



Corporate Recruiters Survey

2025 Report





The 2025 Corporate Recruiters Survey reaffirms employers' trust in graduate management education's ability to develop leaders who can navigate complexity and drive innovation. As AI reshapes work and hybrid workplaces become more common, this confidence reflects graduates' ability to adapt and lead through uncertainty, signaling that business schools remain essential partners in developing the skillsets and mindsets organizations need. With this strong foundation of trust, employers, business schools, and their graduates can thrive through the transformational changes ahead.

Joy Jones, GMAC CEO

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Introduction

For more than two decades, the Corporate Recruiters Survey from the Graduate Management Admission Council™ (GMAC™) has provided the world's graduate business schools and employers with data and insights to understand current trends in skill demand, hiring, compensation, and perceptions of MBA and business master's graduates.

GMAC, together with survey partners European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) and the Career Services and Employer Alliance (CSEA), conducted the survey from January to March of 2025, in association with the career services offices at participating graduate business schools worldwide. GMAC also worked with a market research firm to recruit additional participants to make the overall sample more globally representative.

In total, 1,108 corporate recruiters and hiring managers from staffing firms around the world participated in GMAC's 2025 Corporate Recruiters Survey. Respondents came from 46 countries, providing adequate sample sizes to report details for Africa, Canada, Central and South Asia, East and Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Middle East, United States, and Western Europe. Global results are weighted by the percentage gross domestic product (GDP) of each world region to adjust for the regional employment opportunity potential. Group differences significant at the 95 percent confidence interval level are highlighted throughout this report. However, differences that may not be statistically significant yet suggest an interesting trend may be mentioned as well. Additional information on the report's methodology is available in the methodology section.

The first section of this report examines which skills employers consider when making their hiring decisions—as well as which skills they predict will be most influential in the years to come. Then the report examines how employers perceive graduate management education (GME) broadly, particularly as new technologies and a new generation of workers proliferate their organizations and remote work and learning further normalize. The report ends with recent and projected hiring and salary trends, which are further explored by geography in nine regional profiles.



2025 survey sample stats

1,108

survey
respondents

46

countries
of citizenship
represented

64%

from Global
Fortune 500



Executive summary

With advancing technologies, more program delivery methods, and a new generation of talent entering the labor force, today's workplace looks different. According to the latest data from GMAC's Corporate Recruiters Survey, 99 percent of employers remain confident in graduate management education's ability to prepare graduates to succeed in their organizations—in large part *because* the workplace is different.

In a new question added to the 2025 survey, most global employers agree that skills cultivated by GME programs are more important than before because businesses are adopting AI and other new technologies that demand additional business acumen. More than three-quarters of employers in the Middle East and Central and South Asia—where governments and industry are staking a claim in advancing technologies like AI, cloud computing, smart cities, the Internet of Things, and 5G—agree that new technology increases the relevance of business school skills.¹ However, that compares to fewer than half of U.S. employers, signaling an opportunity for business schools to further demonstrate to some employers how classic GME skills can be applied to new business challenges.

In this evolving workplace, employers across industries and regions continue to hire based on hallmark capabilities like strategic thinking and problem-solving. But it also appears that the integration of AI and technology into how those skills are developed is becoming more urgent to employers, with year-over-year rises in how employers value AI skills both today and in the next five years.

Technology is not the only factor driving workplace changes that GME graduates and their future employers must contend with. In an era of flexible work and study, most global employers indicate that GME skills are more important in today's remote and hybrid work environments. Likewise, most recruiters across regions indicate that they value in-person and online degrees equally—except in the United States, where positive perceptions of online program delivery extend primarily to the technical skills that online degrees can help their students develop.

As workplace norms change, it is business school's ability to form leaders who thrive through change that has sustained employers' high valuation of GME and its graduates—which in turn powered recent and projected hiring and salary boosts across degree types. Even as employers continue to report the influence of inflation and recession risk on their decision-making, the data indicate that they remain optimistic because of their confidence in GME's ability to develop talent with cross-functional, adaptable, and future-ready skillsets.

¹ Malik, Shean and Sami Al-Shatri. "Emerging technology trends in the Middle East 2025." PWC, April 9, 2025. <https://www.pwc.com/m1/en/publications/emerging-technology-trends-in-the-middle-east-2025.html>.

Schwab, Klaus. "How India is carving out its role in the Intelligent Age." World Economic Forum, September 20, 2024. <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/09/india-role-in-the-intelligent-age/>.

Key findings



Today and tomorrow's GME skillset

- Employers value knowledge of how to use AI tools more than last year—when hiring for roles both now and in the future.
- Around the world and across industries, problem-solving and/or strategic thinking are the top skills of today and tomorrow.
- Socioemotional and interpersonal skills like communication, emotional intelligence, and adaptability feature in the top current and future skills of employers across regions.



Employer perceptions in changing times

- Ninety-nine percent of employers express confidence in GME, with growing appreciation for graduates' innovation and navigation of technological disruption.
- Most employers agree the skills gained through GME are more important than before as businesses adopt new technologies.
- Despite sensational stories about Gen Z's informal communication style or casual attitudes toward work, most employers say recent GME graduates are as “professional” as they were before with regard to reliability, respectfulness, accountability, or professional appearance—but with some concern among consulting employers.



Flexible workplaces and classrooms

- The majority of global employers agree or strongly agree that GME skills are more important in today's remote and hybrid work environments.
- While online and in person degrees tend to be valued equally by employers outside the United States—especially those in the tech sector—U.S. employers still have preference for degrees earned through an in-person classroom experience.
- U.S. employers continue to warm up to the value of micro-credentials as most recruiters in other regions maintain strong preference for full degrees.



Hiring and compensation

- Across degree types, more employers predict they will hire GME graduates in 2025 compared to 2024, with a quarter or more of these employers anticipating expanding their hiring compared to last year.
- U.S. manufacturing, technology, and consulting employers are most likely to curb their hiring of international graduates due to President Donald Trump's return to the White House.
- U.S. MBA and business master's graduates are expected to receive larger nominal and real starting salaries in 2025 compared to 2024.

Today and tomorrow's GME skillset

This section explores the skills employers value today and those they anticipate will be most important in the next five years. Understanding these trends helps GME programs make informed decisions about how to adapt and equip graduates with the skills that will ensure their success in an increasingly competitive and technology-driven world.

Program and career services takeaways

- **Integrate AI and technology training:**
With employers placing greater emphasis on AI skills, especially in using AI tools to develop business strategies and make decisions, integrate AI and technology-focused training into workshops, group projects, and other opportunities for applied learning about machine learning platforms, data visualization, or cloud computing.
- **Focus on core competencies like problem-solving and strategic thinking:**
Despite the rising importance of AI, core skills like problem-solving, strategic thinking, and communication remain at the top of employers' current and future priorities. Emphasize these foundational skills by offering case study competitions, problem-solving exercises, and leadership development opportunities—and encourage students to speak to these skills during job interviews.
- **Prepare students for multidimensional communication:**
As communication remains a high priority for employers—especially verbal, presentation, and digital communication—help students hone their ability to communicate across multiple media through workshops on public speaking, resume writing, and professional digital communication tools like Slack, Teams, and Zoom.



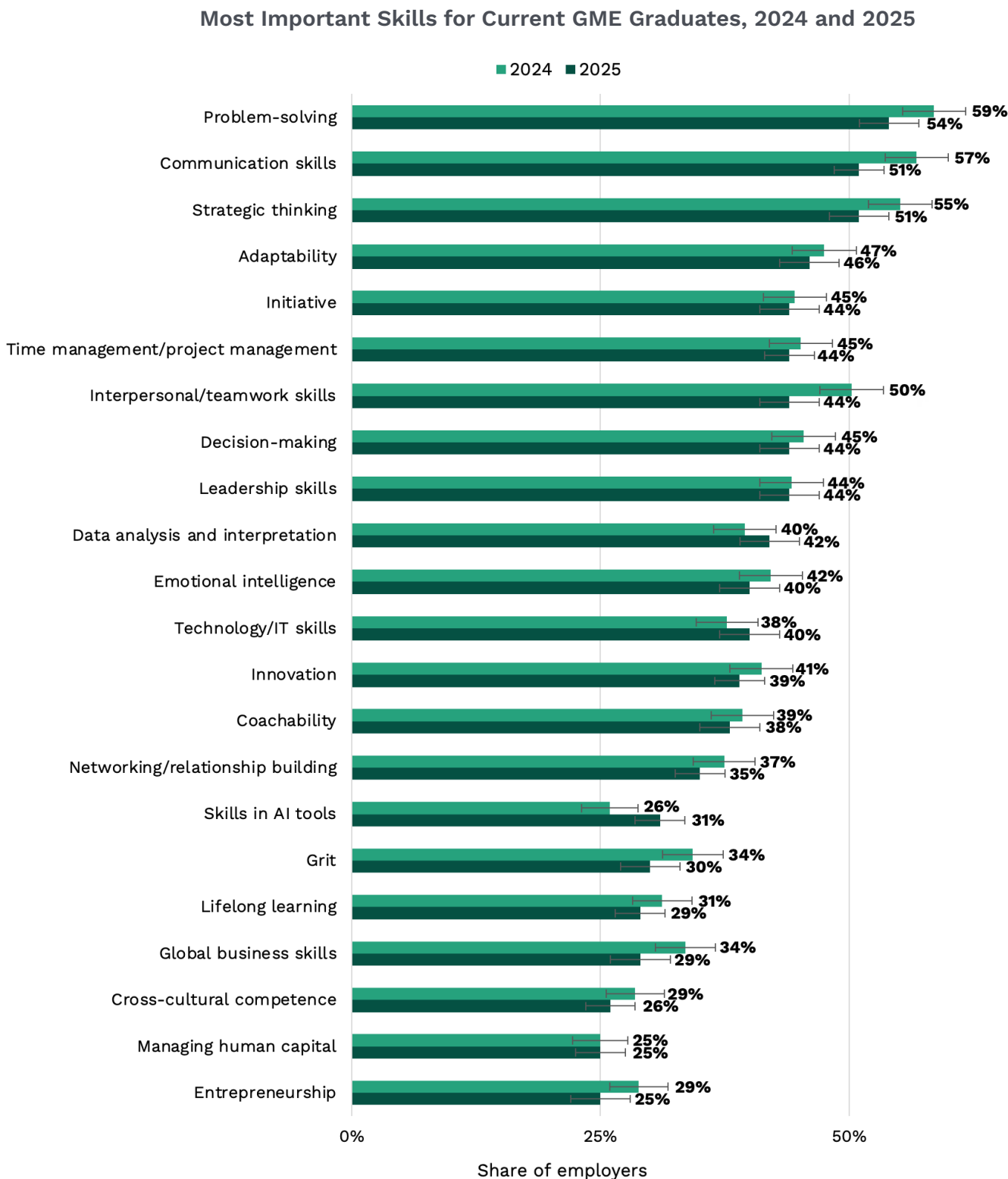
Employers value knowledge of how to use AI tools more than last year—when hiring for roles both now and in the future.

Last year, just 26 percent of global employers indicated that knowledge of using AI tools was important to their hiring of GME graduates—ranking second-to-last in a list of 22 skills respondents could choose from. This year, 31 percent of employers indicated these skills are important, now ranking in the improved but still modest 16th position (Figure 1). Notably, all of the year-over-year changes are within the margin of error, meaning the differences may be attributed to the different samples rather than a true change in the population. However, the AI shift is one of the largest year-over-year changes—and with generative AI gaining traction in the workplace, there is likely at least some change in employer sentiment.



Figure 1: With few year-over-year changes in which skills employers value, problem-solving and strategic thinking still top the list.

Skills using AI experienced the largest increase in employer value compared to last year.



Note: The error bars represent the 95 percent confidence intervals for each estimated population median. When the error bars do not overlap between groups, this indicates a significant difference.

Of course, even more important to employers than AI are the many skills that business schools have developed in their students long before OpenAI's launch of ChatGPT in 2022.² For the second year in a row, corporate recruiters cited problem-solving and strategic thinking as the most important skills they consider when hiring current GME graduates. Notably, adaptability and initiative have become relatively more important to employers compared to the year prior—now outranking time and project management and interpersonal and teamwork skills.

To help business schools determine which skills employers will value more in the near future, we asked respondents to select three skills that they predict will be most important to their hiring decisions in the next five years (Figure 2). Compared to 2024, employers are more likely to predict the future importance of skills using AI tools (though the difference is not statistically significant and may be attributed to different samples rather than a true change in the population). The largest share of employers now predict AI capabilities will be among the most important skills in five years—even more than core business school capabilities like strategic thinking and problem-solving.

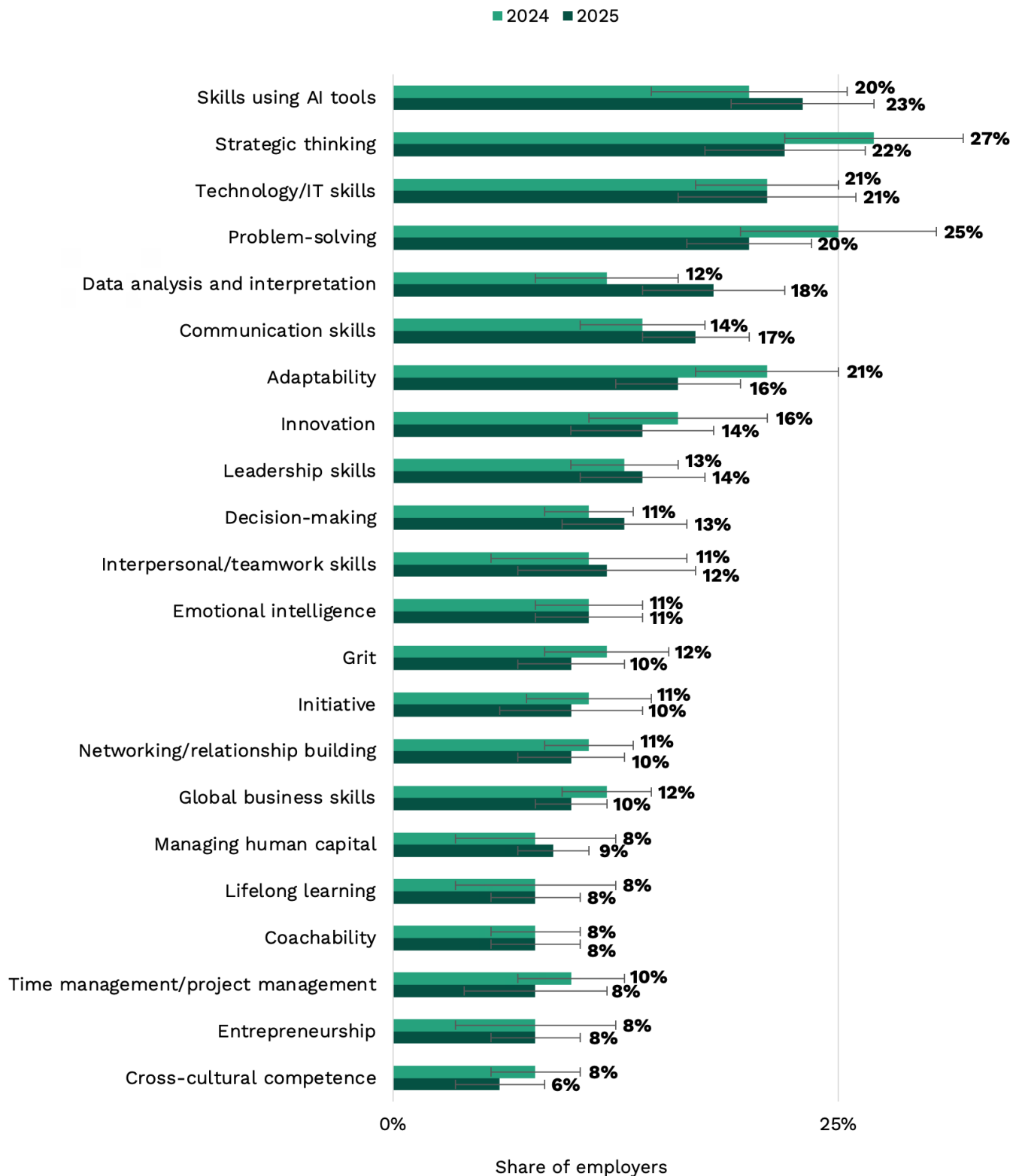


² Wiggers, Kyle, Cody Corral, Alyssa Stringer, and Kate Park. "ChatGPT: Everything you need to know about the AI-powered chatbot." *TechCrunch*, May 23, 2025. <https://techcrunch.com/2025/05/23/chatgpt-everything-to-know-about-the-ai-chatbot/>.

Figure 2: Skills using AI tools replaced strategic thinking as the most important skill for GME graduates in the next five years.

Problem-solving and strategic thinking remain valued by large shares of employers.

Predicted Top 3 Most Important Skills in the Next 5 Years, 2024 and 2025



In 2025, more employers also indicate that data analysis and interpretation will be among the most important skills in the coming years; however, this is more in line with previous years, with 2024 representing an anomaly likely resulting from a methodological change in phrasing (last year, the skill was presented to respondents as “data analysis/quantitative tasks” rather than “data analysis and interpretation”).

Given that employers could select any skills on the list when indicating their current importance but just three when selecting which skills will be important in the next five years, current skill importance and future skill importance are not directly comparable. However, we can still gauge employers’ valuation of skills relative to each other by looking at how the skills were ranked in employer responses. Figure 3 shows that like last year, problem-solving and strategic thinking are top skills for current GME grads as well as top skills that employers prioritize for students graduating in the near future. And while AI skills and the broader category of technology and IT skills do not rank too high among current skills, they become the top and third-most selected skills, respectively, when employers consider how they will be hiring GME graduates in the next five years. As in past years, this means that business schools should continue to prioritize instilling core capabilities like problem-solving, strategic thinking, and communication skills. But it also appears that the integration of AI and technology into how those skills are developed is becoming more urgent to employers.



Figure 3: When comparing which skills employers say are most important today compared to five years from now, AI and other technology skills become much more important.

Strategic thinking and problem-solving are among the top skills valued by employers both today and five years from now.

Most Important Current Skills

(Select all that apply)

1. Problem-solving
2. Strategic thinking
3. Communication skills
4. Adaptability
5. Leadership skills
6. Decision-making
7. Interpersonal/teamwork skills
8. Time/project management
9. Initiative
10. Data analysis/interpretation
11. Technology/IT skills
12. Emotional intelligence
13. Innovation
14. Coachability
15. Networking/relationship building
16. Skills in using AI tools
17. Grit
18. Global business skills
19. Lifelong learning
20. Cross-cultural competence
21. Entrepreneurship
22. Managing human capital

Most Important Future Skills

(Select Top Three)

1. Skills in using AI tools	15
2. Strategic thinking	
3. Technology/IT skills	8
4. Problem-solving	
5. Data analysis/interpretation	5
6. Communication skills	
7. Adaptability	
8. Leadership skills	
9. Innovation	
10. Decision-making	
11. Interpersonal/teamwork skill	
12. Emotional intelligence	
13. Networking/relationship building	
14. Initiative	
15. Grit	
16. Global business skills	
17. Managing human capital	
18. Time/project management	
19. Lifelong learning	
20. Entrepreneurship	
21. Coachability	
22. Cross cultural competence	

Around the world, we see similar trends. Problem-solving or strategic thinking features in the top five current and future skills across each region in Figure 4. Likewise, AI is featured in the top five future skills of employers in every region except for Canada. Notably, socioemotional and interpersonal skills like communication skills, emotional intelligence, or adaptability feature in the top current and future skills of employers across regions, too.

Figure 4: Around the world, problem-solving and/or strategic thinking are the top skills of today and tomorrow.

Skills using AI tools also feature in every region's top five future skills list, with the exception of Canada.

	Top Current Skills	Top Future Skills
Africa	1. Decision-making	1. Technology/IT skills
	2. Leadership skills	2. Innovation
	3. Initiative	3. Skills in using AI tools
	4. Problem-solving	4. Strategic thinking
	5. Coachability	5. Entrepreneurship
Canada	1. Leadership skills	1. Initiative
	2. Adaptability	2. Strategic thinking
	3. Problem-solving	3. Technology/IT skills
	4. Strategic thinking	4. Communication skills
	5. Communication skills	5. Coachability
Central and South Asia	1. Problem-solving	1. Skills in using AI tools
	2. Communication skills	2. Technology/IT skills
	3. Leadership skills	3. Data analysis and interpretation
	4. Technology/IT skills	4. Strategic thinking
	5. Decision-making	5. Decision-making
East and Southeast Asia	1. Strategic thinking	1. Technology/IT skills
	2. Communication skills	2. Skills in using AI tools
	3. Technology/IT skills	3. Data analysis and interpretation
	4. Data analysis and interpretation	4. Problem-solving
	5. Problem-solving	5. Strategic thinking

Figure 4 continued:

	Top Current Skills	Top Future Skills
Eastern Europe	1. Problem-solving	1. Problem-solving
	2. Decision-making	2. Innovation
	3. Time management/ project management	3. Skills in using AI tools
	4. Communication skills	4. Technology/IT skills
	5. Initiative	5. Communication skills
Latin America	1. Emotional intelligence	1. Innovation
	2. Innovation	2. Strategic thinking
	3. Strategic thinking	3. Emotional intelligence
	4. Communication skills	4. Skills in using AI tools
	5. Initiative	5. Technology/IT skills
Middle East	1. Innovation	1. Problem-solving
	2. Problem-solving	2. Decision-making
	3. Communication skills	3. Skills in using AI tools
	4. Time management/ project management	4. Technology/IT skills
	5. Emotional intelligence	5. Adaptability
United States	1. Problem-solving	1. Strategic thinking
	2. Communication skills	2. Problem-solving
	3. Interpersonal/teamwork skills	3. Communication skills
	4. Strategic thinking	4. Skills in using AI tools
	5. Adaptability	5. Adaptability
Western Europe	1. Strategic thinking	1. Technology/IT skills
	2. Problem-solving	2. Skills in using AI tools
	3. Communication skills	3. Strategic thinking
	4. Initiative	4. Problem-solving
	5. Adaptability	5. Data analysis and interpretation

We see similar trends in different industries—problem-solving and/or strategic thinking are top current skills across sectors, with AI in each industry’s top five future skills (Figure 5). Data analysis and interpretation is the top future skill for consulting recruiters and in the top five future skills for employers working in manufacturing, finance/accounting, and technology—industries that may deal more in data. Adaptability is also a key current and future skill valued by client-driven consulting and finance/accounting employers—both now and in the coming years.

Figure 5: Across industries, problem-solving and/or strategic thinking are the top skills of today and tomorrow.

Skills using AI tools also feature in every sector’s top five future skills list.

	Top Current Skills	Top Future Skills
Consulting	1. Problem-solving	1. Data analysis and interpretation
	2. Adaptability	2. Technology/IT skills
	3. Interpersonal/teamwork skills	3. Skills in using AI tools
	4. Communication skills	4. Adaptability
	5. Strategic thinking	5. Strategic thinking
Finance/ Accounting	1. Problem-solving	1. Problem-solving
	2. Communication skills	2. Data analysis and interpretation
	3. Adaptability	3. Skills in using AI tools
	4. Strategic thinking	4. Adaptability
	5. Initiative	5. Interpersonal/teamwork skills
Health Care/ Pharmaceutical	1. Problem-solving	1. Skills in using AI tools
	2. Communication skills	2. Adaptability
	3. Strategic thinking	3. Strategic thinking
	4. Adaptability	4. Emotional intelligence
	5. Interpersonal/teamwork skills	5. Decision-making
Manufacturing	1. Problem-solving	1. Strategic thinking
	2. Communication skills	2. Communication skills
	3. Strategic thinking	3. Problem-solving
	4. Adaptability	4. Data analysis and interpretation
	5. Interpersonal/teamwork skills	5. Skills in using AI tools

Figure 5 continued:

	Top Current Skills	Top Future Skills
Products/ Services	1. Problem-solving	1. Strategic thinking
	2. Communication skills	2. Problem-solving
	3. Initiative	3. Skills in using AI tools
	4. Decision-making	4. Technology/IT skills
	5. Strategic thinking	5. Decision-making
Technology	1. Problem-solving	1. Skills in using AI tools
	2. Communication skills	2. Technology/IT skills
	3. Data analysis and interpretation	3. Strategic thinking
	4. Technology/IT skills	4. Communication skills
	5. Strategic thinking	5. Data analysis and interpretation



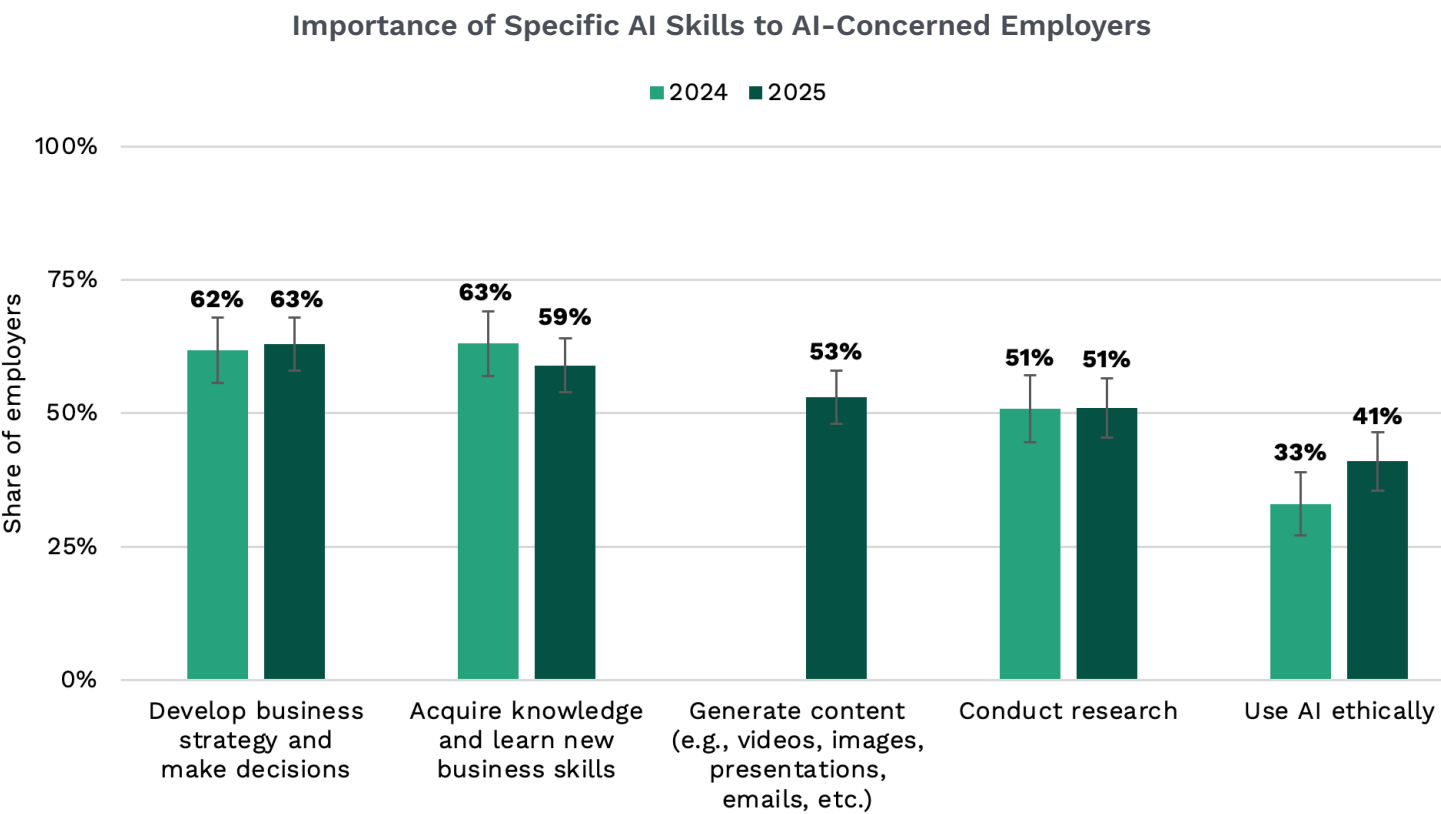
Employers are seeking strategic use of AI and other technologies alongside strong verbal communication skills.

Some of the skills discussed so far can be interpreted in different ways or encompass lots of other capabilities. To help dig deeper into what exactly employers may mean when they say skills related to AI, technology, or communication are important, we provided employers who selected these skills with a list of more specific abilities to prioritize.

For example, the 31 percent of global employers who indicated AI is currently important when hiring GME graduates were then asked to select three options from a list of ways AI tools might be used in business school or in the workplace (Figure 6). We found that most AI-concerned recruiters want GME graduates to be able to leverage AI tools to develop business strategies and make decisions. In 2025, employers appear to be slightly more interested in GME students learning how to use AI ethically compared to 2024, though the eight-point difference is still within the margin of error and could be attributed to the different samples.

Figure 6: AI-concerned employers are most interested in GME graduates leveraging AI tools to develop business strategies and make decisions.

There has been little year-over-year variation in recruiter preferences for the top three AI skills chosen by these employers.

