



Corporate Recruiters Survey

Deans 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 largepart because the workplace is different.

About the Corporate Recruiters 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 skill demand, hiring, compensation, and perceptions of MBA and business master's graduates. In total, 1,108 corporate recruiters and hiring managers from staffing firms around the world participated in the survey, which was conducted from January to March of 2025.

2025 survey sample stats

1,108

survey respondents

46

countries of citizenship represented

64%

from Global Fortune 500



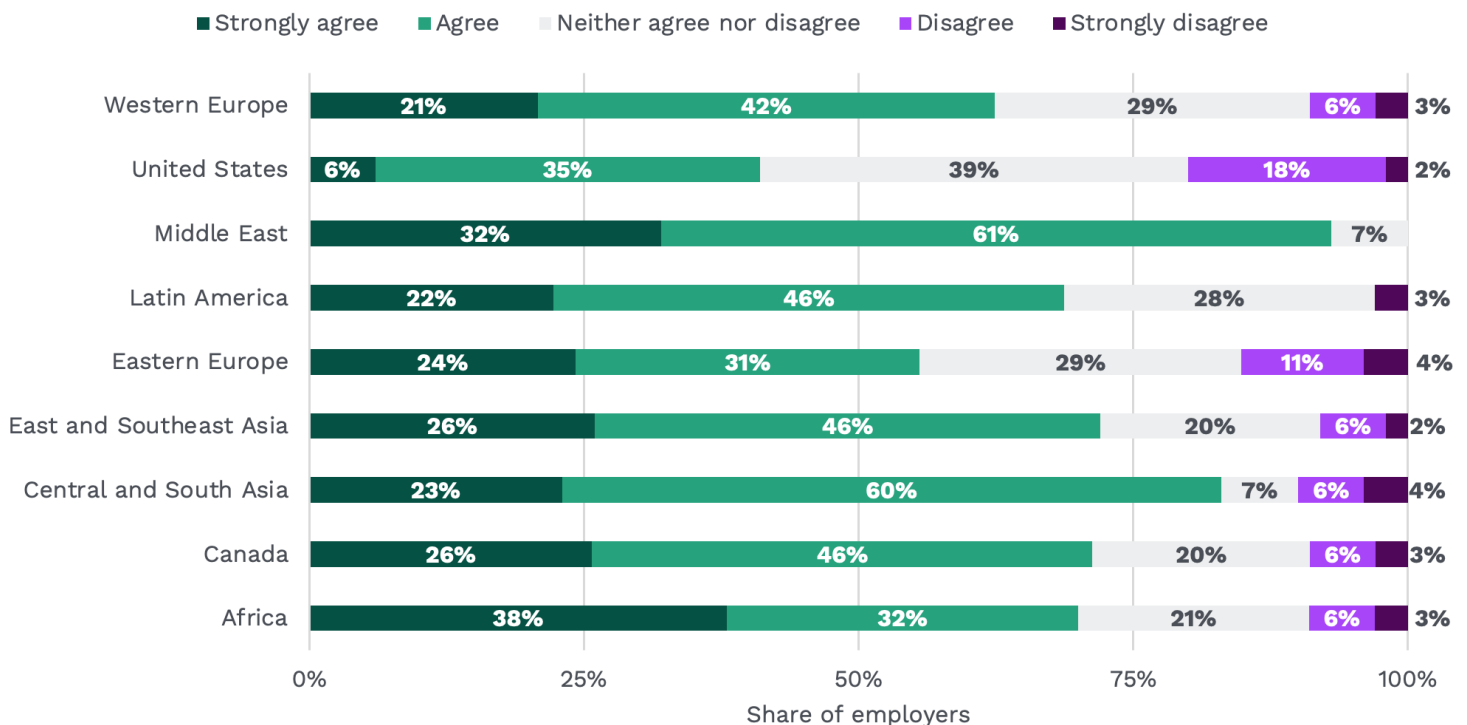
Access the full report at gmac.com/corporaterecruiters

In response to 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 (Figure 1). 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.

Figure 1: 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.”



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/>.

