

GMAC Corporate Recruiters Survey

2023 Deans Summary

According to more than 1,000 respondents to GMAC's 2023 Corporate Recruiters Survey, business schools are largely on the right track to develop the skills graduate management education (GME) graduates currently need in the workforce. Bread-and-butter capabilities like interpersonal skills, communication, and strategy are most in demand. Globally more than half of the employers say these skills are important think that GME graduates are prepared to leverage them in the workplace.

In the next five years, employers think their organizations will look increasingly global, hybrid, and dependent on different mediums of effective communication across cultures. To help GME graduates succeed, employers don't think business schools need to start teaching a completely different set of skills—most say valuable skills like communication, data analysis, and strategy will grow in importance for GME graduates in the next five years (**Figure 1**).

About the Survey

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 hiring, compensation, skill demand, and perceptions of MBA and business master's graduates.

This year's summary report explores which skills employers think will characterize the future workplace—and how prepared they view graduate management education (GME) candidates to be—as well as how macroeconomic conditions are influencing hiring and salary decisions across industries and around the globe.

2023 Survey Sample Stats

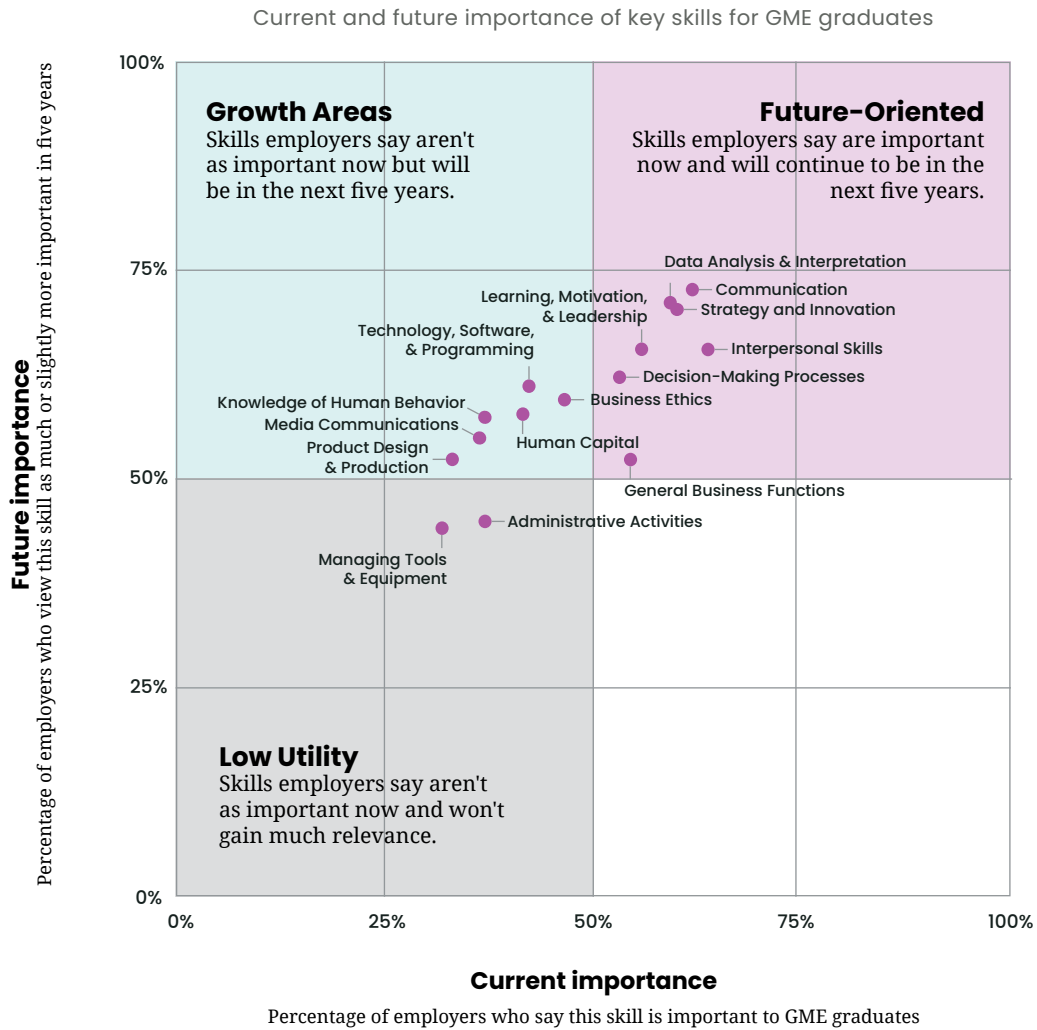
1,028 Total respondents

34 Countries of citizenship represented

55% From Global Fortune 500

Figure 1: Employers say communication, data analysis, and strategy skills are important now and will be even more important in the future.

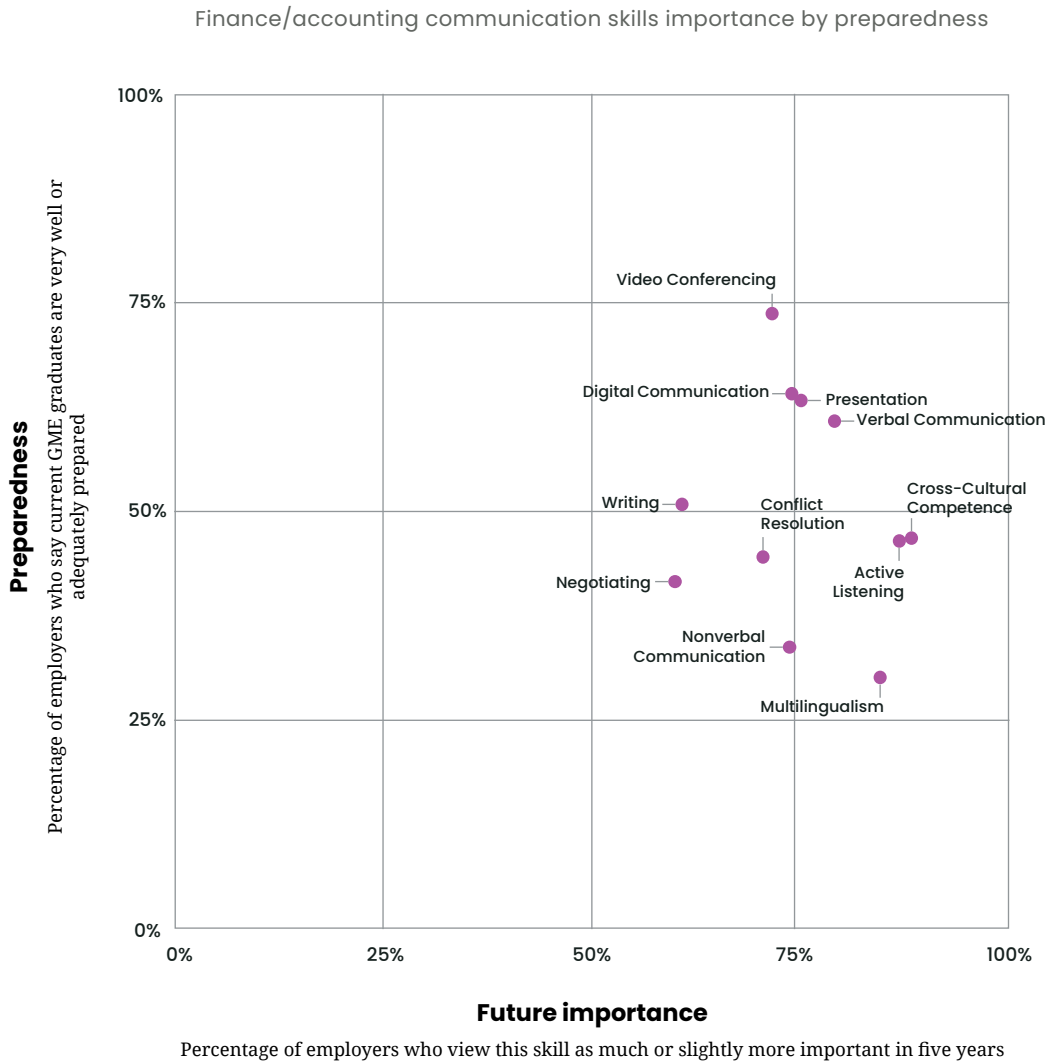
Technology, knowledge of human behavior, and media communication skills are expected to grow the most in importance in the next five years.