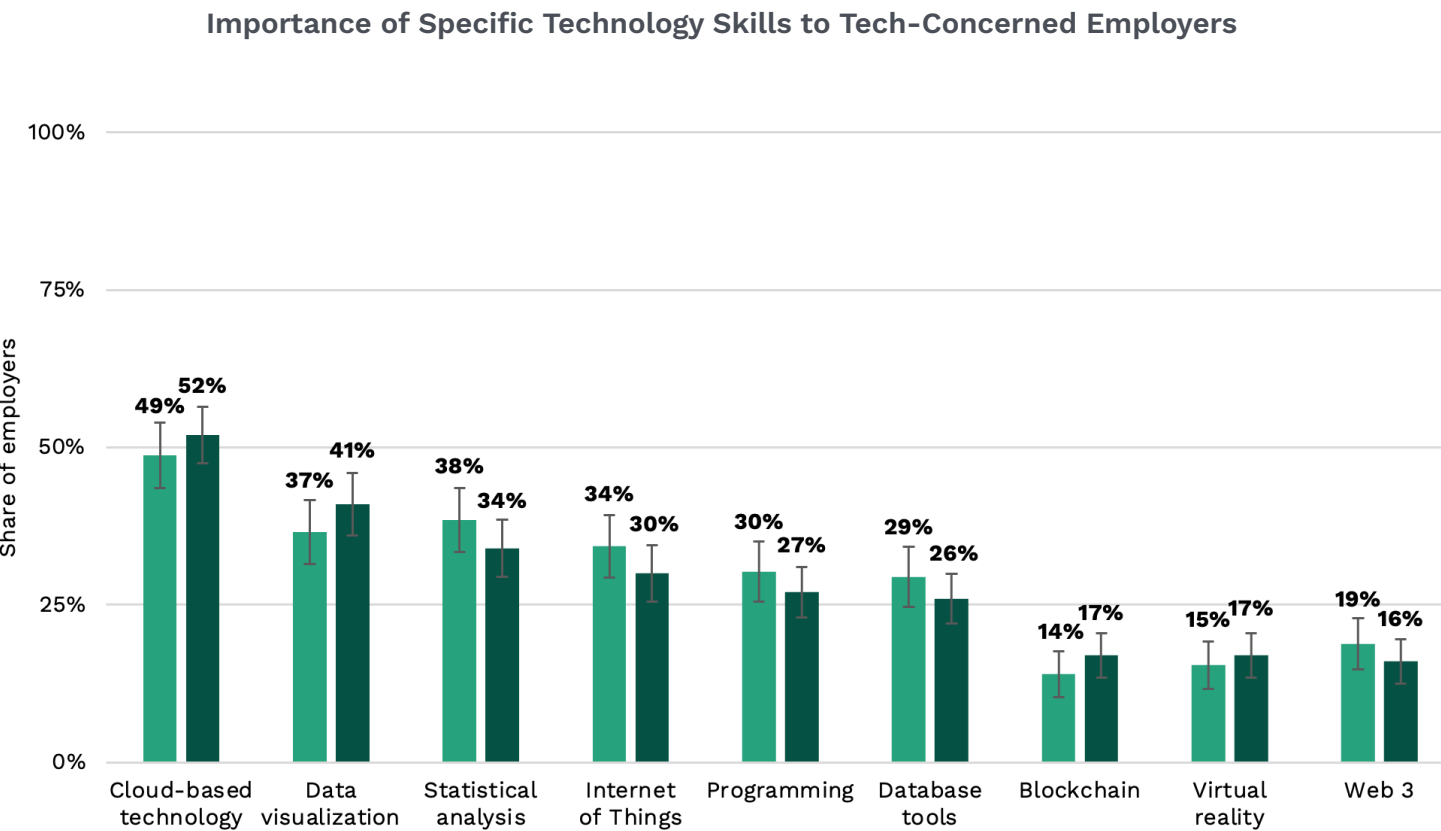


Note: In 2024, generation of video, images, and written content were presented as three different categories and thus are not directly comparable to the 2025 condensed option.

Using AI tools is just one component of broader preferences around how employers want GME graduates joining their organizations to use technology. Among the 40 percent of global employers who indicated technology and IT skills were important considerations in their hiring decisions, more than half of respondents selected knowledge and skills in cloud-based technology (e.g., Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud Platform) (Figure 7). More than one-third of tech-concerned employers also value data visualization and statistical analysis with programs such as SAS, SPSS, or Stata among their top three most important technology-specific skills.

Figure 7: Most tech-concerned employers say cloud-based technology is among their top three technology-specific skills considered in their hiring decisions

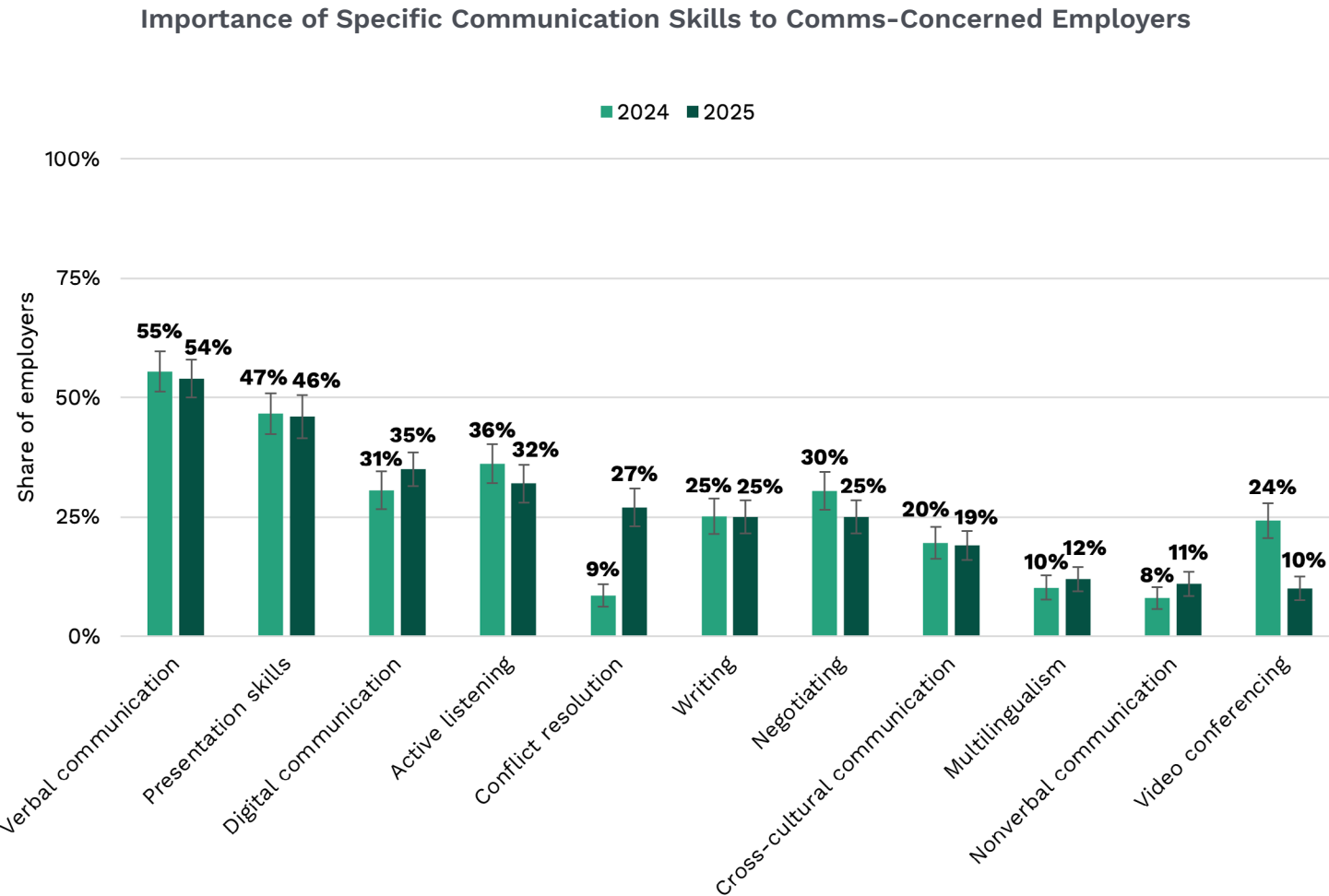
There have been no statistically significant year-over-year changes in the tech-specific skills prioritized by tech-concerned employers.



While these AI and technology skills are clearly valued by employers, more global employers have historically cited the value of communication skills in their hiring decisions—including in 2025. Among the 51 percent of total respondents who indicated communication skills are important for current GME graduates, more than half value prospective employees’ verbal communication skills specifically (Figure 8). Presentation skills also remain quite important to communications-concerned recruiters, with statistically more employers citing the value of conflict resolution skills and statistically fewer valuing video conferencing compared to last year—perhaps related to growing “return to office” mandates that may require more interpersonal capabilities and less video communication.

Figure 8: More than half of communications-concerned employers value verbal communication skills.

The importance of video conferencing dropped among these employers compared to 2024.



In summary, while core skills like problem-solving, strategic thinking, and communication remain vital, employers are increasingly prioritizing technical abilities, especially with AI tools. As AI becomes more integral in decision-making and strategy development, GME graduates will be expected to be proficient in using these tools ethically and strategically. At the same time, communication, emotional intelligence, and adaptability continue to be highly valued, underscoring the need for complementary human-centric and technological savvy. For business schools, this highlights the importance of integrating emerging technologies into their curriculum, while maintaining a strong foundation in traditional business skills—the future GME graduate will need to leverage both critical thinking and advanced technology to succeed.

Employer perceptions in changing times

In times of economic and societal change—whether driven by technological disruption, evolving workforce demographics, or global geopolitical uncertainty—it is critical to understand how employers perceive the value of graduate business school. Deeper insights into how employers view GME’s role in preparing leaders for the future can reveal much about the staying power and adaptability of business education. This section explores how confident employers feel about the capabilities of today’s GME graduates, particularly in light of ongoing digital transformation and the growing presence of Gen Z (the generation born between 1996 and 2012) in the workplace.³ By asking questions about professionalism, preparedness, and the relevance of business school skills in an era of artificial intelligence and automation, we can assess whether GME continues to meet the moment—and what signals it may need to heed moving forward.

Program and career services takeaways

- **Help students translate GME skills into a technology context:**

Since nearly two-thirds of employers say skills developed in business school are even more important in the context of business adopting new technologies, students must be able to articulate how their GME experience equips them for tech-enabled environments. Offer mock interviews or career coaching sessions that focus on tying business acumen to modern tech challenges (e.g., “How would you lead a team through AI adoption?”).

- **Coach students on professionalism—with cultural and industry nuance:** While most employers find that GME grads maintain professional behavior, there are signs of concern—particularly among U.S. employers and recruiters in client-facing sectors like consulting and health care/pharmaceuticals. Reinforce expectations for professionalism in both in-person and virtual interactions, and offer industry-specific etiquette training, including global variations in professional norms and how they might differ from student assumptions.



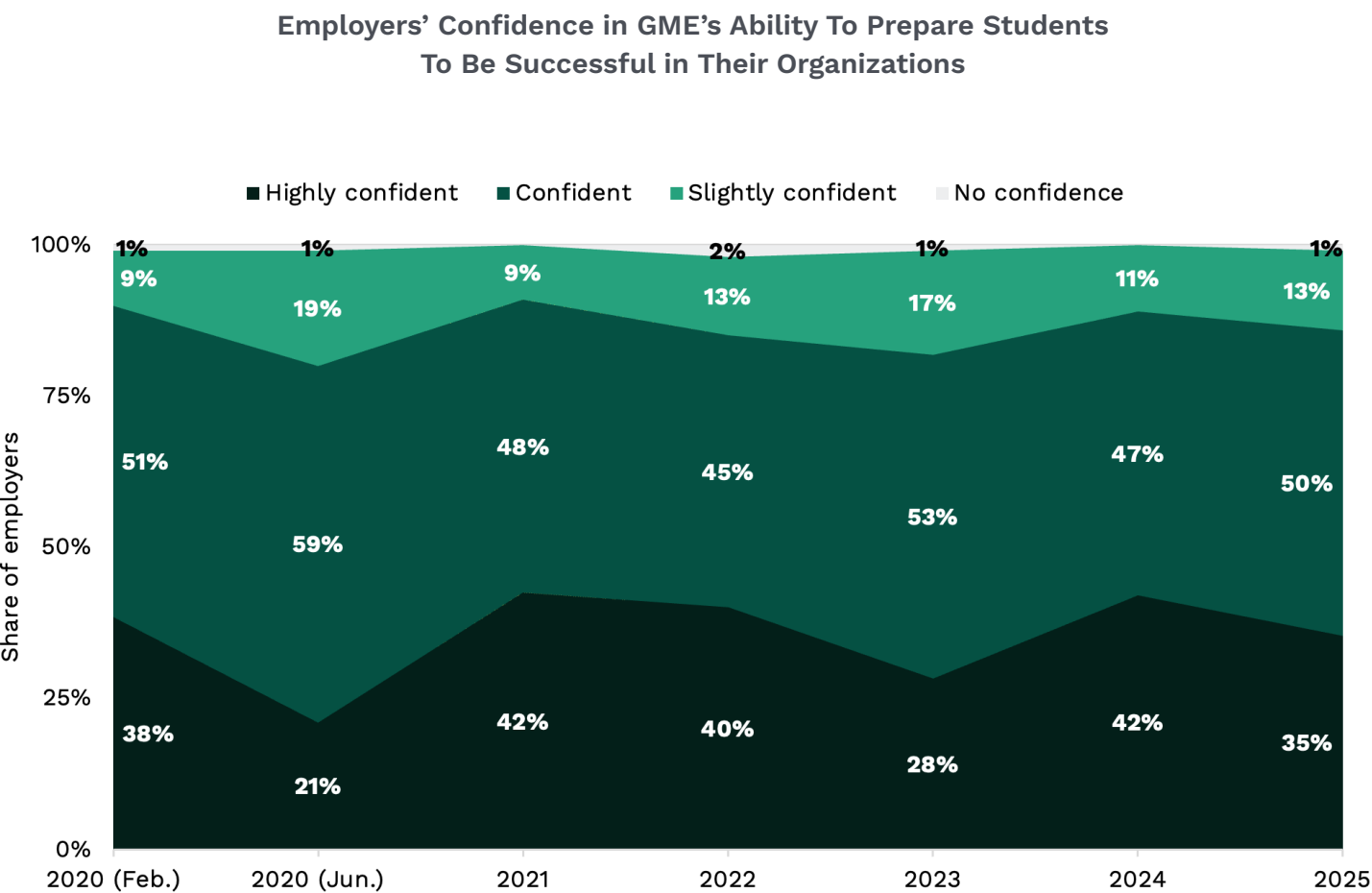
³ “Millennials, baby boomers or Gen Z: Which one are you and what does it mean?” BBC. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zf8j92p>.

Ninety-nine percent of employers express confidence in GME, with growing appreciation for graduates’ innovation and navigation of technological disruption.

In last year’s Corporate Recruiters Survey report, we found that global employers’ confidence in GME’s ability to prepare students to be successful in their organization surged compared to previous years. In 2025, nearly all employers still express at least some level of confidence in GME, with 35 percent indicating high confidence—down slightly from last year’s 42 percent (Figure 9). These trends look similar across industries and regions, with only a handful of respondents ever choosing “no confidence” over the past several years.

Figure 9: Employers have consistently expressed confidence in GME’s ability to prepare successful graduates.

Nearly all global employers have some degree of confidence in 2025.



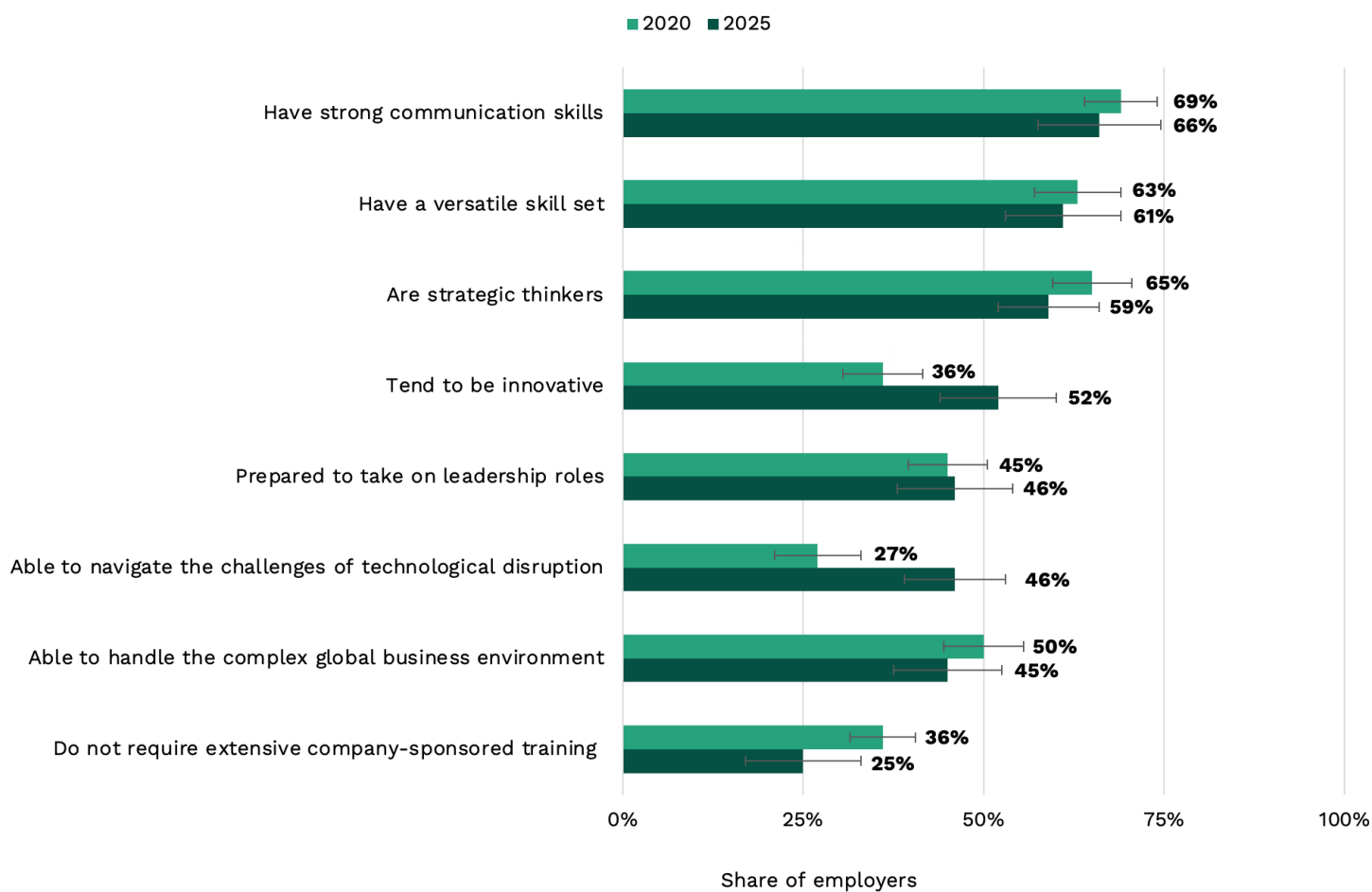
Note: GMAC conducted two rounds of Corporate Recruiters Surveys in 2020 (February-March and June-July) to capture changing perspectives and projections as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When we ask employers explicitly why they are confident, the most common reason has consistently been GME graduates' strong communication skills (Figure 10). Compared to pandemic-era responses, employers continue to also value GME graduates' versatility and strategic thinking, with growing appreciation for their innovation and ability to navigate the challenges of technological disruption. As discussed in the preceding section, employers' high regard for GME likely comes from business school's cultivation of perennially relevant skills that are even more valuable in workplaces with new technologies and a new generation of workers.

Figure 10: Compared to 2020, employers are still confident in business school graduates because of their communication skills, versatility, and strategic mindset.

Today, employers are even more impressed with candidates' innovation and ability to navigate the disruption of technological integration in the workplace.

Why Employers Are Confident in Business School's Ability To Prepare Graduates To Be Successful, 2020 and 2025



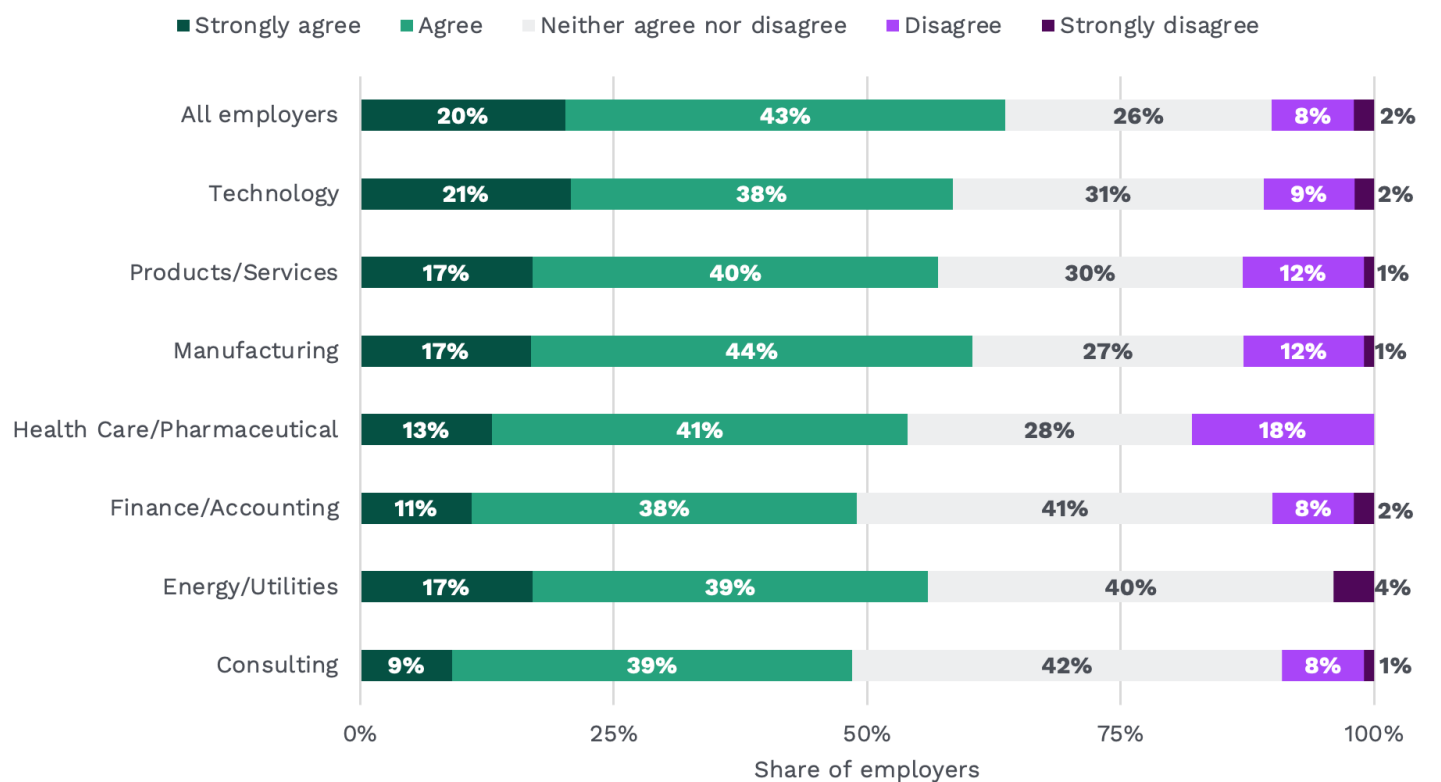
Most employers agree the skills gained through GME are more important than before as businesses adopt new technologies.

Given the increasing use of technology in the workplace, including the seemingly exponential rise in generative AI, we added a new question to the survey about the relevance of the skills students cultivate through GME in this more modern context. We found that nearly two-thirds of global recruiters agree that the skills gained through a graduate business degree are more important than before because businesses are adopting new technology (such as AI or new software), which requires business acumen (Figure 11). In other words, employers believe the core GME skills that were discussed above are key to managing the change brought to their organizations as a result of advancing technology.

Figure 11: Almost two-thirds of employers agree or strongly agree that business school skills are more important because businesses are adopting new technologies.


Employers in the manufacturing sector are most likely to agree and recruiters in the consulting and finance/accounting sectors are the least likely to agree.

Industry Agreement With the Statement: “The skills gained through a graduate business degree are more important than before because businesses are adopting new technologies (e.g., AI, new software, etc.) that require business acumen.”



Across industries, respondents largely agree that the skills learned in business school are more important today because of the new technologies we use at work. Sixty-one percent of manufacturing employers agree or strongly agree, likely related to the high visibility of AI, the Internet of Things (when devices exchange information with each other), and even practices like “green software engineering” impacting workflows and supply chains.⁴ At the same time, just under half of finance/accounting and consulting employers believe business school skills are more important amid greater technological integration in the workplace, perhaps as organizations offering professional services consider things like the proper balance of human expertise and machine-led efficiency.

While employers in different industries are bit more uniform in how they view the impact of technology in their valuation of the skills gained through a graduate business degree, there is much more variation among employers in different regions. Most notably, just 41 percent of U.S. employers agree or strongly agree these skills are more important amidst growing technological integration, with an additional 39 percent neither agreeing nor disagreeing (Figure 12). Meanwhile, more than three-quarters of employers in the Middle East and Central and South Asia find the development of business school skills to be even more important than before, perhaps as governments and industry in the regions stake a claim in advancing technologies like AI, cloud computing, smart cities, the Internet of Things, and 5G.⁵



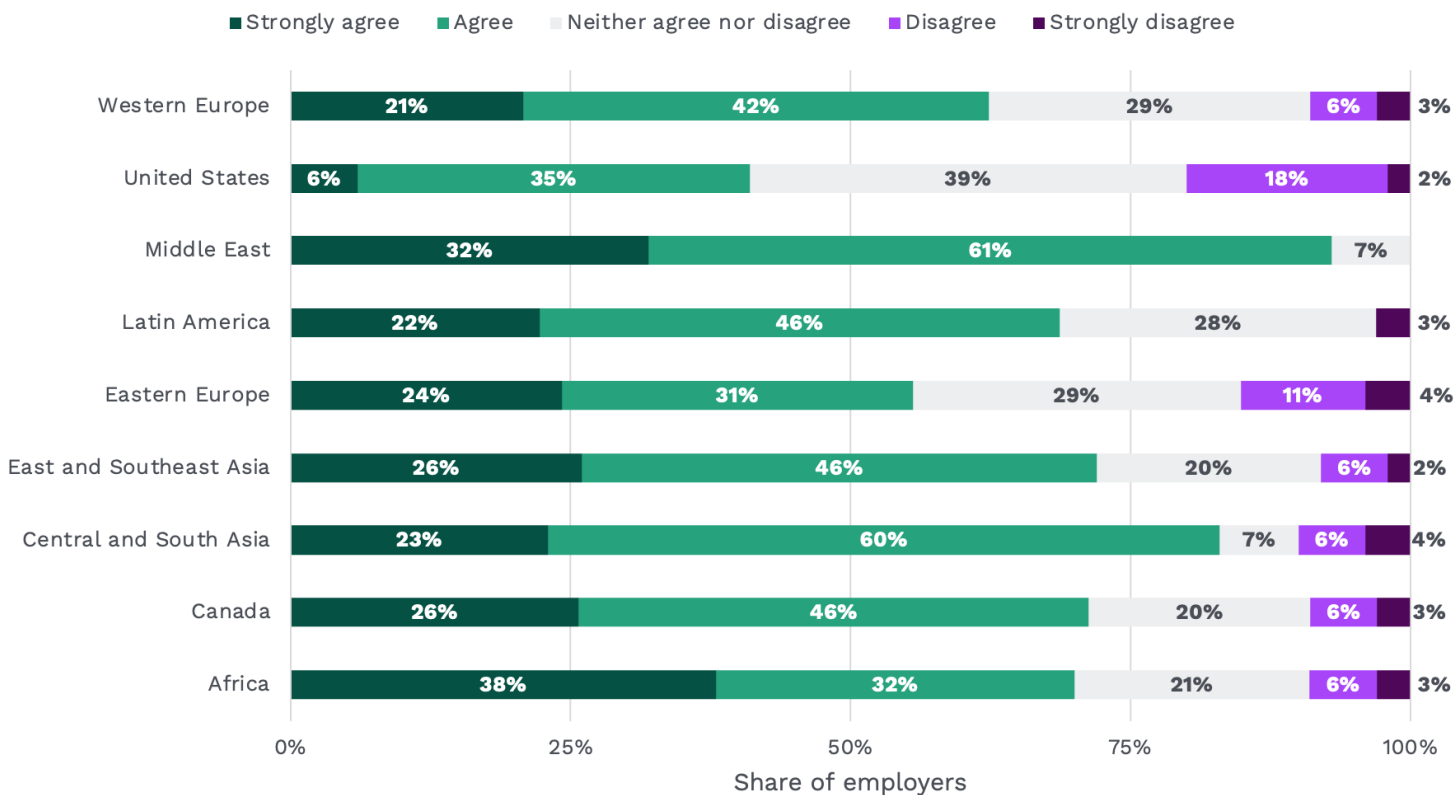
⁴ Dimitrov, Dimitar. “The Future Of Manufacturing: Technology Trends For 2025 And Beyond.” *Forbes*, November 14, 2024. <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbestechcouncil/2024/11/14/the-future-of-manufacturing-technology-trends-for-2025-and-beyond/>.

⁵ Shean and Al-Shatri. “Emerging technology trends in the Middle East 2025.” Schwab. “How India is carving out its role in the Intelligent Age.”

Figure 12: Most global employers agree that GME skills are more valuable today as new technologies demand additional business acumen.

More than three-quarters of employers in the Middle East and Central and South Asia agree or strongly agree compared to fewer than half of U.S. employers.

Regional Agreement With the Statement: “The skills gained through a graduate business degree are more important than before because businesses are adopting new technologies (e.g., AI, new software, etc.) that require business acumen.”



Most employers say recent GME graduates are as “professional” as they were before.

New technologies are not the only thing changing the workplace. As Gen Zers make up larger shares of the workforce, older generations are contending with a new set of values and norms associated with the youngest cohort of the labor market. Despite sensational stories about Gen Z’s informal communication style or casual attitudes toward work, our survey finds that most employers (61 percent) find recent GME graduates to demonstrate the same level of professionalism as graduates from previous years (Figure 13).⁶ The survey offered examples of professionalism such as reliability, respectfulness, accountability, or professional appearance. Employers in the energy/utilities and oft-considered “laid back” technology industries were among the most positive about recent GME graduates’ workplace etiquette. Meanwhile, roughly a quarter of the more client-facing consulting and health care/pharmaceutical recruiters did not agree that business school graduates’ professionalism compares to those from previous years.



