EssayEdge

MBA
Admission Guide

Learn how to navigate the MBA admission process and ace each part of your application. Get tips and insights that will help you with crafting an impeccable personal statement, recommendation letter, essay and resume.

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How can an applicant maximize their chances of being accepted to an MBA program and what is the most crucial factor that all of the business schools put ahead?

"We look for [potential for future leadership] in terms of certain personal qualities and characteristics that we care about. I'm referring to things like honesty, integrity, maturity, commitment to others, and motivation — some of the things that you might expect and then also some things maybe not so expected like self-awareness, self-esteem, empathy, willingness to take risks, willingness to deal with ambiguity. These are things that we think have helped our graduates and some other business leaders to be successful."

— Harvard Business School

"In general what we're looking for are people who have well thought-out ideas, can express those ideas in an articulate, concise way, and can follow our directions (page limits)."

— The Stern School of Business, New York University

"We're also interested in how they write. The form of the essays can be important, as well as the content. How applicants handle the English language is important—the ability to articulate their thoughts in a clear and concise way."

— Yale School of Management

"I think first and foremost we want to get some sense of the inside of an applicant's head and in particular what it is that is prompting this person to pursue a graduate education in business—what has led them to this point, what they think the MBA will do for them in terms of their educational desires and objectives as well as their career goals."

— The University of Chicago Graduate School of Business

"We're really looking for focus, for people who really do have a sense of where they're headed. That's very, very important! People who cannot fully define their short- and long-term goals (although they may not know the specific job) are probably not ready to apply to a business program. We need to know those goals to determine whether the applicants are realistic and whether Columbia is going to be able to help them reach those goals."

— Columbia Business School

What types of documents you need to prepare

Applying for an MBA is a significant step! Aside from the examinations you need to take, you should also prepare the list of documents for successful admission. Each school has its requirements, but we have prepared the most important documents you should proceed with for applying to university.

1. Undergraduate degree

A bachelor's degree from an institution accredited in the United States or the equivalent internationally is vital for any MBA program. You will have an advantage if you already have a bachelor's degree in a major such as business, accounting, economics, or another related field.

2. Personal statement

The personal statement should demonstrate why you are the best applicant for the specific MBA program. It should be well-written and truthful. The personal statement should be a well-crafted document and originally should be no more than two pages in length.

3. Recommendation letter

These letters should give specific proof about your work experience and personal qualities. Recommendation letters can serve as the most crucial factor in whether a candidate gets admitted. Even if not mentioned it is advisable to include at least two letters of recommendation in your application as they increase your chances of getting admitted. The length of a recommendation letter should not be more than two pages.

4. Statement of purpose

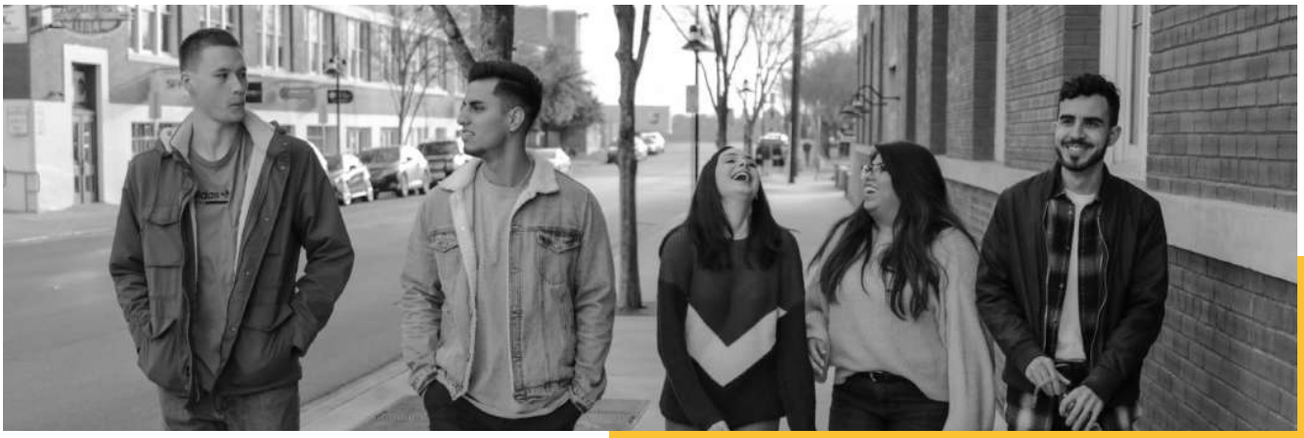
A document of no more than two pages outlining your objectives for pursuing this graduate degree program. You should introduce yourself, your interests and motivations. Be professional and honest in your tone.