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 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: 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

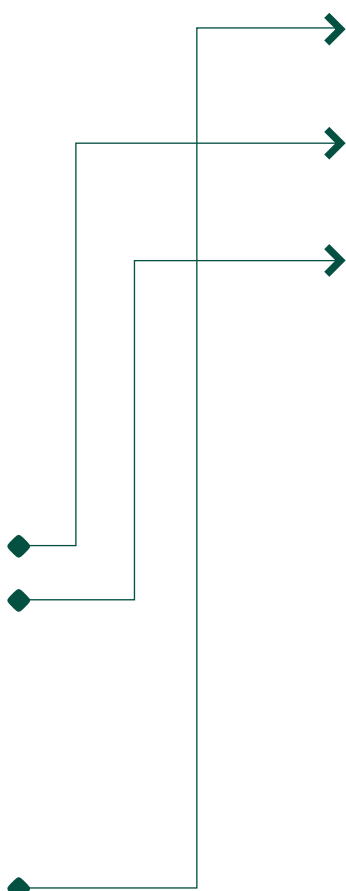
(Select all that apply)

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	



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 (Figure 3). 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 (Figure 4). Ultimately, business schools should help students understand and respond to changing employer expectations—and help employers recognize the full value of GME talent across formats.

Figure 3: 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.”

