

MBA? Master’s? Or Both?

You have many choices when applying to business school. Should you get an MBA? Would it be better to get a specialized business master’s degree instead? When would you need both? Here are some findings from GMAC’s Prospective Students Survey Report 2025:

52%

Consider an MBA program

Why?

To develop general business management knowledge, such as:

Leadership and people management

Strategic thinking and decision making

Innovation and entrepreneurship

What can I do with it?

Enhance your current career

Pursue a different career

Manage your own business

Prospective students

100%

50%

0%

≤22

23-24

25-30

31-39

≥40

Age

Gender

52%

Men

49%

Women

39%

Consider an MBA program

Why?

To acquire in-depth, specialized expertise, such as:

Functional and technical knowledge

Analytical and data skills

Problem solving and critical thinking

What can I do with it?

Qualify for higher level positions

Acquire industry-related or functional skills

Explore possible career options

Prospective students

100%

50%

0%

≤22

23-24

25-30

31-39

≥40

Age

Gender

37%

Men

42%

Women

Region of Citizenship									
Region	Western Europe	USA	Middle East	Latin America	Eastern Europe	Central and South Asia	Canada	East and Southeast Asia	Africa
MBA	43%	52%	37%	60%	37%	68%	75%	40%	31%
Business Master's	49%	28%	56%	27%	54%	22%	18%	48%	60%

When do you need both?

You have a specialized business master’s degree. You may need an MBA when you want to:

Transition from a functional role to a general management position

Gain additional career credentials (e.g., applying for a position in an elite consulting firm)

Move into a different industry

Start a new business and need leadership skills

Be promoted from an individual contributor to managerial role

You have an MBA. You may need a specialized business master’s degree when you want to:

Assume leadership role in a functional area such as CFO or CMO (e.g., Master of Finance, Master of Marketing)

Sharpen your skills in a changing economy (e.g., Master of Data Analytics)

Start a new business (e.g., Master of Entrepreneurship)

Studying a master’s in business will boost your career or help you get that dream job in a specific field. Your GMAT® score is good for five years and keeps every possible option open—most top schools around the world require it for the MBA and recommend it for other master’s.

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