While the outlook on GME graduates' preparedness for mastering the skills of the future is positive overall, it varies a bit by industry and region. Among the majority of finance employers who say communication is a key skill for current graduates, there is much less confidence that GME graduates can deliver on the specific cross-cultural needs they believe may characterize the future workplace (**Figure 2**). U.S. recruiters who note current and growing importance in specific communication and technology requirements say GME graduates could be better prepared across a range of skills to meet employment needs within their organizations. (**Figure 3**).

Figure 2: Finance and accounting employers view cross-cultural competence, active listening, and multilingualism as even more important in the future—but express concern about GME graduates’ preparedness.

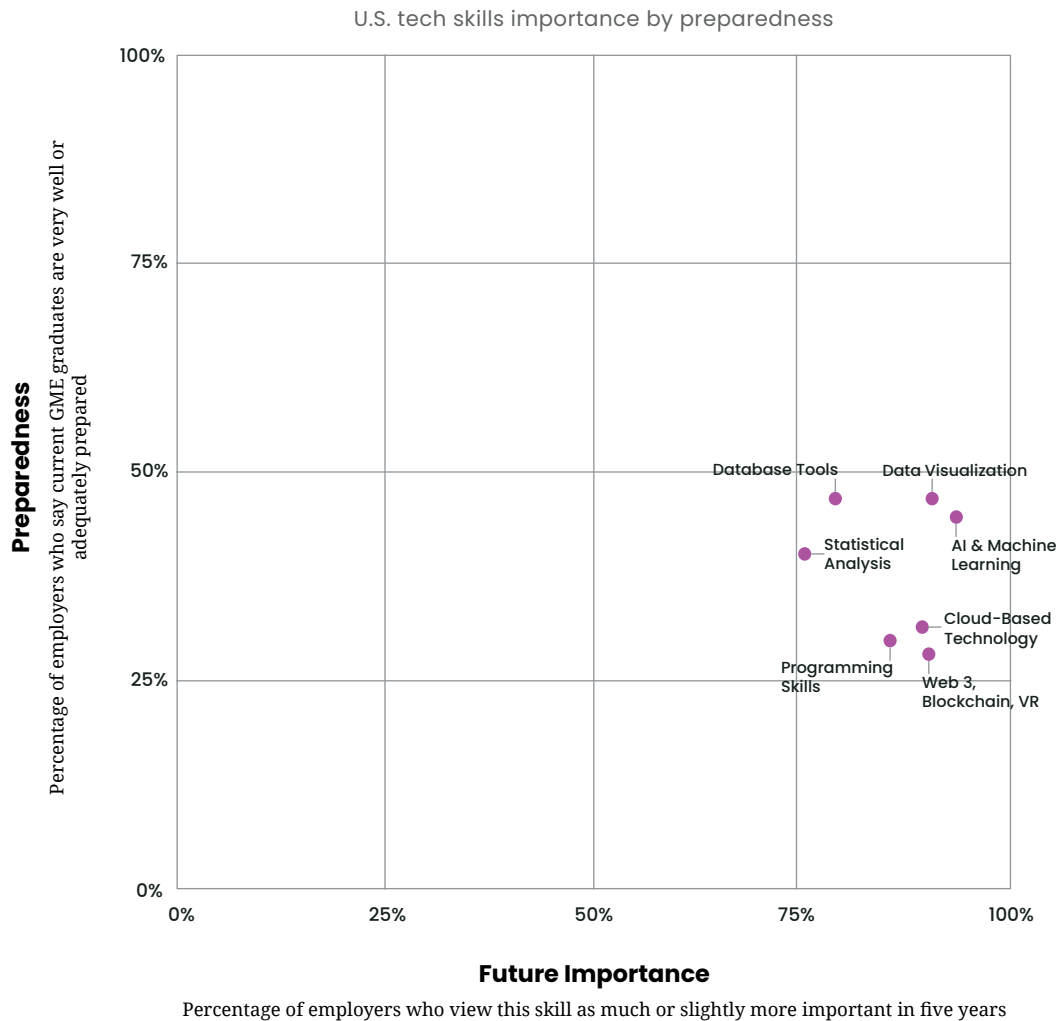
Finance and accounting employers are more confident in graduates’ verbal and digital communication, presentation, and video conferencing preparedness.



