

Taking the GMAT

The GMAT® exam represents the point at which prospects have formulated their short list of schools and are becoming less open to recruiting by schools they have not considered. Research conducted in 1995 on GMAT® test takers¹ shows that where test takers send their scores at the time they sit for the test is a powerful indicator of where they will enroll. Roughly 7 of 10 test takers in the research sample had their GMAT® scores sent to a school they later identified as their first-choice school. Furthermore, 81% of test takers who matriculated did so at a school that had received their first GMAT® scores. The connection between score reports and enrollment was strongest for applicants to part-time programs. Of those who enrolled in part-time programs, 88% enrolled in schools to which they had sent their first scores. Of those who enrolled in full-time programs, 74% did so at schools that received their original score reports.

Half the mba.com Registrants Survey audience took a traditional route to applying by first signing up on mba.com, then taking the GMAT®, then applying to business school. These prospects took an average of three months from the time they took the GMAT® exam to the time they applied to business school.

Results of the mba.com Registrants Survey show that schools should generally attempt to make contact with prospects prior to their taking the GMAT® exam, in order to increase the chances that the prospects will apply and enroll. School should use post-GMAT® contacts strategically to fulfill a goal of the given school or program, for instance to broaden their geographic reach or attract more local candidates who may otherwise attend a larger school farther away.

Schools who receive GMAT® score reports from prospects should follow up with information. Even if a prospect who sent scores to a school does not then apply, the school should keep the prospect on file as a potential applicant. Some prospects who send scores stay in the decision process without applying and thus may still be valuable contacts.

¹ Dugan, Mary Kay, William R. Grady, Betsy Payne, and Terry R. Johnson. 1995. Highlights of the GMAT Registrants Survey: Lessons Learned from a Decade of Research. *Selections* (spring 1995).

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