5. Resume

Resume is an important part of your application. It should include all information about your professional experience,along with details like positions held, achievements and scope of work. Internships and part-time employment may be included

6. Essay

The business school essay is an integral part of an application process. You can be assigned a topic for your essay or you can choose from a shortlist of provided topics. Make sure to highlight your best qualities, ability to overcome obstacles, demonstrate your leadership skills or clearly define your goals. The length of an essay is usually stated by the school you are applying to.



For international students:

If you earned your Bachelor Degree in a country whose official language is not English, you must demonstrate English proficiency by taking either the TOEFL or IELTS.

Important: *For international students English proficiency proof with scores of 550 to 600 (paper) and 213 to 250 (computer). Most international students from non-English speaking countries have to take TOEFL exam*

For american residents:

The GMAT/GRE is required for the majority of MBA programs. Most business schools require the exam and place a major emphasis on it in the admissions process.

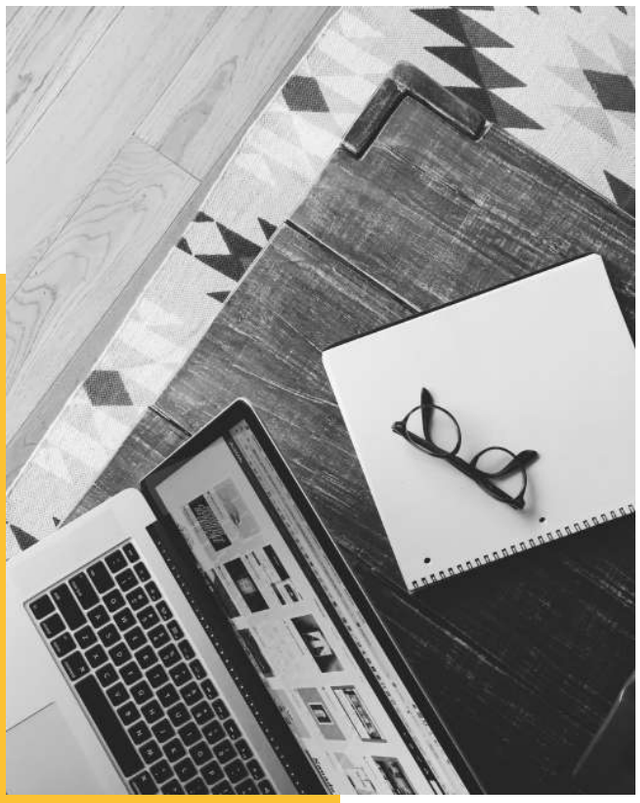
If you have less than two years of professional experience, you must earn a score of at least 500 on the GMAT or at least a 304 on the GRE. Scores are considered official when sent by the testing center directly to your school.

Personal Statement

The hardest part of writing a great personal statement for your MBA application is deciding where to start. It takes a little confidence, some creativity, and a clear plan for the structure of the essay. These tips will help you plan and write your own successful MBA personal statement.

1. Begin with a story that tells the reader something about you that they haven't learned from the rest of your application.

You could write about your decision to pursue a different career path, based on your work experience. Do the words 'big data' or 'supply chain' make your heart beat faster? Exposure to different fields is a good way to find a new passion.



For example, you could write about an assignment to a team working on a data analytics project that piqued your interest in learning more about the field.

2. Tell a story about you at work.

Make the story interesting with details that emphasize your good business sense and ability to think on your feet. Show your actions in the most positive light. This is an opportunity to tell the reader who you are, beyond the admissions file with all the standardized transcripts, test scores, and letters of recommendation. The way to do this is to share something about yourself that they will not learn from other parts of the application.

Let your personality and business acumen shine through your words. Be concise, specific, and personal in your writing style. Give the reader enough specifics to understand the importance of the story but to leave them wanting to know more about you.

3. Now that you have their attention, tell the university why you want to pursue their MBA degree.

Share your long-term career goals and name the concentration you are interested in and why. For example, you could specialize in finance to work in the healthcare field, especially if that is where your current experience is. Share your knowledge by speculating on the growth outlook or future challenges for the healthcare industry.

> **Having a plan and good writing skills will make your MBA personal statement great.**

4. Finally, why are you a good fit for this program?

You have the freedom here to tell the reader exactly how you will contribute to their program. You can seal the deal by summarizing what you have to offer the cohort. This is where your confidence comes in and your creativity explodes in selling yourself: what will you bring to the table? Admissions readers want candidates that will bring solid leadership skills and passion to their MBA program.

Having a plan and good writing skills will make your MBA personal statement great. Proofread your essay, have someone else (friend or professional) read it for content and format, then proofread it again. The personal statement should give the reader a great impression of you and the value you will bring to the cohort. Good luck with your application!

MBA Essay

MBA essays are the major component of the application process.
When you think about writing your MBA essay, you should focus on creating a unique and personal essay. This means that your MBA essay should be both distinctive and representative of you.