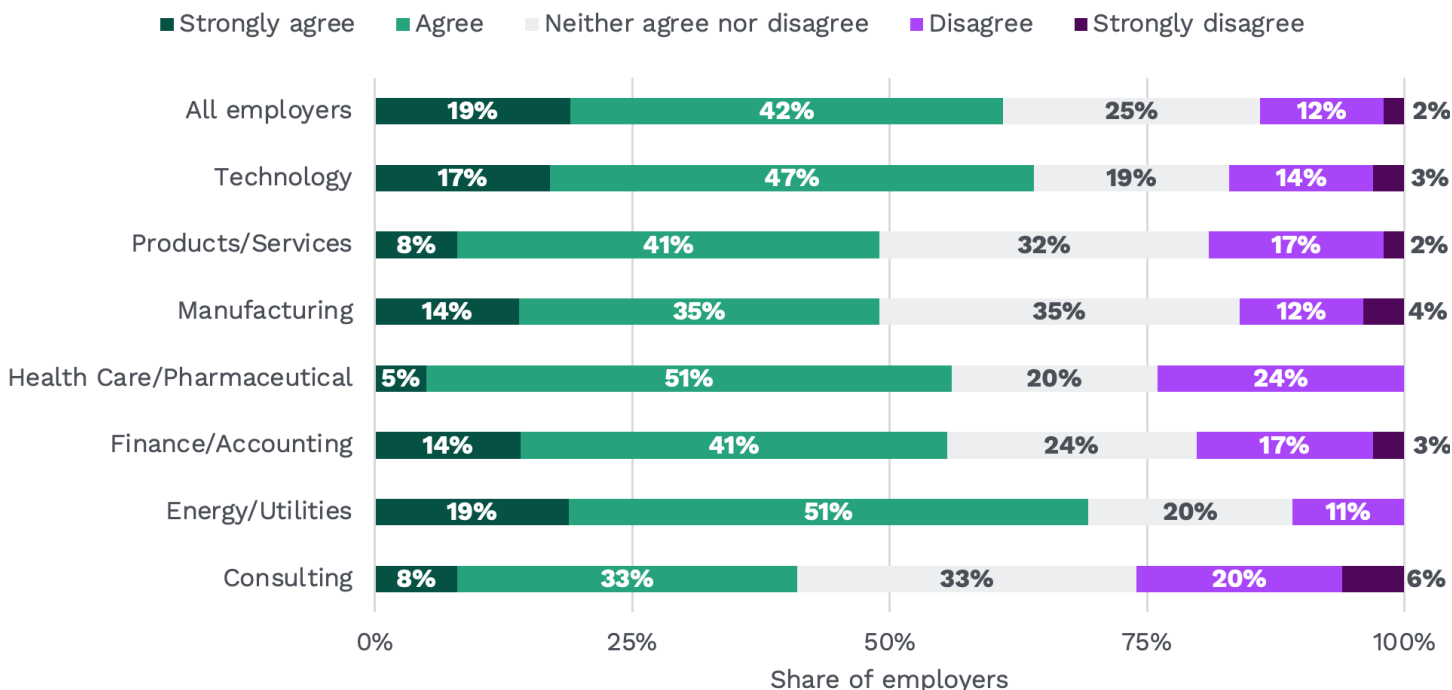
⁶ Knight, Rebecca M. “Not all employers are tolerating Gen Z’s laid-back language.” BBC, March 11, 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20240307-gen-z-casual-workplace-language>.

Royle, Orianna Rosa. “Gen Z really are the hardest to work with—even managers of their own generation say they’re difficult. Instead bosses plan to hire more of their millennial counterparts.” Fortune, January 22, 2025. <https://fortune.com/article/how-to-work-with-gen-z-vs-millennials-work-ethic-employees-workplace-recent-grads/>.

Figure 13: Most global employers think recent GME grads exhibit the same level of professional behavior compared to the graduates who came before them.

Across industries, consulting employers are most likely to find diminished reliability, respectfulness, accountability, or professional appearance compared to GME graduates from years' past.

Industry Agreement With the Statement: “Recent business school graduates demonstrate the same level of professionalism as graduates from previous years.”



Regionally, there is also variation in how employers consider recent graduates' professional behavior, with just under half (46 percent) of U.S. employers expressing similar confidence in their professionalism compared to the GME graduates who came before them (Figure 14). Employers from workplaces in Asia and the Middle East—which tend to be viewed as more hierarchical—are less likely to report declining professionalism among the freshly minted business school graduates joining their organizations.⁷ Likewise, more than one quarter of employers at prestigious Fortune 100 companies—where the competition for top talent is typically most intense—strongly agree that GME graduates are exhibiting the same level of professionalism as before.

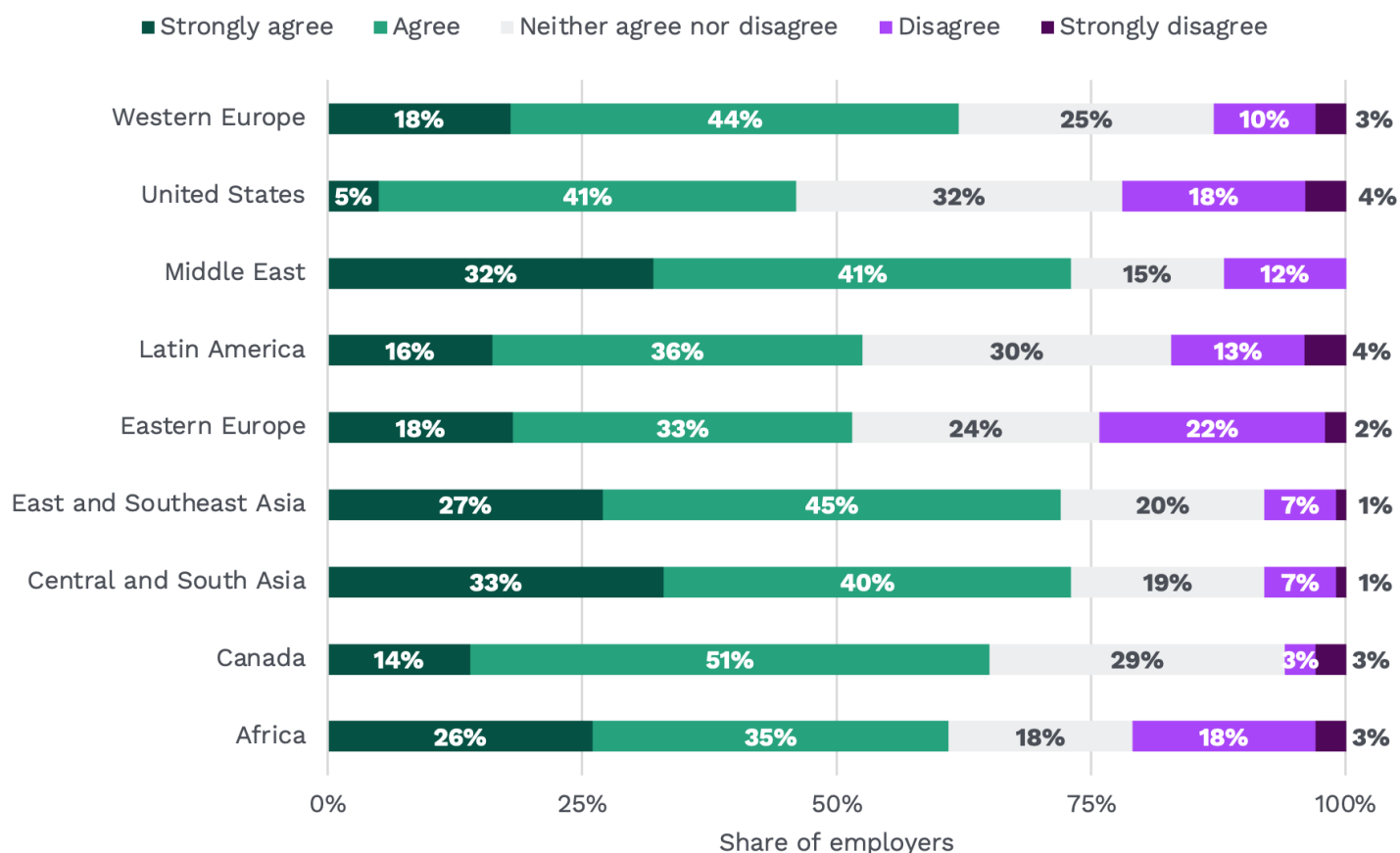
⁷ Thomas, Liam. “Exploring Diversity: Understanding Different Work Cultures in Asia.” *Asia Internship Program*. May 16, 2024. <https://www.internsinasia.com/blog/exploring-diversity-understanding-different-work-cultures-in-asia>.

“Business Etiquette and Culture in the Middle East.” *One IBC*, May 7, 2024. <https://global.oneibc.com/gx/en/insights/articles/business-etiquette-and-culture-in-the-middle-east>.

Figure 14: In every region except the United States, most employers agree or strongly agree today’s GME graduates exhibit the same professionalism as previous graduates.

Employers in Asia and the Middle East are especially likely to report commensurate professional behaviors.

Regional Agreement With the Statement: “Recent business school graduates demonstrate the same level of professionalism as graduates from previous years.”



As the business landscape continues to evolve—with new technologies, shifting global dynamics, and generational change in the workforce—employers remain deeply confident in the value of graduate management education. This sustained confidence underscores GME’s enduring relevance and adaptability. Employers increasingly view GME as critical preparation for leading through complexity, innovation, and disruption. For business schools, the takeaway is clear: their graduates are seen as agents of innovation and stability in a world of flux.

Flexible workplaces and classrooms

The rise of remote and hybrid work has reshaped how employers operate—and how they evaluate talent. At the same time, business schools are expanding flexible program formats to meet the changing expectations of prospective students. These shifts raise critical questions: How do employers perceive the value of online or hybrid business degrees? Are flexible learning models seen as equally effective at developing in-demand skills? And where do micro-credentials fit in the marketplace alongside full-time degrees? This section explores how evolving preferences in work and education are influencing employer attitudes—and what that means for graduate business programs looking to stay relevant.

Program and career services takeaways

- **Demystify program delivery for employers:** As recruiters become more aware of program modalities, work across campus to ensure transparency and alignment in how flexible formats are positioned. Clear messaging about academic rigor, skill outcomes, and student experience can help shape employer perceptions more positively.
- **Help students communicate the value of flexible and online learning:** While many employers—especially in tech—value online and hybrid degrees equally, skepticism remains in sectors like finance and consulting and in the U.S. market overall. Encourage students in flexible programs to proactively articulate the skills and discipline they’ve developed through online or hybrid learning, especially during interviews or on application materials.
- **Monitor the evolving role of micro-credentials:** Micro-credentials may be gaining some traction, particularly in the U.S., but they are still seen as supplementary to full degrees by most employers. Leverage employers’ valuation of full degree programs to encourage students in your badge or certificate courses to continue along their path to an MBA or business master’s degree.



In the era of remote and hybrid work, most employers value online and in-person degrees equally—especially in the tech sector, but not in the United States.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, remote and hybrid work increased dramatically, particularly in the United States.⁸ Though “return to office” mandates are on the rise, there is no doubt that remote and hybrid work arrangements shifted the mindset of employers and employees alike with regard to workplace flexibility and collaboration.⁹ In fact, more than half (56 percent) of global employers agree or strongly agree that the skills gained through a business degree are more important than before for businesses that are using remote or hybrid working arrangements (Figure 15). This was truer of employers from the energy/utilities and relatively flexible technology industries, and less true among consulting recruiters who are perhaps more likely to rely on in-person work with clients.



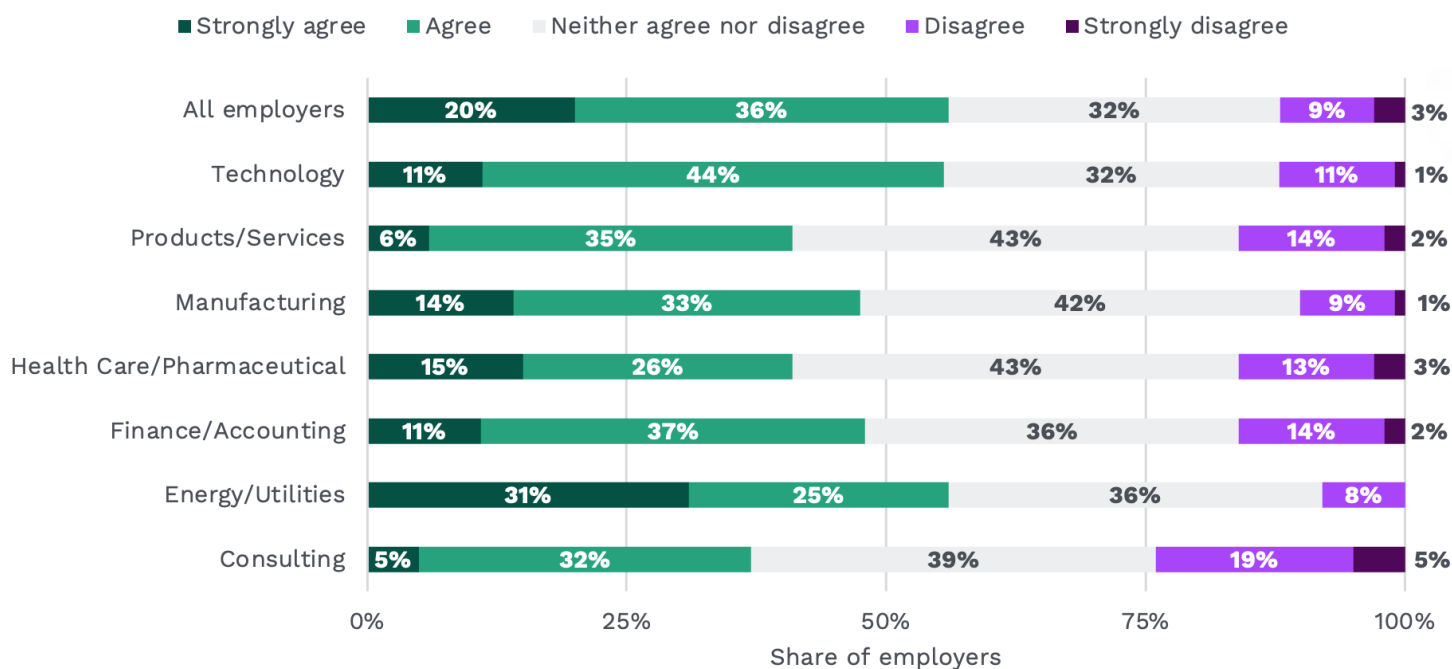
⁸ Carpenter, Gabrielle. “How Many Companies Use Hybrid Work?” B2BReviews, October 2, 2024. <https://www.b2breviews.com/hybrid-work-statistics/>.

⁹ “The return-to-office mandate is here. So is the open office. One has to go.” Fast Company, May 27, 2025. <https://www.fastcompany.com/91337575/the-return-to-office-mandate-is-here-so-is-the-open-office-one-has-to-go>.

Figure 15: Most global employers agree or strongly agree that GME skills are more important in today's remote and hybrid work environments.

Employers in the technology and energy/utilities sector are most likely to find renewed value in GME skills in today's more flexible work environments.

Industry Agreement With the Statement: “The skills gained through a business degree are more important than before for businesses that are now using remote or hybrid working arrangements.”



There are several regional differences in how employers view the value of skills gained through GME amid the rise of remote and hybrid work. Perhaps most notably, about half of U.S. employers are neutral about the value of GME skills in these new working conditions—and at 22 percent, U.S. employers are the most likely to disagree that these skills are more valuable in remote or hybrid contexts compared to employers in other regions (Figure 16). Meanwhile, more than three-quarters of recruiters from Africa and Central and South Asia agree that GME skills are more important in the context of remote and hybrid work. This is perhaps related to the rise in hybrid and remote work across Africa—particularly in the professional services, communication, and finance sectors—as well as in India—where, notably, the rise of more flexible work arrangements has been led by the country’s tech industry. In addition, one-third of employers at Fortune 100 companies—which are typically larger, more complex, and more competitive for top talent—strongly agreed that the skills cultivated in business school are more relevant in today’s more flexible work environments.

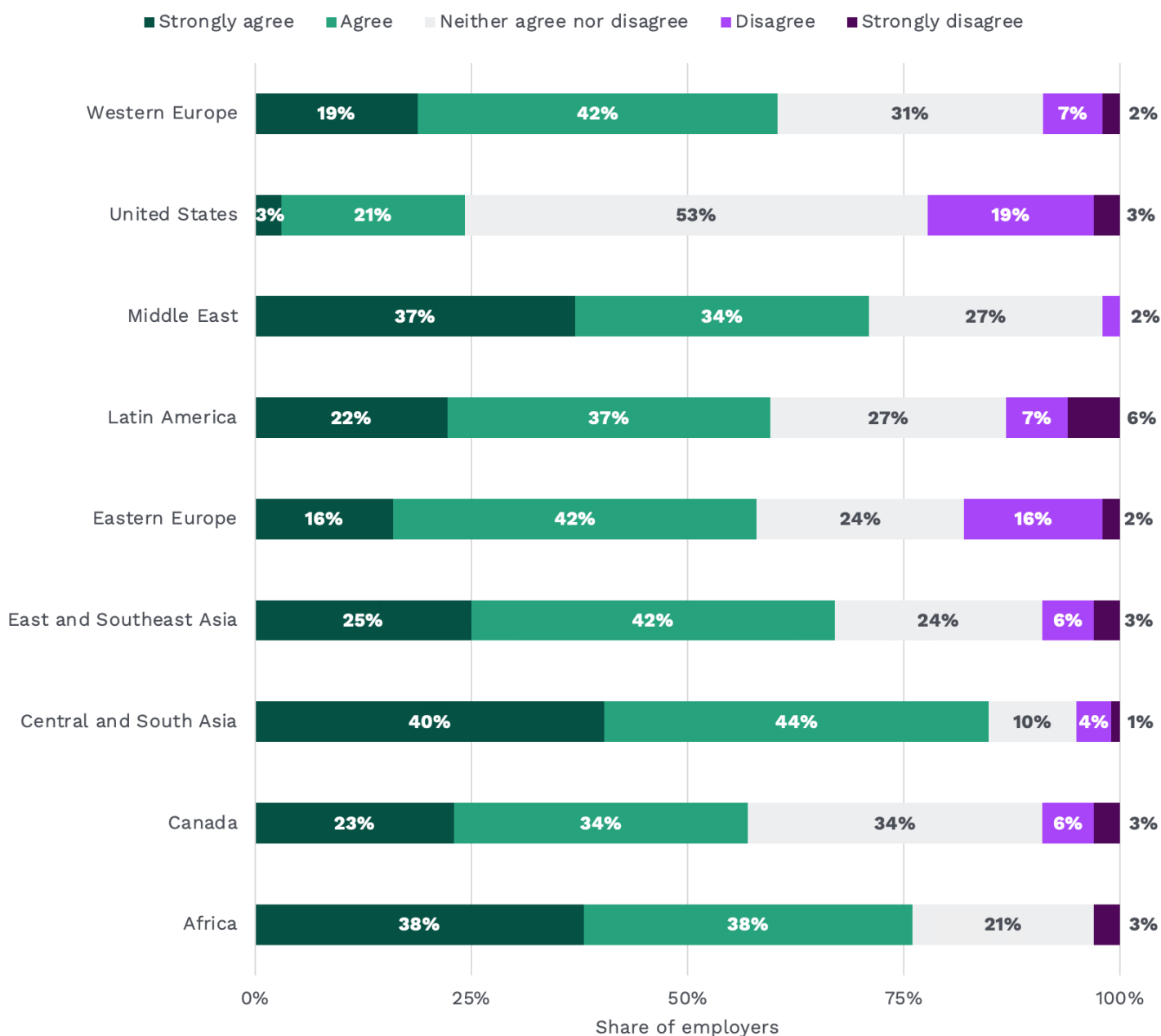
¹⁰ International Labour Office, Geneva. “The Next Normal The changing Workplace in Africa Ten Trends from the COVID-19 Pandemic that are Shaping Workplaces in Africa,” 2022. https://researchrepository.ilo.org/view/pdfCoverPage?instCode=41ILO_INST&filePid=13100838280002676&download=true.

Verma, Prachi. “Indian tech drives faster adoption of hybrid work mode.” *The Economic Times*, August 4, 2024. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/jobs/hr-policies-trends/indian-tech-drives-faster-adoption-of-hybrid-work-mode/articleshow/112253169.cms?from=mdr>.

Figure 16: With the exception of the United States, employers across regions agree the skills gained through a business degree are more valuable today as workplaces increase the flexibility of their work arrangements.


More than three-quarters of employers in Central and South Asia and Africa agree or strongly agree.

Regional Agreement With the Statement: “The skills gained through a business degree are more important than before for businesses that are now using remote or hybrid working arrangements.”



The rise of remote and hybrid arrangements is not limited to the workplace. As candidate interest in online, hybrid, and flexible learning has increased (though according to the latest GMAC Prospective Students Survey, dropped back down to pre-pandemic levels in 2024), more MBA and business master's programs are being delivered outside of the more traditional in-person setting.¹¹ For several years, the Corporate Recruiters Survey has asked employers how they value the skills students develop in predominantly online programs versus in-person programs. This year, we asked directly if recruiters agree or disagree with the statement, “My company values graduates of online or predominantly online and in-person programs equally.”

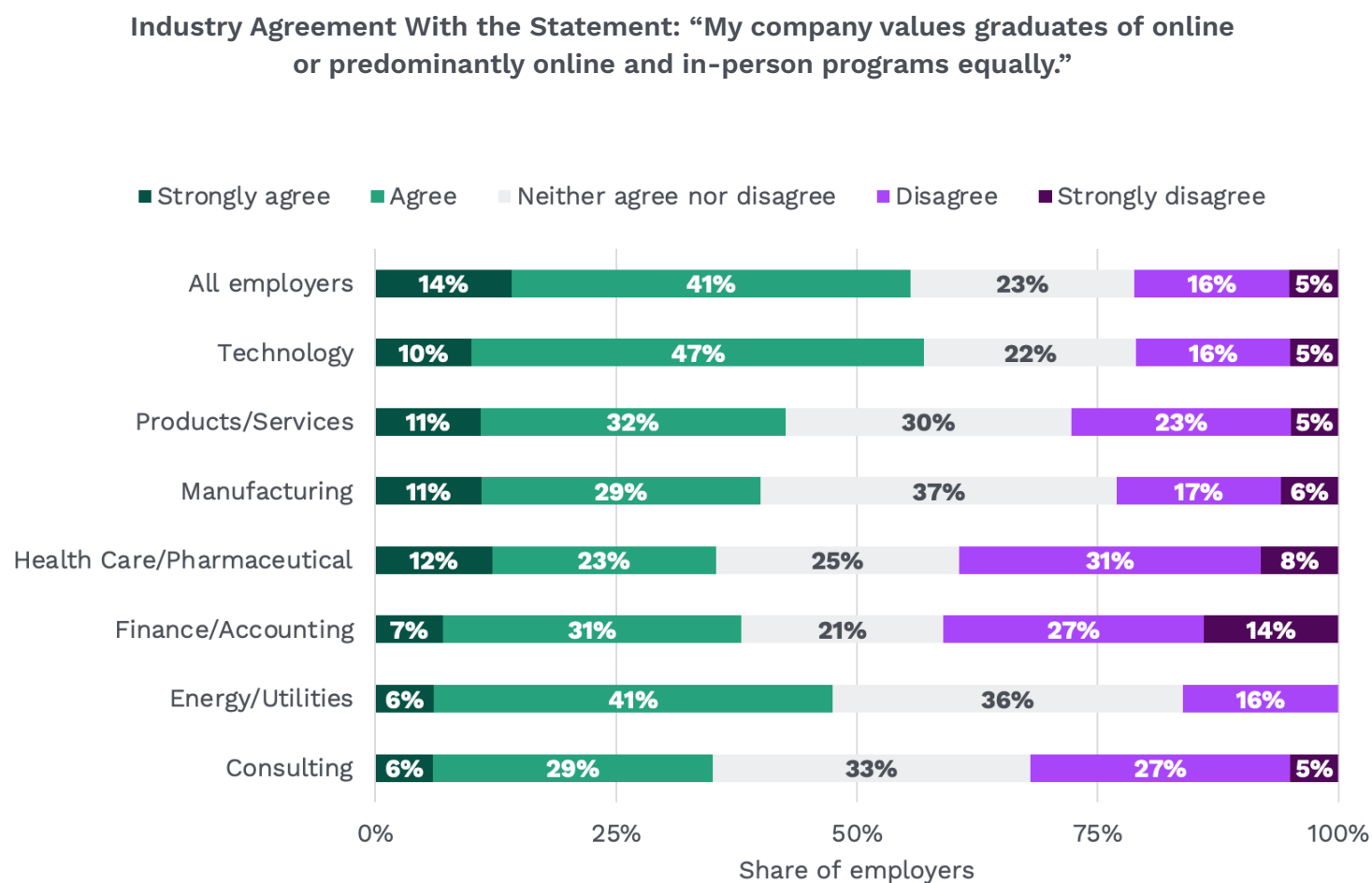
Globally, more than half (55 percent) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (Figure 17). By industry, employers in the technology sector are most likely to agree—likely related to the fact that innovations in technology make distance learning possible and increasingly more engaging. Yet more than a quarter of employers in the finance/accounting, consulting, and health care/pharmaceutical sectors do not value online and in-person degrees equally, perhaps due to the client facing nature of the work and a greater valuation of the human skills that these employers may perceive are better developed face-to-face.



¹¹ Walker, Andrew. “GMAC Prospective Students Survey – 2025 Report.” Graduate Management Admission Council, April 2025. <https://www.gmac.com/market-intelligence-and-research/market-research/gmac-prospective-students-survey>.

Figure 17: Just over half of global employers value graduates of online or predominantly online and in-person programs equally.

Tech employers are especially bullish about the equal value of online and in-person degrees.

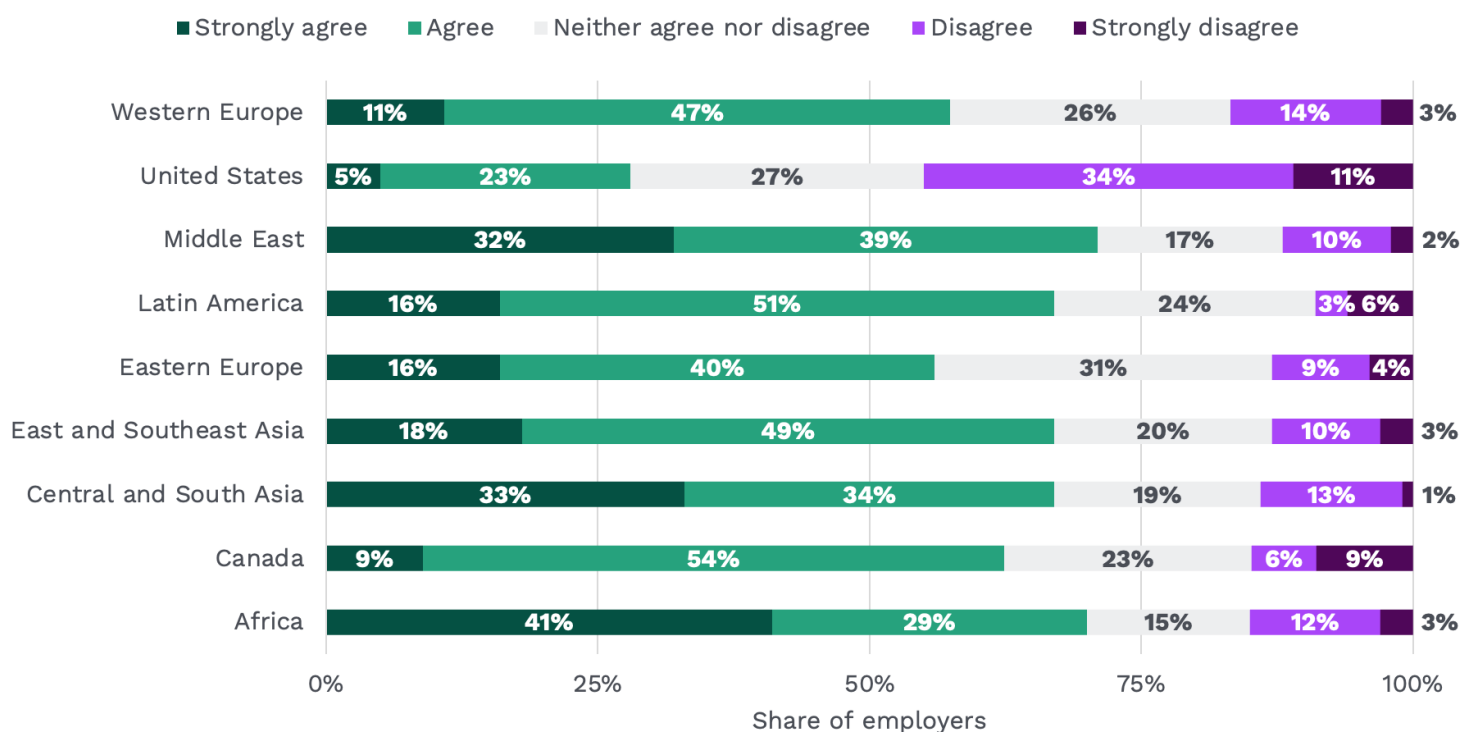


Most employers across regions value in-person and online degrees equally—with the exception of the United States (Figure 18). Nearly half (45 percent) of U.S. employers indicate that their companies do not value degrees earned through these modalities equally. However, as in years past, U.S. employers tend to have more favorable views than employers in other regions with regards to how online programs can develop their students’ tangible skills. For example, 49 percent of U.S. employers agree in-person degrees develop stronger technical skills than online programs—but that compares to a much higher 73 percent in Central and South Asia. At face value, employers outside of the United States are warming up to the equity of online and in-person programs—but it becomes more complex when digging into how employers view skill development through different program modalities. As such, business schools should continue to express their relevance and importance to candidates and employers alike, regardless of their programs’ delivery methods.

Figure 18: Except in the United States, most employers across regions value online and in-person programs equally.

Employers in Africa, Central and South Asia, and the Middle East are most open to the equal value of online and in-person GME.

Regional Agreement With the Statement: “My company values graduates of online or predominantly online and in-person programs equally.”

