

Printable on Business School Advising and Resources

This document contains the following information:

- UAR Advising and Resources
- UAR and other mailing lists
- Deciding on business school
- Preparation
- Selecting the right school for you
- The business school application and timeline
- Should I take a year off before business school?
- Paying for business school

UAR Advising and other Resources for Business School

- UAR Advisors. To arrange a consultation, contact UAR@vpue.stanford.edu; (650) 724-7562; or visit our online appointment web form at uar.stanford.edu.
- **Undergraduate Advising and Research:** Peterson's Guide to Graduate Programs in Business, catalogs from various business schools, and the GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) Bulletin
- **MBA site of the Graduate Management Admissions Council:** www.MBA.com
- **Career Development Center (CDC):** Look at the library for career and company literature. Make an appointment with a career counselor
- **Stanford Career Network (SCN):** The SCN is a searchable database created by the Stanford Alumni Association. It includes over 6,000 alumni who have agreed to be contacted for informational interviews and career networking. Go to www.stanfordalumni.org/career. Click on Stanford Career Network. Log in and click on Search to find contacts by career field, geographical location, company or job function
- Begin reading business related publications: The Wall Street Journal, Forbes and Business Week
- **MBA Admissions Council:** The Graduate Management Admissions Council (GMAC) sponsors a series of forums each year where students can speak with business school representatives from dozens of schools. One of these is held late in November every other year in San Francisco. Check with Sally Mentzer at smentzer@stanford.edu for further information.
- Mailing List: Business imaginebusiness-uac

Why Business School?

Students who express an interest in business school can think of it as a way to develop their capability to become effective leaders in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. Many people move back and forth between both sectors during the course of their careers.

Early Preparation for Business School

- Most business schools welcome all majors so pursue something that you find intellectually exciting.
- Take on leadership roles in school, in work, and in internships. Business schools will look for demonstrated teamwork and interpersonal skills.
- Consider taking at least one calculus course (many schools prefer a year of math).
- Also consider classes in economics, computer science, statistics, or organizational behavior (psychology or sociology).
- Consider taking a class at the Stanford Graduate School of Business.
- Recognize that the vast majority of MBA students spend two to five years working before attending business school.
- Join the Stanford Pre-Business Association (www.stanford.edu/group/prebusiness). It is a group of more than 500 undergraduates interested in business. The club sponsors activities and services designed to expose its members to various aspects of the business world.
- Apply and challenge yourself academically in whatever major (s) interest you
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- Cultivate relationships with professors who have impacted your academic experience
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- Consider classes outside of your areas of interest (humanities students take a math/calculus, economics or statistics class; or science/engineering students take a humanities or social science class
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- Get involved outside the classroom: seek out extracurricular activities that interest you, pursue opportunities to take on leadership roles. Remember, it's not the quantity of activities that's important, but the quality of your contributions to the activities
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- Explore your professional options during your undergraduate years: pursue summer internships or part-time work opportunities, seek out challenging opportunities which will teach you new skills, cultivate relationships with supervisors and mentors; they could be potential recommenders in the future
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- Explore your professional interests post undergrad: pursue professional experiences that inspire your passions, either non-business or business related, seek out opportunities which will build your leadership/management skills, find ways to expand your knowledge of your chosen job industry, continue to cultivate relationships with supervisors, mentors and peers

Selecting a Business School

- Do your b-school homework: visit website of MBA programs that interest you, request materials and information from MBA programs, even if you will not apply for several years, visit the campus of each school and gather feedback from current MBA students and alumni, seek out opportunities to interact with b-school alumni. Ask them why

they chose to pursue an MA and how it has impact their career options. Think about what's most important to YOU in an MBA program

Ask Questions:

Admission

- What percentage of your entering class has had full-time work experience?
- What sort of grade point average and GMAT score do I need to be a competitive candidate?
- What are some examples of summer or part-time jobs that would be considered valuable experience by your school?
- How many applicants do you have each year? How many are accepted?
- Should recommendations be on your own forms, or are copies of letters on file at CDC acceptable?
- What is your policy on deferred admission?

Curriculum

- What sort of mathematics preparation is necessary? Are there courses in other areas that are particularly recommended?
- What teaching methods are used? Does the program emphasize the case method, or more theoretical approaches?
- If you had to describe your program's orientation in just one or two words (e.g., quantitative), which might you choose?
- What is your school best known for; what are its strengths?

General

- How much is tuition? Is financial aid available?
- What is the size of an entering class? What percentage are minorities? What is the mean age of the entering class?
- How is placement? What is the average number of job offers your graduates receive? How many companies interview through your placement office? Are they regional or national?
- Does your placement office do any career advising, or does it deal exclusively with job placement?
- Are students given assistance in finding summer jobs?

