

Advanced study in international affairs offers a wide array of disciplinary options, including international relations, area studies, foreign policy, foreign affairs and international management. A simple way to begin looking for information on graduate programs in international affairs is to look at the entries under “international affairs” in the *Peterson’s Guide to Graduate Programs in the Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences* (available for review in Career Services and many libraries) or go online to petersons.com. Sorting out the options from the array of degree programs that include the word “international” requires an understanding of your career ambitions, experience and preparation.

If you are interested in preparing for a career in research or teaching, investigate Ph.D. programs in departments or schools emphasizing theory and research rather than oriented toward training professionals.

If you are in college now or are a recent graduate, you have not yet established yourself in a profession and are seeking professional training, begin your research into international affairs programs by looking into those programs that are designed to train international affairs professionals. The Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA) is a good place to start. You can find out information on them in Career Services and on the Web at www.apsia.org. APSIA schools offer two-year master’s degree programs designed to impart knowledge as well as skills needed by practitioners.

If you have a profession already and/or you are seeking in-depth knowledge about a specific region of the world, you may prefer to pursue an area studies degree.

Review the mission statements of the programs which interest you as well as their job placement information to help you determine which programs are an appropriate match for you.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM TYPES:

International Relations Master's and Doctoral Programs

Curricula in these academic programs focus on the political and economic relationships among various world governments and usually include study of American diplomatic history and theory, comparative politics, political economy and foreign political and economic policy. Doctoral graduates are prepared to teach and conduct research. Master's graduates can serve as analysts for government and private organizations, and as foreign affairs or policy specialists or researchers.

Foreign Affairs and Foreign Service Master's Programs

These interdisciplinary professional programs have historically prepared students to assume positions as government officers in the service of U.S. Departments of State, Commerce and Defense, among others. Many graduates also obtain positions in the private sector and in non-profit global organizations. Program curricula generally include courses in international relations theory and practice, international trade, foreign policy, American diplomacy, comparative politics and economy, foreign languages and business diplomacy. Foreign affairs program content is thus drawn from business administration, international relations, foreign policy, area studies and even law to create a rich and comprehensive curriculum.

International/Foreign Policy Master's Programs

International policy professional schools provide master's level training in the study and analysis of policy issues that affect international public and private sectors. In addition to courses in political and economic policy analysis and development, students master quantitative and statistical skills that prepare them for positions as policy and research analysts for government, as well as for private and non-profit organizations. These programs will offer the opportunity to focus on issues that affect the global environment.

International Management Master's Programs

There are two types of programs in this category: the master's degree in business administration (MBA) with a specialization or concentration in international business, and the international management or international business master's degree. The MBA with an international concentration generally requires a core of courses covering management theory and practice, finance, accounting, marketing, operations research, quantitative analysis, organization development and other courses, allowing the student to "specialize" in international business by taking such elective courses as international business, international trade, global business environments, cultural differences, etc. The international business or international management master's degree integrates the study of management principles with study of international concerns affecting business in general, thus "internationalizing" each course in the program with titles such as international finance, international management, international marketing, international economic policy, etc. Graduates of this type of program compete favorably with traditional MBA graduates for positions, mainly in the private sector, both in the U.S. and abroad.

Area Studies Master's and Doctoral Programs

Academic area studies program content typically focuses on the political, economic and cultural aspects of a specific world region. Common areas of specialization include Europe, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Asia, Middle East, Pacific Rim countries, Chinese and Russian studies. Some schools offer master's degrees in International Studies with an option to specialize in a particular world region. Master's graduates are considered to be experts in their field, are generally competent to conduct research, can act as consultants, and in some cases, obtain positions with U.S. government agencies or private sector employers in the region or country of specialization. Doctoral graduates are viewed as scholars in their field, generally teach, conduct research and may act as expert consultants for governments and private organizations.

PREPARATION FOR ADMISSION:

Undergraduate academic preparation can vary depending on the type of graduate program interest and desired career goal. Common undergraduate majors leading to the international affairs programs include political science, economics, area studies, foreign language and history, among others. In addition, some international MBA, foreign policy and foreign affairs programs recommend or require the applicant to have completed certain courses which can include introductory economics, statistics, calculus, computer programming, accounting and foreign languages.

Although the curricular focuses and selectivity of the above-mentioned programs differ, admission criteria can be quite similar. All applicants should present: strength in their major and in college work overall; strong admission test scores (the General Graduate Record Examination [GRE] is required for most programs, except international MBA programs, which typically require the Graduate Management Admission Test [GMAT]); usually three letters of reference from faculty and others who can attest to the applicant's motivation and potential to succeed in a graduate or professional program; a strong application statement of purpose or essay which documents the applicant's background, interest, motivation, goals. Admissions committees also value such experiences as undergraduate research on international topics, relevant volunteer work or internships, travel, study or work abroad or full time or part time work in an organization, the mission of which is international in nature (e.g., international banking, international trade, cultural organizations, non-profit global organizations and federal government agencies). A resume may be required of an applicant. Transcripts from all colleges and universities an applicant has attended are generally required. Application deadlines vary, but are usually in January or February for fall admission.

CAREER SERVICES CENTER RESOURCES:

The Center has many very informative resources on international careers, jobs, internships, and graduate schools in print and online at career.ucsd.edu. Both career and graduate school advisors are available for individual appointments.