**Skill preparedness and change of a skill’s importance in five years is only asked of employers who indicated a specific communication skill is important to current GME graduates after selecting the broader category “communication” as important from a list of general skills.*

Figure 3: Three-quarters or more of the U.S. employers who said specific technology skills like artificial intelligence or data visualization are important for current GME graduates also said each specific tech skill will grow in importance in the next five years.

However, fewer than half of these U.S. employers believe GME graduates are currently very well or adequately prepared.



**Skill preparedness and change of a skill's importance in five years is only asked of employers who indicated a specific tech skill is important to current GME graduates after selecting the broader category "technology, software, and programming" as important from a list of general skills.*

Still, employers' overall satisfaction with business school graduates remains high, with 82 percent of employers expressing confidence in GME's ability to prepare their students for success. Hiring of business school talent in 2022 was proportionally highest in Central and South Asia and East and Southeast Asia, where employers were also most willing to hire international candidates. Publicly traded companies were most likely to hire business school talent across degree types in 2022, and Fortune 500 companies continue to hold favorable views of GME graduates' abilities to be successful and lead in their organizations.

Online degrees have lost favor a bit since last year, and their standing remains low in the U.S.—only 27% of U.S. recruiters say their organization views in-person and online degrees equally (**Figure 4**). Likewise, employers around the world believe talent with a GME degree are more likely to be successful in their organization than employees with micro-credentials only. Employers tend to be open to hearing specifically about the tangible communication, leadership, and technical skills online degrees and micro-credentials can impart to their students—though most still think in-person programs develop these skills better than online degrees.



With the rise of new technology, hybrid offices, and multinational teamwork, employers are expecting GME graduates to bring forward classic business school capabilities like communication, leadership, and strategic thinking in new ways. Graduates will need to be able to communicate effectively across cultures and a wider variety of media, lead a multi-generational workforce through uncertain times, and make smart choices to leverage new technology to drive innovation. Employers and prospective GME students—especially Generation Z—agree that business schools are well-positioned to align their coursework with already-overlapping candidate interests and market demands.

