Best Practices in Applying to Graduate School
Why Graduate School?

✓ Changes in Salary
✓ ‘Mastering' a Subject
✓ Career Advancement
✓ Professional Focus
Preparing to Apply: 12+ Months

- Determine which program you wish to pursue
- Research graduate schools
- Create a spreadsheet to track deadlines
- Understand your financial situation
- Investigate financial aid options
Preparing to Apply

✓ Seek out schools’ admissions counselors
  • Understand the priorities of the Admissions Committee
✓ Complete prerequisite courses and skills
✓ Identify weaknesses in your application
✓ Take any standardized tests
✓ Begin to gather application materials
Preparing to Apply

All schools vary, but be prepared to provide:

- Application form
- Application fee
- C.V. or Resume
- Official transcripts from each institution
- Standardized test scores (ex: GRE, GMAT)
- Personal statement and/or topical essays
- 2-3 letters of recommendation
- Bank Statements (for financial aid and/or studying abroad)
Preparing to Apply

✓ Finalize your list of desired programs
✓ Reach out to potential recommenders
✓ Compile application materials per school
  ✓ Update Resume
  ✓ Request transcripts from all institutions attended
  ✓ Write essays and personal statements
✓ Apply to outside scholarships
✓ Retake any standardized tests (if needed)
✓ Check in with recommenders
Essays and Personal Statements

Outline Your Qualifications
Apply: 1 Month

✓ Finalize all applications for admission
✓ Finalize all applications for scholarships/financial aid
✓ Check in with recommenders
✓ Update financial plan
✓ Submit all requested materials
Application Mistakes

Failing to follow instructions: Submit the requested information – no more or less. Ask for extra copies of external documents. Request transcripts and recommendations early.

Making foolish mistakes: Read your essays and statement several times. Ask a second party to review them, as well.

Not conducting an honest self-assessment of your skills, experiences, and interests: Discern what you want to master and why. Disclose issues straightforwardly. Contact schools to determine how best to discuss issue(s) or gap(s). Avoid oversharng or apologizing. Share how you’ve grown.
After the Deadline

✓ Confirm all materials for admission and scholarships received
✓ Thank all recommenders
✓ Update financial plan
✓ Continue to learn about programs
What do Schools Look For?

- Experiences and perspectives that will help others succeed
- A clear sense of professional direction
- Aptitude for study
- Chance of success in the program
- Experiences and perspectives that will help others succeed
Paying for School

- Merit and Need-based aid
- Research / teaching assistant positions
- Working for the university
- Assistance provide by central university of programs within the School
- External Sources of funding
  - Grants
  - Loans
  - Scholarships
Paying for School: Examples

- **Pickering, Rangel, and Payne Fellowships**
  - Specific to careers with State Department or US Agency for International Development

- **Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program**
  - For Returned Peace Corps Volunteers

- **Organization of American States (OAS) Scholarships**
  - For citizens of OAS member states to pursue graduate or doctoral degrees

- **Baltic-American Foundation Scholarships**
  - For Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians who wish to pursue postgraduate studies

- **Public Policy and International Affairs Program**
  - To promote the inclusion of underrepresented groups in public service
International Affairs is an interdisciplinary field that can prepare you for a variety of career paths.

- Communications & Public Relations
- Business
- Development & Conflict Resolution
- Energy & Environment
- Education
- Human Rights & Law
- Science & Technology
- Security & Intelligence
Being Competitive

- Supervisors
- Peers
- Professors
- Alumni

- Professional Experience
- Write Well
- Speak Comfortably

- Understand Project Management
- Build a Network
  - Supervisors
  - Peers
  - Professors
  - Alumni
Stay engaged!

External Links:

• apsia.org/events
• apsia.org/fellowships-scholarships
• apsia.org/graduate-schools-programs
• apsia.org/careers/international-career-guide
Stay engaged!

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Upcoming APSIA Events

Online Graduate School Fair
September 29
11:00AM – 1:45PM ET

Register at bit.ly/septfair22
Upcoming APSIA Events

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