a light blue button-down shirt. She is holding a black travel mug and looking towards three young men. The men are standing and listening; one has red hair and is wearing a blue polo shirt, another has short brown hair and is wearing a dark polo shirt with white and red stripes, and a third is partially visible in the foreground wearing a blue and white checkered shirt. They are outdoors with green trees and a building in the background.

Professor Erica Chenoweth, PhD, is an internationally recognized authority on political violence and its alternatives. At the Josef Korbel School she teaches classes on international relations, terrorism, civil war, nonviolent resistance and contemporary warfare.

To learn more about our master of arts programs call 303.871.2544 or email [korbeladm@du.edu](mailto:korbeladm@du.edu)

[www.du.edu/korbel](http://www.du.edu/korbel)



UNIVERSITY *of*  
DENVER

JOSEF KORBEL SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

# American University

## SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICE (SIS)

**“SIS IS COMMITTED TO CREATING A DIVERSE COMMUNITY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE READY TO LEAD THROUGH SERVICE. WE WANT OUR STUDENTS TO BEHAVE WITH AN UNFAILING SPIRIT OF INQUIRY AND MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE LARGER COMMUNITIES AROUND THEM.”**



**-JIA JIANG,**  
 DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE  
 ENROLLMENT  
 MANAGEMENT,  
 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY,  
 SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL  
 SERVICE (SIS)



“Successful candidates to SIS make a thoughtful and concerted effort to understand who we are and what we do as a school,” says Jia Jiang, director of graduate enrollment management at the American University School of International Service (SIS). “They understand that SIS’s key vision and mission is to be of service to the international community, and that we understand service to be a mindset and not just a moment.”

Students come to SIS working toward their individual ideas of service. Some do it through social justice and poverty alleviation, or through people-to-people educational and cultural exchange. Others do it through global governance and security or foreign policy. “At the core of these approaches, we have an incredibly collaborative learning culture that is built around our strong commitment to public service,” says Jiang. “People who come here often find some common ground in their core values and their interest in making a positive impact on the larger communities around them.” Such values connect students with each other and with faculty.

Successful applicants to SIS have a strong academic background and multiple indicators showing how they can succeed at SIS and beyond. They also have a compelling rationale for choosing the specific program to which they are applying.

“Many of our successful applicants actively interact with the SIS community before applying,” says Jiang. Talking with faculty, students, and staff helps applicants understand the school’s degree offerings, learning expectations, global opportunities, opportunities to be involved in scholar-practitioner-led research, and ways to pursue their unique interests within the school’s structured, but flexible, curriculum. Applicants’ early interaction with SIS helps them put together a focused and thoughtful application that reflects their achievements and potential.

“We consider GRE scores as one of many indicators for understanding an applicant holistically,” says Jiang. She notes that less robust GRE results can potentially be mitigated by other factors, such as:

- Impressive work experience;
- A statement of purpose that demonstrates substantive knowledge of the field and conveys a clear understanding of the program; and
- Evidence of critical thinking, leadership, and resilience.

“SIS prides itself on combining knowledge and practice, so having relevant work experience is really valuable for our students,” says Jiang. Even students who came straight out of undergrad have usually completed at least one substantive internship, volunteer program, and/or study-abroad program.

Recommendations focusing on an applicant’s academic performance and potential, work ethic, and commitment to public service can help to enhance an application. Another type of recommendation might help offset an applicant’s weakness: If quantitative GRE scores are a concern, for example, a letter from a supervisor who managed the applicant’s successful quantitative analysis in a job could help to reveal an important strength.

**Master’s Degree Program Options:** MA in Comparative and Regional Studies; MS in Development Management; MA in Ethics, Peace, and Global Affairs; MA in Global Environmental Policy; MA in Global Governance, Politics, and Security; MA in Global Media; MA in Intercultural and International Communication; MA in International Development; MA in International Economic Relations; MA in International Economics; MA in International Peace and Conflict Resolution; MA in Natural Resources and Sustainable Development; MA in United States Foreign Policy and National Security; MA in International Relations (online); MA in Social Enterprise (online or on campus); Executive Master’s (online or on campus) and other degrees.

**Fall 2018 Application Deadline:** Master’s applications completed by January 15, 2018, will receive priority consideration.