Joint Programs

Many MBA programs now offer joint degrees with other graduate schools or have areas of specialization that might be of interest to you. For example, UCLA offers an MBA specializing in arts management, while the University of Michigan offers a joint MBA/Master's of Public Health. At many schools it is possible to do a joint JD/MBA. Usually schools that offer joint degrees require a separate application for each program. To find out what options are available at which schools, you should consult a table which can be found in the UAR library within *The Official Guide to MBA Programs*. Another resource

is the internet for doing an MBA Program Search. Consult with a UAR advisor to see if a joint program is the best fit for your goals.

School Visitations and Contacts

If possible, visit the school (s) that most interest you. Also, contact current students and alumni. Ask the admissions office for the names and emails of current and past students. Ask them questions about their experience.

Applying to Business School

Timeline. Application deadlines vary from school to school, however, since many have a rolling admissions policy, it is wise to apply earlier rather than later in the application year. Our recommendation is to:

- Take the GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test – more detail below) as early as possible: The score is valid for 5 years. Prepare for the test. Some people find test preparation books or courses to be helpful. You can take the test more than once and most schools will take the highest score
- Request applications in the late summer of the year prior to entry
- Complete applications by January 1 at the latest (depending on the school's admission calendar)

Admission criteria break down into roughly two categories, quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative factors are your undergraduate academic record and your GMAT score. To get an idea of how competitive your "numbers" are, you may want to consult schools that interest you for information on average GPA's or GMAT scores. Contrary to what your impression may be about admission to other professional schools, these quantitative factors are not the most important parts of your application. Most business schools are equally, if not more, interested in the qualitative factors. These qualitative elements of your application are work experiences recommendations, and the application essays.

Work Experience

Many jobs will show how well you handle responsibility, and how much leadership potential you have. Also, class discussions are enlivened by significant employment experiences - experiences you won't easily get in an academic community. In addition, prior employment may make you more employable after you get your MBA. In reality, some work experience after your undergraduate education is almost a requirement for admission to an MBA program.

The CDC has a comprehensive library of career information to assist in defining your career interests and goals. They can help you find a job which will be both rewarding and a good step toward business school. The CDC can advise you on increasing your *marketability* for employment after graduation, and in your senior year, provide the opportunity for job interviews.

Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)

The [Graduate Management Admission Test \(GMAT\)](#) is offered four times a year and is required for admission to most graduate schools of business (Harvard is a notable exception). Test applications are available on the GMAT website. Stanford Business School is now accepting the GRE (Graduate Record Examination) in lieu of the GMAT. You should plan to take the exam no later than the fall of the year preceding the year in which you wish to enter business school. You may want to consider taking the exam at an earlier date in the summer or spring. Many students have found that they have more time to study for the GMAT in the spring or summer, and that they receive their score reports early enough to use them as a guideline when deciding where to apply. The GMAT score is divided into verbal and quantitative categories. Although many business schools indicate they look at your overall performance on the exam, in fact they give more weight to the quantitative score. For detailed information and assistance with preparation for the exam, be sure to consult the most recent edition of *The Official Guide to GMAT*.

Recommendations

The number and type of recommendations required varies with each business school. Generally speaking, two will suffice, but students often submit three or four. When choosing who should write letters of recommendation for you, remember that each business school has its own very specific recommendation forms that you are asked to submit. It's up to you whether or not to ask your references to complete these forms or whether you want to set up a recommendation file at CDC. From the standpoint of business schools, it is far easier to review their own forms than to read letters. However, it could become quite an imposition on your references if you asked them to complete many different forms. You will have to use your judgment on this, based on how many and to which schools you are applying, and discussions with the people who will be writing your letters. If you wish to establish a file at the CDC, be sure to acquaint yourself with their procedures by the beginning of your senior year at the latest.

Application Essays

A word of warning: many applications take a long time to complete, largely because of the essays. Business schools use essays to try to determine your leadership potential, initiative, motivation, and possible contributions to the learning environment at the school. Be assured that your essay(s) will be closely scrutinized by the admissions committee. Give yourself enough time to insure that they: 1) clearly answer their questions, 2) are well organized and develop the points you're making logically, and 3) utilize correct grammar and spelling.

Many schools ask you to talk about your strengths and weaknesses as well as your career goals. This latter issue can affect applicants directly out of undergraduate programs and without significant work experience. It is to your advantage to be able to discuss a relatively specific career goal-- remember that you will be competing with people with a fair amount of work experience and who know exactly what they want to do. To be able to write about career goals, you need to have a good feel for the variety of careers one can pursue with an MBA, and how your interests, strengths, and personality best fit into a

given area. Your essay should show energy and enthusiasm. You should come across as a person with specific accomplishments and a plan to accomplish more. You should be enthusiastic and informed about the school you are sending the essay to. Don't just re-hash your application; show how it all fits together to make you the ideal MBA candidate.