



**Talent and
Opportunity
Scholarship**



**GMAT
Scholarship
Award winners
and runners-up**



Graduate
Management
Admission
Council™

GMAT™

The Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) is delighted to share the stories of the ten outstanding recipients of the GMAT™ Talent and Opportunity Scholarship 2024 (Europe).

Selected from over **200 applicants across 23 countries**, the winners share one defining trait: they are global problem solvers. Each of them has committed to addressing a significant challenge, whether that challenge affects their own community or us all worldwide.

The deserving winners will be awarded a scholarship that includes a voucher to cover the full cost of the GMAT Exam; a GMAT Official Practice Exam package and a meditation application subscription. In addition, thanks to the generosity of industry partners, winners will receive a GMAT preparation course with a GMAT instructor, sessions from a professional admissions consultant, and an online cultural course for applicants who plan to study abroad. The total value of the scholarship is close to €4,500.

With such a strong field this year, GMAC is rewarding seven runners up with a GMAT Official Guide to help with their exam preparation.

"We want to thank each of our sponsors for their valuable contribution to making this scholarship possible. Scholarships like this help to address the disparities that exist within business schools today, however, the work doesn't stop here. More must be done to create inclusive environments where all talented individuals have the opportunity to thrive, ensuring a brighter and more equitable future for the entire business community."

said Nalisha Patel, Regional Director for Europe at GMAC.



Scholarship purpose

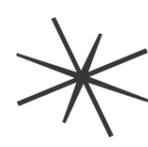
Launched in 2022, the annual **GMAT Talent and Opportunity Scholarship**, aims to promote inclusivity within graduate management education and reduce barriers for underrepresented groups.

The scholarship is open to all, but we strongly encouraged applications from **women, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, socio-economically diverse, LGBTQ+ and non-binary candidates.**



“Inequalities and underrepresentation in business and business schools is a profound challenge that hinders innovation and reinforces systemic inequalities. When diverse voices are excluded, we all lose out on the breadth of ideas and leadership needed to drive progress. This scholarship is our commitment to changing that—by opening doors for underrepresented talent, we aim to cultivate a more inclusive business landscape that not only reflects the richness of our society but also strengthens it for the better.”

said Nalisha Patel, Regional Director for Europe at GMAC.



Where ambition and talent meet inclusivity

The 2024 GMAT scholarship winners represent a diverse group of global problem solvers committed to making a meaningful impact in areas like healthcare, finance, diversity, and environmental sustainability. These exceptional individuals have been awarded comprehensive support to pursue their educational goals, reflecting their dedication to using business education as a tool for positive change.

The scholarship is made possible in part by our generous sponsors: **700+ Club, CoVent Prep, Dia Gerontoudi Prep Center, English Business Services (EBS), GMAT Amsterdam, Your GMAT Coach, Fortuna Admissions, and CulturaGo.**



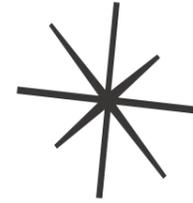
We thank our industry partners for their valuable contribution.



The winners

Students:

Alex Sarshar
Ana Fuentes
Anastasiya Rozenbaum
Helen Poon
Leon Melzer
Phillip Siwila
Rebecca Byström
S. Varma
Sofiia Talakh
Tomas Malchus





From:
**South Asia, living
in United Kingdom**

Expertise:
Finance

Ambition:
**Promote diversity and inclusion and
drive change in the corporate world**

Alex Sarshar



My Story



Growing up in three cities across Southeast Asia exposed me to a vibrant mix of cultures and perspectives. By the age of 16, I had attended five different schools, making friends from diverse backgrounds. My mixed ethnicity gave me a unique appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusivity.

At the University of Oxford, I discovered my passion for finance. Alongside this, I learned to find a balance between my purely academic pursuits, my fundraising work and other extra-curricular roles and responsibilities. Since joining the world of finance, I have enjoyed working directly on low-carbon and renewable projects supporting the energy transition.

I am eager to pursue my studies at a top-tier business school to deepen my understanding of finance and learn from a diverse, internationally-minded community. My goal is to leverage this knowledge to drive positive change in the corporate world, fostering success for all in a more inclusive global environment.

