MASTER'S OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DEGREE

A specific note on graduate schools in International Affairs, offering the M.I.A. and similar degrees for Macalester College International Studies majors, I.S. graduates, and others

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Earlier, you will have read my "general" page on grad-school choices. Here in this separate page, I will discuss in somewhat more detail the **MIA**, which is, again, the most common field for Macalester International Studies alumni to pursue – even though this counts for at best only 1/3 of the total degrees pursued.

In my own view, the six top tier International Affairs programs, in alphabetical order, are:

1. The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy ("Fletcher") at Tufts University

2. The John F. Kennedy School of Government ("the K-School") at Harvard University, which also includes a strong domestic / public-policy angle

3. The School of Advanced International Studies ("SAIS," pronounced like rice) at Johns Hopkins University, but located in Washington DC, with additional campuses in Italy and China

4. The School of International and Public Affairs ("SIPA") at Columbia University

5. The School of Foreign Service (SFS) at Georgetown University (which alas has no nickname)

6. The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs ("Wilson") at Princeton University. Like the K-School, it includes a strong domestic angle as well.

Of course, all six of these schools have different focuses and strengths, but all of them are unimpeachable. Wilson may be the hardest to get into, because it is small and students are very well funded. SAIS has more of an economics-development focus than the others – though this is certainly available at all of the schools. Explore all of them to see the best match for you.

The strong *next* tier of MIA programs include the other members of APSIA, the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs. Go to www.apsia.org for a list and much more information. Special note should be made here of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs ("HHH") at the University of Minnesota. It is a strong school often favored by Macalester graduates with regional commitments here in the upper midwest. Like Woodrow Wilson and the K-School, it also has a strong domestic / public-policy component. There are a few dozen additional schools beyond the APSIA list, including schools outside the United States, many of which have important strengths.

Each of the many International Affairs schools has somewhat different regional, disciplinary, and functional strengths and specialties, and many have special and/or joint-degree programs (e.g. environment, health, economics, law, domestic policy, etc.).

What can you expect in terms of admissions to the top International Affairs schools? My experience over the past fifteen years suggest this. A Mac I.S. major who has performed well, has enriched their credentials in other ways, and has interesting post-Mac experience, can expect to be admitted to 2-4 of those I am terming the top six, if they apply to all six. A Mac student with a top academic record and truly fine extras can expect to be admitted to 3-6 of them, if they apply to all six. Admissions to schools beyond my personal "top six," many of which have important strengths, is often (though not universally) widely accessible to Mac I.S. grads.

As with applications to all degrees, your chances depend not only on your GPA and standardized test scores, but also on your range of BA credentials (majors, minors, concentrations, study abroad, independent work, internships, and more), your "story," special attributes, intervening work and field experience, and recommendations. Applicants just one year beyond the BA will be evaluated mainly on transcript, test scores, and recommendations. But the further past the BA you are, the more the quality, range, and depth of your intervening experience will count.