

The MBA Application Process

Research

- Consider the institutional reputation, faculty, teaching strategy, geographic location, student population and culture, available financial aid, and total cost of the programs in which you are interested.
- Reflect upon the criteria that are important to you, and choose schools that match them.
- Contact each school's admissions office. Sometimes business schools give tours or allow you to sit in on classes to get a better feel of the program.
- Keep in mind the internship opportunities that the school provides and companies that recruit there.
- Visit www.mba.com, www.gradschools.com, www.graduateguide.com, and the Grad School sections of www.petersons.com and www.princetonreview.com/home.asp.

The Application

- Personal Statement/Essay
Business schools typically ask applicants to discuss their previous work experience, their future professional goals, and how they believe that an MBA can assist them in achieving those objectives. Graduate management programs seek individuals with clear, distinct business ideas and aspirations, and the personal statement provides the applicant with the opportunity to articulate these goals and display strong writing skills. Your essay needs to be well thought out, concise, and compelling. Admissions officers read hundreds of personal essays; it's important to make yours impressive – and memorable. Keep in mind the following suggestions:
 1. Start your essay with something that will grab the reader's attention. Personal anecdotes often help draw the reader in.
 2. Personalize your essay. Don't simply repeat information that can be read on your application. Provide the reader with an inside view of your thoughts, interests, and motivation to get an MBA.
 3. Make your motivation clear to the reader. The admissions officer wants to get the sense that you are enthusiastic about obtaining an MBA and plan to apply the education to your professional work.
 4. Create a well-written document. Your essay is a sample of your writing abilities. It's important to convey your thoughts clearly, effectively, and with attention to grammar.
 5. Edit your essay multiple times. Have it critiqued by friends, family, educators, and members of the MIT Careers Office staff.

- References

Be sure to ask people who know you very well to write your references. The more specific they can be about your candidacy, the stronger your application will be. If the school does not specify from whom you should obtain references, you should choose people with whom you've worked in different settings. For example, include professors as well as employers.
- GPA

GPA standards vary from program to program. Most of the time, the average GPA of students currently enrolled in the program or the minimum GPA accepted can be found on the program's Web site. This information is helpful for evaluating a business school's academic standards and comparing them to your own.
- GMAT

The Graduate Admission Management Test (GMAT) is a standardized assessment designed to measure the qualifications of applicants for a business and management studies program. The test consists of three sections: the Analytical Writing Assessment, the Quantitative Section, and the Verbal Section.

You are given 60 minutes for the Analytical Writing Assessment and 75 minutes for each of the other two sections. Total GMAT scores range from 200-800. Two-thirds of test takers score between 400 and 600.

For more information, visit <http://www.gmac.com/gmac/thegmat/>.
- Interview

The interview process may vary depending on the school to which you are applying. For the most part, interviews are by invitation only and cannot be requested. But whenever possible, visit the campus and meet with someone in person rather than speaking with an admissions representative on the phone. A campus visit offers you the opportunity to demonstrate strong interpersonal skills (a must in the business world) and gain a better sense of the school's environment.

The MIT Careers Office recommends that MBA applicants sign up for a mock interview and review the Winning Interview Techniques workshop (<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/workshops/interview>) in preparation for a business school interview.

Next Steps

- Schedule an appointment with a Careers Office staff member to help identify your career and education goals.

- Informational interviewing is a powerful tool. Ask current MBA students and MBA recipients about typical careers and industries that actively recruit people with the degree.
- The Institute Career Assistance Network (ICAN) is a good place to get names of alumni/ae in the specific field in which you are interested. You can access this database online at: <http://alum.mit.edu/cs/ican/index.html>.