The SIPA COMBINED/DUAL Bachelor’s/Master’s Program

MPA: Masters of Public Administration  MIA: Masters of International Affairs

What is the Combined/Dual Bachelor’s/Master’s Program with SIPA?
The SIPA Combined/Dual Program is an accelerated program allowing accepted students to combine completion of their BA or BS while pursuing the MPA or MIA, thereby expediting the earning of a Master’s degree. Please note that this program is only for exceptionally advanced – academically and experientially – students. Students considering (but not certain about pursuing) a career in public administration or international affairs may be better prepared by working before applying for MPA or MIA programs, as typical MPA or MIA students have worked in their fields for a minimum of three to five years prior to entering their graduate program. Only those students passionate about public administration or international affairs with the academic and experiential background should apply.

Requirements
- Barnard: students will have completed most requirements
- CC:  93 pts, core, and concentration (or 6 pts left in major) completed
- SEAS:  96 pts, core completed; no more than 6 pts left in major
- GS:    94 pts, will have completed most core and major or concentration requirements
- GPA:  Competitive applicants typically have a 3.6 or better (3.0 minimum)
- MIA:  Demonstrated proficiency in economics, modern language, political science, and experience in international affairs (i.e. overseas work exposure)
- MPA:  Demonstrated proficiency in statistics, political science, calculus, economics, and experience in public service (i.e., health advocacy, volunteer services, social work)
- During the senior year, students must complete at least 12 SIPA credits per semester (and 3-6 credits to complete undergraduate major if needed)

General Information
- Housing: during senior year, student housing is through the respective undergraduate schools. During the final year at SIPA, housing will not be guaranteed; students must apply for University Apartment Housing through SIPA.
- Financial Aid: during senior year, financial aid will be awarded through the undergraduate school. During the final year at SIPA, students must apply to SIPA for financial aid.

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CC/SEAS Contact
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General Studies Contact
- Scott Halvorson, 854-2881, sh287@columbia.edu

SIPA Contact
- Urbano Garza, 854-8690, utgl1@columbia.edu
Philosophy
The SIPA program is designed for...
- Those who are already well connected to and have demonstrated depth and proficiency in public administration, foreign services, or international relations.
- Those who have a passion for pursuing careers in public administration or international affairs, have the expertise to work with practitioners in the field in the classroom setting, and are willing and able handle the academic challenge an accelerated program
- Those who want the opportunity to save one year’s worth of tuition money.

Why the SIPA program is discouraged...
- The SIPA Combined/Dual Degree Program is not for everyone; SIPA Combined/Dual Program students are split between two worlds not fully enjoying the benefits of a typical “senior year” yet not fully holding the status of a typical SIPA student.
- Not fully integrated and involved with “senior” class – lose experience of a traditional senior year.
- Difficulty relating to entering SIPA class: most SIPA students are about 26 years old, have work experience, contacts and public administration or international affairs context
- First year “regular” SIPA admits receive priority for prime internships and therefore have the networks already developed in the second year for career networking.

Process and Deadlines
- Formal applications are available in December.
- Applications are due in January; applications can be mailed or faxed to the appropriate Dean.
- Nominations of viable applicants sent to SIPA in early February.
- SIPA coordinates candidate interviews in March or April.
- SIPA contacts students selected for admissions to SIPA Combined/Dual Program in late April / early May.

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Frequently Asked Questions

What makes a good applicant? (academic, personal, experience)
- **Academic**: strong grades; breadth and depth in disciplines needed; ability to balance rigorous program and academic challenges
- **Personal**: maturity, focus, passion, and depth
- **Experience**: passion and experience in public administration or international affairs; working on one political campaign (public administration) or studying abroad (international affairs) has typically not been sufficient for application viability; applicants need to show longevity and experience in the field through differing venues and organizations

What about GPA requirements?
- There is no formal requirement, but viable applicants have typically achieved GPAs above 3.6

Do I need to major in Political Science to be a viable applicant?
- No – any major is acceptable for admission to the SIPA Combined/Dual Degree Program. However, students must achieve strong marks in the disciplines needed (modern languages, economics, political science, etc.).

What holes in my application can I fill now?
- The biggest holes are academic or experiential.
- **Academics**: students must show breadth and achievement in the disciplines needed; any student with academic gaps should contact the appropriate Dean to discuss appropriate program planning.
- **Experience**: students lacking sufficient experience should plan appropriate public administration or international affairs internships/opportunities to enhance their application.

How many students apply and are accepted each year?
- Roughly 20 students express interest in applying their junior year; approximately 10-15 formally apply; roughly one-third of the applications are passed to the SIPA Admissions Committee for final review.

What are the typical reasons students do not get accepted?
- Students typically lack academic or experiential proficiency. Please note that the SIPA Combined/Dual Degree Program is an ACCELERATED program – the Deans find that many applicants not passed on for SIPA Admissions Committee consideration can be viable applicants for MPA or MIA programs given another year of academic success and/or a few years of practical experience. By no means should students not selected for the SIPA Combined/Dual Degree Program consider themselves not viable for an MPA or MIA programs in the future.

I have applied for the SIPA Combined/Dual Degree Program and am waiting to hear the Admissions Committee’s decision. How should I plan my schedule my senior year?
- Students waiting for an admissions decision should schedule their senior year as if they would remain at CC, SEAS, GS, or Barnard. If students are accepted into the SIPA Program, SIPA advisors will assist students in preparing for the MPA or MIA curriculum.

What can I do in my freshman and sophomore years to prepare for SIPA Combined/Dual Degree Program admissions?
- Students should pursue their major of choice, noting that they should also complete courses in the needed disciplines.
- Students should expose themselves to as many public administration or international affairs opportunities as possible in order to confirm their interest in and desire for a career in public administration or international affairs.

Will I be able to apply if I study abroad during my junior year?
- Applicants are encouraged to study abroad to enhance their international exposure; students can communicate with their undergraduate Dean via email and fax and can submit applications while overseas. Students studying abroad should contact their Dean for assistance with the application process. Applicants selected to interview with SIPA can conduct interviews via phone.

Do I need to take the GRE’s?
- No standardized tests are needed for SIPA Combined/Dual Degree Program admission.