

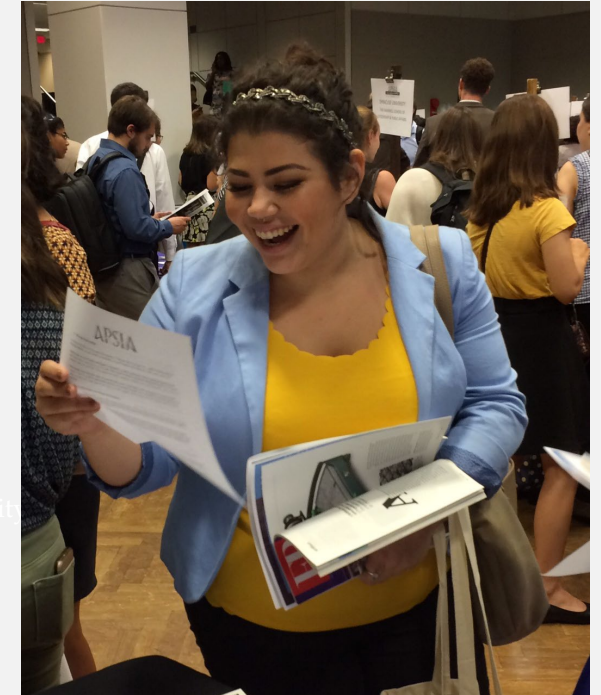
Best Practices in Applying to Graduate School

APSLA



Why Graduate School?

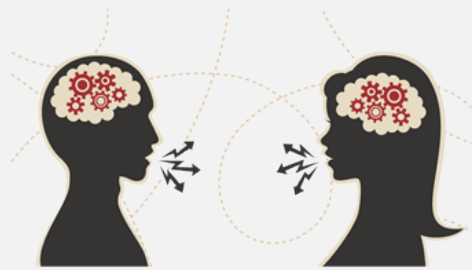
- ✓ Changes in Salary
- ✓ 'Mastering' a Subject
- ✓ Career Advancement
- ✓ Professional Focus



Duke University

Career Options

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

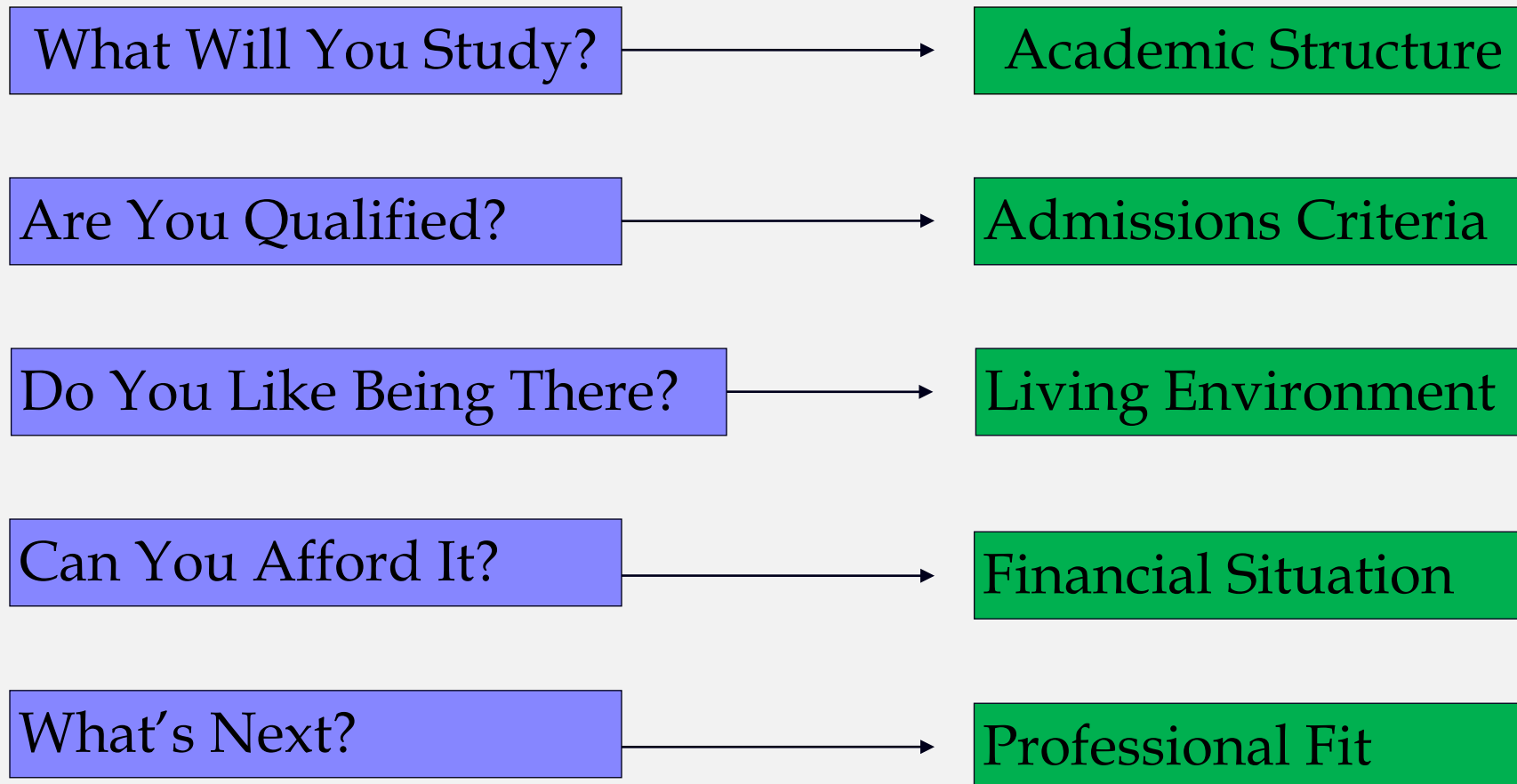
Preparing to Apply: 12+ Months

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



Duke University, Sanford School of Public Policy

Finding the Right Program



Preparing to Apply

- ✓ Seek out schools' admissions counselors
 - Understand the priorities of the Admissions Committee
- ✓ Finalize your list of desired programs
- ✓ Identify weaknesses in your application
- ✓ Take any standardized tests
- ✓ Begin to gather materials / school
- ✓ Apply to outside scholarships
- ✓ Reach out to potential recommenders