Judges' commentary:

"Alex has consistently demonstrated a profound commitment to cultural diversity and inclusivity. His proactive efforts in fostering community engagement, passion for sustainable finance, and advocacy for mental health reflect their dedication to creating positive change in multiple areas."



Ana Fuentes



From:
Mexico

Expertise:
Healthcare and medical science

Ambition:
Bridge the gap between medicine and business



My Story



I was born and raised in Mexico City, and I have two brothers and two loving parents. At 17, I was accepted into medical school. I spent nearly a year researching in the vascular surgery department at the Mayo Clinic. After earning my medical degree, I completed my mandatory community service with a foundation that provides quality education to low-income children in Mexico City. I love sports, especially triathlon and cycling. I aim to combine my medical knowledge and field experience with an MBA to further contribute to the healthcare industry.

Judges' commentary:
"Ana's rigorous medical training in Mexico and healthcare research experience in the USA ignited her interest to drive impactful changes in the medical field by bridging the gap between medicine and business."



From:
Netherlands

Expertise:
**Healthcare, biomedicine
and biomedical engineering**

Ambition:
**Passionately committed to bridging
the gap between cutting-edge
biomedical engineering innovations,
medical discoveries, and patient care
through entrepreneurship**

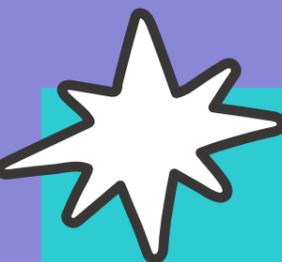
Anastasiya Rozenbaum

My Story

Growing up in a multicultural family and overcoming socio-economic challenges has cultivated in me a habit of leadership, engaged community citizenship, and a deep appreciation for diversity and inclusion, which I aspire to foster during my MBA and in my future leadership roles. My professional journey spans healthcare, management, technology, and leadership in the humanitarian sector across Africa, Europe, and Asia. Furthermore, I have conducted state-of-the-art research in biomedicine and biomedical engineering with a focus on cardiovascular applications in several laboratories across the globe, including the University of Oxford. I am committed to making a tangible impact on healthcare and advancing its quality and delivery through transformative innovation. I aspire to address healthcare disparities by bridging the gap between the groundbreaking scientific advancements and undeserved communities. During my MBA, I am also eager to expand my social-impact efforts, and inspire and empower women to pursue entrepreneurship careers and leadership roles.

Judges' commentary:

"Anastasiya has demonstrated remarkable leadership and resilience in overcoming socio-economic challenges. With a diverse background in healthcare, technology, and humanitarian work, Anastasiya is dedicated to advancing healthcare quality, access, and inclusion globally."



From:
United Kingdom

Expertise:
**Economics, Finance,
and M&A Investment**

Ambition:
**Improve representation
and women's experiences in finance**

Helen Poon



My Story



I am an M&A Investment Associate at Accenture, specializing in M&A, minority investments, and strategic partnerships in the technology and business services sectors. With a strong background in valuation modelling and strategic advisory, I have successfully led due diligence processes and complex negotiations, showcasing my leadership by managing analysts and collaborating across international teams. Previously, as an Investment Associate at the Financial Times and an Investment Banking Analyst, I supported major M&A and IPO transactions, further honing my financial expertise.

I hold a BA in Economics with First Class Honours from Durham University, where I conducted a data analysis dissertation on US renewable energy policy. Passionate about public speaking and legal and organizational systems, I plan to leverage my MBA experience to excel in speaking competitions and deepen my understanding of these areas, enhancing my strategic capabilities in the business world.

Judges' commentary:
"Helen's leadership and strategic expertise in finance are matched by her strong advocacy for representation and inclusion. Her commitment to enhancing financial literacy and promoting diversity in the workplace highlights her dedication to making a meaningful impact."

Leon Melzer



From:

Germany

Expertise:

Psychology and medical technology

Ambition:

Drive innovation at the intersection of healthcare and technology, fostering empathy and resilience in leadership



My Story



I'm Leon Melzer, a dedicated Psychology student with a deep interest in understanding human behavior. My journey has taken me from healthcare to psychology, where I've developed a passion for innovation and strategic thinking. I believe in the power of teamwork and community, values I've embraced through various leadership roles. My experiences have taught me the importance of cultural diversity and global collaboration, shaping my perspective on the world. I am eager to pursue business school to combine my love for understanding people with business strategy, aiming to lead a company that values both its human and business aspects. My commitment to learning, leadership, and innovation drives me to make a positive impact in the world.