**Standardized Exam Scores:** See <https://cms.american.edu/sis/admissions/required-materials.cfm> for more info.

**Recommendation Letters:** Two required for master’s degree applications

**Application Checklist:**

<https://cms.american.edu/sis/admissions/required-materials.cfm>

*Participates in the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and matching program for Segal AmeriCorps Education Award.*





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# Johns Hopkins University

## SCHOOL OF ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (SAIS)

**“BY CONNECTING THE THEORETICAL STUDY OF ECONOMICS, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, AND REGIONAL STUDIES TO THE PRACTICAL WORK OF POLICYMAKERS,**



**STUDENTS AT JOHNS HOPKINS SAIS BUILD THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND NETWORKS REQUIRED FOR SUCCESS IN TODAY’S COMPLEX GLOBAL ECONOMY.”**

**-SIDNEY T. JACKSON,**  
 ASSISTANT DEAN OF  
 GLOBAL ENROLLMENT  
 AND RECRUITMENT,  
 JOHNS HOPKINS  
 UNIVERSITY SCHOOL  
 OF ADVANCED  
 INTERNATIONAL  
 STUDIES (SAIS)

“We look for candidates who are creative, passionate, and driven, and who demonstrate that they are poised for success,” says Sidney T. Jackson, assistant dean of global enrollment and recruitment at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). “We seek talented and motivated candidates who wish to further their expertise and build a globally minded career.”

Most successful applicants to Johns Hopkins SAIS have worked, studied, volunteered, or traveled outside of their home country. Many applicants are proficient in one or two foreign languages.

“Successful candidates also demonstrate strong analytic and quantitative aptitude—as evidenced through previous coursework, professional experience, or, in some cases, standardized test scores,” says Jackson. Johns Hopkins SAIS requires the GRE or GMAT for most of its degree programs; the GMAT is especially popular among students planning to pursue a dual MA/MBA degree.

“Test scores, however, are not the determining factor in the admissions review,” notes Jackson. “For example, there are some candidates who do very well on the GRE or GMAT but lack appropriate work experience.”

An applicant’s work history helps the admissions committee to see that their goals are informed by practical exposure to the subjects they wish to study. Students often contribute to classroom discussions by sharing their relevant work experiences. Even so, about 10 to 12 percent of students entering the Master of Arts program each year arrive at Johns Hopkins SAIS directly from undergraduate programs. Such students typically distinguish themselves by having a particularly strong academic record, unique internship experience, or a fellowship supporting their graduate study.

If a candidate is currently employed, the admissions committee would prefer that at least one of the two required recommendation letters come from an immediate supervisor. The longer a candidate has been out of school, the more the emphasis is likely to be placed on their professional accomplishments and career trajectory.

Many undergraduate applicants who have not yet entered the workforce will have one of their professors write academic recommendations, but the committee also welcomes recommendations from an internship supervisor or a volunteer organization. Applicants should seek a recommender who knows them well and can talk about their interpersonal skills, character, leadership, and ability to succeed in the program.

Although Johns Hopkins SAIS offers an early notification enrollment option for some master’s degree programs, the acceptance rate in the early notification pool is comparable to that of the regular decision pool. Deadline dates vary by program, and candidates should apply as soon as they feel their application best highlights their academic and work experience, extracurricular activities, and personal or professional leadership roles.



### Master’s Degree Program Options and Campus Locations:

Master of Arts (Bologna, Italy; Nanjing, China; Washington, D.C.)  
 MA in International Affairs (Bologna, Italy)  
 MA in International Studies (Nanjing, China)  
 MA in International Economics and Finance (Washington, D.C.)  
 MA in Global Policy (Washington, D.C.)  
 MA in Global Risk (Bologna, Italy)  
 Master of International Public Policy (Bologna, Italy; Washington, D.C.)

**Fall 2018 Application Deadline:** Varies by program.  
 Visit [www.sais-jhu.edu/admissions](http://www.sais-jhu.edu/admissions) for more information.

**Standardized Exam Scores:** GRE or GMAT

**Recommendation Letters:** Two required

**Application Checklist:** [www.sais-jhu.edu/application-checklist](http://www.sais-jhu.edu/application-checklist)





# STUDY WITH PURPOSE

*“It’s never been more important to study international relations at a school that understands that truth is elusive but real; that history cannot be rewritten to suit today’s preferences; that tradeoffs are inescapable facts of economic life; and that leaders are those who inspire, not those who inflame.”*

— ELIOT COHEN, PhD

Director of the Philip Merrill Center for  
Strategic Studies and Robert E. Osgood  
Professor of Strategic Studies



JOHNS HOPKINS  
SCHOOL of ADVANCED  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

## NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Master of Arts  
Master of Arts in Global Policy  
Master of Arts in Global Risk  
Master of Arts in International Affairs  
Master of Arts in International Studies

Master of Arts in International Economics and Finance  
Master of International Public Policy  
Certificate in Chinese and American Studies  
Diploma in International Studies  
Doctor of Philosophy

[sais-jhu.edu/fp](https://sais-jhu.edu/fp)

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## APSIA ADMISSIONS FAIRS

This fall, the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA) is offering the following admissions fairs, where you can meet admissions officers from a wide variety of schools:

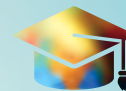
- *New York, N.Y.*  
September 12
- *Washington, D.C.*  
September 13
- *Vancouver, B.C.*  
September 14
- *Portland, Ore.*  
September 16
- *Tokyo, Japan*  
November 7
- *Taipei, Taiwan*  
November 8
- *Seoul, Korea*  
November 9
- *Online Admissions Fair: November 15*

In addition, APSIA hosts monthly one-hour webinars focusing on "Best Practices for Applying to Graduate School." Participation is free. Upcoming webinars will be held on the following dates:

- *August 9*
- *September 6*
- *October 19*
- *November 7*
- *December 6*

For more information and to register for any of these events, visit [www.apsia.org/events](http://www.apsia.org/events).

## PROGRAM DIRECTORY MASTER'S DEGREES IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



### Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA)

Provides resources on careers and graduate studies in international affairs, including information about its community of 60+ member schools and affiliated programs

[www.apsia.org](http://www.apsia.org)

### American University, School of International Service (SIS)

MA in Comparative and Regional Studies; MS in Development Management; MA in Ethics, Peace, and Global Affairs; MA in Global Environmental Policy; MA in Global Governance, Politics, and Security; MA in Global Media; MA in Intercultural and International Communication; MA in International Development; MA in International Economic Relations; MA in International Economics; MA in International Peace and Conflict Resolution; MA in Natural Resources and Sustainable Development; MA in United States Foreign Policy and National Security; MA in International Relations (online); MA in Social Enterprise (online or on campus); Executive Master's (online or on campus) and other degrees.

<http://american.edu/sis/admissions>

### Georgetown University, Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS)

Master of Science in Foreign Service (MSFS)  
MA in Security Studies  
Master of Global Human Development  
MA in Arab Studies  
MA in Asian Studies  
MA in Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies  
MA in German and European Studies  
MA in Latin American Studies  
MA in International Business and Policy

<http://sfs.georgetown.edu>

### Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)

Master of Arts (Bologna, Italy; Nanjing, China; Washington, D.C.)  
MA in International Affairs (Bologna, Italy)  
MA in International Studies (Nanjing, China)  
MA in International Economics and Finance (Washington, D.C.)  
MA in Global Policy (Washington, D.C.)  
MA in Global Risk (Bologna, Italy)  
Master of International Public Policy (Bologna, Italy; Washington, D.C.)

[www.sais-jhu.edu/fp](http://www.sais-jhu.edu/fp)

### University of Denver, Josef Korbel School of International Studies

MA, Conflict Resolution; MA, Global Finance, Trade and Economic Integration; MA, International Administration; MA, International Development; MA, International Human Rights; MA, International Security; MA, International Studies; Master of Public Policy. Dual degrees include the MA/JD (law) and MA/MSW (social work). The school also offers a PhD in International Studies and five certificate programs.

[www.du.edu/korbel](http://www.du.edu/korbel)

The copy in this report was prepared by **Nancy Henderson**, an independent education writer based in Washington, D.C., in connection with the business department of *FOREIGN POLICY*, and did not involve the editorial staff of this magazine.

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# TRANSFORM YOURSELF AND THE WORLD

## **APSIA SCHOOLS DELIVER THE SKILLS AND MINDSET TO IGNITE TRANSFORMATION IN A COMPLEX WORLD.**

The APSIA community brings together the leading graduate schools around the world which specialize in international affairs.

Our graduates work for peace, expand prosperity, build organizations, lead governments, and protect their fellow citizens.

APSIA.org makes it easy to connect with the world's leading graduate schools of international affairs.

“

*Before [graduate school], I had an understanding of global challenges and now I have the tools to approach their solutions.*

”

Atishay Abbhi, Master of Arts candidate,  
Energy, Resources and Environment,  
Johns Hopkins School of Advanced  
International Studies

# APSIA

Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs

[www.apsia.org](http://www.apsia.org)