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Your Early Profile

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Introduction



A big congratulations is in order! You've taken a major step towards getting an MBA or a graduate business degree by visiting mba.com. There are so many opportunities out there for someone as ambitious and successful as you.

Business school provides you with the leadership skills, business knowledge, and networking opportunities that are valuable to your career. With an MBA or other graduate business degree, you'll gain a competitive edge in the job market, command a higher salary, and enjoy new and challenging opportunities. You've worked hard to get where you are. Now it's time to take the next step.



Your Early Profile

Whether business school has been on your mind for years or you have only recently become interested, the first step to any successful MBA or graduate business school application is developing a crystal-clear understanding of why you want to go. You will be asked this question in your short answers, essays, and interviews. It's crucial to be convinced that you want that degree, before you can begin to convince the admissions committee to admit you.

There are, of course, many great reasons for pursuing an MBA or graduate business degree. In the 2017 GMAC Alumni Perspectives Survey, 86% of respondents said business school prepared them for leadership positions, 86% said it prepared them for their chosen career, and 82% agreed it increased their earning power. In addition, an overwhelming number of respondents (95%) rated their business school degree as having a good to outstanding value. You will rarely, if ever, meet someone who regrets getting an MBA or graduate business degree.

Why do I want a graduate business degree?

! To-Dos Covered:

- Develop your answer to ‘Why b-school?’

Different applicants will have varied reasons for going to graduate business school. Some common reasons we see are:

- **To build skills in specific business functions (e.g., marketing, operations)**
- **To gain leadership and management skills**
- **To find a job with a greater social impact**
- **To increase earning potential**
- **To switch to a job in a different sector or industry**
- **To gain international exposure and a global perspective**
- **To gain access to employment opportunities in another country**
- **To help start a new business**

... and many more

Whatever your motivations are for applying to business school, make them specific. Rather than just saying you want to build skills, know which specific skills you want to build and what kind of job or company you would like to apply those skills to after business school. Also, have a clear idea of which resources provided by business schools will help you – courses, clubs, hands-on projects, etc. In other words, make sure you have a clear understanding of how getting an MBA or graduate business degree will help you accomplish your career goals.

Attending b-school will have an impact on your personal life, including your personal development, time, location, finances, and family. Now is also a good time to define your personal goals as they relate to getting a graduate business degree.



TRY IT OUT:

State the reason you want to get an MBA below. Then, reference this answer as you work on your application and practice saying it with confidence as you prepare for your interviews.

Why do I want an MBA or graduate business degree (and which specific elements of the program will help me accomplish my career goals)?

Is now the right time for me to apply?

! To-Dos Covered:

- Develop your answer to 'Why now?'

Pursuing an MBA or graduate business degree is a major life decision. There are many considerations and possible changes to your life as you take the initial steps toward earning your degree. For example, if you pursue a full-time, two-year MBA, you will likely leave your job and potentially move to a new city. Conversely, a part-time program could allow you to stay in a job you love, but could pose challenges with time-management. That's why it is important to consider the impact an MBA may have and determine if now is the right time to consider making these changes.

Answering these three questions can help you decide whether now is the right time to apply.

- 1.** Is now the right time in your professional life? What are your career objectives? Are you unsure if your current job or company can help you achieve those goals? Or do you love your job and your current employer is encouraging you to apply to school in order to gain new skills?
- 2.** Is now the right time academically? Do you have the discipline and drive to be a full-time student for up to two years, or the time-management skills to balance the demands of a part-time program? What education background is preferred for your proposed career? Can you identify gaps in your background, experience, or training that could stop you from reaching your goals?
- 3.** Is now the right time in your personal life? How are you paying for business school or supporting yourself during your studies? How will the decision affect your family? Do you have the flexibility and desire to relocate?

The latest mba.com research indicates that the top two reasons people delay their plans for business school are (1) financial reasons and (2) personal/family reasons. So, it's helpful to think through these questions to understand and determine with confidence that now is the right time. The good news is financial resources, such as scholarships and loans, are more accessible than ever, and our families may be more flexible than we think. Of course, there will never be a perfect time to apply, but even the process of exploring an MBA can teach you a lot about yourself and your career prospects. It's never too early to get this exploration started!

TRY IT OUT:

Similar to the 'Why an MBA?' question, it's helpful to write down your answer to this question for future reference in your essays and interviews. Why am I pursuing a graduate business degree?

TRY IT OUT:

Why is now the right time to pursue an MBA or graduate business degree?

TRY IT OUT:

How will my family life be affected by my decision to attend b-school?

TRY IT OUT:

What level of financial security and income is important to me? How am I going to pay for b-school or support myself during my studies?



TIP:

There are many ways to finance your degree that will lead to a strong “return on investment” – especially if you plan in advance. Consider these [five funding sources](#), but keep in mind that most students use a combination of these options to fund their graduate management education.

Attending b-school will also broaden your horizons and catapult you to a whole new level, leading to major career shifts. Let's think about how your professional life will be impacted and what you envision your career will look like in the future.

TRY IT OUT:

What is my career objective?

TRY IT OUT:

Are there any particular careers where my skills could be especially valuable?

TRY IT OUT:

Why is obtaining a graduate business degree the next step for me? Will it help me get to where I want to go?



TIP:

Check out job functions in which employers place recent graduate business hires and the major skill sets they require for mid-level jobs.

Conclusion

No matter what your career goal is – advancing or changing your current career, starting your own business, or helping those in need – business school can get you there faster. Check out the "[My Schools and Story](#)" guide to help you get started with the process of choosing a program and applying to schools.

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