

Full-Time and Part-Time MBA Programs in California

Introduction

This paper, derived from the GMAC 2009 Application Trends Survey, focuses on the responses of full-time and part-time MBA programs in the state of California (CA) and draws comparisons with overall aggregate data for the same program types in the United States (US). Data presented in this publication is a summary of responses from 15 participating full-time MBA and 15 part-time MBA programs—a small fraction of the 226 full-time programs and 121 part-time programs that participated.

Key Findings

- Application volume continued to grow for full-time MBA programs in CA—79 percent of participating programs reported that the number of applications increased compared with last year.
- Full-time MBA programs in CA continued to attract foreign applicants—62 percent of CA programs compared with 48 percent of all full-time programs in the US reported receiving more applications from foreign citizens than last year.
- On average, part-time MBA programs in CA were larger and more competitive than their counterparts in the US.
- Two in three (66%) part-time programs in CA reported a decline in total number of applicants during this application cycle, and nearly half (46%) reported a decline in applications from domestic candidates.
- Two-third (67%) of the full-time MBA programs and half (50%) of the part-time MBA programs in CA—proportionally more than in the US overall—observed an improvement in applicant quality compared with the previous application cycle.

Program Profile

The characteristics of participating full-time and part-time MBA programs in CA are presented in Table 1. Compared with all responding programs in the US, full-time MBA programs in CA appeared to be slightly smaller. Unlike typical (71%) US part-time programs that begin class several times a year, most part-time MBA programs in CA (60%) begin class once a year.

	Full-Time MBA		Part-Time MBA	
	CA (n = 15)	All US (n = 146)	CA (n = 15)	All US (n = 93)
Length ^a				
One-year	33%	29%	—	—
Two-year	67%	71%	—	—
Total	100%	100%	—	—
Class size				
50 students or fewer	40%	32%	40%	34%
51 to 100 students	40%	33%	13%	24%
More than 100 students	20%	35%	47%	41%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Funding sources				
Receives government funding	40%	46%	60%	44%
Program operates with private financing	60%	54%	40%	56%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Enrollment type				
Class begins once a year	73%	80%	60%	29%
Class begins several times a year, including rolling admissions	27%	20%	40%	71%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

^a For the purposes of this report, full-time MBA programs with the duration of 18 months or less are classified as one-year programs; those of 19 months or more are classified as two-year programs.

Applicants

In 2009, full-time MBA programs in CA appeared to attract proportionally more national, domestic, and local candidates compared with programs across the US overall (Table 2). The CA part-time program candidate location and citizenship profiles were comparable with those for all US part-time programs.

	Full-Time MBA		Part-Time MBA	
	CA	All US	CA	All US
By location	n = 12	n = 124	n = 13	n = 85
National ^a	66%	60%	93%	94%
Local ^b	52%	44%	86%	88%
International	34%	40%	7%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
By citizenship	n = 14	n = 137	n = 10	n = 76
Domestic	59%	53%	90%	86%
Foreign ^c	41%	47%	10%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

^a Includes permanent residents.
^b Within the city or metropolitan area of school location. Derived as percentage of national applicants.
^c The term "foreign" is defined by applicant citizenship and is used to refer to any applicant whose citizenship differs from that of the country where they apply. Foreign applicants include permanent residents of a given country if they do not have the country's citizenship.

Two-third (67%) of full-time MBA programs and half (50%) of part-time MBA programs in CA—proportionally more than in the US overall—observed an improvement in applicant quality compared with the previous application cycle (Table 3).

	Full-Time MBA		Part-Time MBA	
	CA (n = 15)	All US (n = 145)	CA (n = 14)	All US (n = 92)
Significantly more academically qualified	13%	3%	7%	3%
Moderately more academically qualified	13%	17%	14%	14%
Slightly more academically qualified	40%	26%	29%	23%
About the same quality as last year	27%	48%	36%	50%
Slightly less academically qualified	7%	6%	14%	10%
Moderately less academically qualified	—	1%	—	—
Significantly less academically qualified	—	—	—	—
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
More qualified	67%	46%	50%	40%
About the same	27%	48%	36%	50%
Less qualified	7%	6%	14%	10%
Total	100%	100	100%	100%

Overall Application Trends

Being slightly smaller, full-time MBA programs located in CA received slightly fewer applications per program than the average US full-time MBA programs. An average part-time program in CA received significantly more applications from all types of candidates, however (Table 4).