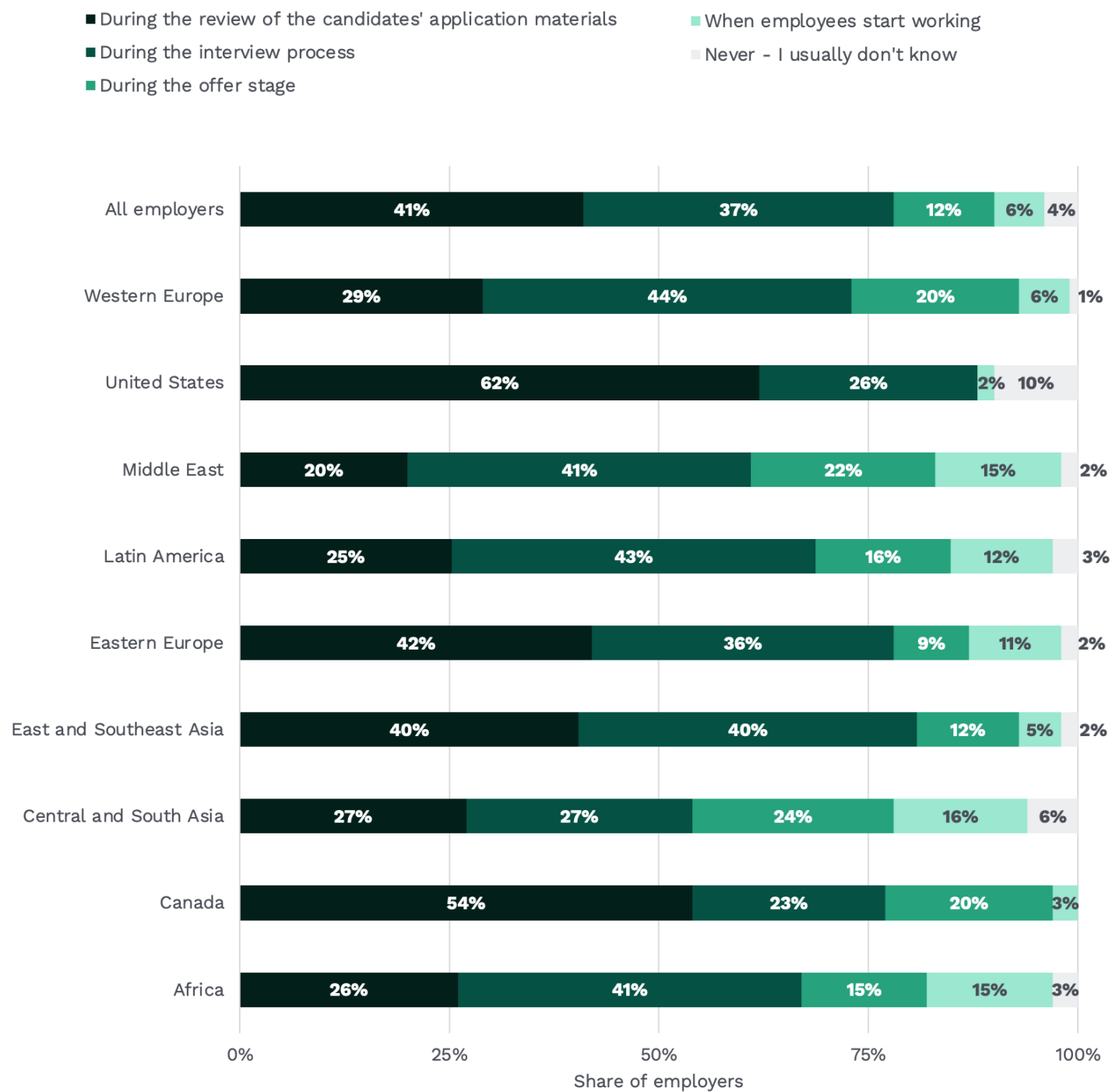


When considering how employers value online and in-person degrees, school professionals are often quick to point out that there is typically little indication for employers about how a program is delivered (e.g., it is not necessarily relayed on transcripts or diplomas). To examine this assumption, we added a new question to the survey asking employers at which stage they are informed a candidate’s degree was earned online. Globally, 90 percent of employers find out at some point before a new employee starts, with just four percent saying they never find out at all (Figure 19). Across industries, this overwhelmingly happens during the review of the candidates’ application materials or during the interview process. There is more variation by region, with most North American employers discovering a potential employee’s GME degree was earned online during the initial review of their application materials. Meanwhile, a plurality of employers learn that a candidate’s degree was earned online during the interview process in Western Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa.

Figure 19: Employers in North America are most likely to identify a prospective employee has an online degree upon review of their application materials.

Very few employers never discover if a candidate's degree was earned online.

When Employers Discover if Candidates Have an Online Degree by Region

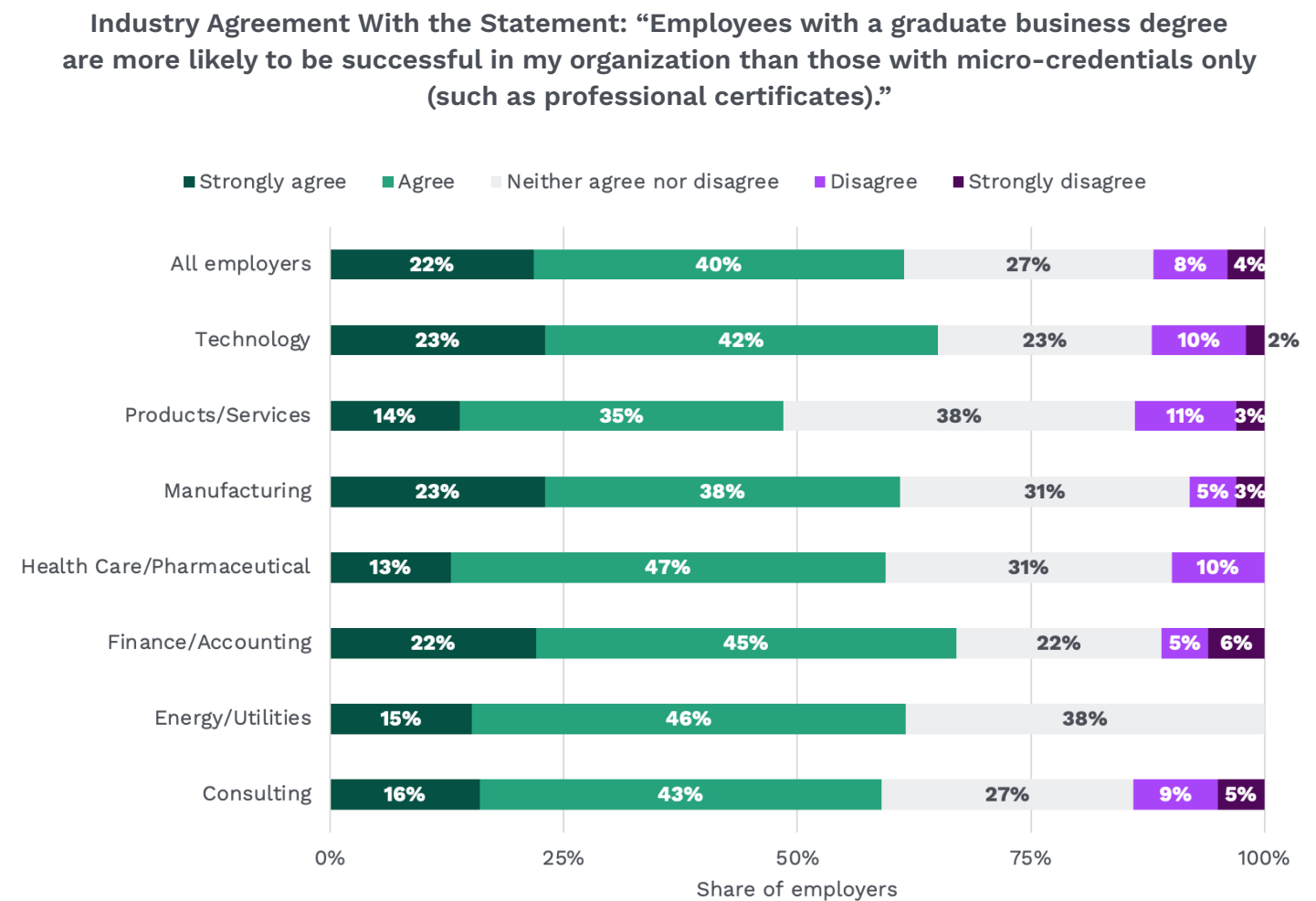


U.S. employers continue to warm up to the value of micro-credentials as most recruiters in other regions maintain strong preference for full degrees.

In 2025, most global recruiters (62 percent) agree or strongly agree that their employees with graduate business degrees are more likely to be successful in their organizations than those with micro-credentials only (Figure 20). Products and services employers have the most favorable views of micro-credentials (though 49 percent still value full degrees more), while technology and finance/accounting employers are among the least likely to value micro-credentials similarly to full degree programs. This may be related to the more specific technical capabilities required for roles like software engineers, accountants, or investment bankers—skills that cannot be properly taught through a bootcamp or short video courses.

Figure 20: Most global employers agree or strongly agree that their employees with graduate business degrees are more likely to be successful in their organizations than those with micro-credentials only.

Employers in the products and services sector are least likely to agree, while employees in the technology and finance/accounting industries are most likely.

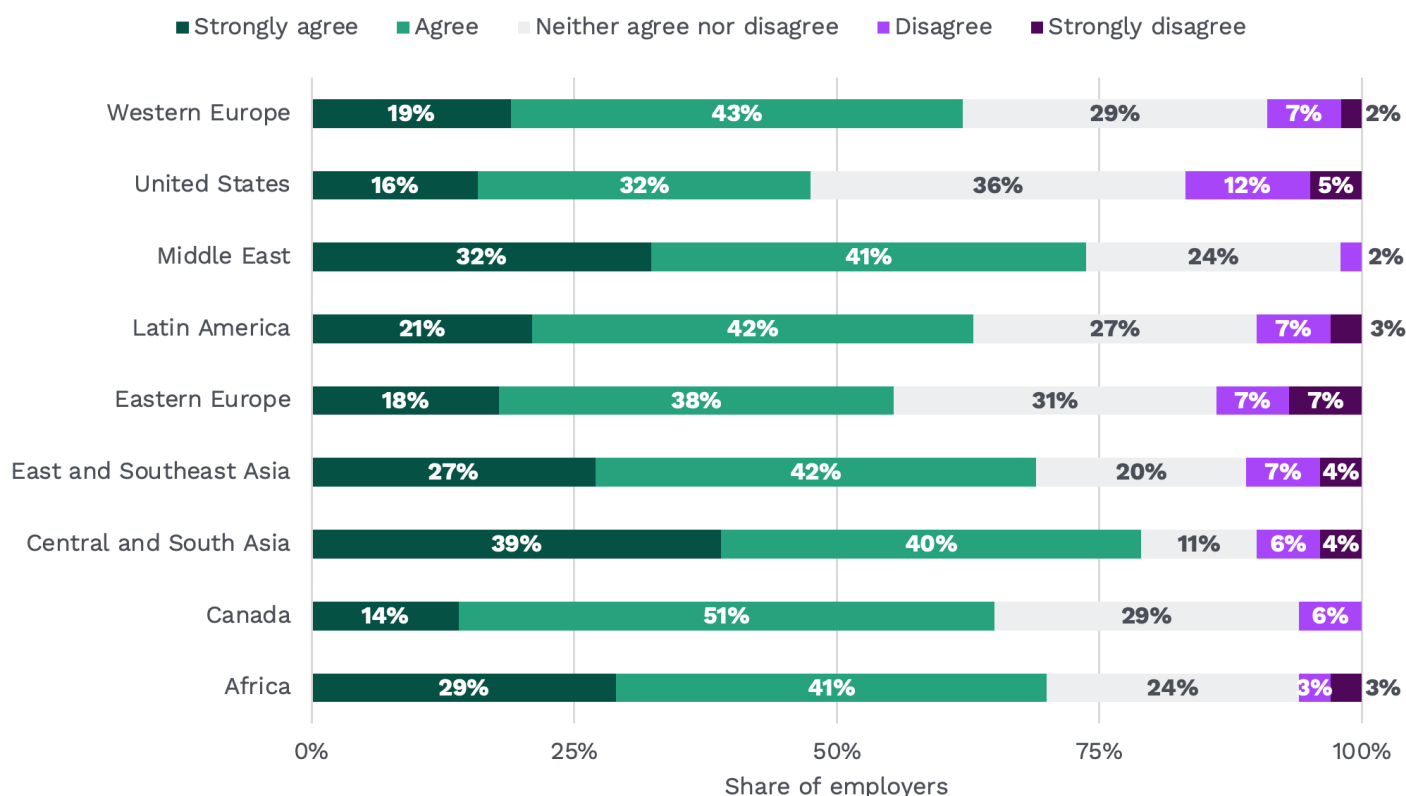


More than half of employers across regions agree or strongly agree that their employees with MBAs or business master’s degrees tend to be more successful than those with digital badges or certificates—except in the United States. Forty-eight percent of U.S. employers value full degrees more, but the United States has the largest share of employers who are neutral or disagree with the statement compared to other regions.

Figure 21: More than half of employers across regions—except in the United States—agree employees with GME degrees are more successful in their organizations than those with micro-credentials only.

Employers in Central and South Asia and the Middle East are most likely to value full degrees more than micro-credentials.

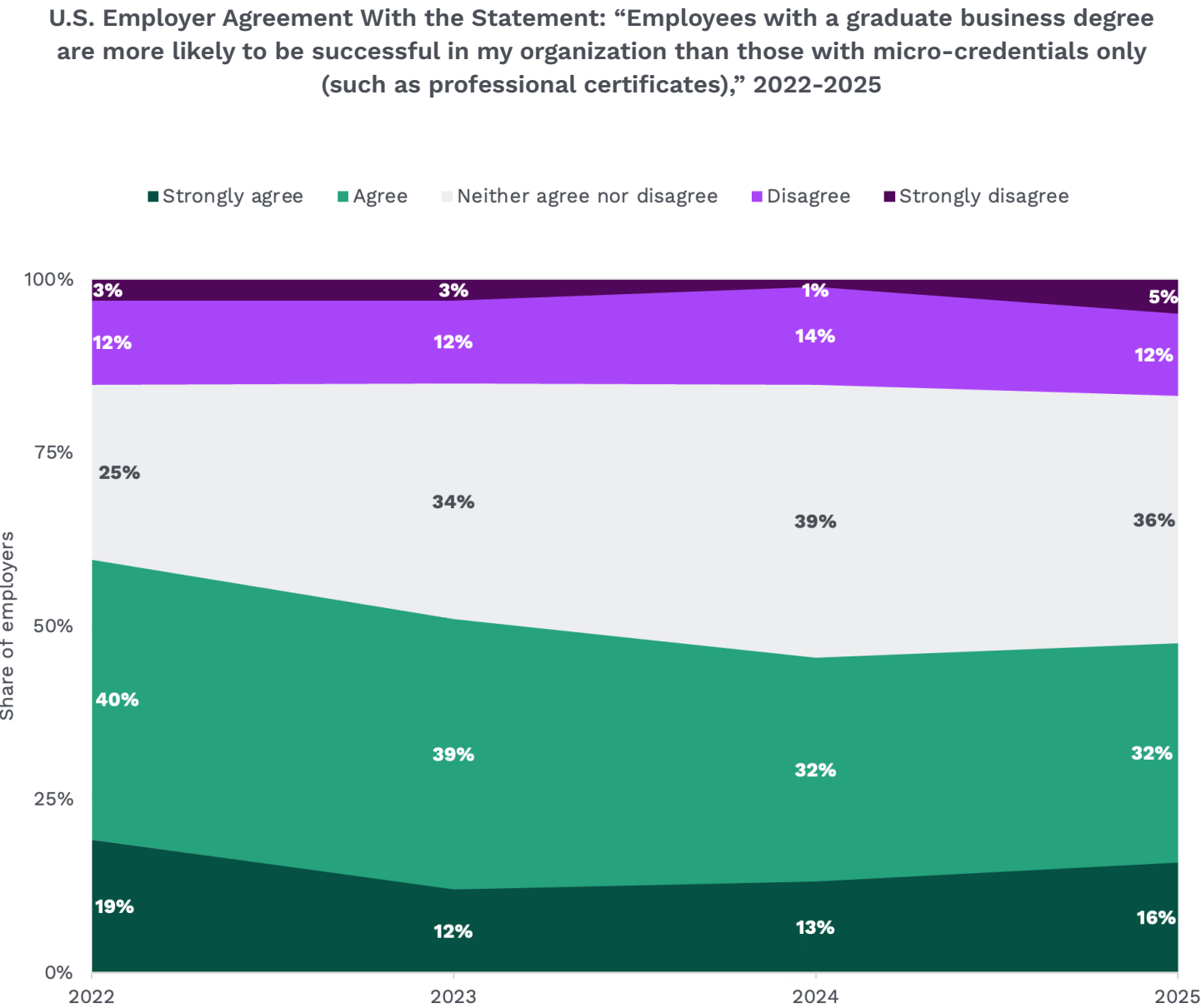
Regional Agreement With the Statement: “Employees with a graduate business degree are more likely to be successful in my organization than those with micro-credentials only (such as professional certificates).”



This relative warmth of U.S. employers toward the value of micro-credentials has increased slightly over time (Figure 22). 2025 is when the largest share of U.S. employers disagreed that GME degrees better facilitate the success of their employees when compared to micro-credentials since we first asked the question in 2022. This should not necessarily be interpreted as U.S. employers devaluing full degree programs. Rather, digging deeper into the data reveals some changes and nuance in how U.S. employers might evaluate the variety of offerings within any business school’s portfolio.

Figure 22: In 2025, fewer U.S. recruiters say GME degrees help the success of their employees more than micro-credentials compared to 2022.

More U.S. employers are also neutral about the statement compared to when it was first asked.



In sum, the shift to hybrid and remote work has not only transformed how and where business gets done—it may also be affecting employer perceptions of graduate management education. As flexibility in work and learning becomes a norm, schools must ensure their offerings, regardless of format, are seen as rigorous, relevant, and aligned with real-world demands.

Hiring and compensation

Understanding employer hiring plans and compensation expectations is essential to evaluating the real-world value of graduate management education (GME). Hiring and salary outcomes reflect how the market values GME degrees—what skills are in demand, which credentials carry weight, and where opportunities are growing or shifting. By asking recruiters about their hiring intentions, salary projections, and the factors influencing their decision-making, we gain critical insight into how business school graduates are positioned in a rapidly changing global economy. These insights not only help business schools align their programs with employer needs but also empower students to make informed decisions about their education, careers, and return on investment.

Program and career services takeaways

- **Shape career-ready curricula:** Insights into hiring and salary trends should feed back into program design. Career services can play a critical role by sharing employer feedback with faculty and program leaders to help shape curricula that are responsive to market demands.
- **Prepare students for regional and global market nuances:** Hiring trends vary significantly by geography, industry, and even political climate. Equip students with the knowledge and tools to navigate these differences—whether they're seeking roles domestically or internationally. This could include offering regional job search strategy sessions, leveraging alumni in key markets, and highlighting sector-specific nuances in employer behavior and compensation.
- **Highlight and support non-salary forms of career success:** As employers increasingly offer benefits like professional development, educational assistance, and flexible work arrangements, help students recognize and negotiate for these non-salary components. Host workshops or create resources that guide students in evaluating total compensation packages and making informed choices about what success looks like for them.



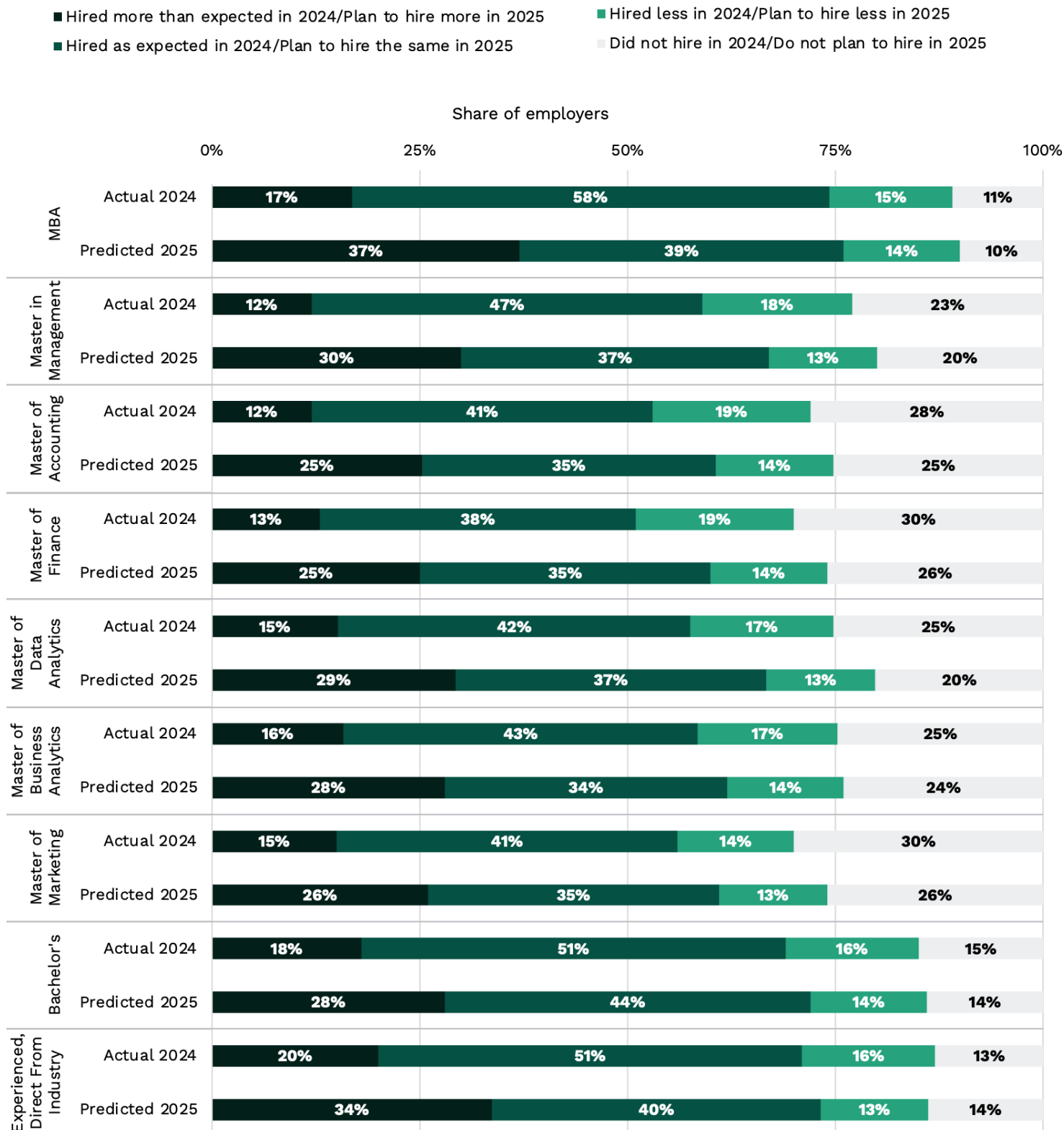
More than one-third of global employers plan to expand their hiring of MBA graduates in 2025 compared to 2024.

Across degree types, more employers predict that they will hire GME graduates in 2025 compared to 2024, with a quarter or more of these employers anticipating expanding their hiring compared to last year (Figure 23). Ninety percent of responding global employers plan to hire MBA talent in 2025—even more than prospective employees with bachelor's degrees or those coming directly from other organizations. A plurality of global employers intend to maintain steady hiring of newly minted MBAs compared to 2024 levels, with a similar amount planning to increase their hiring. As in years past, generalist MBA talent typically appeals to more kinds of organizations than graduates of more specialized business master's programs, so the comparatively larger shares of employers who do not plan to hire business master's talent should not be interpreted as a lack of job prospects for these students post-graduation. Rather, there are fewer and more specialized roles and organizations that will appeal to business master's graduates.

Figure 23: More respondents predict they will hire MBAs in 2025 than bachelor's graduates or candidates from other organizations.

More than a quarter of global employees plan to expand their hiring of graduates for each degree type.

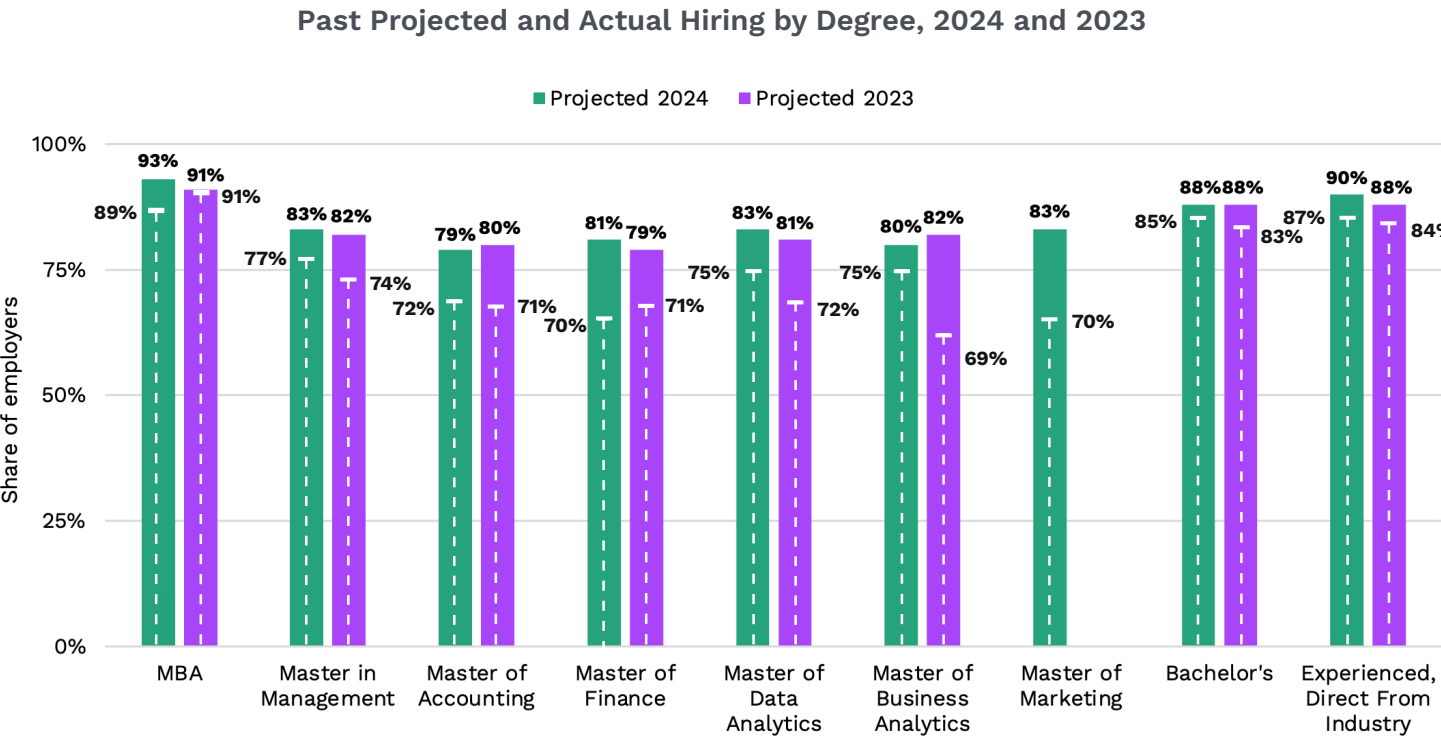
Global Employers' 2024 Hiring Outcomes and 2025 Hiring Projections



Of course, these are recruiters’ predictions, so there is not a guarantee that hiring will actually expand. When looking back at our survey respondents’ past predictions in 2024 and 2023, the actual hiring patterns came up a few points short of employers’ estimates (Figure 24). The predictions are not wildly outside of actual results, and it should still be heartening that employers are optimistic about hiring despite global economic and geopolitical headwinds.

Figure 24: Employers tend to have slightly more optimistic hiring plans compared to hiring results.

Predictions have been closer to results—and highest—among MBA graduates.



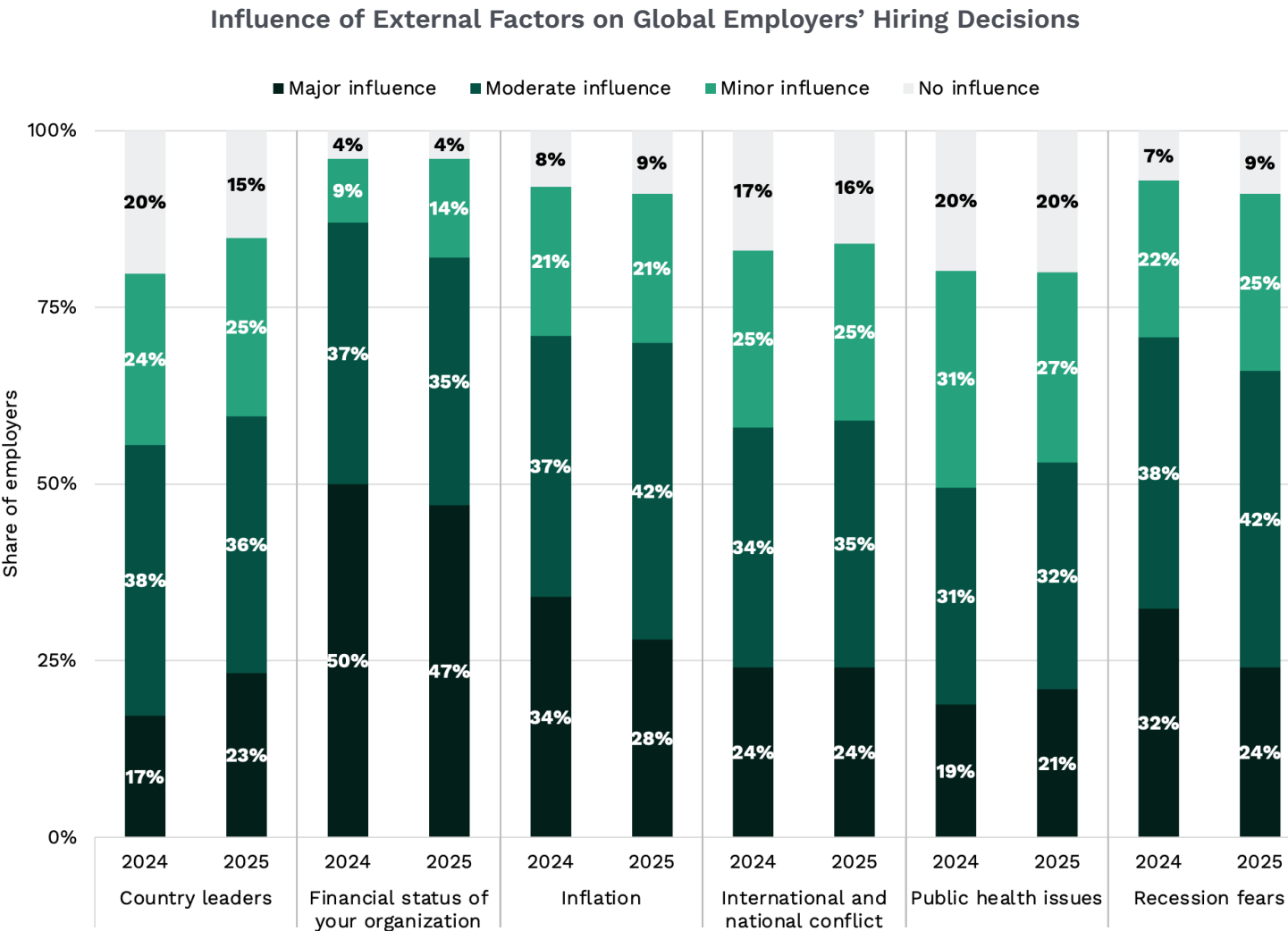
Note: Actual and projected hiring for the Master of Marketing is not reported for 2023 due to insufficient sample size.

