

## OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

### DOCTORAL DEGREE APPLICATION PROCESS

#### PhD vs. MIA/MPA — What are the benefits?

- MIA/MPA degree: Provides a broad-based curriculum with a balance between theory and practice, leaving plenty of career paths open to the recipient
- PhD degree: Completely theory-based, with a bent towards abstract thinking. The focus is narrow, which tends to limit job prospects upon graduation. Most PhD recipients follow an academic career path, where research is valued over teaching skills. However, it is becoming more common for individuals with a PhD to fill highly specialized roles within professional public and private sector organizations.

#### Program Acceptance

A program's first priority is to maximize its academic credentials. As such, the primary focus will be a candidate's academic record, followed by GRE scores, and then work experience, if applicable.

#### Funding

Most programs take roughly seven years to complete, which over time can be very costly. It is strongly recommended that explore how to (partially or completely) fund your program through an employer or through the program/school itself. Check your employer's benefits for tuition remission. Perhaps talk with them about the benefits and value of your research and other skills obtained from a doctoral degree. Also, many programs provide full funding for PhD candidates in the form of fellowships. Be sure to gather information about internal funding mechanisms before you apply. Make sure that you are clear about what each school is willing to offer you and the time commitments required of you for their fellowships.

#### Quick tips

Once you are interested in a program, look over the faculty roster and reach out to an adviser of interest to you. Since you will be in constant contact with them, it will be helpful if you have a shared connection.

**Note:** Get a feel for the long-term plans of the faculty adviser of interest to you. Are they close to retirement? Will they be moving to a different school? Are they interested in the area of research you intend to pursue? You want to find someone who will be there for the duration of your studies.

#### Resources

- *The Chronicle of Higher Education* ([www.chronicle.com](http://www.chronicle.com)) — A job-information source for college and university faculty members and administrators. Includes many career searches in academia
- *The American Political Science Association* ([www.apsanet.org](http://www.apsanet.org)) — Political science professional association
- *Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs* ([www.apsia.org](http://www.apsia.org)) — Provides information about its 30 member schools for current and prospective students, employers and media sources
- *Interfolio* ([www.interfolio.com](http://www.interfolio.com)) — Manages credential files for students and alumni. Collects, stores, and distributes credential files including evaluations, curriculum vitae, and committee letters. These documents are then used to support applications to graduate schools, professional schools, or jobs.

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