Judges' commentary:
"Leon's family influences and educational pursuits in healthcare, medical technology, and psychology have instilled resilience, innovation, and empathy in him – a unique and balanced set of qualities that will serve him well at business school."



From:
**From Zambia living
in United Kingdom**

Expertise:
Electrical Engineering

Ambition:
**Develop sustainable growth
strategies in renewable energy**

**Phillip
Siwila**



My Story



I am a licensed Professional Electrical Engineer with extensive expertise in decarbonization, system planning, and investment for electric power utilities in the UK, having previously led technical projects across Africa. My focus includes renewables, power system performance, grid resilience, and modeling to improve energy access for national development. I hold a BEng in Electrical Power Engineering and Electrical Engineering and was a Global Health Fellow in 2016/17.

At business school, I want to learn more about leadership, inclusion, negotiations, finance, and marketing to help me dissect complex problems, evaluate alternatives, and make informed choices. Post-MBA, my goal is to drive grid decarbonization and significantly impact the renewable energy industry. I aim to empower electric power utilities and renewable energy generation companies globally and in emerging markets to develop strategies for sustainable growth, enhance energy access, drive capital productivity, and achieve digital transformations.

Judges' commentary:

"Growing up with periods of hardship, Phillip's experiences have shaped his aspirations to redefine the energy sector. He is now determined to drive meaningful change through inclusive leadership to develop impactful and sustainable energy solutions."



Rebecca Byström

From:
Sweden

Expertise:
Finance and Accounting

Ambition:
**Deepen expertise
in international finance**



My Story

I recently completed my Bachelor of Science in Business and Economics, specializing in Finance and Accounting, at the Stockholm School of Economics. Throughout my studies, I have gained practical experience by working at a venture capital firm and participating in insight programs at financial institutions such as Morgan Stanley and Nordea. These experiences have equipped me with a comprehensive understanding of the tools and concepts covered in my academic coursework.

Before my business studies, I studied Mandarin Chinese for one year. My longstanding interest in finance and international relations has driven me to engage with non-governmental organizations and national boards, including the Young Shareholders Association and the European Youth Parliament in Sweden.

My future aspiration is to pursue a master's degree in Finance in Asia, where I aim to deepen my expertise in international finance, particularly in this dynamic and significant region of the global economy.

Judges' commentary:
"Rebecca's personal circumstances has shaped who she is today, enabling her to develop determination and resilience. Her international experiences and academic achievements demonstrate her capacity to enrich and inspire others."



From:
United Kingdom

Expertise:
Finance

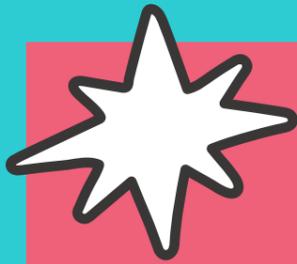
Ambition:
**Drive diversity and inclusion
in consulting and business**

S. Varma

My Story

I graduated in Theology and Religion from Oxford in 2020. I enjoyed learning about languages, ancient cultures and different traditions. My current career has led me to working in the civil service advising governments on technology, digital transformation and procurement projects. My ambition is to join a business school in the USA to pivot into a business orientated role, expand my network and immerse myself in another country. I spend my time volunteering at a school in India, with legal charities and playing cricket. I would like to thank the GMAC judging panel for their vote of confidence in my potential.

Judges' commentary:
"S.Varma's rich multicultural experiences, from studying at Oxford and lecturing in Japan to working with diverse governments, shape his unique perspective. His entrepreneurial ventures and dedicated volunteering reflect a deep commitment to social impact and innovation."



From:
Ukraine

Expertise:
International Economic Relationships & Finance

Ambition:
Promote democratic value and apply best practices learned abroad to support Ukraine's development

Sofiia Talakh



My Story

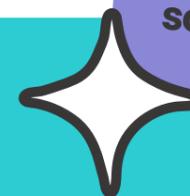


My name is Sofiia Talakh, currently I am in the last year of my bachelors degree in Kyiv National University of Taras Schevschenko, where I study International Economic Relations/ Finance. I am from Kyiv and live, study and work in Ukraine now.