In order to determine how global employers might alter their hiring decisions based on macro-level factors like these, we explored how this year’s trends compare to 2024. As before, the specific financial status of an employers’ organization is the top factor influencing their hiring decisions (Figure 25). But this year, we see that fewer recruiters report major influence of recession fears or inflation. Importantly, this survey was fielded in January to March of 2025—just before U.S. President Donald Trump rolled out new tariff policies that disrupted the markets.¹² It is also notable that more respondents say “country leaders” will be a major influence on their hiring decisions—increases that were most pronounced among employers in the Middle East, Latin America, and the United States. Further geographic breakdowns of hiring trends and projections are included in the regional profiles at the end of the report.

¹² Minsberg, Tayla. “A Timeline of Trump’s On-Again, Off-Again Tariffs.” *The New York Times*, May 26, 2025. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/13/business/economy/trump-tariff-timeline.html>.

Figure 25: Despite perceived economic headwinds, fewer employers are concerned with inflation or recession compared to last year.

More global employers than last year report increased influence of country leaders on their hiring decisions.

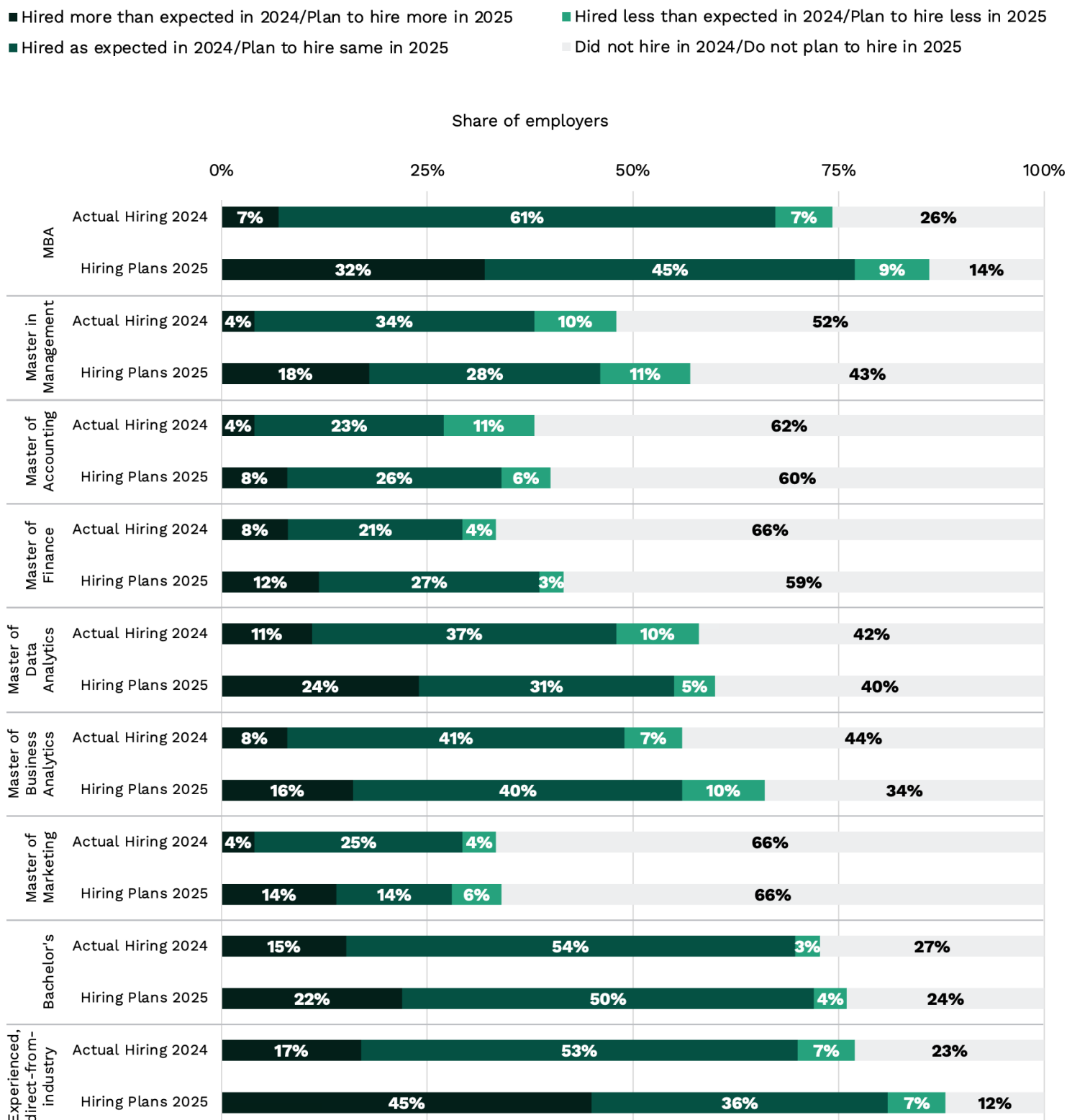


Hiring patterns will also vary by industry. For example, consulting companies seem especially bullish about hiring MBA talent this year, with 86 percent indicating some level of hiring, and almost one-third planning to hire more MBA graduates than last year (Figure 26). In addition, there are plans for more total hiring across degree types, including a pronounced hiring expansion of Master of Data Analytics graduates.

Figure 26: More total consulting employers plan to hire each GME degree type in 2025.

Expanded hiring is predicted to be highest among industry, MBA, and data analytics graduates.

Consulting Employers' 2024 Hiring Outcomes and 2025 Hiring Projections



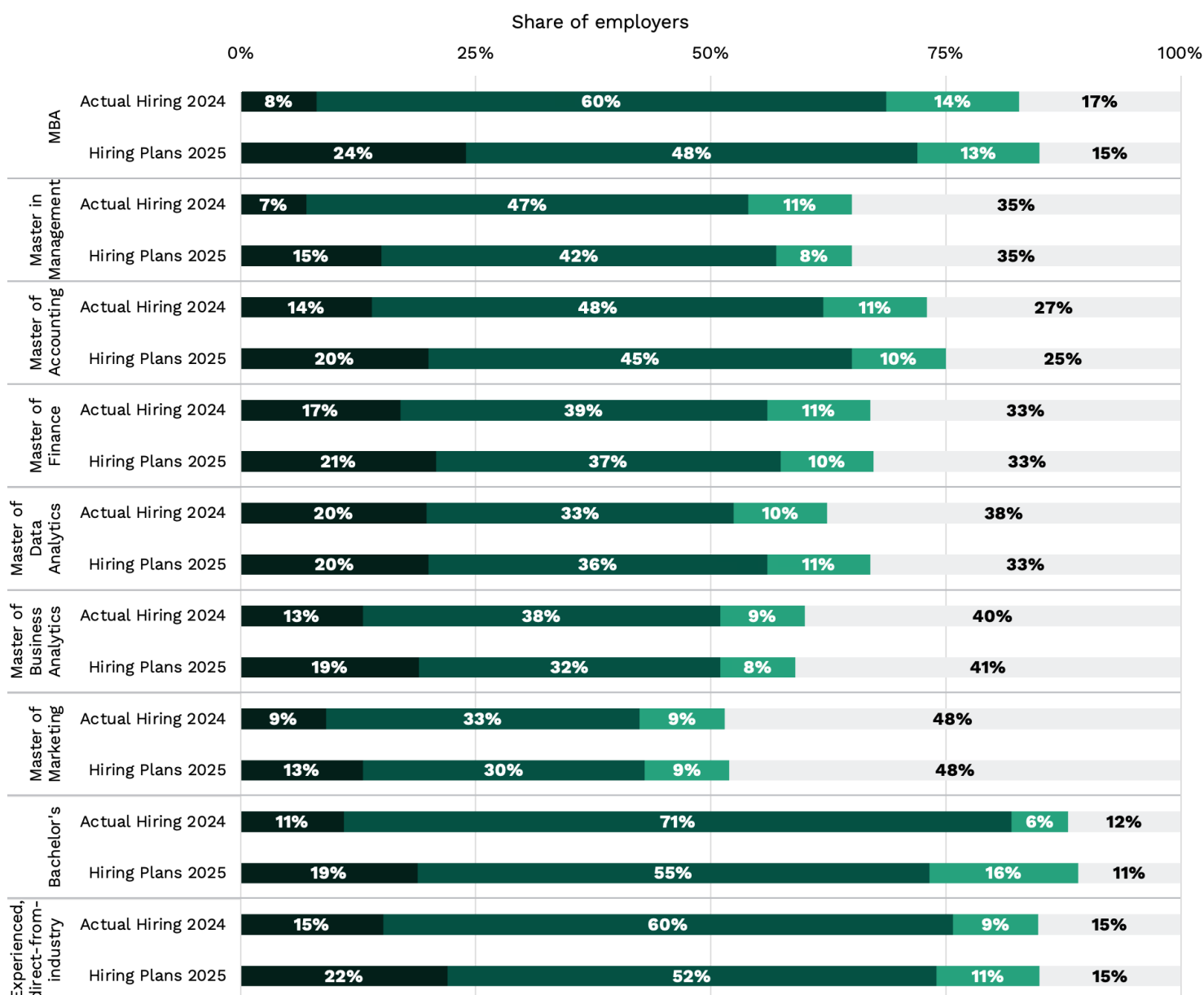
Finance employers are also optimistic in their projected hiring for 2025 but are perhaps more in line with their 2024 hiring practices compared to consulting employers. About a quarter of employers in the finance and accounting sector plan to expand their hiring of MBAs, with one-in-five of these employers also looking to expand their hiring of accounting, finance, data analytics, and business analytics graduates (Figure 27).

Figure 27: Each degree type is predicted to be hired by half or more finance and accounting respondents.

More finance and accounting employers plan to expand hiring of MBA graduates compared to graduates of other programs and industry candidates.

Finance/Accounting Employers' 2024 Hiring Outcomes and 2025 Hiring Projections

- Hired more than expected in 2024/Plan to hire more in 2025
- Hired less than expected in 2024/Plan to hire less in 2025
- Hired as expected in 2024/Plan to hire same in 2025
- Did not hire in 2024/Do not plan to hire in 2025



Despite a year marked by layoffs at technology companies, employers in the sector are particularly optimistic about their MBA hiring in the year to come, with 93 percent of responding tech companies saying they plan to hire MBA graduates in 2025 (Figure 28).¹³ Data analytics graduates are also in high demand at tech companies in 2025—a potential boon to data analytics programs that have seen decreasing applications and candidate interest, according to our most recent Application Trends Survey and GMAC Prospective Student Survey reports.¹⁴ While fewer total technology employers report planning to hire Master of Business Analytics talent compared to last year’s actual hiring results, 29 percent of tech recruiters report they plan to expand their hiring of these graduates.



¹³ Corrall, Cody. “A comprehensive archive of 2024 tech layoffs.” TechCrunch, December 31, 2024. <https://techcrunch.com/2024/12/31/a-comprehensive-archive-of-2024-tech-layoffs/>.

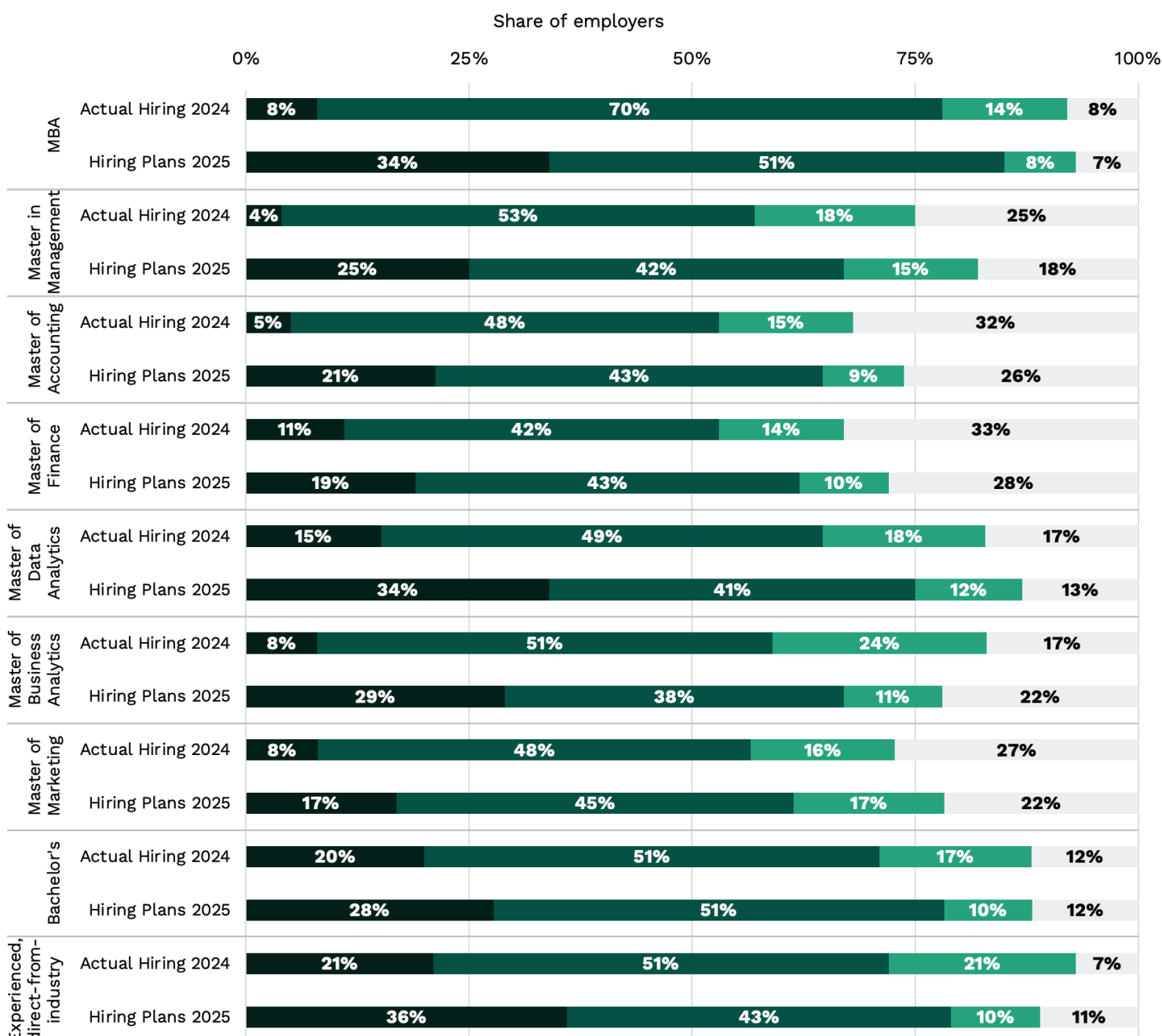
¹⁴ Walker, Andrew. “Application Trends Survey – 2024 Report.” Graduate Management Admission Council, October 2024. <https://www.gmac.com/market-intelligence-and-research/market-research/application-trends-survey>. Walker. “Prospective Students Survey – 2025 Report.”

Figure 28: More than three-quarters of technology employers plan to hire MBA, management, data analytics, business analytics, bachelor's, and industry candidates in 2025.

More than one-third of technology employers plan to expand their hiring of MBA, data analytics, and industry candidates.

Technology Employers' 2024 Hiring Outcomes and 2025 Hiring Projections

- Hired more than expected in 2024/Plan to hire more in 2025
- Hired less than expected in 2024/Plan to hire less in 2025
- Hired as expected in 2024/Plan to hire same in 2025
- Did not hire in 2024/Do not plan to hire in 2025



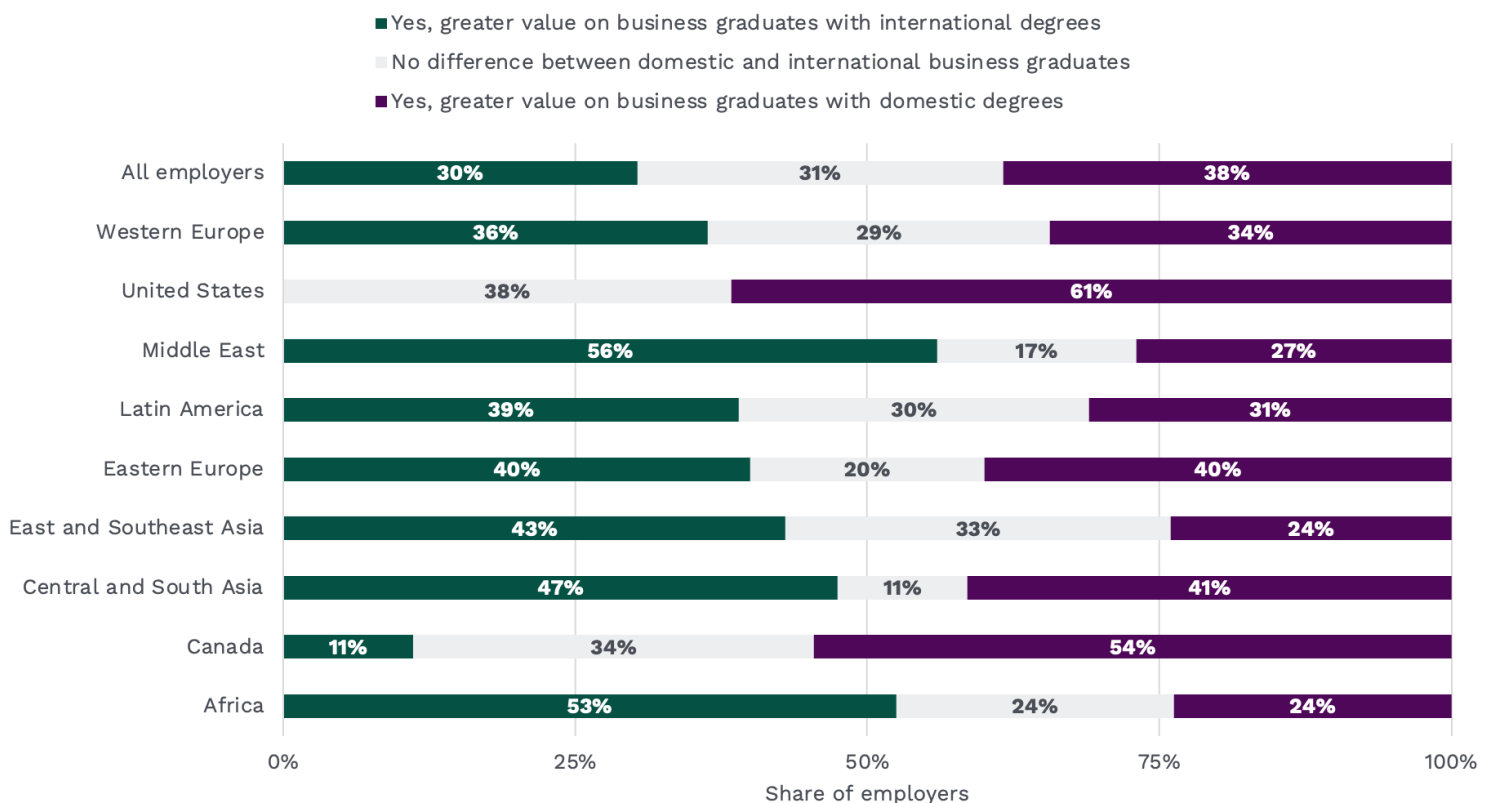
U.S. manufacturing, technology, and consulting employers are most likely to curb their hiring of international students due to Donald Trump’s return to the White House.

To better understand hiring patterns of international students, this year’s Corporate Recruiters Survey added back a question about how employers view degrees earned domestically (i.e., in the same country where their organization is headquartered) versus those earned internationally (i.e., outside of their organization’s headquarters). Employers in the United States and Canada vary from those in other regions—with more than half of both U.S. and Canadian employers placing greater value on degrees earned domestically (Figure 29). These employers are also the most likely to say they do not have a preference about whether a degree was earned domestically or internationally. In every other region, more employers prefer international business degrees to domestic degrees (except in Eastern Europe, where there is equal preference).

Figure 29: Most North American employers value degrees earned domestically while most employers in other regions prefer international degrees.

Compared to recruiters in other regions, North American employers are also the most likely to value international and domestic degrees equally.

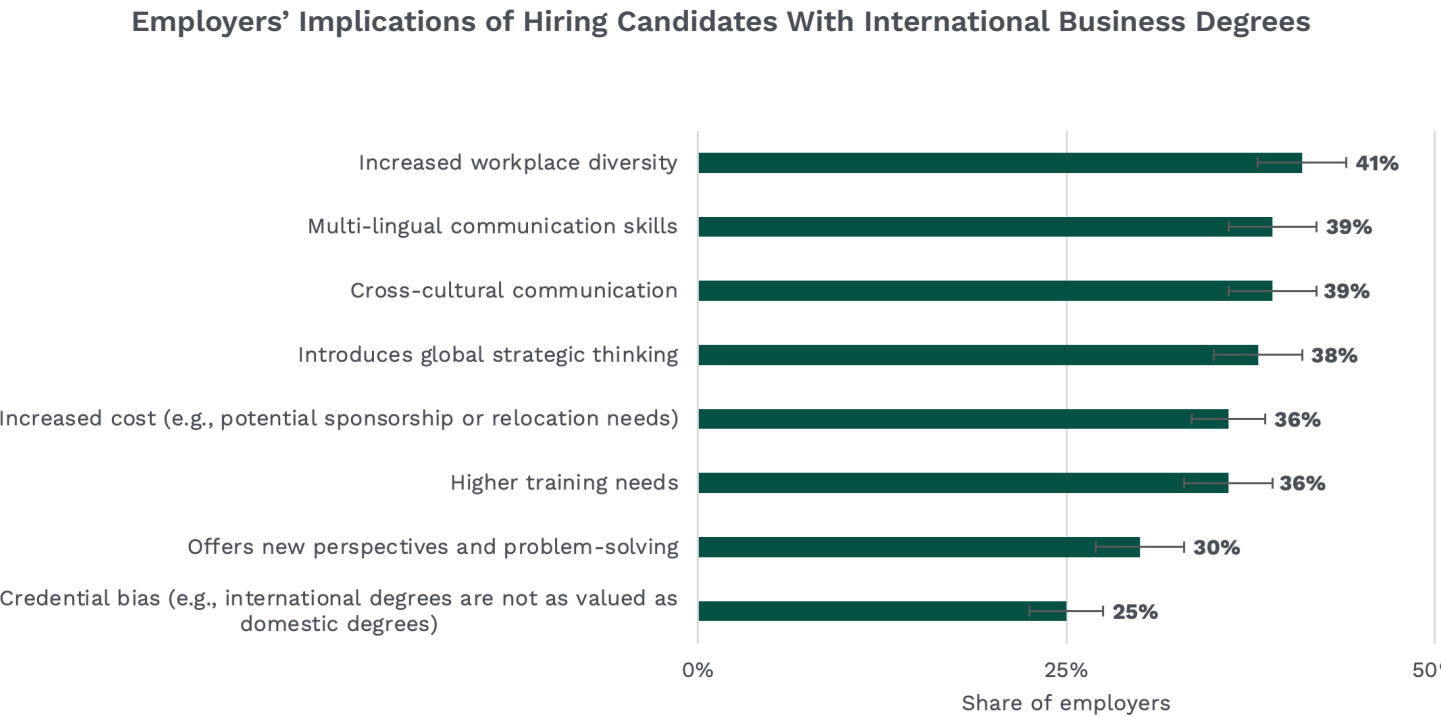
How Employers Value Domestic and International Degrees by Region



Globally, employers find a lot of value in hiring candidates from countries outside where they are headquartered, with about two-fifths of respondents citing increased workplace diversity, multilingual and cross-cultural communication skills, and more global strategic thinking (Figure 30). However, about one-third of recruiters also cite the increased cost of potential sponsorship and training needs associated with hiring international candidates. More than half of employers in Canada, Central and South Asia, and Eastern Europe cited concern with higher training needs, and nearly half of U.S. employers cited concern for increased costs associated with hiring international candidates. Fortune 100 employers appear to feel some of the costs and benefits of hiring international talent more acutely than those outside of the list, with 44 percent indicating increased cost implications but 59 percent highlighting increased work diversity. Generally, concern about costs related to hiring international employees increases with companies' number of employees (even though medium-sized companies with 5,000-9,999 employees were the most likely to hire international talent in 2024 compared to companies with more than 10,000 employees).

Figure 30: Global employers find common benefits of hiring candidates with international business degrees like increased diversity and multi-lingual and cross-cultural communication skills.

However, employers also recognize there are often higher training needs and costs associated with sponsorship or relocation.



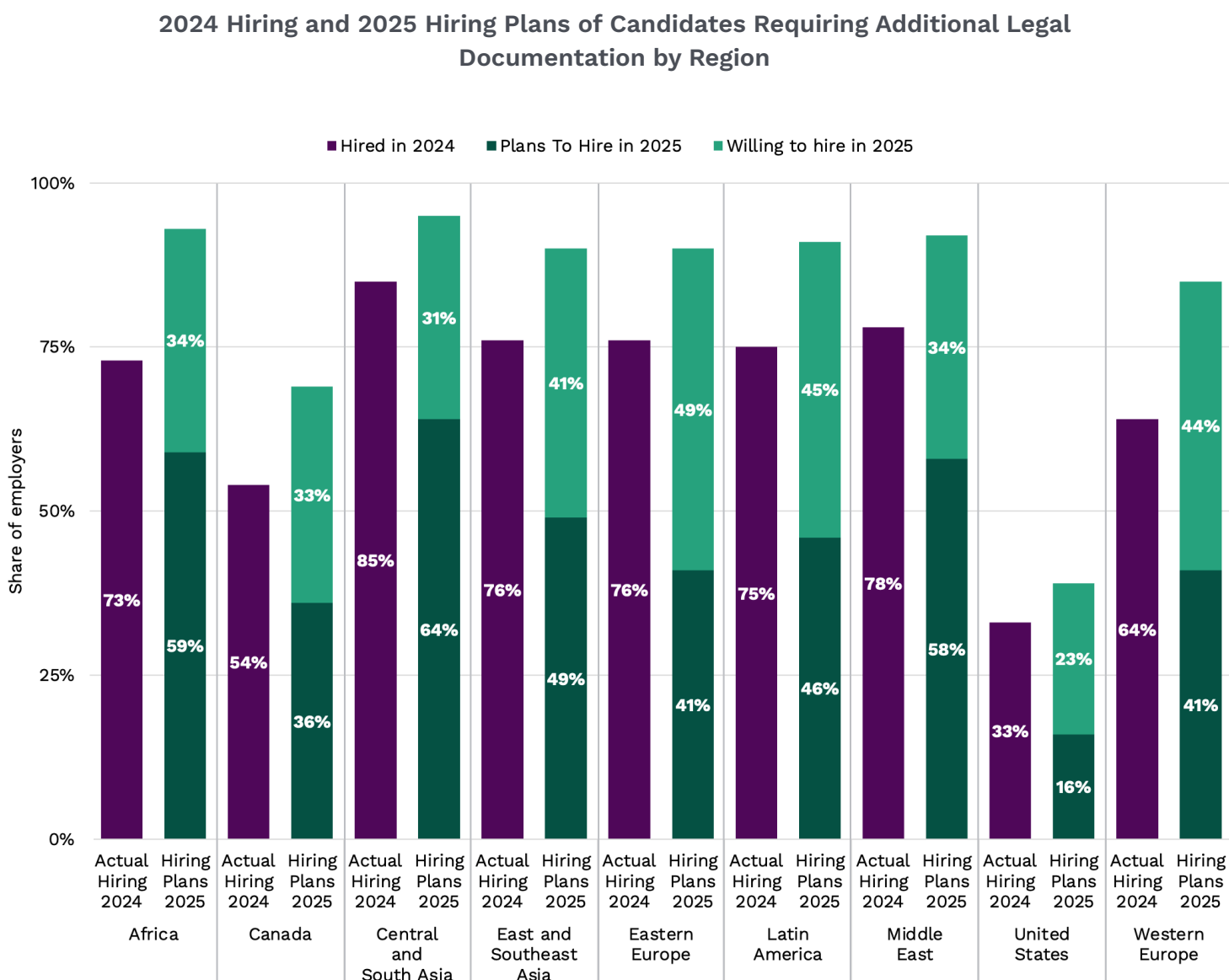
Despite cost and training concerns, employers across regions have active plans to hire—or are willing to hire—more international candidates in 2025 compared to 2024 (Figure 31). In 2024, employers in Central and South Asia were the most likely to hire candidates that required additional legal documentation, with three-quarters or more of employers in the Middle East, East and Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America also hiring international talent.¹⁵ When asked about 2025 hiring, most employers outside of the United States indicated they have active plans to hire international employees, or that they are willing to hire employees who require additional legal documentation even if they do not have current plans to do so. Employers in the United States are outliers in this regard, with only one-third indicating they hired international talent in 2024—down from 40 percent in 2023, though the difference is within the margin of error. Still, U.S. employers’ willingness to hire international talent in 2025 is slightly higher than actual 2024 rates.