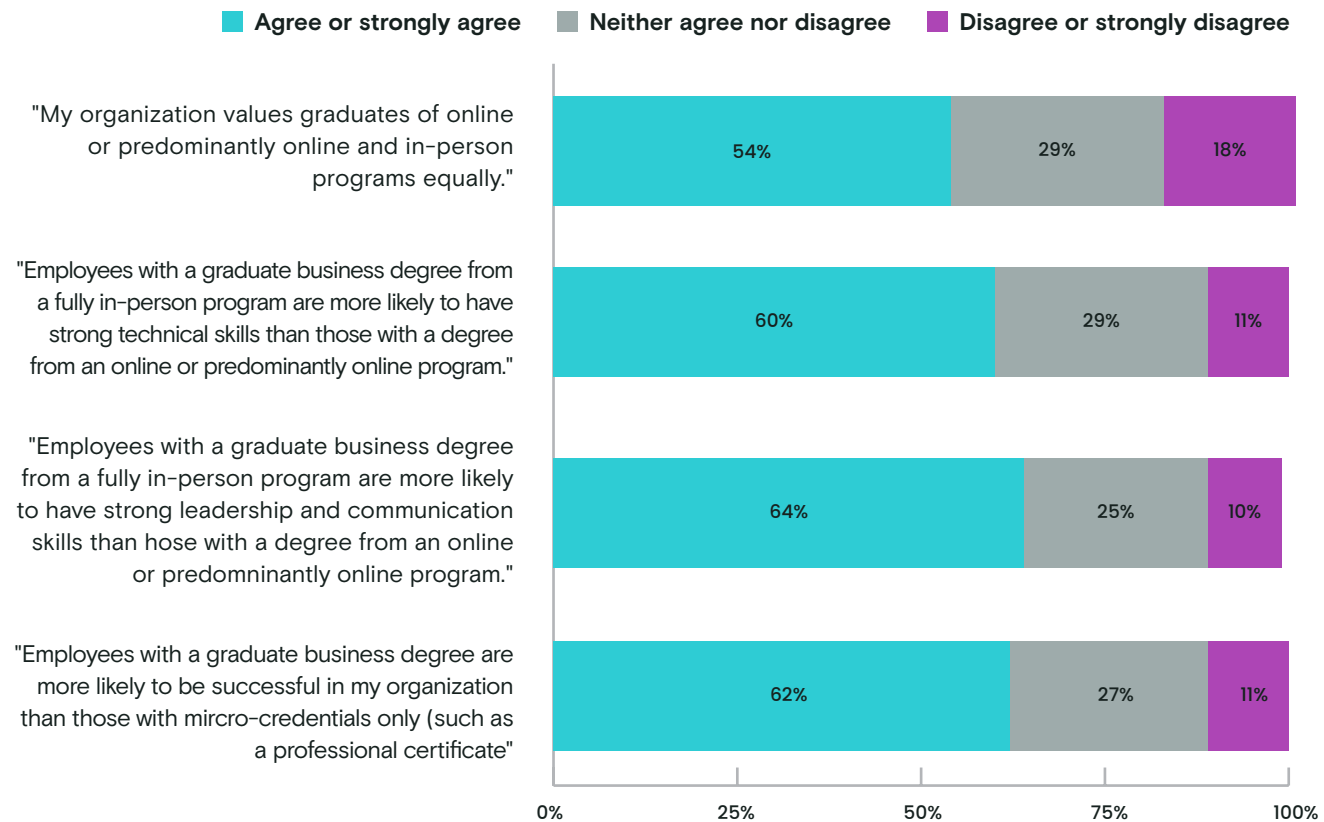
The Corporate Recruiters Survey – 2023 Summary Report offers schools insights like these into the current needs of the market, recruiter perceptions of GME graduates, and employer placements of the latest cohort of GME alumni in the workforce.

—Joy Jones, GMAC CEO

Figure 4: About half of employers view online and in-person degrees equally, though most tend to believe employees from in-person programs have stronger leadership, communication, and technical skills.

Most employers also view talent with business degrees to be more competitive and successful than those with micro-credentials only.

