

Methodology for 2011 Application Trends Survey

From June 1 to mid-July 2011, the Graduate Management Admission Council® (GMAC®) conducted its *Application Trends Survey*, an annual survey of business school admission professionals worldwide to assess how application volume at MBA and other graduate management programs compared with that from the same period in 2010. This study is the 12th in the series of GMAC surveys that monitor application trends.

To represent a cross section of the graduate management industry worldwide, GMAC invited approximately 1,819 graduate business schools and faculties to participate in this year's Application Trends Survey. This included all its member schools—the majority of Graduate Management Admission Test® (GMAT®) score-receiving schools—plus a number of institutions that do not use the GMAT exam in their admission process to take part in this study. A total of 331 graduate business schools and faculties participated in this survey by submitting data for 649 graduate management programs, including 467 MBA, 158 specialized master's, and 24 doctoral programs. The MBA is represented by 117 full-time two-year, 82 full-time one-year, 109 part-time or professional, 67 executive, 68 flexible MBA, and 24 online or distance-learning programs. Master's programs are represented by several majors, including Master of Accounting (41), Master in Management (29), and Master of Finance (30) programs. Overall, 467 programs from 218 responding schools were in the United States; 89 programs from 60 schools were in Europe; 40 programs from 26 schools were in the Asia-Pacific region; 37 programs from 16 schools were in Canada; and 16 programs from 13 responding schools were in other world regions. Geographically, the survey sample represents 45 countries worldwide and 42 states and the District of Columbia in the United States. Combined, participating programs received more than 212,000 applications during the 2011 application cycle.

The survey questionnaire contained two sections: the mandatory *Application Trends* portion of the survey, which was required in order to qualify as a survey participant, and the optional *Admissions Management* section. All survey questions might not have been applicable to all responding programs. The survey was conducted online. By the response cut-off date, 649 graduate management programs from 331 business schools participated in the survey, at a school-based response rate of 18 percent. This response rate was achieved through an email invitation and two follow-up messages. Each school or faculty reported, on average, for two graduate management programs.

All application numbers and trends discussed in this report refer to complete applications that contained all documents needed for making an admission decision, which were received on or about June 30, 2011 for the 2011–2012 incoming class.

Data Analysis

Survey data were analyzed and tabulated using SPSS.

The following broad classification of graduate management programs was used in this report:

- Full-time MBA programs
- Two-year full-time MBA programs
- One-year full-time MBA programs
- Part-time, professional, or weekend MBA programs
- Part-time lockstep MBA programs
- Part-time self-paced MBA programs
- Executive MBA (EMBA) programs
- Flexible MBA programs (combination of full- and part-time options, primarily delivered on campus)
- Online or distance learning MBA programs (including hybrid programs)
- Master of science in management (generalist and global/international) or in business administration
- Master of accounting or taxation
- Master of finance
- Master-level programs in other specialized business disciplines
- PhD in business or management and DBA programs

Other specialized master's programs included the following fields: Human resource management [nine programs]; business information technology [fifteen programs]; marketing or marketing communications [ten programs]; real estate management [three programs]; public operations design and leadership [two programs]; administration or public policy, athletic administration, industrial relations, innovation management, engineering management, marketing and technological innovation, environmental management and sustainability, social sciences, arts administration, leadership and ethics, leadership and higher education, quantitative analysis, risk management, supply-chain control [one program each]. In addition, a few business schools reported combined data for two to five master's programs that specialized in business fields.

The reader should note that these classifications might not perfectly fit each of the reporting programs. With the need to accommodate people with various backgrounds, career paths, and lifestyles, new program types emerge continuously. Such program types are classified according to the closest match available. For example, MBA co-op programs that reported to the survey were classified into either traditional or accelerated full-time MBA programs based on the number of semesters of their full-time studies. In addition, applicants for some MBA programs do not declare the type of program delivery they may want to pursue at the time they submit an application.

World geographic classification used in this report is based on the following categories:

- **Asia and Pacific Islands (APAC):** Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam
- **Canada**
- **Europe:** Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, and United Kingdom
- **United States:** United States of America and its territories
- **Other world regions:** Brazil, Costa Rica, Egypt, Israel, Kenya, Lebanon, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Peru, South Africa, and United Arab Emirates.

In addition, US graduate management programs were grouped geographically using the following regional classifications:

- **Northeast (NE):** Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island
- **Midwest (MW):** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin
- **South (S):** Alabama, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia
- **West (W):** Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

Findings reported in this publication are based on survey responses of participating programs and are not based on a census of all graduate management programs; therefore, the data may be subject to error, including sampling error and item-nonresponse error.

Percentages in tables may not add to 100, due either to multiple responses provided by respondents or to rounding. Averages are not reported if the number of observations in a cell is less than 10. Percentages are not reported if the number of observations in a column is less than 10. Unless otherwise specified, responses “don’t know,” “prefer not to say,” or “not applicable” are not included.