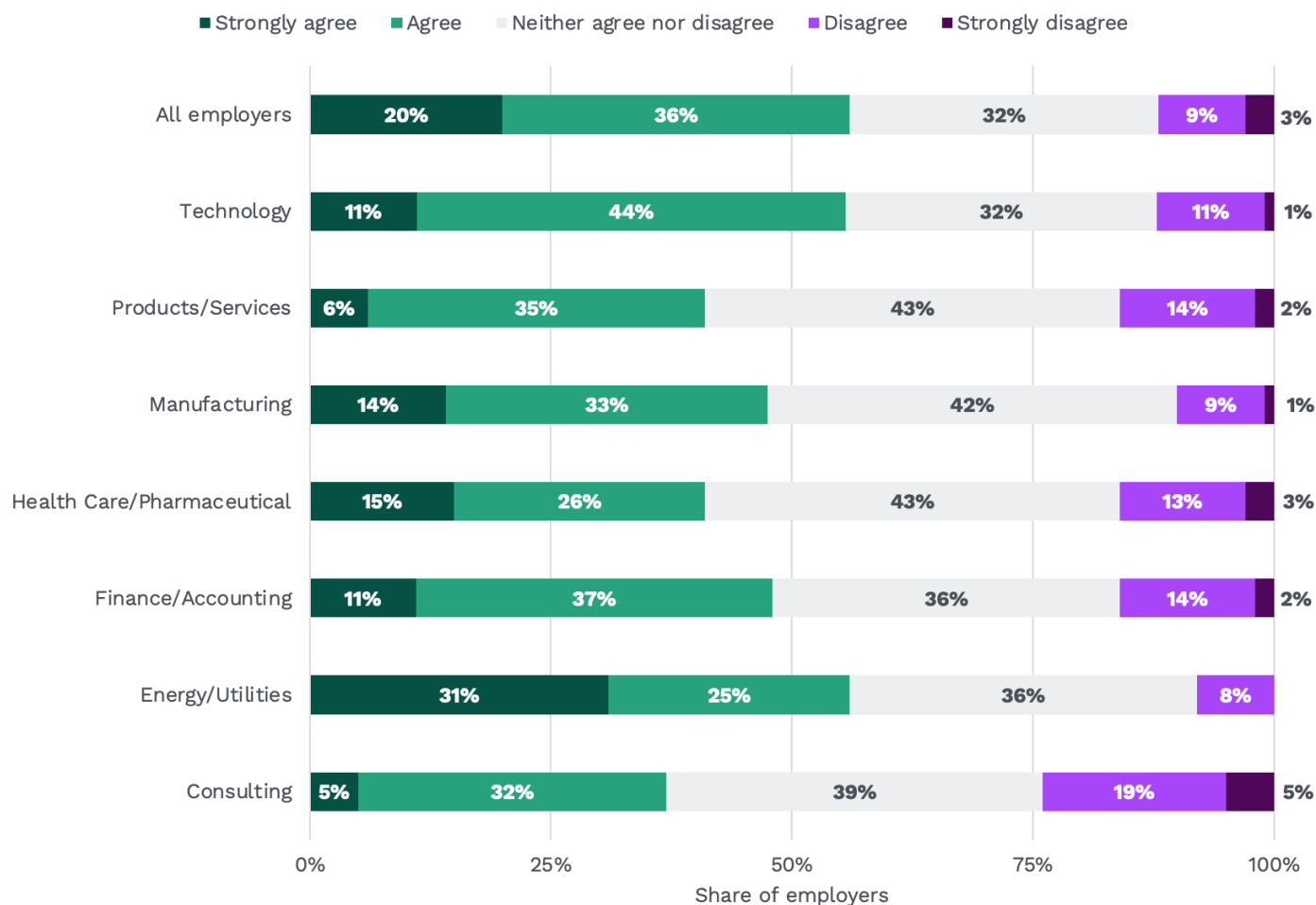
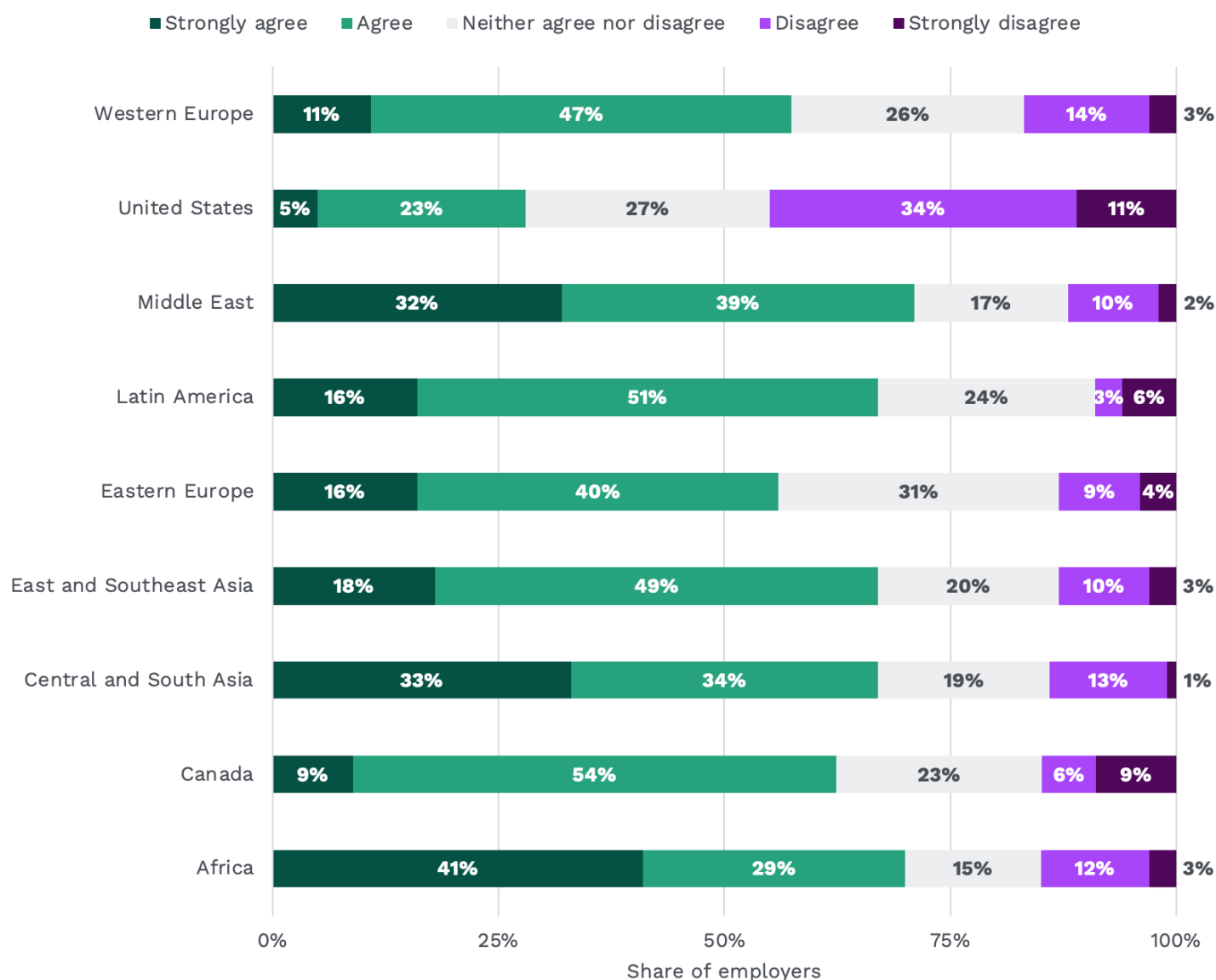


Figure 4: Except in the United States, most employers across regions value online and in-person programs equally.

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.”