Employer sentiment about online degrees and micro-credentials



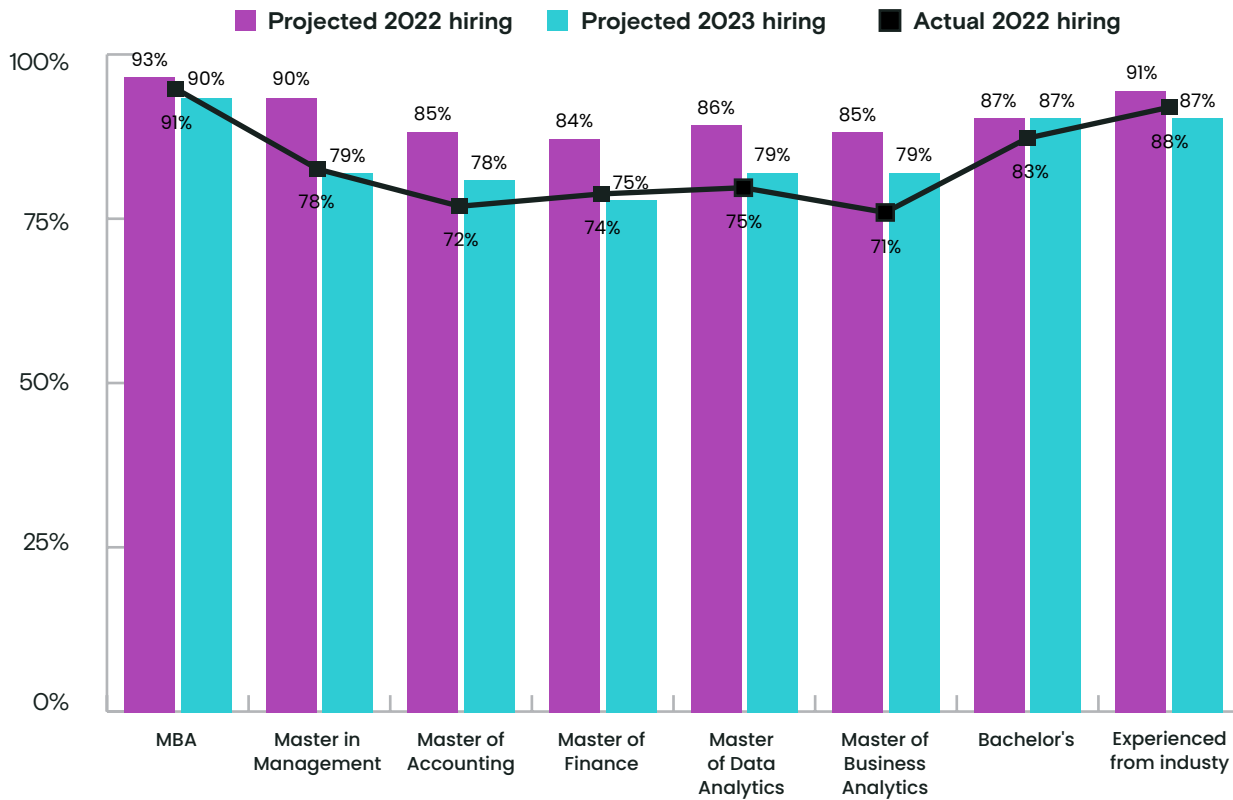
Projected salaries for 2023 are highest among U.S. MBAs—one of the only degree types expecting a salary bump after accounting for inflation. However, starting salary is not necessarily the best measure of the value of a GME degree compared to lifetime earnings. Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce “The College Payoff” study continues to show that median earnings rise with each additional level of education.¹ Employers across industries and regions unsurprisingly report the influence of inflation and recession risk on their salary and hiring considerations, but most organizations indicated plans to expand and increase their headcount in 2023, including some anticipated growth in business master’s hiring compared to 2022 results (Figure 5).

¹Carnevale, 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/>.

Figure 5: Employer’s 2023 hiring projections are a bit more conservative than 2022 estimates, though generally in line with actual 2022 hiring results.

Compared to actual 2022 hiring results, employers are anticipating a small rise in hiring across business master’s talent.

Projected 2022 and 2023 hiring vs. actual 2022 hiring



Overall, this year’s results indicate business schools are on the right track with the skills they are developing among their students. Unfavorable macroeconomic conditions loom, but employers haven’t given up on plans to hire GME graduates. There is opportunity to keep business school students competitive now and in the future by deepening the cross-cultural and technological capabilities of graduates—including among specialists—to ensure they can thrive in the future workplace.

To gain a better understanding of employer perspectives, these findings and more are discussed in greater detail in the Corporate Recruiters Survey – 2023 Summary Report, available at gmac.com/corporaterecruiters.