	Full-Time MBA		Part-Time MBA	
	CA	All US	CA	All US
All applicants	n = 15	n = 143	n = 15	n = 88
Mean	655	733	312	180
Median	201	278	221	114
Domestic applicants	n = 15	n = 140	n = 10	n = 79
Mean	385	349	213	134
Median	145	132	152	86
Foreign ^a applicants	n = 15	n = 140	n = 9	n = 66
Mean	271	311	—	27
Median	90	141	—	11
Female applicants	n = 12	n = 133	n = 10	n = 81
Mean	267	214	114	59
Median	100	91	69	39

^a The term “foreign” is defined by applicant citizenship and is used to refer to any applicant whose citizenship differs from that of the country where they apply. Foreign applicants include permanent residents of a given country if they do not have the country’s citizenship.

Notably, while growth in the number of applications has moderated overall, the majority of CA full-time MBA programs (79%) experienced an increase in application volume compared with last year (Table 5). In 2008, 70 percent of CA full-time MBA programs reported an increase. Two in three (66%) part-time programs in CA saw a decline in the number of applicants during this application cycle, however.

Table 5. Change in the Full-Time and Part-Time MBA Program Total Application Volume Compared with Previous Year, Percentage of Programs, CA and all US

	Full-Time MBA		Part-Time MBA	
	CA (n = 14)	All US (n = 144)	CA (n = 15)	All US (n = 90)
Up significantly (21%+)	29%	19%	—	11%
Up moderately (11–20%)	14%	17%	13%	12%
Up slightly (1–10%)	36%	27%	13%	17%
Flat (no change from previous year)	—	3%	7%	8%
Down slightly (1–10%)	14%	21%	33%	27%
Down moderately (11–20%)	—	8%	20%	16%
Down significantly (21%+)	7%	4%	13%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Up	79%	64%	27%	40%
Flat	—	3%	7%	8%
Down	21%	33%	66%	52%
Total	100%	100	100%	100%

Domestic Application Trends

Domestic applicants accounted for 90 percent of the total applicant pool of part-time MBA programs in CA (Table 2); however, nearly half of part-time programs (46%) reported a decline in applications from domestic candidates when compared with last year (Table 6).

Table 6. Change in Full-Time and Part-Time MBA Program Domestic Application Volume Compared with Previous Year, Percentage of Programs, CA and all US

	Full-Time MBA		Part-Time MBA	
	CA (n = 13)	All US (n = 140)	CA (n = 13)	All US (n = 82)
Up significantly (21%+)	23%	31%	—	11%
Up moderately (11–20%)	31%	18%	—	11%
Up slightly (1–10%)	15%	23%	31%	17%
Flat (no change from previous year)	—	5%	23%	22%
Down slightly (1–10%)	15%	17%	23%	24%
Down moderately (11–20%)	8%	2%	8%	6%
Down significantly (21%+)	8%	4%	15%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Up	69%	72%	31%	39%
Flat	—	5%	23%	22%
Down	31%	23%	46%	39%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Foreign Application Trends

Full-time MBA programs in CA continued to attract foreign applicants—62% of CA programs compared with 48% of all part-time programs in the US reported increased numbers of foreign applicants over last year (Table 7). Among foreign countries, China appeared to be the leading supplier of candidates to programs in CA.

Table 7. Change in Full-Time and Part-Time MBA Program Foreign^a Application Volume Compared with Previous Year, Percentage of Programs, CA and all US

	Full-Time MBA		Part-Time MBA	
	CA (n = 13)	All US (n = 140)	CA (n = 11)	All US (n = 81)
Up significantly (21%+)	23%	16%	9%	12%
Up moderately (11–20%)	15%	10%	27%	7%
Up slightly (1–10%)	23%	22%	9%	10%
Flat (no change from previous year)	15%	10%	27%	28%
Down slightly (1–10%)	8%	14%	9%	21%
Down moderately (11–20%)	8%	14%	9%	9%
Down significantly (21%+)	8%	15%	9%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Up	62%	48%	46%	30%
Flat	15%	10%	27%	28%
Down	23%	42%	27%	42%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

^a The term “foreign” is defined by applicant citizenship and is used to refer to any applicant whose citizenship differs from that of the country where they apply. For example, French citizens will be considered foreign by a program in the UK, and UK citizens will be considered foreign by a French program. Foreign applicants include permanent residents of a given country if they do not have the country’s citizenship.

