

## Application Trends: Full-Time MBA Programs in Canada

### Introduction

This paper, derived from the Graduate Management Admission Council® 2008 Application Trends Survey Report series, focuses on the responses from full-time MBA programs in Canada. Data presented in this publication are a summary of the responses from 12 participating Canadian full-time MBA programs—a small fraction of the 197-program overall sample. Caution should be exercised when making year-to-year comparisons, as the number and composition of responding programs differ compared with 2007.

### Key Findings

- Overall, the majority of Canadian programs (73%) increased their application volume when compared with last year. This proportion includes those that reported a slight increase in their number of applications (46%).
- The vast majority of programs (84%) indicated that candidates were better academically qualified this year than those who applied last year were.
- Although foreign citizens were the most targeted group in Canadian program's outreach efforts, four in 10 participating programs reported a decline in the number of foreign applications.

### Program Profile

Most of the participating Canadian full-time MBA programs were relatively small, with fewer than 101 students (75%), and most were part of government-funded business schools or universities (75%) (Table 1). The majority of surveyed programs (75%) begin classes once a year. Participants were evenly split between traditional programs, which typically run two years (50%), and accelerated programs, which typically run one year (50%). Based on the average media rankings, a quarter of Canadian full-time MBA programs that provided data for the survey (25%) ranked in the top 50 and classified as first-tier programs; a third (33%) were among the next 50 and classified as second-tier programs. The reader should note that number and characteristics of responding programs from Canada changed in comparison with 2007 data, which implies that the observed year-to-year differences may be attributed to a different composition of the respondent pool rather than market trends. For example, the slightly greater proportion of traditional MBA programs and first-tier programs in the 2007 sample compared with the 2008 sample may have contributed to the larger average number of applications per program observed in 2007.

	2007 (n = 14)	2008 (n = 12)
<b>Length<sup>a</sup></b>		
Traditional	57%	50%
Accelerated	43%	50%
Total	100%	100%
<b>Tier<sup>b</sup></b>		
First	36%	25%
Second	14%	33%
Third	50%	42%
Total	100%	100%
<b>Class size</b>		
100 students or fewer	64%	75%
More than 100 students	36%	25%
Total	100%	100%
<b>Governance status</b>		
Receives funds from the government	93%	75%
Operates based on private financing	7%	25%
Total	100%	100%
<b>Enrollment type</b>		
Class begins once a year	85%	75%
Class begins several times a year, including rolling admissions	15%	25%
Total	100%	100%
<p><sup>a</sup>. For the purposes of this report, programs with a duration of 18 months or less are classified as accelerated, those of 19 months or more are classified as traditional programs.</p> <p><sup>b</sup>. Full-time MBA programs were classified by their tier based on the average media rankings across those published by <i>Business Week</i>, <i>Financial Times</i>, and <i>U.S. News and World Report</i>: First-tier programs are those in the top 50 (1 through 50), second-tier programs include the next 50 programs (51 through 100), and third-tier programs include those ranked 101 and lower as well as unranked programs.</p>		

## Applicants

Canadian citizens, or domestic candidates, made up more than half of full-time MBA program applicants (58%) (Table 2). Data reported by nine programs suggest that women made up 34% of the applicant pool—a slightly greater share than that of women in the United States or in Europe.

	2007 (n = 13)	2008 (n = 10)
Domestic	51%	58%
Foreign <sup>a</sup>	49%	42%
Total	100%	100%

<sup>a</sup> The term "foreign" is defined by applicant citizenship and is used to refer to any applicant whose citizenship differs from that of the country where they apply. For example, U.S. citizens would be considered foreign by a program in Canada, and Canadian citizens would be considered foreign by a U.S. program. Foreign applicants include permanent residents of a given country if they do not have the country's citizenship.

All 12 participating programs reported that applicants this year were either more academically qualified compared with last year (84%) or as academically qualified as those who applied last year (17%) (Table 3).

	2007 (n = 13)	2008 (n = 12)
Significantly more academically qualified	—	—
Moderately more academically qualified	8%	17%
Slightly more academically qualified	38%	67%
About the same quality as last year	54%	17%
Slightly less academically qualified	—	—
Moderately less academically qualified	—	—
Significantly less academically qualified	—	—
Total	100%	100%
More qualified	46%	84%
About the same	54%	17%
Less qualified	—	—
Total	100%	100%

## Overall Application Trends

On average, surveyed full-time MBA programs in Canada received 295 applications per program (Table 4). Traditional two-year MBA programs typically reported receiving more applications than accelerated programs; however the magnitude of difference in the number of applications between the two program types was smaller than that reported in other world regions.

