



5 Year MIA/MPA Program

School of International and Public Affairs

What is the SIPA 5-Year Program?

The SIPA 5-Year Program is an accelerated joint masters program allowing accepted students to earn a BA and MPA or MIA in five years. The program is designed for advanced students who are strong academically and have already gained some relevant experience. 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 the fields and who possess the background described below should apply.

Requirements

- CC: 93 pts, Core completed including Physical Education; no more than 6-8 pts left in major
- MIA: Demonstrated proficiency in modern language(s), economics and/or quantitative analysis, and experience in international affairs (i.e. overseas exposure)
- MPA: Demonstrated proficiency in modern language(s), economics and/or quantitative analysis, and experience in public service (i.e. health advocacy, volunteer service, social work)
- Senior year: live in undergraduate residence halls, take at least 12 SIPA credits per semester (and 6-8 additional credits to complete undergraduate major if needed)
- Fifth year: no more housing or financial aid from Columbia College/SEAS; must apply separately to SIPA for housing or financial aid for consideration

For whom is the SIPA program designed?

- Those who are already well connected to, and have demonstrated depth and proficiency in, public administration, foreign service, or international relations
- Those with a demonstrated commitment to pursuing careers in public administration or international affairs, have the expertise to work with experienced practitioners in the classroom setting, and are willing and able handle the academic challenge of the 5-Year Program

Why might the program not be for me?

- SIPA 5-Year 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
- Students often have difficulty relating to entering SIPA class: most SIPA students are about 30 years old, have extensive work experience, contacts in their field, and an understanding of the public administration or international affairs context

What can I do in my first and second years to prepare for SIPA 5-Year Program admissions?

- Students should pursue their major of choice and complete their Core requirements, noting that they should also complete courses in the needed disciplines outlined above.
- 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.

What makes a good applicant to the program? (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:** commitment 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.

When and How to Apply

- If you are interested in learning more about this program, please speak with your CSA advising dean as soon as possible.
- Students apply to the SIPA program during their junior year. Applications can be found and completed through the SIPA Admissions Website.