Female Application Trends

Female applicants made up 37 percent of 2009 candidates to full-time MBA programs in CA and 42 percent of candidates to part-time programs (Table 8). Proportionally more CA full-time MBA programs (64%) compared with all US programs (53%) reported that they received more applications from women than last year (Table 9).

Table 8. Gender Profile of Full-Time and Part-Time MBA Program Applicants, CA and all US

	Full-Time MBA		Part-Time MBA	
	CA (n = 12)	All US (n = 133)	CA (n = 10)	All US (n = 81)
Female	37%	34%	42%	37%
Male	63%	66%	58%	63%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 9. Change in the Full-Time and Part-Time MBA Program Female Application Volume Compared with Previous Year, Percentage of Programs, CA and all US

	Full-Time MBA		Part-Time MBA	
	CA (n = 11)	All US (n = 134)	CA (n = 13)	All US (n = 86)
Up significantly (21%+)	18%	17%	—	10%
Up moderately (11–20%)	27%	13%	8%	9%
Up slightly (1–10%)	18%	23%	31%	22%
Flat (no change from previous year)	9%	14%	23%	21%
Down slightly (1–10%)	9%	23%	15%	14%
Down moderately (11–20%)	9%	5%	15%	13%
Down significantly (21%+)	9%	5%	8%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Up	64%	53%	39%	42%
Flat	9%	14%	23%	21%
Down	27%	33%	39%	37%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Full-Time MBA Tuition Assistance Programs

All (100%) participating full-time MBA programs in CA offered some form of tuition assistance to incoming students, primarily in the form of scholarships (73%) (Table 10). Although CA programs were less likely to offer stipends (7%), they were more likely to extend on-campus work-study programs (40%) and school-to-student loans (20%) compared with all US full-time MBA programs.

Table 10. Full-Time MBA Programs Offering Tuition Assistance, CA and all US

	CA (n = 15)	All US (n = 142)
Scholarships	73%	78%
Fellowships	33%	37%
Stipends	7%	28%
Reduced tuition	33%	26%
School-to-student loan program	20%	9%
On-campus work-study program	40%	28%
Assistantships	20%	14%
Other programs	7%	4%
None of the above—this program does not offer tuition assistance	—	2%

Acceptance, Enrollment, and Class Size

The average full-time MBA program acceptance rate at 43 percent in CA was comparable to the all-US average (Table 11). On the other hand, CA part-time MBA programs appeared to be more competitive—only 61 percent of applicants, on average, compared with 73 percent overall, received

an offer of acceptance from part-time programs. Of the accepted applicants, an estimated 58 percent would enroll to full-time MBA programs and 78 percent to part-time MBA programs in CA.

	Full-Time MBA		Part-Time MBA	
	CA	All US	CA	All US
Percentage of total applicants that received the offer of acceptance	<i>n</i> = 13	<i>n</i> = 131	<i>n</i> = 13	<i>n</i> = 77
Mean	43%	47%	61%	73%
Median	50%	45%	68%	77%
Estimated percentage of accepted applicants who enroll	<i>n</i> = 11	<i>n</i> = 126	<i>n</i> = 13	<i>n</i> = 80
Mean ^b	58%	58%	78%	80%
Median	55%	56%	80%	85%

Based on the average class size, participating full-time MBA programs in CA were slightly smaller than the average US program and part-time MBA programs were larger than average (Table 12). With an increase in the number of applicants, half (50%) of full-time MBA programs in CA expected to make more seats available in the 2009–2010 incoming class, as did 39 percent of part-time MBA programs in CA.

	Full-Time MBA		Part-Time MBA	
	CA	All US	CA	All US
Average class size ^a	<i>n</i> = 14	<i>n</i> = 135	<i>n</i> = 13	<i>n</i> = 83
Targeted 2009–2010 (#)				
Mean ^b	91	117	137	118
Median	73	78	143	85
Actual 2007–2009 (#)				
Mean ^b	86	112	131	115
Median	61	74	136	87
Percentage change (%)	5.8%	4.5%	4.6%	2.6%
Growth plans ^c				
Expect to increase	50%	48%	39%	42%
Do not expect to change	36%	35%	46%	40%
Expect to reduce	14%	17%	15%	18%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Findings presented in this paper are based on analysis of the 2009 GMAC Application Trends Survey data. For questions or comments regarding the study findings, methodology, or data, please contact the GMAC Research and Development department at research@gmac.com.

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