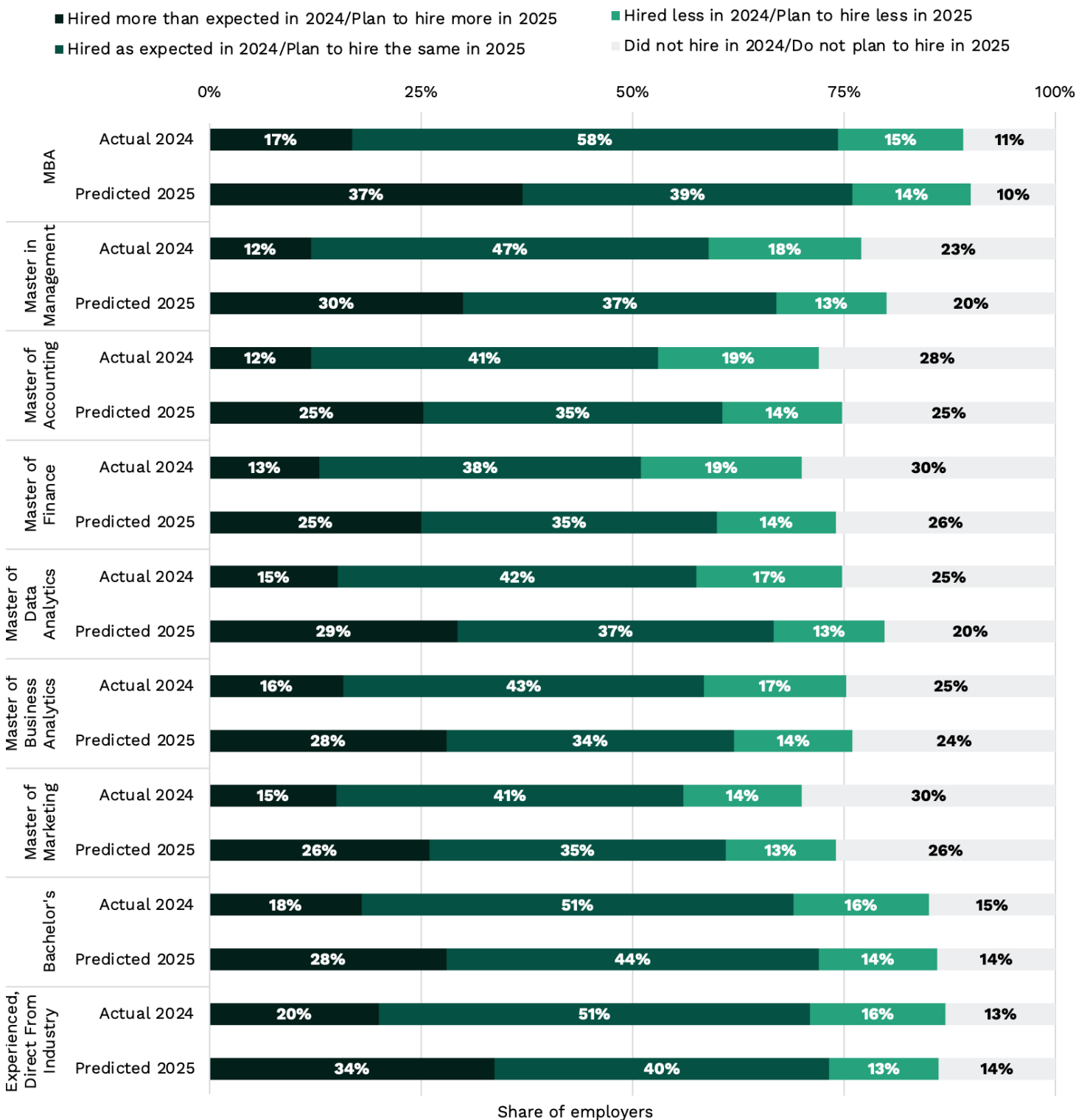


As workplace norms evolve, it is business school’s ability to form leaders who thrive through change that has sustained employers’ high valuation of GME and its graduates—which in turn powered recent and projected hiring and salary boosts across degree types (Figure 5). Even as employers continue to 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.

Figure 5: When employers completed the survey from January to March of 2025, more respondents predicted they will hire MBAs in 2025 than bachelor's graduates or candidates from other organizations.

More than a quarter of global employers plan to expand their hiring of graduates for each degree type, though the survey does not take into account disruptions to the geopolitical and macroeconomic landscape after the survey closed in March.

Global Employers' 2024 Hiring Outcomes and 2025 Hiring Projections





More 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.
- 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

- 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; however, consulting employers express some concern with regard to recent graduates' reliability, respectfulness, accountability, or professional appearance.



Flexible workplaces and classrooms

- 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

- U.S. MBA and business master's graduates are expected to receive larger nominal and real starting salaries in 2025 compared to 2024.
- 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.



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