I am really passionate about finance, I have finished many courses from CFA, and on Coursera, I completed finance and accounting schools (by Deloitte, PwC, EY, KPMG). I am also passionate about diplomacy and was a member of politico-diplomatic club. I worked as an auditor in Deloitte and gained valuable experience there, including preparation for ACCA and completed IBK by London School of Business and Finance. I also had an internship in analytical centre ADASTRA. My experience includes participation in scientific conferences and forums.

My dream is to obtain a business master's degree at a top European business school in Finance and related subjects. I am eager to continue my GMAT preparation to support my application.

Judges' commentary:
"Sofiia's diverse experiences and deep passion for finance and diplomacy highlight her resilience and commitment. Her background in Kyiv, combined with her academic achievements and work in challenging conditions, equips her to bring a unique and inspiring perspective to a business school community."



Tomas Malchus



From:
**From Czech Republic,
living in Germany**

Expertise:
Economics

Ambition:
**Create an inclusive and positive
learning environment through
genuine engagement**



My Story



Over my lifetime I've developed a deep appreciation for diverse cultures, growing up in the former Eastern Block and moving to Germany to pursue my studies. The last years have taught me financial independence and resilience, but foremost, empathy and emotional maturity on a personal level. You may never know when an illness may get to you before it's too late.

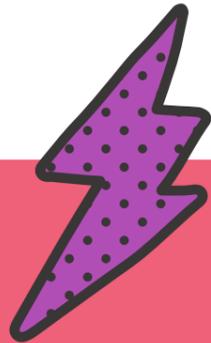
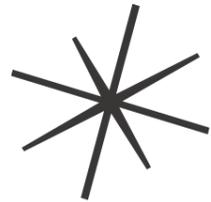
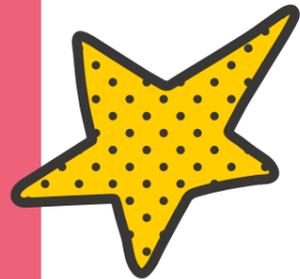
At business school, I'd love to contribute those qualities to the class, and leverage my past experience in order to create an inclusive and positive learning environment. There's always a story behind every single person and I believe that we all can learn so much from one another.



Judges' commentary:
"Tomas's adaptability, resilience and empathy, shaped by diverse life experiences, exemplify the belief in paying it forward. His special character will undoubtedly contribute to business school through genuine engagement and shared human stories."



The runners up



Students:

Minni Laukka
Yukta Raj
Jamie Yeo
Carla Espallardo
Lauraine Liu
Kelly Allen
Praveen Nair



Student:
Minni Laukka
From:
Finland
Expertise and ambition:
Business administration, global perspective, cultural awareness, inclusivity advocate



Student:
Yukta Raj
From:
Spain
Expertise and ambition:
Economics, finance, computer science, entrepreneurial, cross-cultural exposure diversity and inclusion advocate



Student:
Lauraine Liu
From:
France
Expertise and ambition:
Computer science, innovation, adaptability, strategic thinking, global perspective



Student:
Kelly Allen
From:
Netherlands
Expertise and ambition:
Private equity, international experience, embraces diversity, adaptability



Student:
Jamie Yeo
From:
Germany
Expertise and ambition:
Consulting, international experience, collaborative, compassionate



Student:
Carla Espallardo
From:
Spain
Expertise and ambition:
Multidisciplinary education, consulting, social impact, leadership skills, multilingual, cross-cultural experience



Student:
Praveen Nair
From:
United Kingdom
Expertise and ambition:
Computer science, entrepreneurial mindset, promoting inclusivity and diverse perspectives



Congratulations to our winners



**Applications for the 2025 Scholarship
will open in March 2025.**

Keep updated on [www.mba.com/
how-to-apply/scholarships-and-financing/
gmat-talent-and-opportunity-scholarship](https://www.mba.com/how-to-apply/scholarships-and-financing/gmat-talent-and-opportunity-scholarship)

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