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How does candidate research and decision making vary by age?



On the path to graduate management education (GME), prospective students use different resources to learn more about their options, which can have varying degrees of impact on their decision making. Whether a candidate is still an undergraduate or has a decade of professional experience under their belt, prospective students care about receiving the best quality education possible and conducting thorough research.

GME information sources

Prospective students engage with all sorts of resources on their path to GME, from finding information online to consulting experts in education. The specific types of resources they most often use vary by age. For example, a quarter of students less than 24 years old will speak to their professors on their path to GME, but students older than 31 don't seek professor input as much. School websites are a highly valued resource as over half of all prospective students use business school websites in researching GME.

Resource usage by age group

School websites



Friends/family



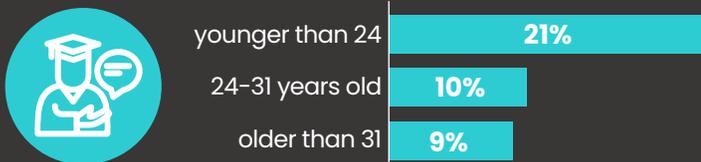
Published rankings



School Admissions professionals



College/University professors



Program decision factors

As a part of our survey, prospective students ranked the most important factors in their GME decision-making process. Across every age group, quality of the graduate business education is the most important to GME students. The financial aspects of a program also matter the most to nearly 1 in 5 of all prospective students, regardless of their age.

Percentage of candidates ranking a decision factor most important, by age group

Students younger than 24



Students 24-30 years old



Students older than 31



GME research

The top four aspects of graduate business programs that prospective students research the most are program eligibility requirements, program rankings, specific school/university offerings, and the cost of the program. Older students research more about how much a program will cost, whereas younger students focus on specific school offerings.

Percentage of candidates who said they put "a lot" of research into an aspect of a program, by age group

Students younger than 24



Students 24-30 years old



Students older than 31