1. Think of a unique story about yourself that is relevant to your desire to pursue the degree or to your ability to succeed in this field. Relate the story concisely, using humor or drama, as the situation requires. Make sure that the point of the story is well-understood. Do not assume your reader will make a vague connection.

2. Describe your background which has led you to apply to this program. Focus on your work experience, internships, volunteer work, and education. These factors have prepared and encouraged you to apply for this degree.

3. Discuss your short term and long term goals. What do you plan to do with this MBA? Do you see yourself working in a management position at a bank or an accounting firm, as an investment adviser at a brokerage firm, or as a tax specialist or marketing expert in the corporate world? Are your interests oriented to the international markets, the health care management industry, or to the non-profit world? There are many specialties in the business administration department. You should take this opportunity to dream big and let the admissions committee know what you hope to accomplish, following receipt of the MBA.

4. If you have specific professors or courses you are particularly interested in at the university to which you are applying, you can show your interest by including this information.

While each school will have its own specific phrasing, many MBA essay prompts are relatively similar. Because most applicants to MBA programs will apply to 3-5 schools, using the same anecdotes and examples for most of your MBA essays can be a huge time saver. This is not to say that you can use the same essays. You'll still need to tailor each essay according to the specifics of each school's prompt and view that essay within the larger context of your complete MBA essay package. However, you don't need to start from scratch with each school. A thorough brainstorming process will save you time and effort in the long run as you will have already chosen the best examples from your work and life experience to include in your MBA application personal statements.

Don't know how to start with your MBA essay? Get help with our Premier service!
One-on-one approach and strategic advice will take you from outline to the finished essay. With the help of our editors and their rigorous guidance, you will make your candidacy stand out among the rest of the applicants!

Statement of Purpose

When you write your Statement of Purpose for MBA applications, you will want to impress your reader. A Statement of Purpose for MBA admission could be the document in your application which results in an offer of admission to the program.

What are the three most important ways to impress your reader in a statement of purpose for MBA?

1. Write well.

Demonstrate your professional writing skills to the reader. If you use good grammar, strong words which explain your meaning clearly and eloquently, complete sentences with consistent verb tenses, and exhibit your solid command of the language, the reader will be impressed. Also, your statement of purpose for MBA admission will be easier to understand, which means it will be more appealing to the admissions committee.

2. Be unique.

This is your opportunity to make yourself stand out in a crowded field of applicants. Define yourself using creativity. Think about what makes you unique and write about it in your statement of purpose for MBA application. Remember to give examples, tell stories, or share anecdotes which will illustrate your uniqueness. Give details which will differentiate you and make you memorable.

3. Have well-defined long term goals.

The reader will be impressed by a statement of purpose for MBA admission which includes the applicantâ€™s dreams and goals. If you demonstrate that you know what you want to study and why, the committee could be impressed by the amount of research you have done regarding the university and the program to which you are applying. If you include the name of a professor or two, the courses in which you have the greatest interest, or professional groups you plan to join on campus, the statement of purpose will illustrate your tremendous interest in their program. Think about the reasons you are applying to the MBA program and be specific about what you hope to do with the degree. Impress them with your long term planning skills and the fact that you are motivated and determined to acquire the MBA degree.

In summary, the statement of purpose for MBA should be written to impress the reader with your ability to communicate well, your creativity, and your long term goals for a career using your MBA.

Resume

Before getting into an MBA program, you have to do something on top of sending your educational documents. You need to create a high-quality resume to help increase your chances of being accepted. So, in this article, you'll learn how to craft a CV for applying to an MBA program. Apart from that, we get more specific and show you how to write a resume as a student with work experience, and as one without it.

How to Write an MBA Resume for a Student with Work Experience

When applying for an MBA program, it is essential to highlight your work experience, if you have it. That said, here is a step-by-step guide to help you craft that perfect document.

1. Adopt the Perfect Structure

Before crafting an MBA CV, it helps to settle on the ideal structure/format. This way, you will make it easier for the admission panel to skim through your document, especially since they always have to review tons of MBA applications. So, how do you achieve this? Pick and work with an excellent MBA CV template. After that, subdivide your CV into several sections, namely:

- Contact details
- Professional profile
- Work experience
- Education
- Skills (optional)
- Awards, certifications, additional achievements

For each part of your MBA CV, be sure to use the reverse-chronological format, where you start a list with your latest employment/accomplishment. However, note, if you are instructed to use a specific MBA Word resume structure, be sure to abide by the guidelines that are provided.

2. Write Your Professional Profile

As an experienced applicant, a professional profile will enable you to highlight your qualifications and experience. This info is put at the top of the CV under the heading – "Professional Profile." It should be brief but informative.

3. List Your Work Experience Well

List your gigs in reverse-chronological order. Begin with your present or latest role and work your way back.