¹⁵ Note the Corporate Recruiters Survey includes responses from traditional corporate recruiters as well as employees at staffing firms with responsibility for hiring GME graduates. Within the Western European and East and Southeast Asian samples, there is some divergence in 2024 international hiring results among these respondent types, with staffing firms in these regions more likely to report hiring candidates who required additional legal documentation than corporate recruiters in the regions. The results reported in Figure 31 represent the combined results of staffing firms and recruiter responses in each region.

Figure 31: Across regions, willingness to hire international talent in 2025 exceeds actual 2024 hiring.

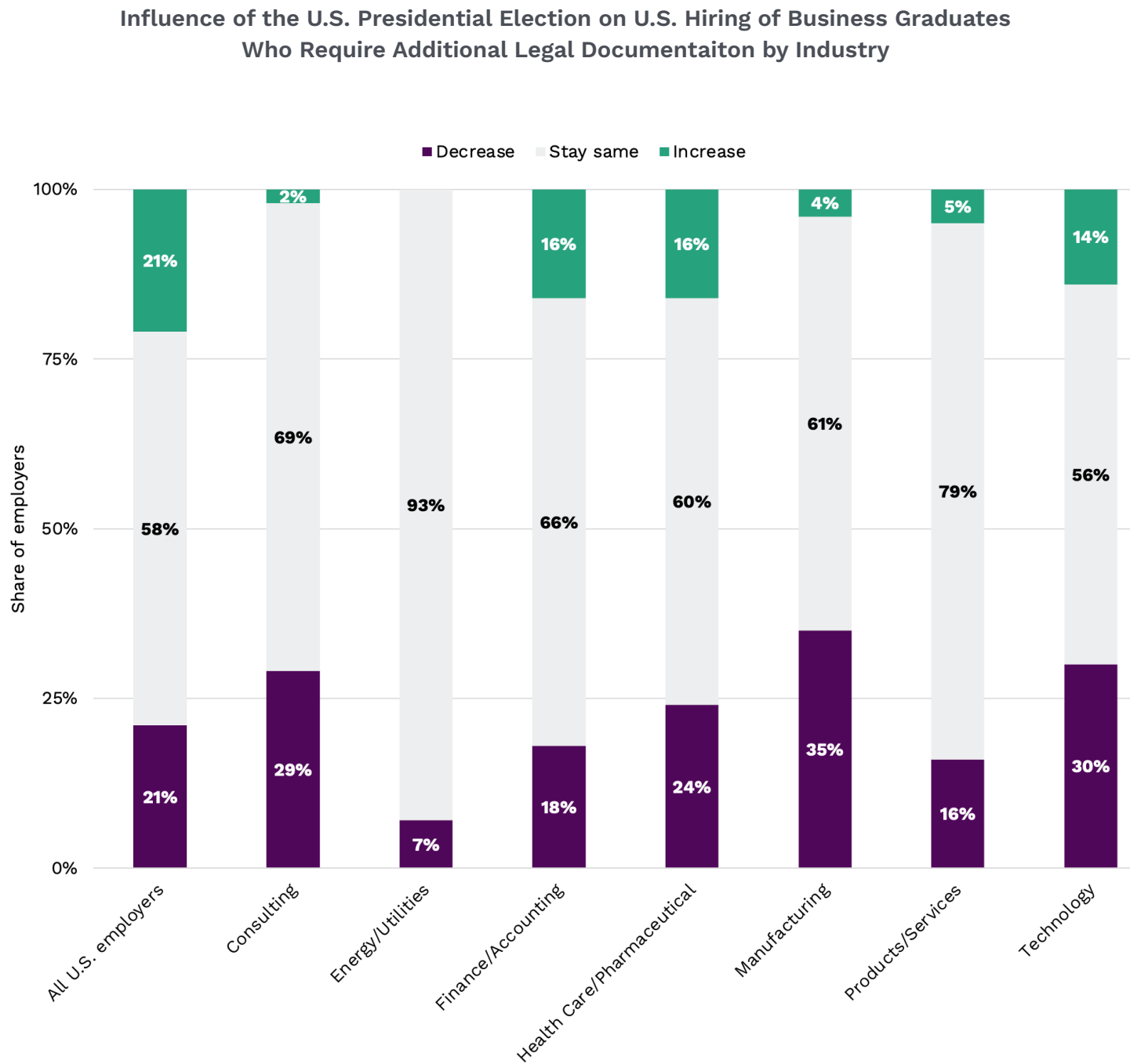
Employers in the United States were the least likely to hire international candidates in 2024 and least willing to hire in 2025 compared to employers in other regions.



Following the last U.S. presidential election in 2024, we asked U.S. employers how the change in who resides in the White House might affect their hiring decisions in 2025 (Figure 32). Most U.S. employers across industries say the election will have no effect. However, more than a quarter of manufacturing, technology, and consulting employers say that the election may decrease their hiring of international talent. While this survey was fielded from January to March of 2025—before Donald Trump rolled out his full tariff policy—uncertain trade relationships with Canada, Mexico, and China may have impacted how employers in these industries made hiring plans for international GME graduates.

Figure 32: Most U.S. employers across industries do not think Donald Trump’s presidency will influence their hiring of international talent.

U.S. manufacturing, tech, and consulting employers are the most likely to signal international hiring may decrease.



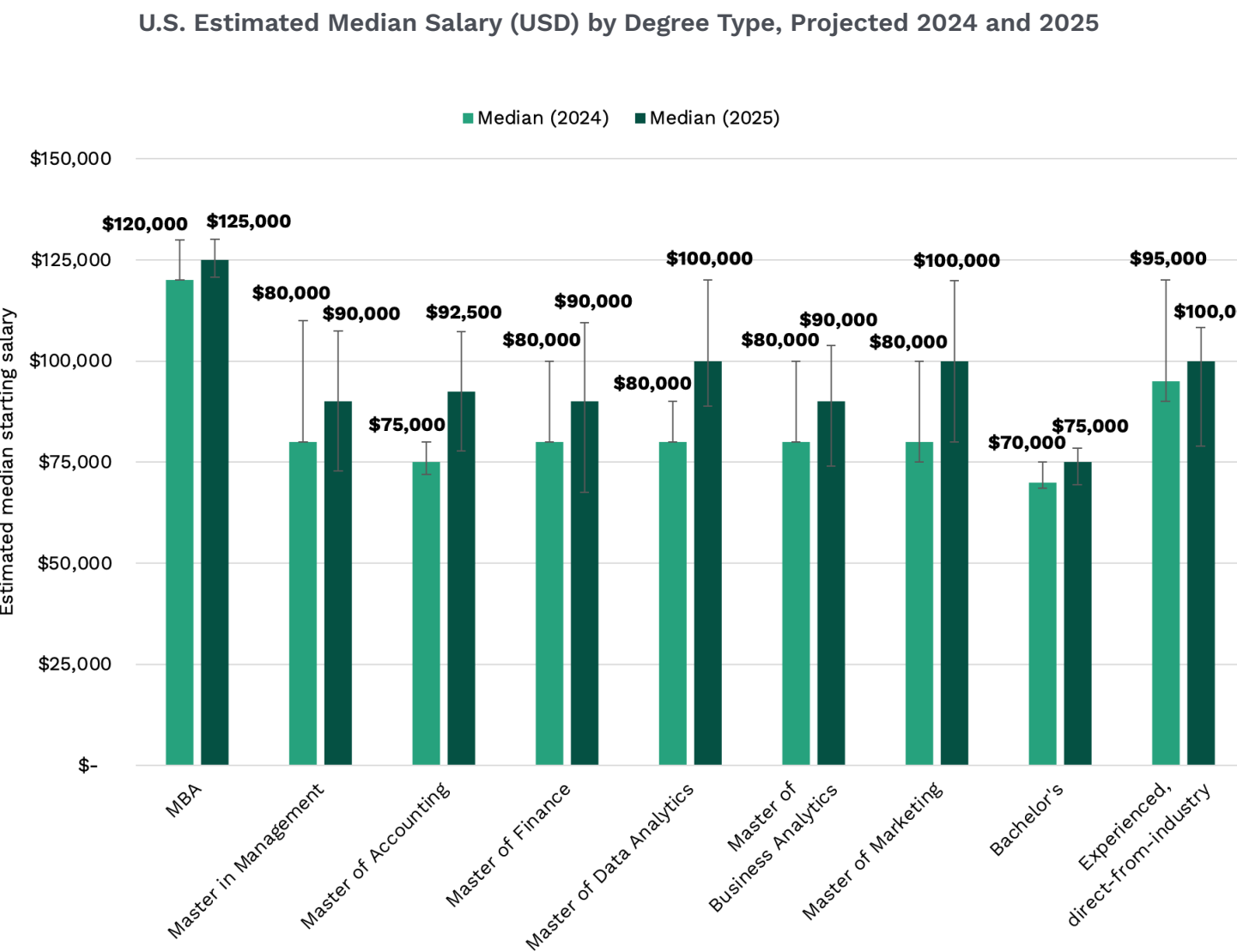
Note: Not all respondents selected an industry, but all U.S. respondents are included in the “All U.S. employers” category.

U.S. MBA and business master’s graduates are expected to receive nominal and real raises to their starting salaries in 2025.

Compared to salaries in 2024, U.S. employers estimate higher salaries across degree types in 2025 (Figure 33). The median U.S. MBA salary is projected to be the highest compared to other degrees—and \$25,000 more than prospective employees coming directly from other organizations, as well as \$5,000 more than last year’s estimated U.S. MBA starting salary. Employers are also predicting sizeable year-over-year bumps to the salaries of business master’s talent—particularly data analytics and marketing graduates.

Figure 33: Across degree types, GME graduates in the United States are expected to have higher post-grad salaries in 2025 compared to 2024.

MBA graduates in the United States are expected to make \$25,000 more than a candidate coming directly from another organization.



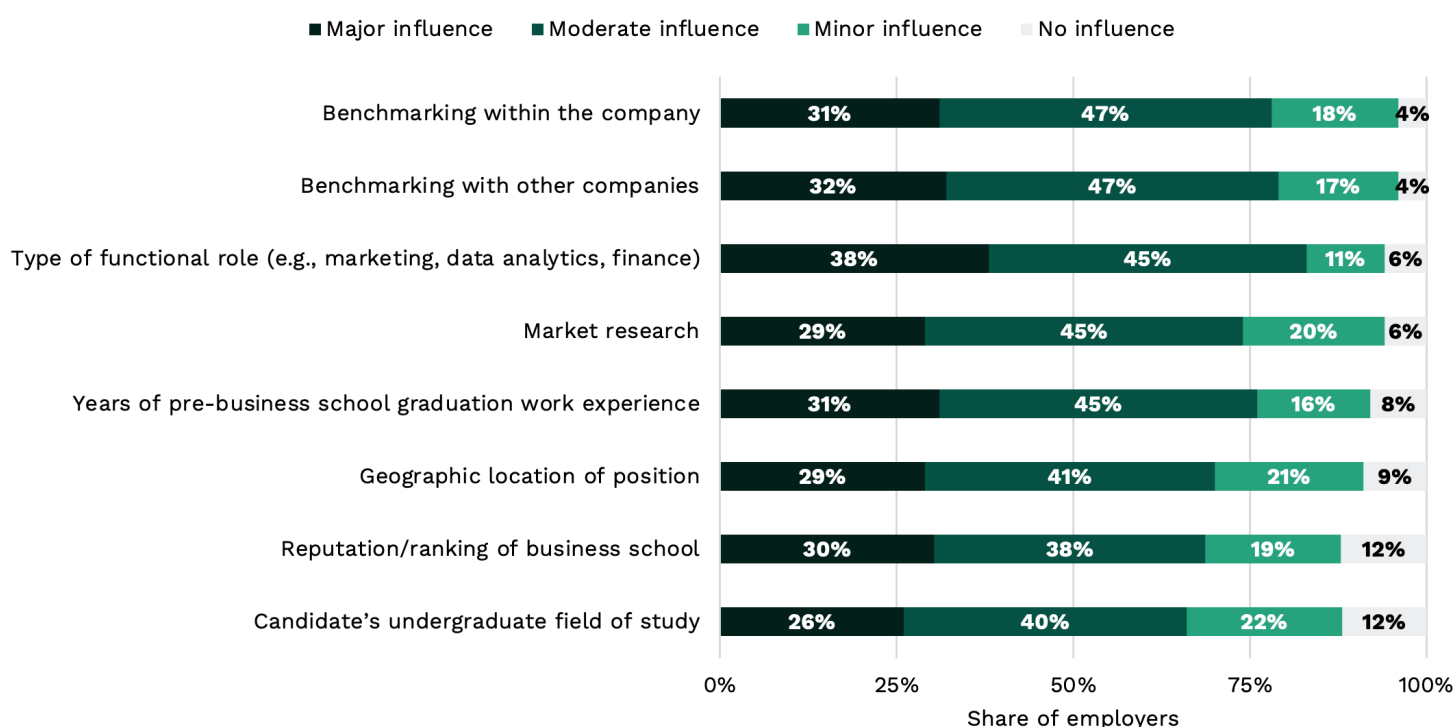
These nominal increases translate to higher salaries in real dollars, too. Leveraging the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index Inflation calculator, a \$120,000 salary in February 2024 equates to just over \$123,000 in February of 2025, meaning employers are predicting U.S. MBAs will receive a modest salary bump even after accounting for inflation.¹⁶ However, these year-over-year changes in projections are not statistically significant, meaning 2025 salary estimates may not have meaningfully changed since 2024. Additional salary information by geography is available in the regional profiles at the end of the report.

As with hiring, salary decisions are impacted by many factors. Figure 34 illuminates some of the micro-level decisions that global employers make when determining a starting offer. The role's function tends to be the most important factor, along with candidates' years of work experience and benchmarking within the company and with others in the industry.

Figure 34: Global employers report the function of a role is most influential in determining salary offers.

More than three-quarters of employers also report major or moderate influence of the years of work experience a prospective employee has and benchmarking within the organization and across the industry.

Factors Impacting Global Employers' Salary/Bonus Determinations in 2025



¹⁶ "CPI Inflation Calculator." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm.

Importantly, starting salary is just one indicator of the financial return on graduates' investment in a GME degree. Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce's "The College Payoff" study consistently shows that each level of higher education yields greater median lifetime earnings, especially in the field of business.¹⁷ GMAC's Prospective Student Survey and white paper about Gen Z prospective GME students also reveal that candidates' perceived "ROI" is calculated in more than just dollars—it also includes lifestyle and intangible factors like work-life balance, stability, social impact, and personal fulfillment.¹⁸

Employers also compensate employees with a variety of non-salary benefits (Figure 35). Professional development opportunities remain global employers' top additional way to compensate employees, with roughly half also offering educational assistance even as school loan assistance recedes. There is regional variation in these benefits. For example, corporate volunteering is most common in the United States and educational assistance is most common in the Middle East. Notably, professional development is the top non-salary benefit offered across geographies.



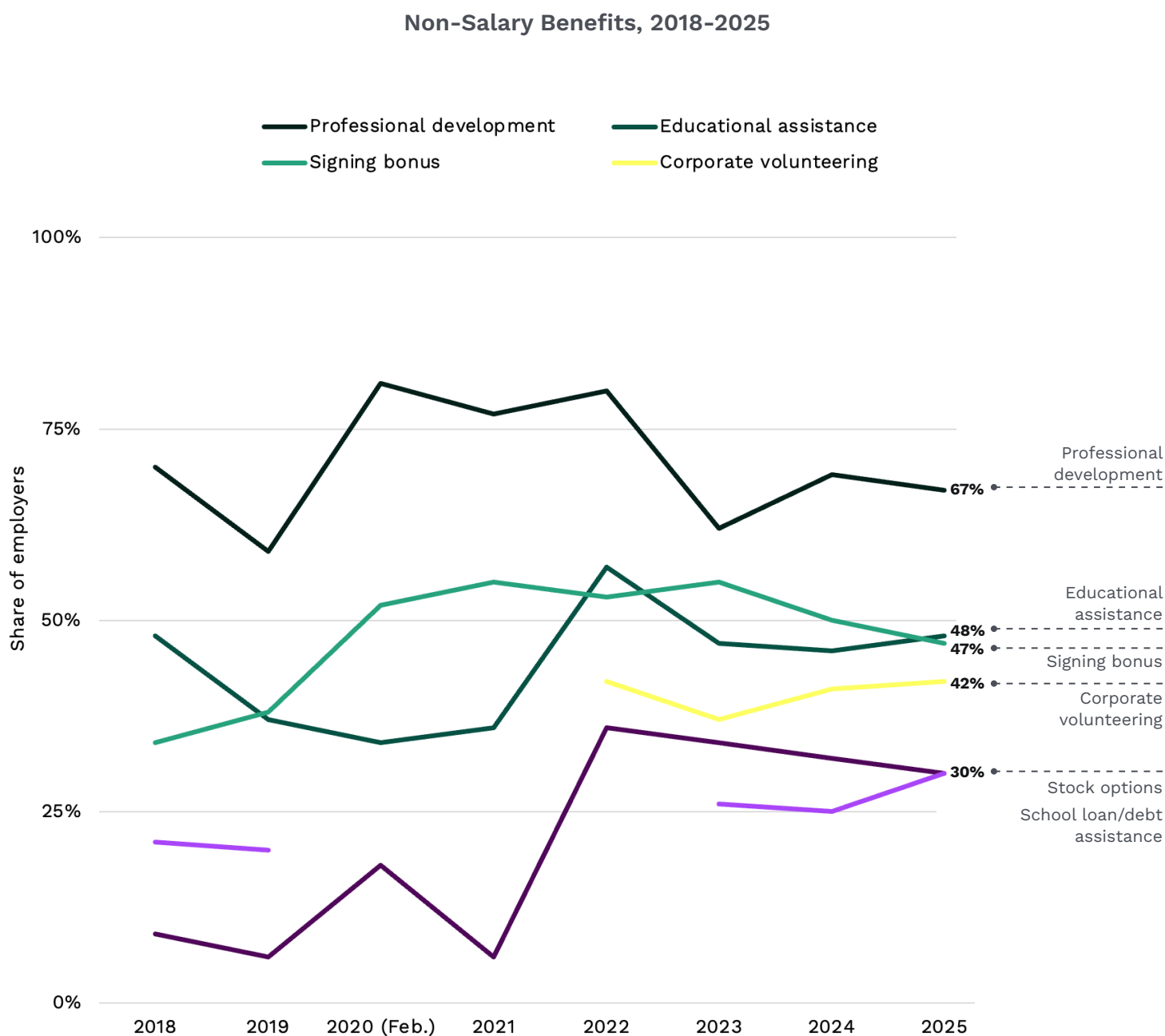
¹⁷ "Carnevale, Anthony P., Ban Cheah, Emma Wenzinger. "The College Payoff: More Education Doesn't Always Mean More Earnings." Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2021. <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/collegepayoff2021/>.

¹⁸ Walker. "Prospective Student Survey – 2025 Report."

Walker, Andrew. "Gen Z in the GME Pipeline." Graduate Management Admission Council, June 2023. <https://www.gmac.com/market-intelligence-and-research/research-library/measuring-program-roi/2023-gen-z-in-the-gme-pipeline>.

Figure 35: Professional development has consistently been the most common type of non-salary benefit offered by global employers over the past eight years.

Nearly half of employers offer signing bonuses and educational assistance.



Employer hiring and salary predictions for 2025 suggest steady or expanding demand for GME talent, particularly MBAs, signaling continued confidence in the value of graduate business education despite economic and geopolitical uncertainty. As business schools expand their portfolios, there are opportunities to continue to plug into how employers plan to upskill, reskill, and compensate their employees. Schools that position themselves as partners in long-term talent development to both candidates and employers will be best equipped to deliver value in a shifting global landscape.

Conclusion

The evolving employment landscape—shaped by new technologies, shifting skill demands, and expanding work and education modalities—presents both a challenge and a call to action for business schools. As organizations redefine how they work and whom they hire, schools must continue to evolve how they prepare talent and how they articulate the value of that preparation to the marketplace.

In a labor market that prizes adaptability, collaboration, and technological fluency, GME programs must also steadfastly deliver on core capabilities like problem-solving and strategic thinking. This balance of hallmark skills with technological savvy and a human-centric outlook further feeds the consistent goodwill of employers—and in turn, boosts salary and hiring outcomes for graduates—even in times of change.

Meanwhile, career services teams are uniquely positioned to act as translators—helping students understand and respond to changing employer expectations, and helping employers recognize the full value of GME talent across formats and borders. This multidirectional feedback loop helps GME programs explain their value and relevance to students and employers alike, while modeling a new future for businesses, business leaders, and business schools. The future of graduate management education will be defined by those institutions that embrace flexibility not just in how they teach, but in how they listen, engage, and evolve.

Regional profiles



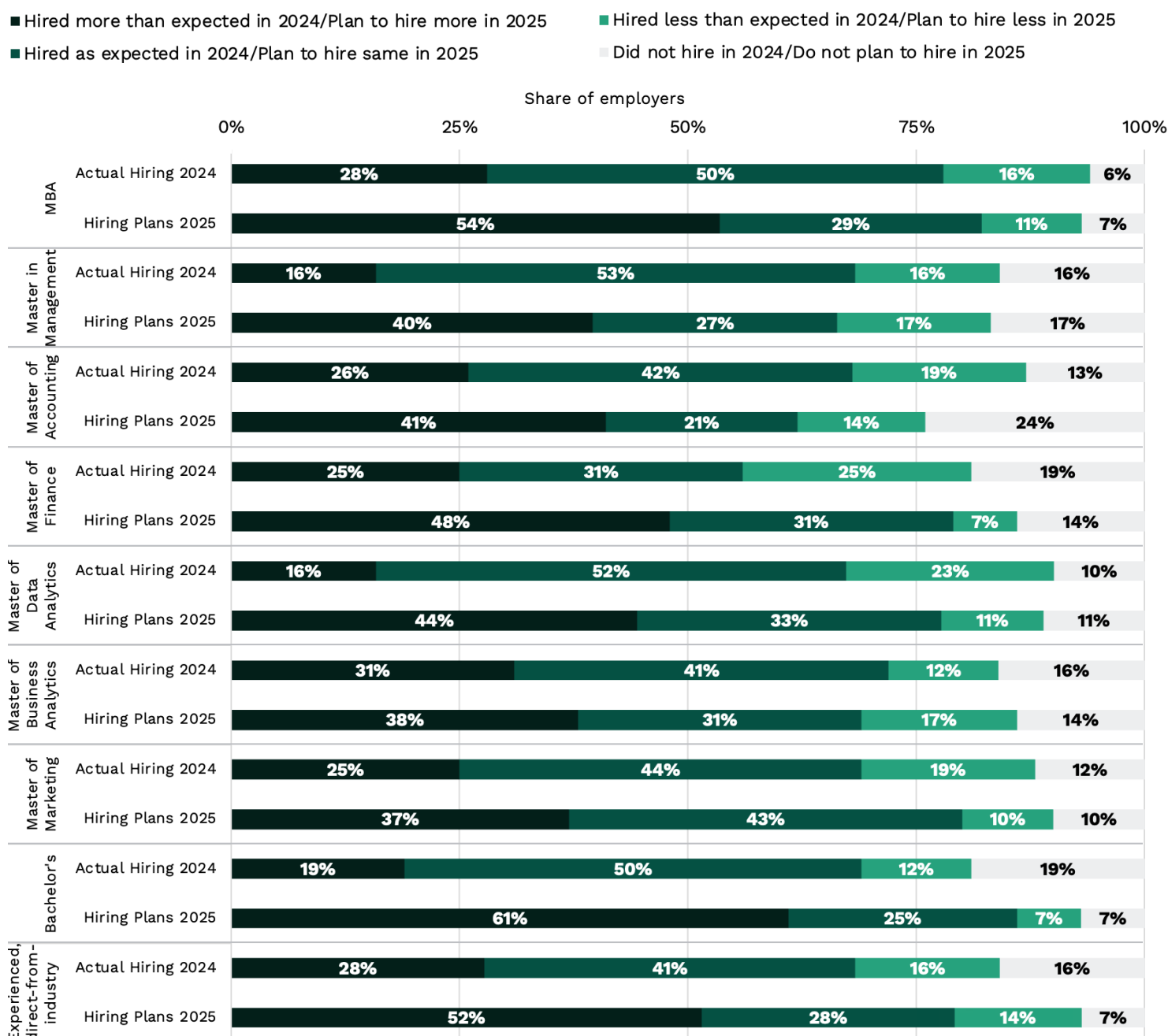
Africa

Sample size=34

African employers project expanded total hiring across degree types in 2025.

More than half of employers in the region plan to expand their hiring of MBA graduates in 2025.

African Employers' 2024 Hiring Outcomes and 2025 Hiring Projections by Degree Type



Major influences on hiring decisions

62%

1. Inflation

56%

2. Financial status of
your organization

47%

3. International and national conflict

Major influences on salary decisions

60%

1. Benchmarking within the company

60%

2. Type of functional role
(e.g., marketing, data analytics, finance)

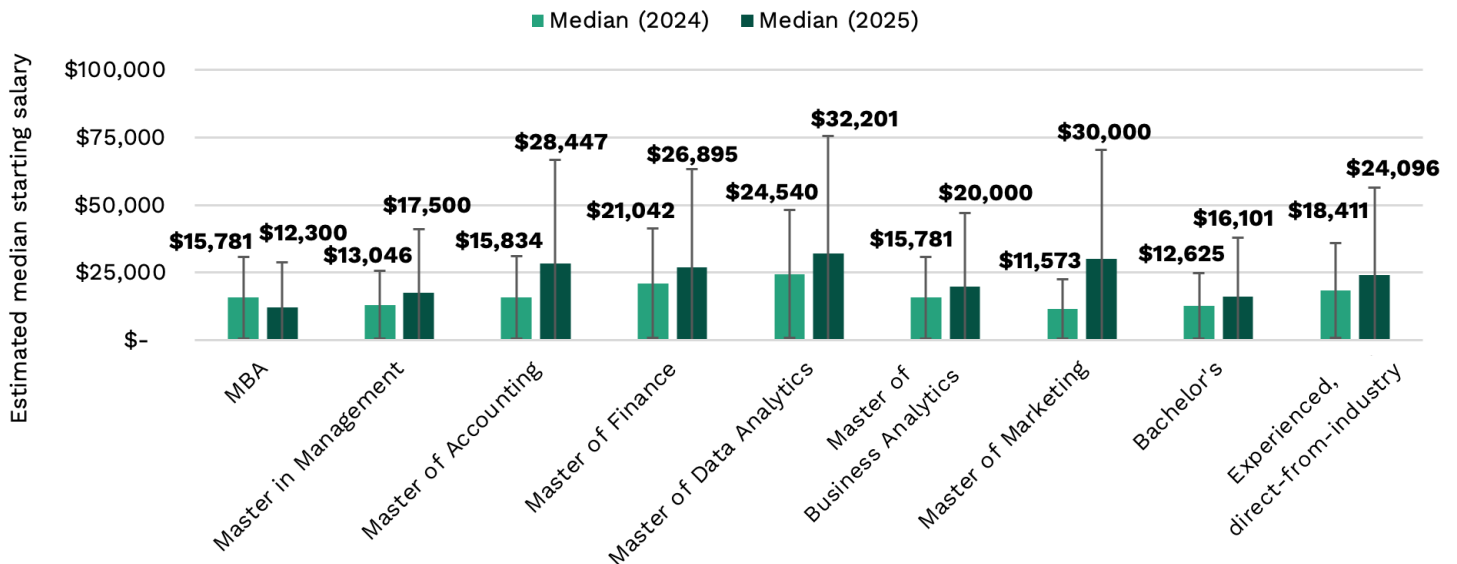
57%

3. Candidate's undergraduate field of study

African employers project expanded median salaries for graduates of business master's degrees in 2025.

The starting median starting salary of MBA graduates in Africa is expected to decline.

African Estimated Median Salary (USD) by Degree Type, Projected 2024 and 2025



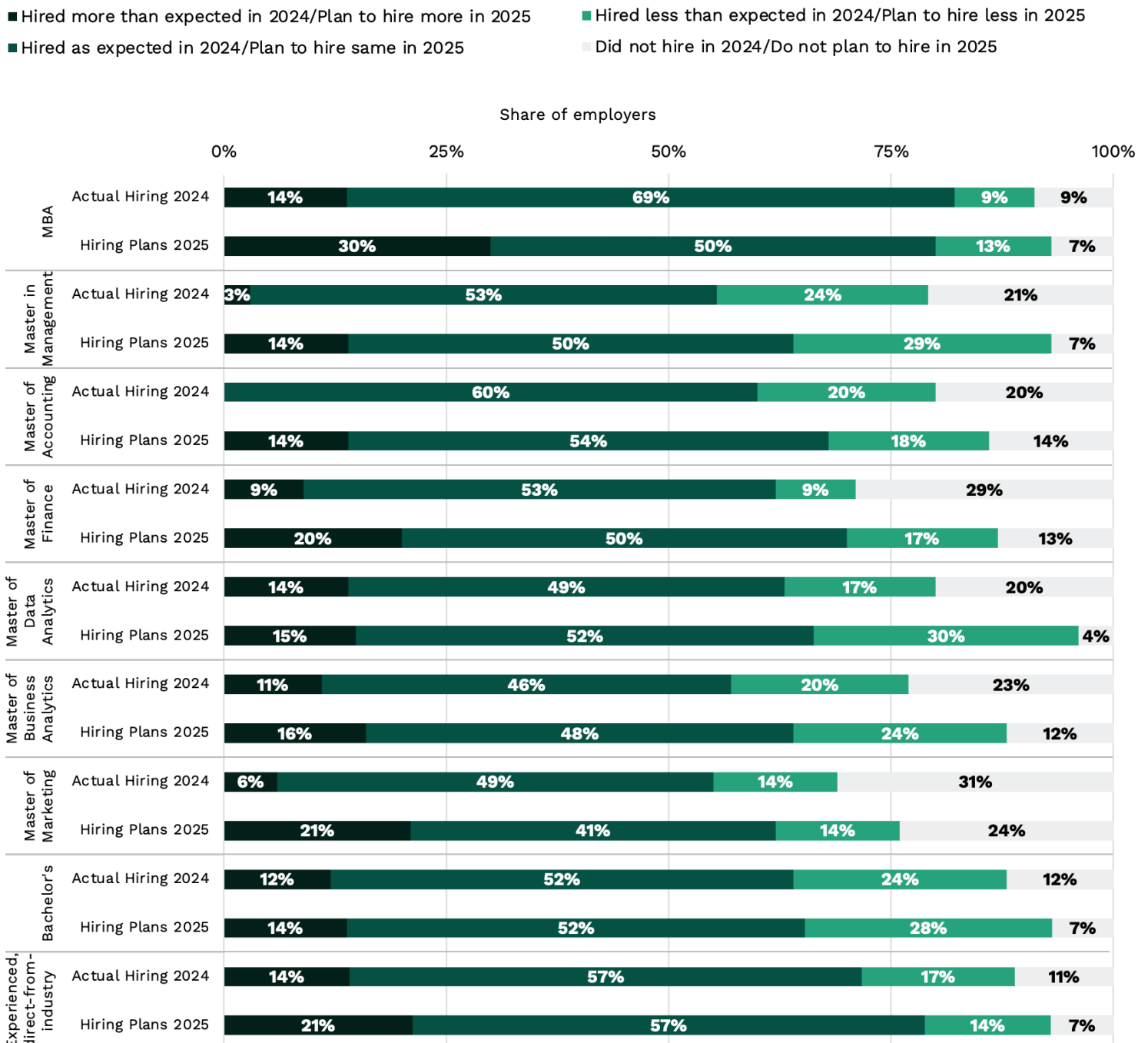
Notes:

- Actual and projected hiring may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
- The error bars represent the 95 percent confidence intervals for each estimated population median. When the error bars do not overlap between groups, this indicates a significant difference. Some error bars extend below zero due to the small sample size.
- Salaries were reported in employers' choice of currency and converted to U.S. dollars using exchange rate data from the time when the survey was fielded.
- The sample of African employers reporting hiring and salary data per degree type is less than 30, so conclusions should not be drawn about the population.