**Table 4. Number of Applications Received by Canadian Full-Time MBA Programs**

	2007	2008
All applicants	<i>n</i> = 14	<i>n</i> = 12
Mean	325	295
Median	222	225
Domestic applicants	<i>n</i> = 13	<i>n</i> = 10
Mean	164	180
Median	110	109
Foreign <sup>a</sup> applicants	<i>n</i> = 13	<i>n</i> = 10
Mean	156	131
Median	63	97

<sup>a</sup> The term “foreign” is defined by applicant citizenship and is used to refer to any applicant whose citizenship differs from that of the country where they apply. For example, U.S. citizens would be considered foreign by a program in Canada, and Canadian citizens would be considered foreign by a U.S. program. Foreign applicants include permanent residents of a given country if they do not have the country’s citizenship.

Similar to programs in other world regions, the majority of Canadian programs (73%) experienced an increase in application volume when compared with last year (Table 5). Yet, nearly half of participating programs (46%) reported only a slight increase in the number of applications, and less than a fifth of programs (18%)—proportionally half of those in the United States (36%), for example—reported that they received a significantly greater number of applications. On the other hand, none of the participating Canadian programs received fewer applications than last year.

**Table 5. Change in Canadian Full-Time MBA Program Total Application Volume Compared with Previous Year, Percentage of Programs**

	2007 ( <i>n</i> = 13)	2008 ( <i>n</i> = 11)
Up significantly (21%+)	15%	18%
Up moderately (11–20%)	8%	9%
Up slightly (1–10%)	38%	46%
Flat (no change from previous year)	15%	27%
Down slightly (1–10%)	8%	—
Down moderately (11–20%)	—	—
Down significantly (21%+)	15%	—
Total	100%	100%
Up	62%	73%
Flat	15%	27%
Down	23%	—
Total	100%	100%

## Foreign Application Trends

On average, the surveyed full-time MBA program in Canada received 131 applications from foreign citizens (Table 4) with four in 10 programs (40%) reporting a decrease in the number of foreign applications compared with last year (Table 6). Those few programs that received more applications from foreign citizens than last year reported that the greatest numbers came from India, China, and Colombia.

<b>Table 6. Change in Canadian Full-Time MBA Program Foreign<sup>a</sup> Application Volume Compared with Previous Year, Percentage of Programs</b>		
	2007 (n = 12)	2008 (n = 10)
Up significantly (21%+)	8%	—
Up moderately (11–20%)	8%	20%
Up slightly (1–10%)	25%	10%
Flat (no change from previous year)	33%	30%
Down slightly (1–10%)	8%	40%
Down moderately (11–20%)	—	—
Down significantly (21%+)	17%	—
Total	100%	100%
Up	42%	30%
Flat	33%	30%
Down	25%	40%
Total	100%	100%
<sup>a</sup> The term “foreign” is defined by applicant citizenship and is used to refer to any applicant whose citizenship differs from that of the country where they apply. For example, U.S. citizens would be considered foreign by a program in Canada, and Canadian citizens would be considered foreign by a U.S. program. Foreign applicants include permanent residents of a given country if they do not have the country’s citizenship.		

## Special Recruitment and Outreach

The majority of Canadian full-time MBA programs (83%) undertook special recruitment and outreach efforts to attract applicants (Table 7). Of those, nearly all programs (90%) tried to recruit foreign candidates, which is consistent with last year (88%).

	2007 ( <i>n</i> = 13)	2008 ( <i>n</i> = 12)
Conducted special recruitment or outreach	62%	83%
Foreign candidates	88%	90%
Women	50%	60%
Working professionals	50%	60%
Underrepresented U.S. minorities	—	—
Undergraduate students	38%	60%
Occupational specialties	13%	50%
Military	—	—
Underrepresented nationalities	13%	10%
Other groups	—	—

## Offers of Acceptance and Enrollment Rates

The average participating Canadian program reported that they extended an offer of acceptance to 56% of applicants and estimated 63% of accepted applicants would enroll (Table 8).

	2007	2008
Percentage of total applicants that received acceptance offer	<i>n</i> = 12	<i>n</i> = 10
Mean	48%	56%
Median	50%	58%
Estimated percentage of accepted applicants who will enroll	<i>n</i> = 12	<i>n</i> = 11
Mean	58%	63%
Median	60%	60%

## Conclusion

A generous contribution of time and information by admission professionals of 12 MBA programs in Canada allowed us to continue tailoring the Application Trends data to the needs of the region. The authors hope that everyone who finds the information in this paper useful will encourage their colleagues and peer schools to participate in global and regional information sharing through the GMAC® Application Trends Survey.

Findings presented in this paper are based on analysis of the 2008 GMAC Application Trends Survey data. For questions or comments regarding the study findings, methodology, or data, please contact the GMAC Research and Development department at [research@gmac.com](mailto:research@gmac.com).

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