For reader convenience, some percentage distributions (based on original survey response categories) are collapsed into broader categories at the bottom of a table. For example, responses “up significantly,” “up moderately,” and “up slightly” are grouped into the “up” category. (See *Key Survey Definitions* below for breakdown of percentage distributions.) All statistical significance tests in these tables are based on the original response categories.

The opinions and evaluations contained in this report represent those of individual contributors and are not necessarily the views of the Graduate Management Admission Council.

Participant Profile

The reporting programs included 199 full-time MBA, 109 part-time or professional MBA, 67 executive MBA (EMBA), 68 flexible MBA, and 24 online or distance-learning MBA programs, as well as 158 other master-level programs in business fields, and 24 doctoral programs in business (Table 1).

Overall, 467 programs from 218 responding schools were in the United States, 89 programs from 60 schools were in Europe, 40 programs from 26 schools were in the Asia-Pacific region, 37 programs from 16 schools were in Canada, and 16 programs from 13 responding schools were in other world regions (Table 2).

In addition, detailed participant profiles of full-time, part-time, executive, flexible, and online MBA programs as well as master's in accounting, master's in management, and master's in finance programs are presented in the corresponding sections of this report.

Table 1. Type and Number of Responding Programs by World Region

	United States	Canada	Europe	Asia-Pacific	Other World Regions	Total
Two-year full-time MBA	N=97	N=4	N=5	N=9	N=2	N=117
One-year full-time MBA	N=33	N=7	N=27	N=11	N=4	N=82
Part-time	N=87	N=4	N=7	N=7	N=4	N=109
Flexible or combined full-time and part-time MBA (on campus)	N=60	N=1	N=1	N=3	N=3	N=68
Executive MBA	N=40	N=5	N=12	N=7	N=3	N=67
Online or distance learning MBA	N=19	N=1	N=4	—	—	N=24
All MBA programs	N=336	N=22	N=56	N=37	N=16	N=467
Master in management	N=5	N=5	N=11	N=1	—	N=22
Master in international management	N=2	—	N=4	N=1	—	N=7
Master of accounting or taxation	N=41	—	—	—	—	N=41
Master of financial engineering	N=19	N=2	N=9	—	—	N=30
Master of human resource management	N=8	—	N=1	—	—	N=9
Master of business information technology	N=15	—	—	—	—	N=15
Master of marketing or marketing communications	N=9	—	N=1	—	—	N=10
Master of real estate management	N=3	—	—	—	—	N=3
Master of public administration/policy management	N=1	—	—	—	—	N=1
Other master's programs	N=18	—	N=2	—	—	N=20
All master's programs	N=121	N=7	N=28	N=2	—	N=158
PhD/DBA	N=10	N=8	N=5	N=1	—	N=24

Table 2. Worldwide Location of Participating Business Schools

	Number of Schools
United States	N=218
Canada	N=16
Europe	N=60
Asia-Pacific	N=26
Other world regions	N=13
Total	N=333 ¹

Key Survey Definitions

The following definitions appeared in the survey questionnaire and analysis:

Academic profile includes undergraduate GPA (UGPA), GMAT score, essays, and other indicators of academic quality used by a particular program in the admission process.

Acceptance rate is calculated as the number of acceptance offers divided by the number of total completed applications times 100.

A *co-op or cooperative education program* combines semesters of full-time study with semesters of structured full-time work for which students receive academic credit.

Enrollment rate is calculated as the number of accepted applicants who enroll divided by the number of all accepted applicants times 100.

Flexible MBA programs combine full-time and part-time course delivery options for students and are delivered primarily on campus.

The term *foreign* is defined by applicant citizenship and refers to any applicant whose citizenship differs from that of the country where he/she applies. For example, US citizens applying to UK programs would be considered foreign in the United Kingdom, and UK citizens applying to US programs would be considered foreign in the United States. Foreign applicants include permanent residents of a given country if they do not have citizenship in that country. Similarly, the term *domestic* is also defined by applicant citizenship.

The term *international* is defined by applicant residence, not by citizenship. Permanent residents of a given country would *not* be classified as international in this category, even if they were not citizens of the country.

Lockstep part-time or professional programs require students in the same year (cohorts) to advance together taking specific courses in a particular order.

¹ A small number of programs reported data about programs located in more than one country.

The term *minority* refers to ethnic minorities that include the following groups of US citizens: Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and American Indian or Alaska Native. The category, *underrepresented US minority candidates*, does not include US citizens of Asian origin.

Percentage distributions based on original survey response categories are often collapsed into broader categories “Up”, “Flat”, or “Down” at the bottom of a table or figure for reader convenience. The category “Up” includes up significantly (21% or higher), up moderately (11% to 20%), and up slightly (1% to 10%). “Flat” means there was no (0%) change from the previous year. “Down” includes down slightly (-1% to -10%), down moderately (-11% to -20%), and down significantly (-21% or lower).

Self-paced part-time or professional programs allow students flexibility in the pace or sequence in which they choose to complete their courses.

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