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)

Preparing to Apply

Essays and Personal Statements

Outline Your Qualifications

- Work and Volunteer Experiences
- Life Experiences
- Coursework
- Projects
- Languages

Convey Your Passion

- What do you want to study? Why does that topic excite you?
- What motivates you to go to Grad School now?

Explain Your Goals

- Why This School?
- Why This Program?
- What will you do with the degree once you have it?

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



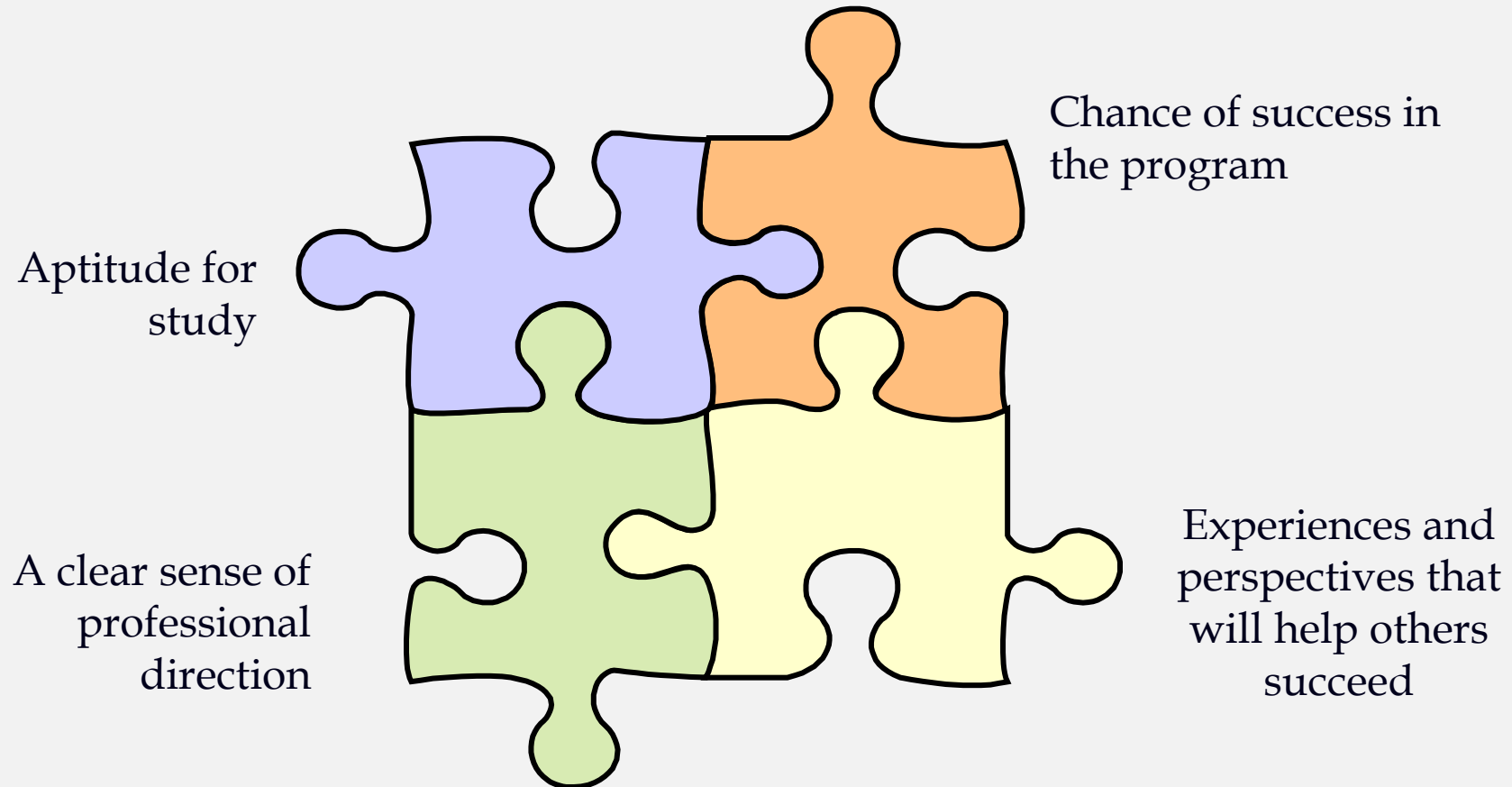
Read your essays and statement several times. Ask a second party to review them, as well.

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 oversharing or apologizing. Share how you've grown.

What do Schools Look For?



Paying for School

- Merit and Need-based aid
- Research / teaching assistant positions
- 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

Being Competitive

(International)
Professional
Experience

Write
Well

Speak
Comfortably

Understand Project
Management

Build a Network

- Supervisors
- Peers
- Professors
- Alumni

Stay engaged!



APSLA
transforming
our world.

Briana Suarez
International Admissions and Ops Manager
briana@apsia.org

External Links:

- apsia.org/events
- apsia.org/fellowships-scholarships
- apsia.org/graduate-schools-programs
- apsia.org/careers/international-career-guide



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