

Methodology for 2014 Application Trends Survey

From early June to mid-July 2014, the Graduate Management Admission Council® (GMAC®) conducted the *Application Trends Survey*, its annual survey of business school admission professionals worldwide to assess how application volume at MBA and other graduate management programs compared with the same period in 2013. GMAC first began monitoring and reporting on application trends for graduate management programs 15 years ago.

To represent a cross section of the graduate management industry worldwide, GMAC invited 1,729 graduate business schools and faculties to participate in this year's survey. This included all its member schools—the majority of Graduate Management Admission Test® (GMAT®) score-receiving schools—plus other institutions that do not use the GMAT exam in their admission process. The survey questionnaire consisted of approximately two dozen questions and was administered online. All survey questions might not have been applicable to all responding programs.

By the survey closing date, a total of 314 business schools and faculties worldwide participated in the survey, representing an 18 percent response rate. These schools submitted data for 748 graduate management programs, including 469 MBA, 259 specialized master's programs, and 20 doctoral programs. The survey sample represents 32 countries worldwide, including 41 US states and the District of Columbia.

Combined, participating programs received 292,058 applications during the 2014 application cycle. All application numbers and trends discussed in this report refer to complete applications that contained all documents needed for making an admissions decision, which were received by June 30, 2014 for the 2014–2015 incoming class.

Data Analysis

Survey data were analyzed and tabulated using SPSS. The following broad classification of graduate management programs was used in this report:

- *Full-time MBA (includes full-time two-year and one-year MBA, as well as postgraduate programs (PGP))*
- *Professional MBA*
 - *Part-time MBA (includes lockstep and self-paced programs)*
 - *Executive MBA*
 - *Flexible MBA (combination of full- and part-time options, primarily delivered on campus)*
 - *Online/distance MBA (including hybrid programs)*
- *Master in Management (generalist and global/international) or in business administration*
- *Master of Accounting (or taxation)*
- *Master of Finance*
- *Master of Information Technology (IT) or Systems*
- *Master in Marketing and/or Communications*
- *Master-level programs in other specialized business disciplines*
- *PhD in business or management and DBA programs*

The MBA is represented by 129 full-time two-year MBA (including international MBA and two-year PGP), 90 full-time one-year MBA (including one-year international MBA and one-year PGP), 111 part-time or professional MBA, 62 flexible MBA, 60 executive MBA, 16 online or distance-learning MBA programs, and 1 other MBA program.

Specialized master's programs are represented by several majors, including Master of Accounting and Master of Taxation (65), Master of Finance (51), Master in Management and International Management (33), Master in Marketing and/or Communication (21), Master of Information Technology or Systems (12), and 77 other master-level programs in business fields, as well as 20 PhD or DBA programs.

Other specialized master's programs included the following: Master in Economics, Master of Entrepreneurship, Master of Health Administration, Master in Hospitality, Master in Project Management, Master in Public Administration or Public Policy, Master of Real Estate Management, Master of Supply Chain Management, Logistics, or Operations, and one non-MBA joint-degree program.

These classifications may not perfectly fit each of the reporting programs. With the need to accommodate people with various backgrounds, career paths, and lifestyles, new program types emerge continuously and are classified according to the closest match available.

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

For the purposes of this report, two approaches are used to assess changes in the application volume to graduate management programs. The *relative* approach involves monitoring the number of programs that report either an increase or decrease in applications compared with the prior year. The *absolute* approach involves monitoring the number of applications received by programs.

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

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

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

Regional Location of Survey Respondents, 2014

The following geographic classifications include countries within each region that represent locations of programs that responded to this survey.

- **Asia Pacific:** Australia, China, Hong Kong (SAR of China), Japan, Korea, Republic of (South), Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand.
- **Canada:** Canada
- **Europe:** France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
- **India:** India
- **Latin America:** Colombia and Mexico.
- **Middle East & Africa:** Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal South Africa, Turkey.
- **United States:** United States of America and its territories.

For purposes of this survey, US regions are based on regional classifications used by the US Census Bureau. The **US Northeast** includes Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. The **US Midwest** includes Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The **US South** includes Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina,

Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. The **US West** includes Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

Participant Profile

Geographically, 525 programs from 213 responding schools were in the United States; 108 programs from 41 schools were in Europe; 40 programs from 20 schools were in the Asia-Pacific region; 34 programs from 18 schools were in Canada; 21 programs from 4 schools were in Latin America; 13 programs from 12 schools were from India; and 7 programs from 6 schools were in Middle East/Africa.

Table 1 displays the type and number of programs represented in the survey analysis, as well as the total number of participating business schools by world region.

Table 1. Application Trends Survey Participant Profile, 2014

	United States	Europe	Asia-Pacific	India	Canada	Middle East/Africa	Latin America	Total
Number of schools	213	41	20	12	18	6	4	N = 314
Program type								
Full-time 2-year MBA	101	3	11	6	7	1	0	N = 129
Full-time 1-year MBA	40	22	10	6	8	2	2	N = 90
Part-time (lockstep) MBA	41	1	6	0	4	1	2	N = 55
Part-time (self-paced) MBA	51	1	1	0	1	1	1	N = 56
Flexible MBA	52	1	2	0	5	0	2	N = 62
Executive MBA	33	16	2	1	2	2	4	N = 60
Online/distance MBA	15	0	0	0	1	0	0	N = 16
Other MBA	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N = 1
All MBA programs	335	44	32	13	28	7	11	N = 469
Master in Management	10	20	0	0	2	0	1	N = 33
Master of Accounting	61	3	1	0	0	0	0	N = 65
Master of Finance	36	11	1	0	1	0	2	N = 51
Master in Information Technology (IT)	11	0	1	0	0	0	0	N = 12
Master in Marketing & Communications	14	4	1	0	0	0	2	N = 21
Other master's programs	46	25	3	0	0	0	3	N = 77
All master's programs	177	63	7	0	3	0	8	N = 259
PhD/DBA	13	1	1	0	3	0	2	N = 20
Total responding programs	525	108	40	13	34	7	21	N = 748

Key Survey Definitions

The following definitions appeared in the survey questionnaire and analysis:

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

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

Domestic candidate refers to applicants who are citizens of the country where the program is located.

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

The term **entrepreneurs** refers to individuals contemplating or currently running their own businesses that schools may specifically recruit as potential applicants.

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

Foreign candidate refers to any applicant whose citizenship differs from that of the country where he/she applies. For example, US citizens applying to UK programs would be considered foreign in the United Kingdom, and UK citizens applying to US programs would be considered foreign in the United States.

The term **occupational specialties** refers to individuals working in particular professions such as engineering, technology, or other occupational categories that schools may target for special recruitment activities.

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

Pre-experience candidates refers to prospective students without professional work experience.

Postgraduate program (PGP) is the Indian version of the MBA. Based on the length of the programs, the responses were aggregated within full-time one-or two-year MBA program data.

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