Canadian employers predict more total hiring of GME degrees in 2025.

Thirty percent of Canadian employers expect to expand their hiring of MBA graduates in 2025.

Canadian Employers' 2024 Hiring Outcomes and 2025 Hiring Projections by Degree Type



Major influences on hiring decisions

40%

1. Financial status of your organization

26%

2. Inflation

23%

3. Recession fears

Major influences on salary decisions

26%

1. Benchmarking with other companies

26%

2. Benchmarking within the company

26%

3. Years of pre-business school graduation work experience

Canadian employers are anticipating roughly similar salaries across degree types in 2025, with Master of Finance graduates expected to have a higher median starting salary.

All GME graduates are expected to have higher starting salaries than bachelor's graduates.

Canada Estimated Median Salary (USD) by Degree Type, Projected 2025



Notes:

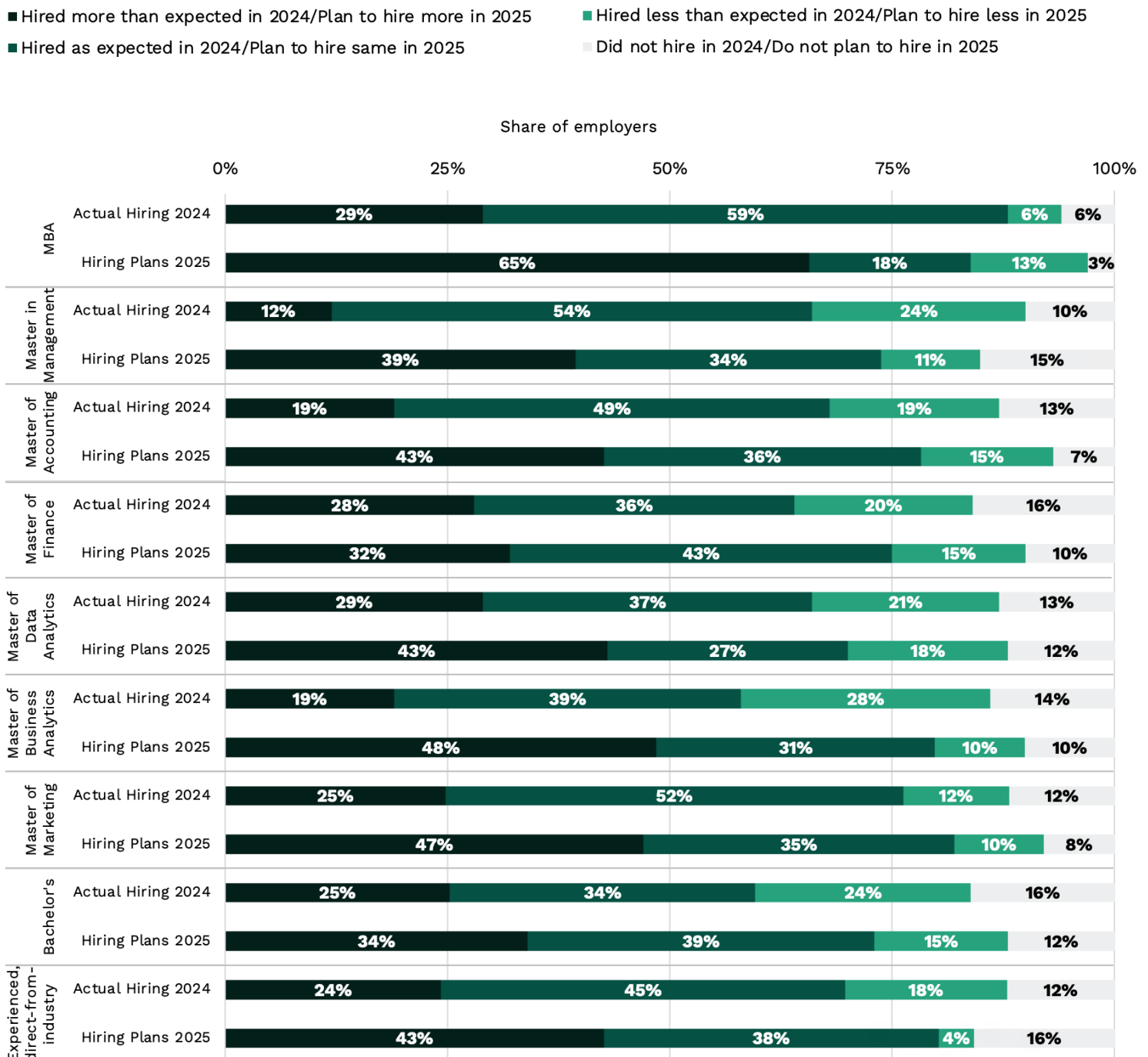
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- Salaries were reported in employers' choice of currency and converted to U.S. dollars using exchange rate data from the time when the survey was fielded.
- The sample of Canadian employers reporting salary and hiring data per degree type is less than 30, so conclusions should not be drawn about the population.
- 2024 salary estimates for Canada cannot be reported due to insufficient sample size.



More total employers in Central and South Asia plan to hire GME graduates across degree types in 2025 compared to 2024.

Nearly two-thirds of employers plan to expand their hiring of MBA graduates in 2025.

Central and South Asian Employers' 2024 Hiring Outcomes and 2025 Hiring Projects



Major influences on hiring decisions

56%

1. Financial status of your organization

46%

2. Country leaders

46%

3. International and national conflict

Major influences on salary decisions

56%

1. Type of functional role
(e.g., marketing, data analytics, finance)

52%

2. Market research

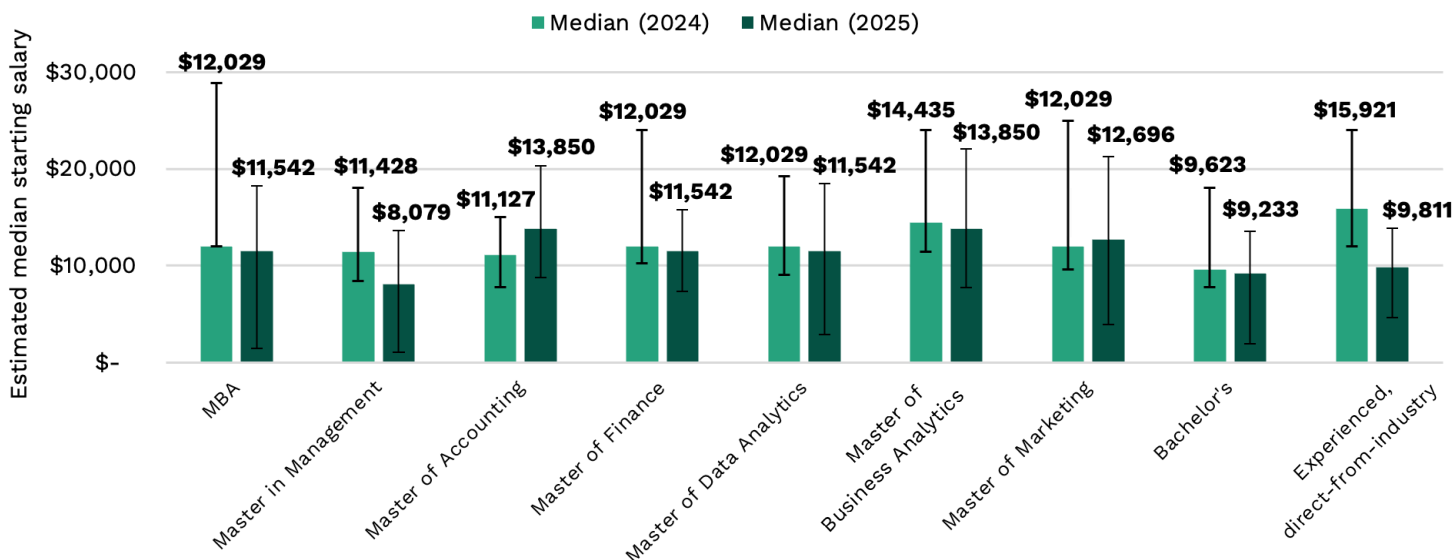
48%

3. Benchmarking within the company

Employers in the region anticipate higher median salaries for accounting and marketing graduates in 2025.

Nearly all GME degree types are expected to have larger starting salaries than bachelor's and direct-from-industry candidates in Central and South Asia.

Central and South Asia Estimated Median Salary (USD) by Degree Type, Projected 2024 and 2025



Notes:

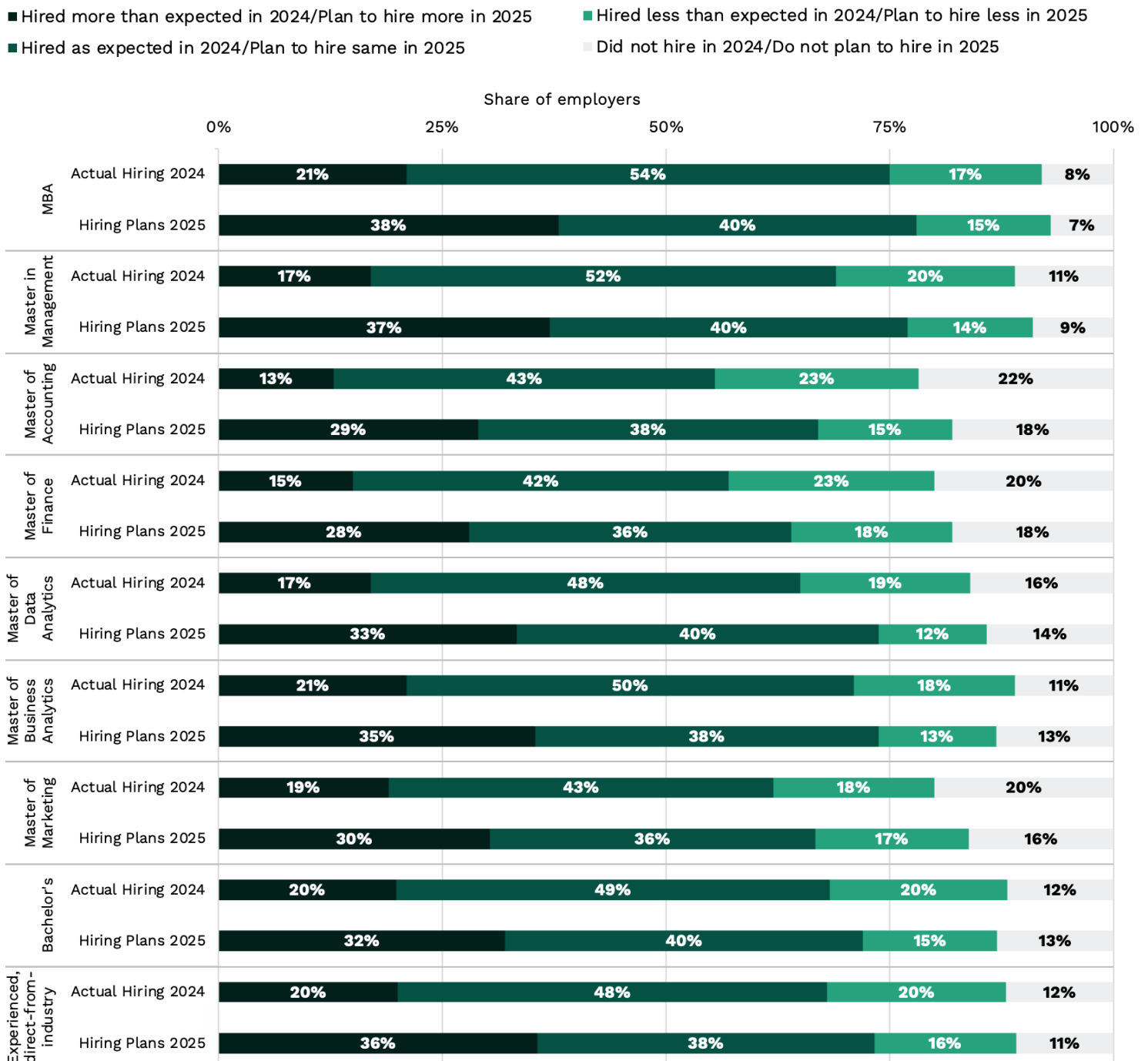
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- Salaries were reported in employers' choice of currency and converted to U.S. dollars using exchange rate data from the time when the survey was fielded.



More than one-third of East and Southeast Asian employers plan to expand hiring of MBA, management, data analytics, business analytics, and industry candidates in 2025.

Employers in the region most anticipate hiring MBA graduates in 2025.

East and Southeast Asian Employers' 2024 Hiring Outcomes and 2025 Hiring Projections by Degree Type



Major influences on hiring decisions

44%

1. Financial status of your organization

35%

2. Inflation

33%

3. International and national conflict

Major influences on salary decisions

39%

1. Type of functional role
(e.g., marketing, data analytics, finance)

39%

2. Reputation/ranking of business school

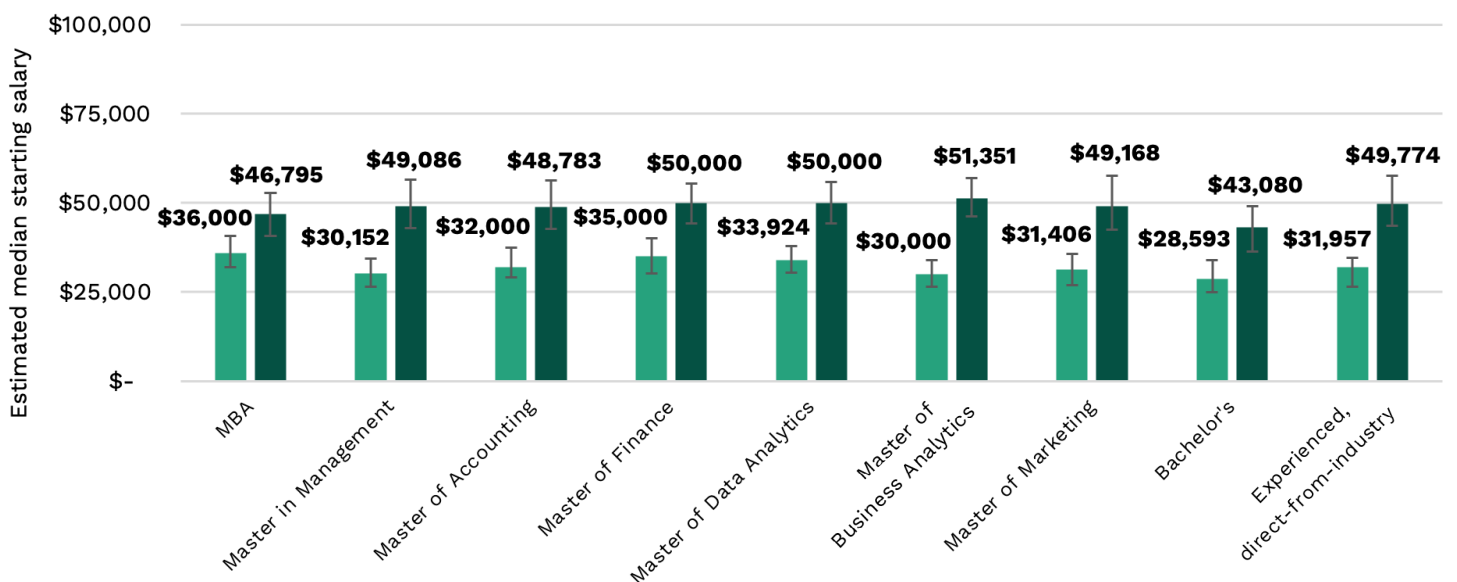
33%

3. Years of pre-business school graduation
work experience

Employers in East and Southeast Asia are anticipating higher starting salaries for all degree types in 2025.

Master of Business Analytics graduates have the highest projected median salary for 2025.

East and Southeast Asia Estimated Median Salary (USD) by Degree Type, Projected 2024 and 2025



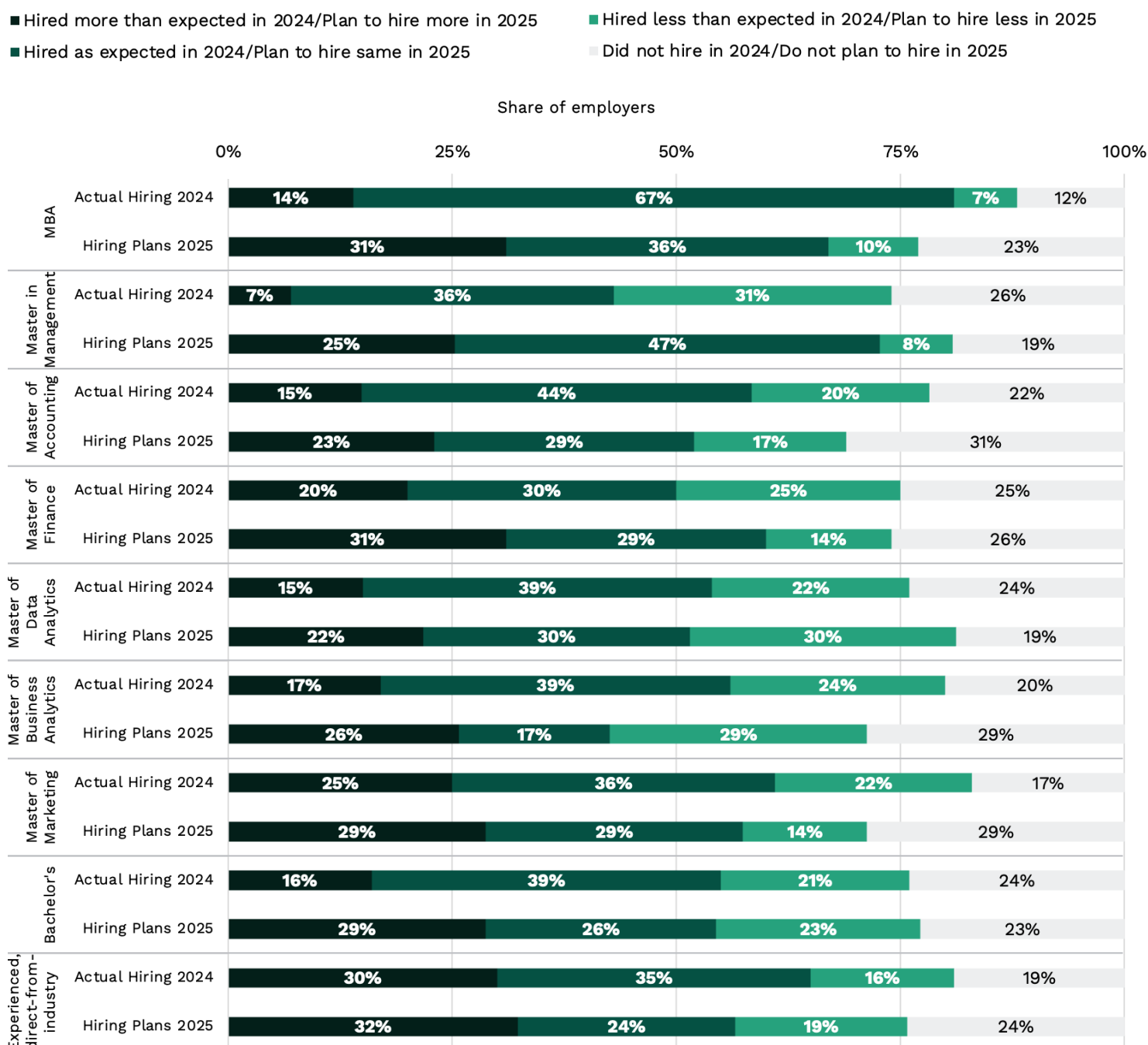
Notes:

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Nearly one-third of Eastern European employers plan to expand hiring of MBA and finance graduates in 2025.

More employers in Eastern Europe say they will not hire MBA, accounting, business analytics, and marketing graduates in 2025 compared to 2024.

Eastern European Employers' 2024 Hiring Outcomes and 2025 Hiring Projections by Degree Type



Major influences on hiring decisions

31%

1. Financial status of your organization

27%

2. Public health issues

22%

3. Recession fears

Major influences on salary decisions

35%

1. Benchmarking with other companies

35%

2. Reputation/ranking of business school

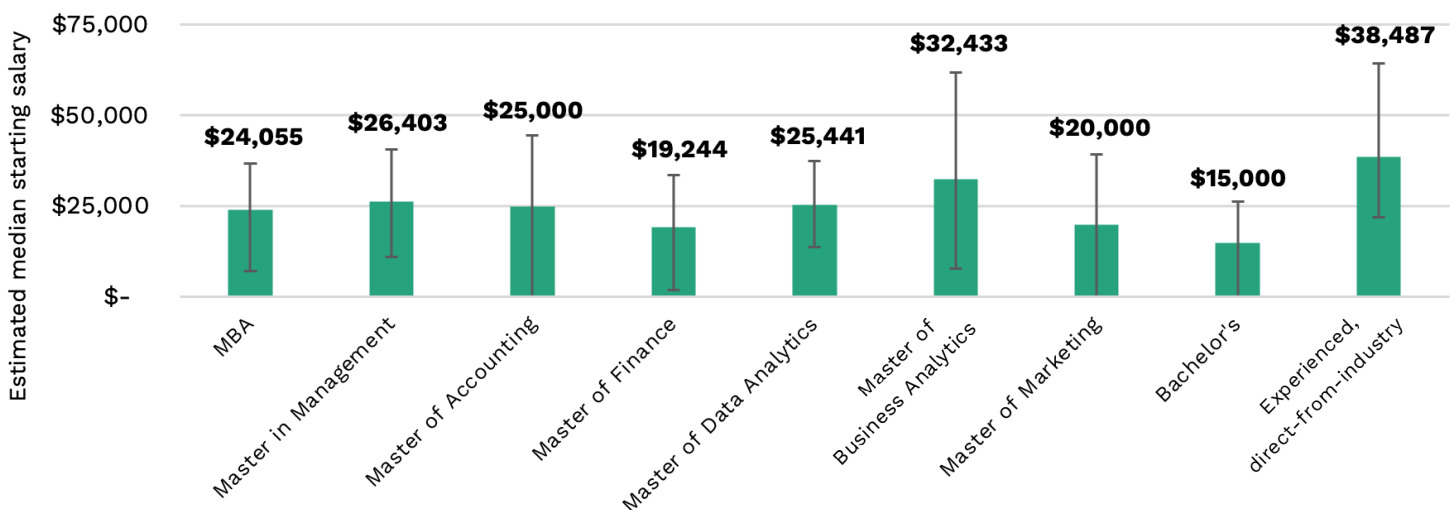
32%

3. Type of functional role
(e.g., marketing, data analytics, finance)

Eastern European employers project higher salaries for all GME graduates compared to bachelor's graduates.

Master of Business Analytics graduates have the highest estimated median salary compared to other GME degrees in the region.

Eastern Europe Estimated Median Salary (USD) by Degree Type, Projected 2025



Notes:

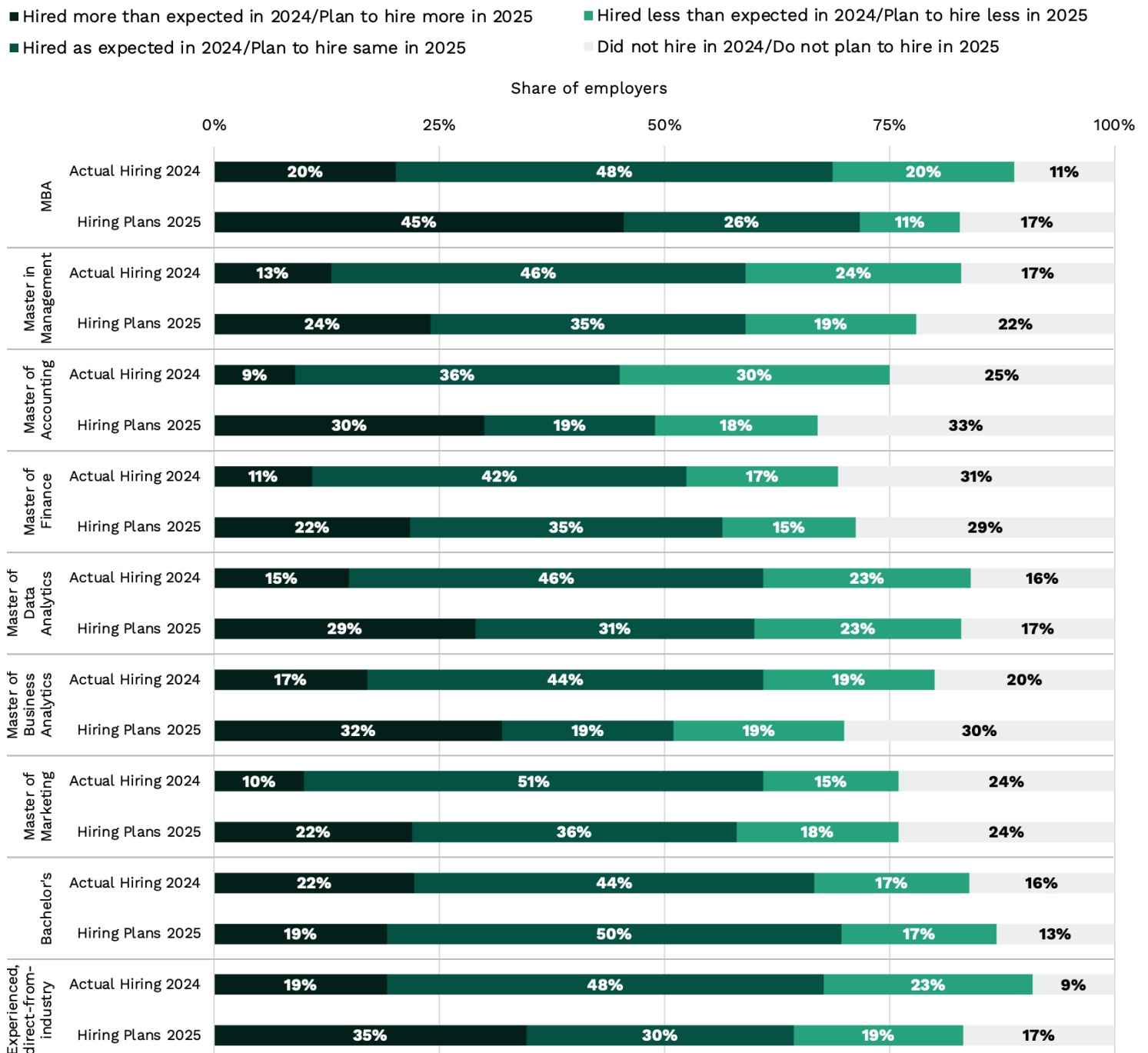
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- Salaries were reported in employers' choice of currency and converted to U.S. dollars using exchange rate data from the time when the survey was fielded.
- The sample of Eastern European employers reporting salary and hiring data per degree type is less than 30, so conclusions should not be drawn about the population.
- 2024 salary estimates for Eastern Europe cannot be reported due to insufficient sample size.



Nearly half of Latin American employers plan to expand their hiring of MBA graduates in 2025 compared to 2024.

With the exception of finance, marketing, and bachelor's graduates, fewer employers in Latin America anticipate hiring in 2025 compared to 2024

Latin American Employers' 2024 Hiring Outcomes and 2025 Hiring Projections by Degree Type



Major influences on hiring decisions

43%

1. Financial status of your organization

36%

2. Inflation

34%

3. Recession fears

Major influences on salary decisions

37%

1. Years of pre-business school graduation work experience

37%

2. Reputation/ranking of business school

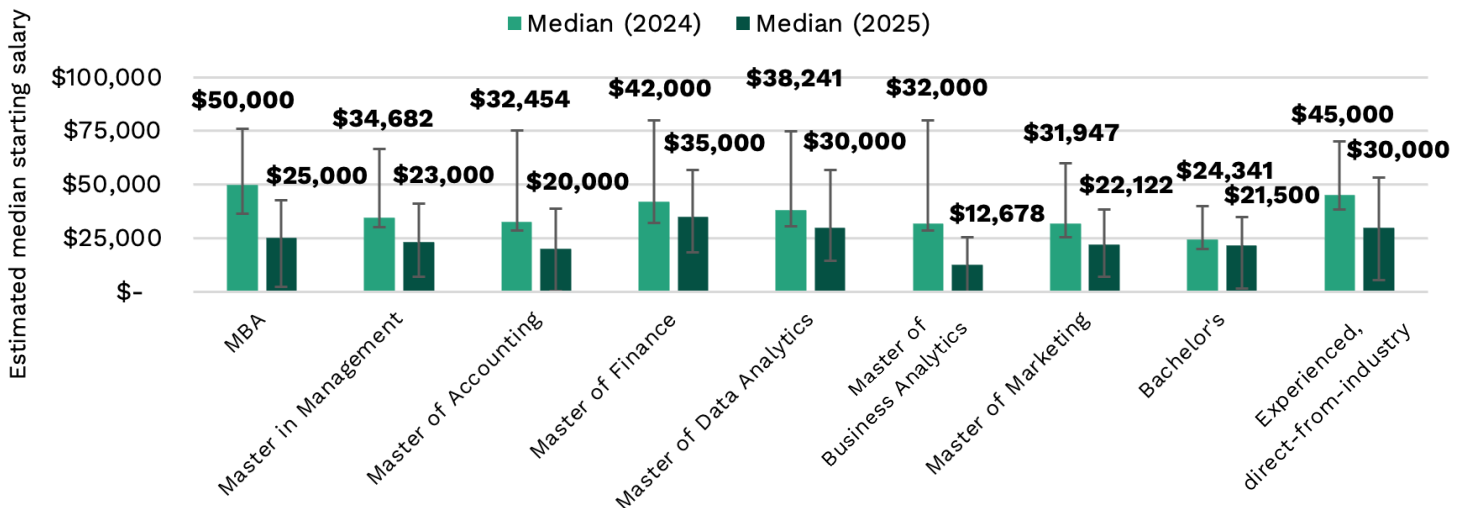
37%

3. Market research

Latin American employers predict Master of Data Analytics graduates will have the highest median starting salary in 2025 compared to other degree types.

Salary projections in the region are smaller across the board in 2025, though this is likely due at least in part to a different composition of the countries represented in the Latin America sample compared to last year.

Latin America Estimated Median Salary (USD) by Degree Type, Projected 2024 and 2025



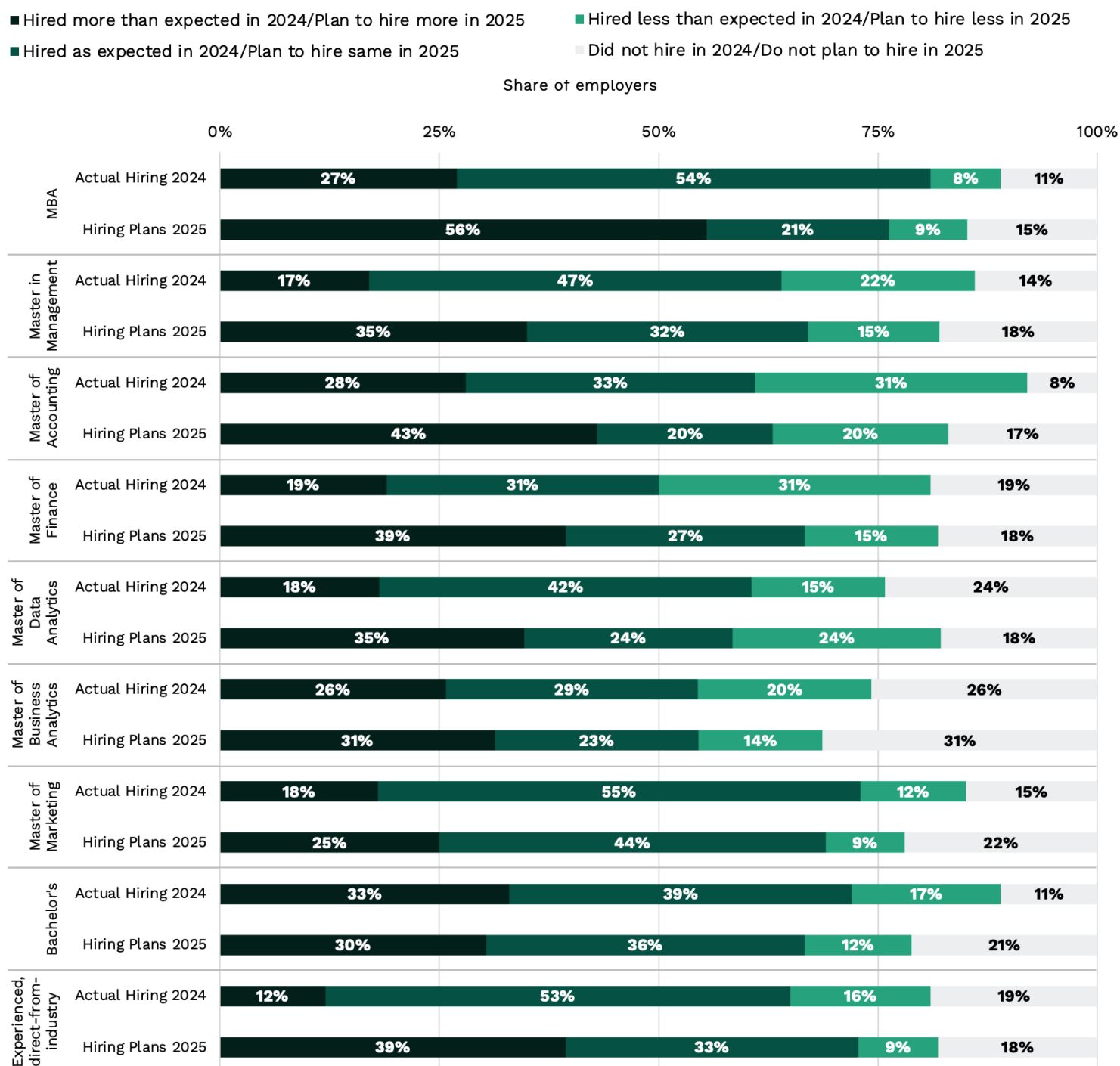
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- Salaries were reported in employers' choice of currency and converted to U.S. dollars using exchange rate data from the time when the survey was fielded.

More than half of employers in the Middle East expect to expand their hiring of MBA graduates in 2025 compared to 2024.

The number of Middle Eastern employers that do not plan to hire in 2025 increased for most degree types except for finance and data analytics graduates.

Middle Eastern Employers' 2024 Hiring Outcomes and 2025 Hiring Projections by Degree Type



Major influences on hiring decisions

54%

1. Financial status of your organization

39%

2. Country leaders

37%

3. Public health issues

Major influences on salary decisions

57%

1. Reputation/ranking of business school

49%

2. Years of pre-business school graduation work experience

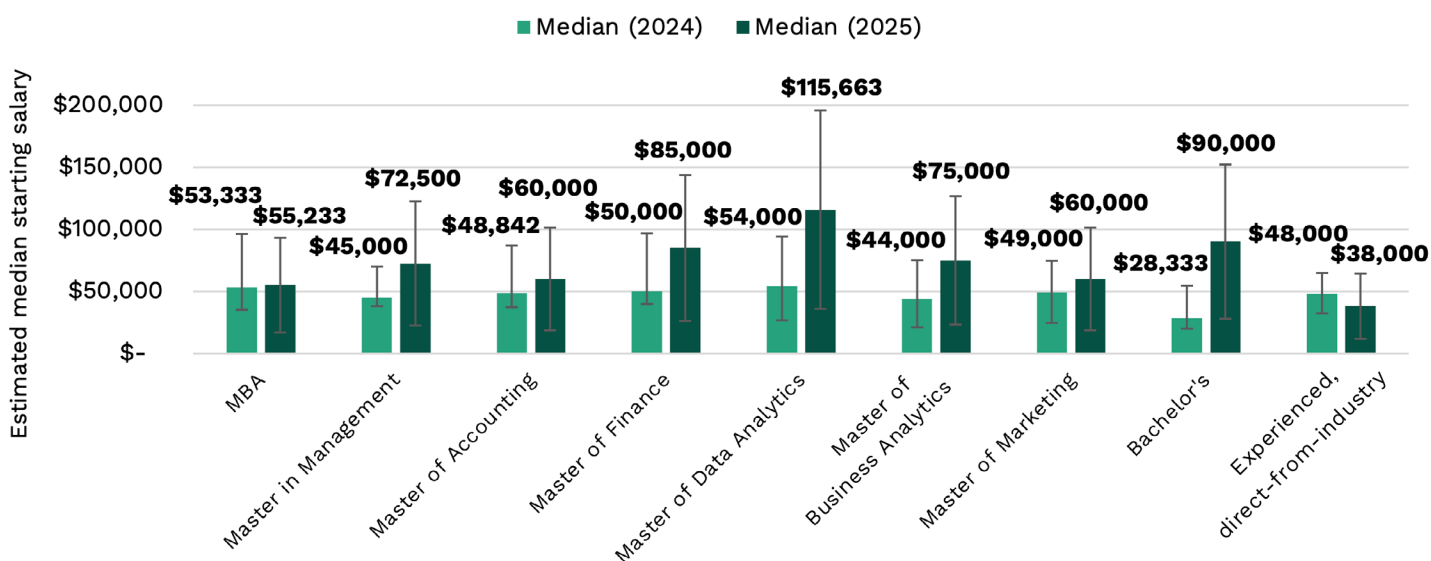
46%

3. Type of functional role (e.g., marketing, data analytics, finance)

Employers in the Middle East estimate Master of Data Analytics graduates will have the highest post-graduation starting salaries compared to other GME degrees.

Middle Eastern employers anticipate higher median starting salaries for each degree type in 2025 compared to 2024.

Middle East Estimated Median Salary (USD) by Degree Type, Projected 2024 and 2025



Notes:

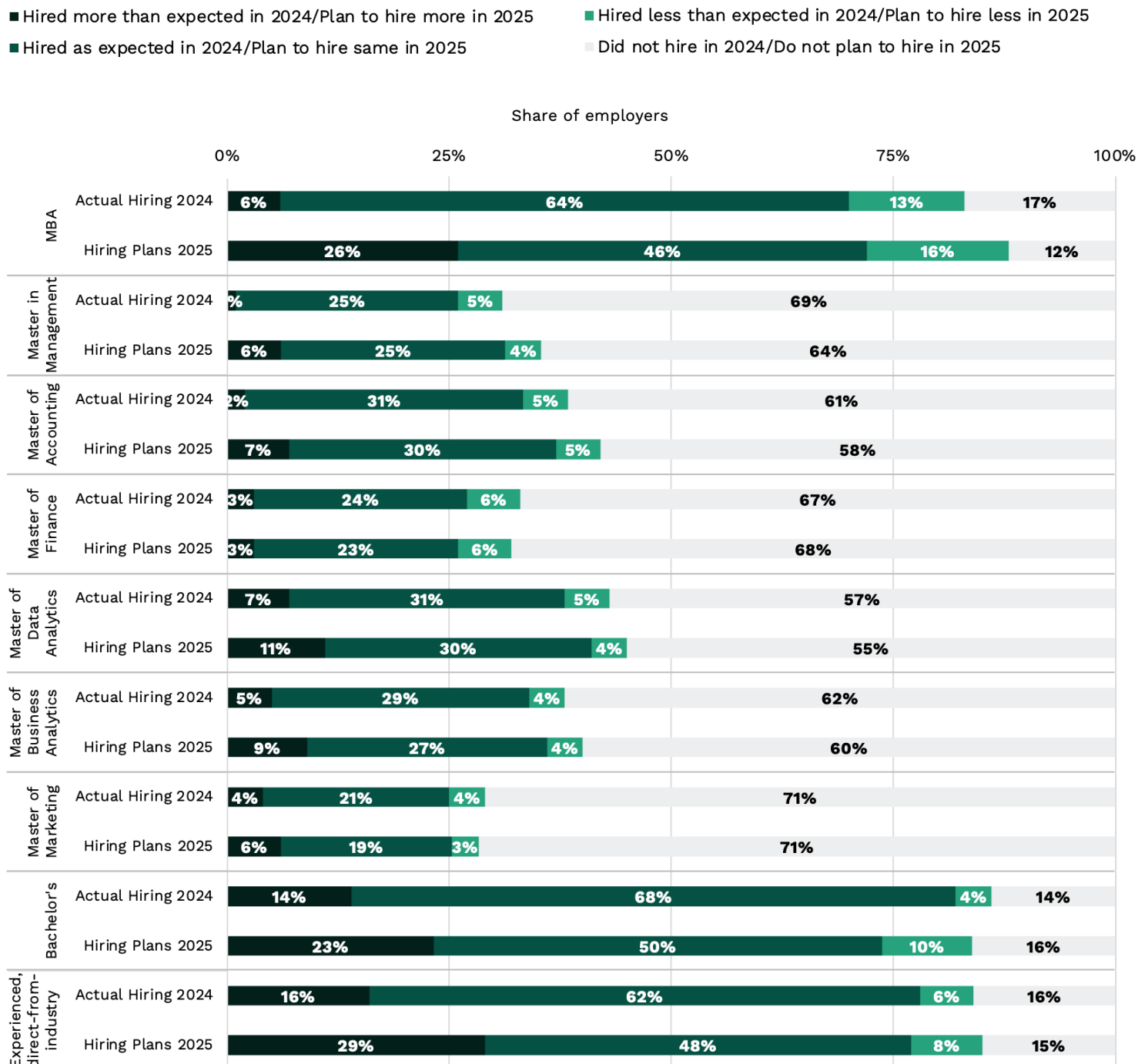
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- The error bars represent the 95 percent confidence intervals for each estimated population median. When the error bars do not overlap between groups, this indicates a significant difference. Some error bars extend below zero due to the small sample size.
- Salaries were reported in employers' choice of currency and converted to U.S. dollars using exchange rate data from the time when the survey was fielded.
- The sample of Middle East employers reporting salary and hiring data per degree type is less than 30, so conclusions should not be drawn about the population.



U.S. employers plan more total hiring across degree types in 2025, with the exception of the Master of Finance.

More than a quarter of U.S. employers plan to expand their hiring of MBA graduates in 2025.

U.S. Employers' 2024 Hiring Outcomes and 2025 Hiring Projections by Degree Type



Major influences on hiring decisions

54%

1. Financial status of your organization

13%

2. Recession fears

11%

3. Inflation

Major influences on salary decisions

36%

1. Type of functional role
(e.g., marketing, data analytics, finance)

31%

2. Benchmarking with other companies

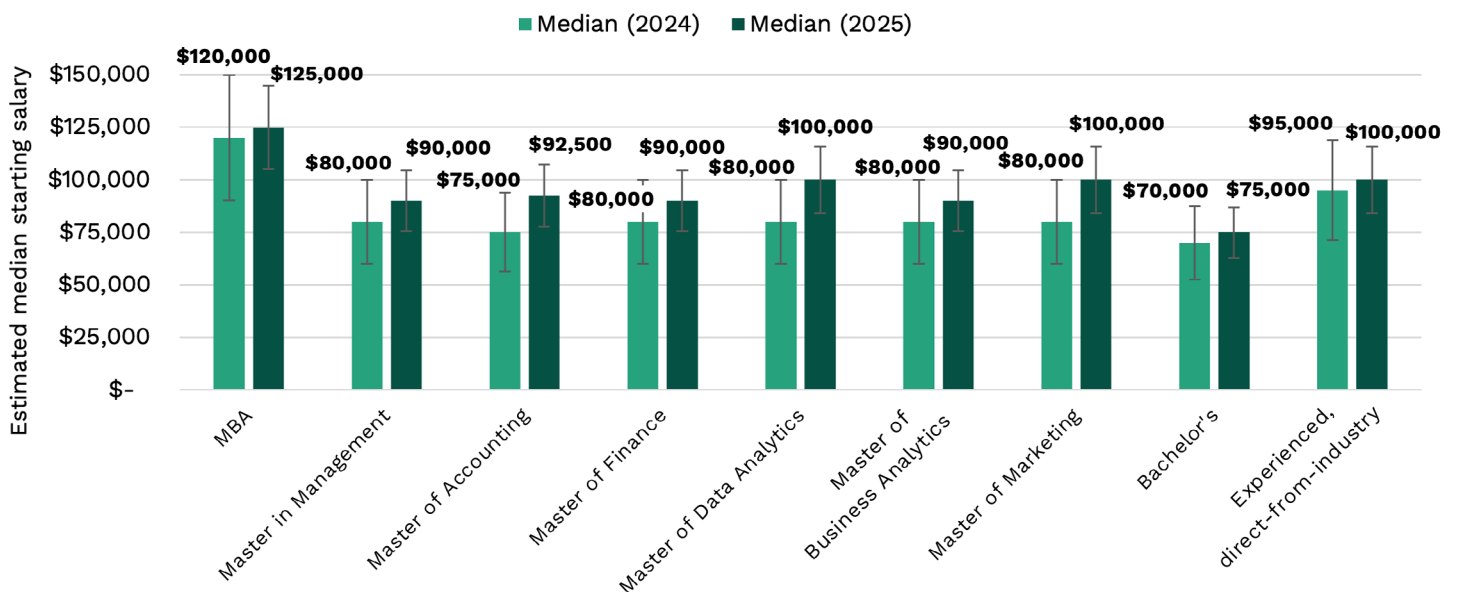
28%

3. Benchmarking within the company

Across degree types, GME graduates in the United States are expected to have higher post-grad salaries in 2025 compared to 2024.

MBA graduates in the United States are expected to make \$25,000 more than a candidate coming directly from another organization.

U.S. Estimated Median Salary (USD) by Degree Type, Projected 2024 and 2025



Notes:

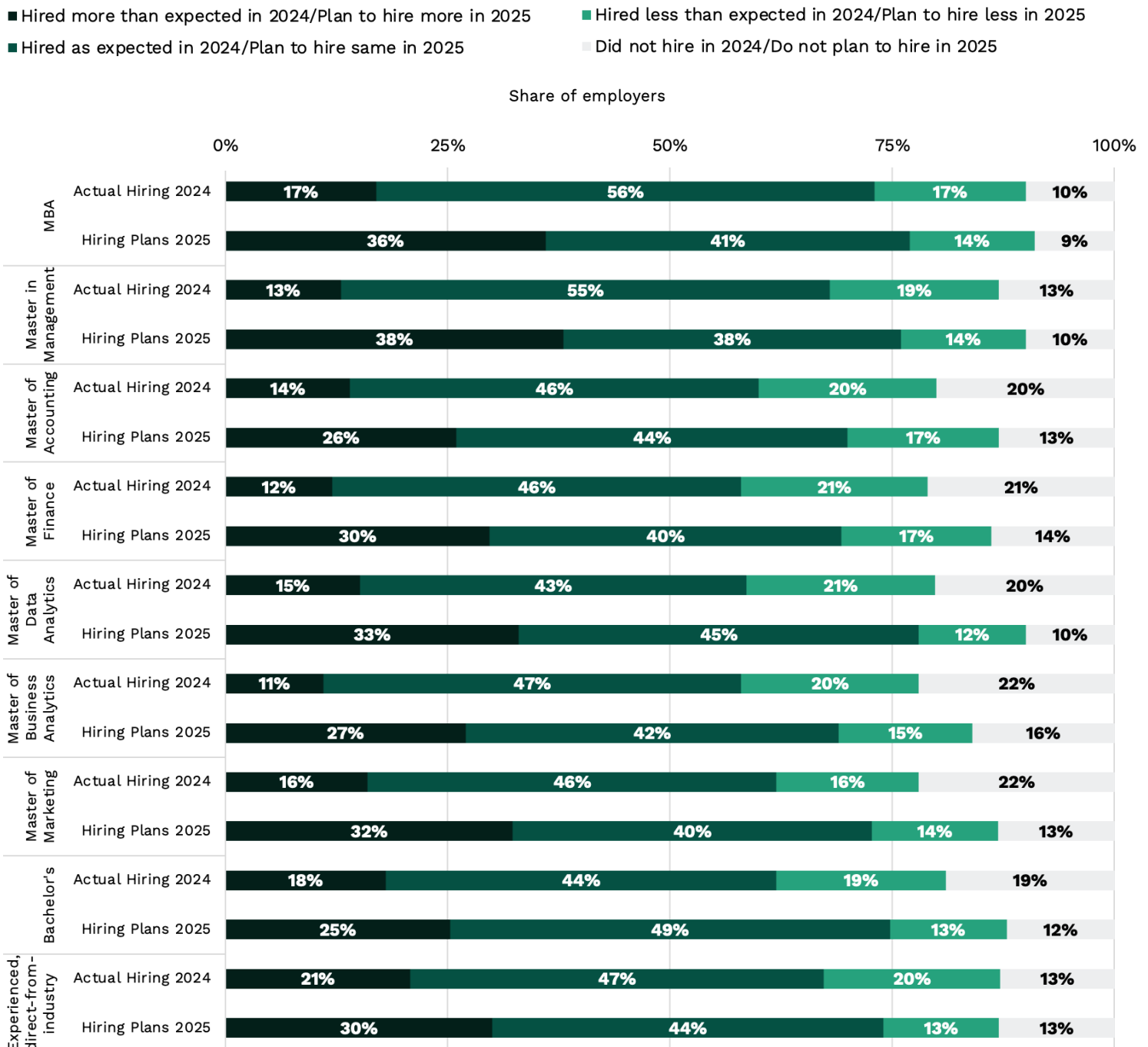
- Actual and projected hiring may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
- The error bars represent the 95 percent confidence intervals for each estimated population median. When the error bars do not overlap between groups, this indicates a significant difference.
- Salaries were reported in employers' choice of currency and converted to U.S. dollars using exchange rate data from the time when the survey was fielded.



More Western European employers anticipate hiring each degree type in 2025 compared to 2024.

One-third or more of employers in Western Europe plan to expand their hiring of MBA, management, and data analytics graduates.

Western European Employers' 2024 Hiring Outcomes and 2025 Hiring Projections by Degree Type



Major influences on hiring decisions

40%

1. Financial status of your organization

29%

3. Inflation

22%

3. International and national conflict

Major influences on salary decisions

32%

1. Years of pre-business school graduation work experience

30%

2. Benchmarking with other companies

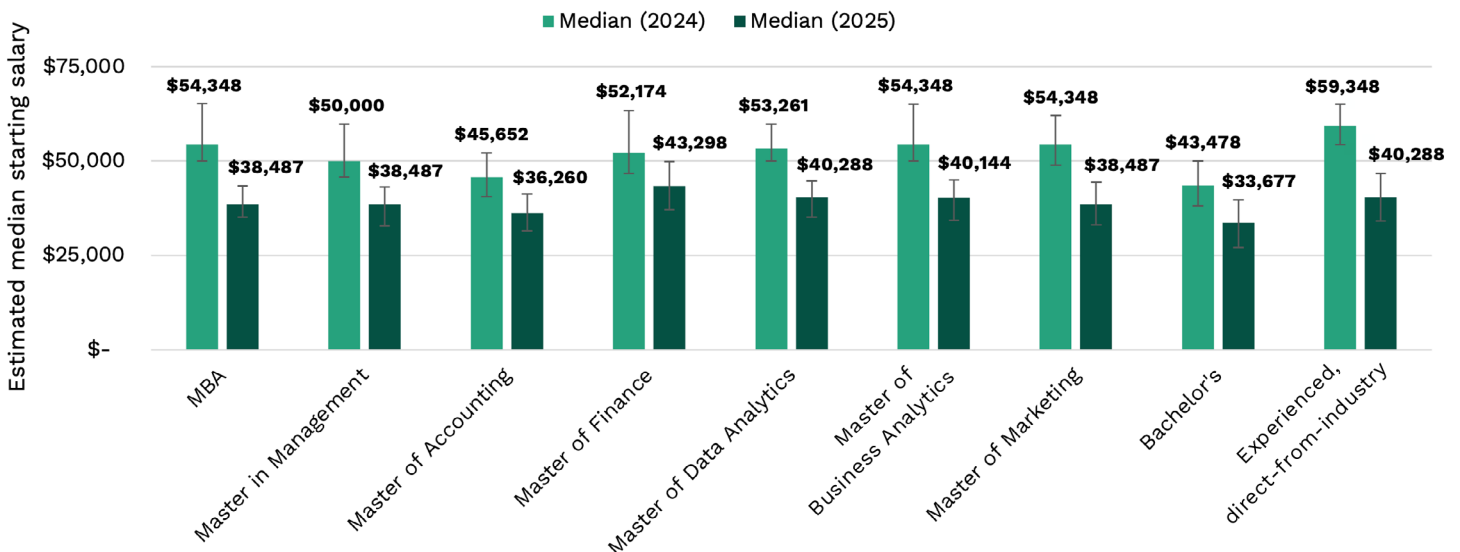
30%

3. Type of functional role (e.g., marketing, data analytics, finance)

Western European employers estimate higher median starting salaries for each GME degree type compared to bachelor's graduates.

Salary projections in the region are smaller across the board in 2025, though this is likely due at least in part to a different composition of the countries represented in the Western Europe sample compared to last year.

Western European Estimated Median Salary (USD) by Degree Type, Projected 2024 and 2025



Notes:

- Actual and projected hiring may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
- The error bars represent the 95 percent confidence intervals for each estimated population median. When the error bars do not overlap between groups, this indicates a significant difference.
- Salaries were reported in employers' choice of currency and converted to U.S. dollars using exchange rate data from the time when the survey was fielded.

Appendix: Defining ‘business school skills’

- **Adaptability:** capacity and willingness to adjust, evolve, or thrive in response to changing circumstances
- **Coachability:** the ability to learn new things, and be open to criticism and suggestions for improvement
- **Communication skills:** convey information effectively and efficiently through verbal, written, or non-verbal means
- **Cross-cultural competence:** ability to understand people from different cultures and engage with them effectively
- **Data analysis and interpretation:** ability to interpret and synthesize data to extract insights and meaning
- **Decision-making:** using effective processes to consider options and make smart decisions in the time required
- **Emotional intelligence:** the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and effectively use one’s own emotions and the emotions of others in various social and interpersonal situations
- **Entrepreneurship:** taking the initiative to create and manage a business venture, assuming the associated financial, managerial, and operational risks
- **Global business skills:** understanding international business contexts and being skilled at putting this knowledge to use
- **Grit:** a combination of passion, perseverance, resilience, and determination towards achieving long-term goals
- **Initiative:** the ability and willingness to act proactively and independently without being prompted or directed by others
- **Innovation:** ability to generate ideas or ways of doing things that are both new and useful
- **Interpersonal/teamwork skills:** ability to work with others to achieve a common goal
- **Leadership skills:** ability to guide, influence, and inspire others to achieve common goals
- **Lifelong learning:** the ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge, skills, and personal development throughout one’s entire life
- **Managing human capital:** oversee and optimize the contributions, capabilities, and well-being of an organization’s workforce
- **Networking/relationship-building:** building and maintaining professional relationships
- **Problem-solving:** ability to analyze, identify, and implement effective solutions to solve problems
- **Skills in using AI tools:** the ability to effectively leverage AI technologies and platforms to analyze data, make predictions, and automate processes
- **Strategic thinking:** ability to analyze complex situations, envision future possibilities, and formulate effective plans to achieve long-term goals
- **Technology/IT skills:** the ability to effectively use and navigate various tools, software, and devices to solve problems and achieve goals
- **Time management/project management:** plan, organize, and prioritize tasks to make the most efficient use of resources to achieve goals

Methodology

The findings in this report are based on results of the Corporate Recruiters Survey 2025, GMAC's annual survey of employers who recruit from and hire MBA and other business master's graduates of business schools around the world. GMAC conducted this survey in partnership with CSEA and EFMD between January and March 2025. GMAC also worked with a market research firm to recruit additional participants to make the overall sample more globally representative.

In total, 1,108 recruiters from 46 countries worldwide responded to this survey. Among them, 64 percent hire talent for Global Fortune 100 or 500 companies. Global results are weighted by the gross domestic product (GDP) of each world region to adjust for the regional employment opportunity potential. Regional results are not weighted.

Descriptive analyses were conducted on survey responses to examine respondents' confidence in business schools, international and domestic hiring results for 2024 and 2025 hiring plans for recent business school graduates, compensation packages, and skill demand. Estimates of population parameters were reported. To assess the magnitude of differences between groups or across survey questions or years, 95 percent confidence intervals were used. If two confidence intervals overlap, this indicates no meaningful difference in the interested parameters at the population level, even if there is a difference at the sample level. If two confidence intervals do not overlap, one can interpret this as a statistically significant difference. Group differences significant at the 95 percent confidence interval level are highlighted throughout this report. Differences that may not be statistically significant but suggest an interesting trend may be mentioned as well.

Respondent profile

	Africa	Australia and Pacific Islands	Canada	Central and South Asia	East and Southeast Asia	Eastern Europe	Latin America	Middle East	United States	Western Europe	Total
Fortune List Status											
Fortune 500	17	7	14	36	148	22	27	12	58	85	426
Fortune 100	10	2	2	17	54	7	12	16	49	33	202
Neither	10	11	17	14	83	12	25	7	130	96	400
Company Type											
For-profit, Private	22	17	23	49	172	23	36	26	141	148	657
For-profit, Public	5	4	7	13	97	10	18	10	84	50	298
Non-profit	3	1	5	4	18	4	5	3	22	13	78
Government	4	0	0	2	9	5	5	1	12	18	56
Other	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	3	7
Company Size											
Fewer than 50	2	2	2	1	5	4	1	2	23	18	60
50-99	3	6	0	1	5	0	5	4	12	12	48
100-499	0	4	7	5	20	2	6	2	25	25	96
500-999	0	2	5	7	20	4	4	3	12	16	73
1,000-4,999	2	1	6	7	27	2	4	7	42	34	132
5,000-9,999	1	1	1	4	26	0	4	0	24	11	72
10,000 or more	0	1	2	6	21	0	2	1	114	17	164
Industry											
Technology	1	2	4	9	29	4	6	4	22	25	106
Manufacturing	2	2	4	9	22	0	1	3	33	11	87
Health Care/ Pharmaceutical	2	0	0	0	8	1	0	0	19	9	39
Products/Services	0	3	5	2	12	2	4	4	24	22	78
Other	0	5	0	1	11	0	2	3	41	12	75
Consulting	0	3	2	0	8	0	3	0	36	12	64
Finance/ Accounting	0	1	4	5	16	2	4	1	38	19	90
Energy/Utilities	0	0	1	1	8	0	3	1	6	6	26
Total	34	22	35	70	297	45	67	41	261	236	1108

Contributors

The following individuals made significant contributions to the research and analysis reflected in this report:

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Andrew supports GMAC's commitment to presenting and disseminating actionable and relevant information about graduate management education through authoring reports, white papers, and briefs available on gmac.com and leading presentations, workshops, and panel discussions at industry conferences. Andrew earned a Master of Public Policy and BSFS in International Politics from Georgetown University.



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