Provide at most five bullets under every role. Use them to highlight what sets you apart and the accomplishments you attained.

Quantify if possible. For example, instead of "boosted sales," you could say "increased sales by 48%."

4. How to Write an MBA Resume for a Student without Work Experience

The majority of business schools go for one-page resumes. So, unless you have vast working experience or a highly significant accomplishment that may take up a lot of words, it's best to stick to a single page.

Now, if you don't possess much or any job experience, your educational background is the next best thing you can talk about. Of course, you still have a bit of work history, such as your undergraduate internship, part-time gigs, and even volunteering. So, always create a section for your working experience. However, since you haven't held a fulltime job in your professional line yet, it's best to put your education before your work history. So, what does a student in this category need to show?

> "Always create a section for your working experience.

5. Structure for an MBA Resume with No Work History

What should your CV consist of? Highlight your:

- **Degree:** mention the name of the undergraduate degree you took
- **University:** give the full name of the institution where you studied
- **Major:** highlight your degree major
- **Minors:** give your minor courses if they apply to the program you want to enroll in
- **Date of graduation:** specific the year you graduated
- **GPA:** if you have a good GPA, ensure you mention it, too.

These are not the only details you can write in the education section. You can go further and detail your favorite courses, academic accomplishments or awards won, extracurricular activities you participated in, etc. Just make sure they are relevant to the program you want to qualify for.

If you don't have much experience, you can also create a skills section (which is an optional part) to sell yourself further. Here are some tips to help you stand out:

- Figure out your selling qualities
- Draw attention to the skills you gained rather than the roles you held
- Look for skills you nurtured from your degree (research skills, pitching experience, etc.)
- Don't leave out your obvious talents.

6. Putting It All Together

Now, you know what structure to follow when writing your CV if you have job experience or you don't. Always remember, there's a lot you can talk about in your resume. So, never leave a blank space. Lastly, make your CV as concise as possible. One or two pages, depending on your job experience, is enough.

Recommendation Letter

You're cruising through your applications for business school and then you arrive at the MBA recommendation letters. Most schools today require 2-3 letters from people who are able to persuasively describe your qualifications for business school. While you might think that this is an area of your application over which you no control, you actually play an essential role in ensuring that your recommender provides you with the best recommendation letter possible.

What makes a great MBA recommendation letter? The very best ones do a comprehensive job of painting a vivid picture of who you are as an individual, intellectual, and professional. They highlight your various strengths; the qualities, skills, and perspectives you would contribute to the program and school; and your well-defined goals for the future. In a world of straight-A students, business hotshots, and perfect GMAT scores, a well-written and convincing recommendation letter can really make you stand out from the competition and convince the Admissions Committee that you are a top candidate for their esteemed MBA program. This is truly a critical part of your application.

First and foremost, you need to pick the right people to write these letters. Getting a great letter of recommendation begins with developing strong relationships. This is by far the most important factor in securing a strong letter. People writing a recommendation for you need something to say, and they can write more convincingly if they really know you. Follow directions. If the application asks for a professional reference, then ask someone you have worked with for over the past few years – a supervisor, teammate, etc. Someone who has seen you in action and who knows how you perform at your very best. In general, avoid asking family or friends to provide personal references, unless the application specifically indicates this is okay. Also, the position or rank of the person writing the letter can make a difference in some cases, but ultimately, you should select someone who knows you well and who can write a strong letter versus someone who is in a more senior position but doesn't know you very well.

Here are some general tips for the "ask:"

- Ask the person far in advance. They are much more likely to agree to write the letter if they have several weeks to write it versus a few days. Respect their time and busy schedules. A minimum of two weeks is optimal. If you do have to ask someone at the last minute, then provide them with a rough draft or outline to help expedite the process.

- Ask politely, ideally in person. This person is doing a big favor for you, so take the time to ask them in person and to express your appreciation, whether it is face-to-face or via email.

- Provide a description of the MBA programs you are applying to and explain why you are interested in them. The recommender can write a stronger letter if he or she is able to present your skills and experiences in a way that aligns them with the program and your professional goals for the future. Offer key talking points if needed.

- Provide your resume, a copy of your application (if appropriate), and your personal statement. These documents contain important information about you that the recommender might be able to incorporate into the letter, making it even stronger.

- Remind the recommender that a good letter should be short – around five paragraphs is perfect. Any shorter than this, they might not be able to fully highlight your strengths and abilities. Any longer than this, the reader might begin to lose interest.

- Follow up with your recommender after about a week, just to check in and to offer additional information if needed. This also serves as a gentle nudge to ensure that this person is continuing to work on the letter so that you meet your deadline.

- Instruct them on how to submit the letter after it is finished. These instructions may already be listed on the actual form, but you should review them with the recommender again just in case.

After the recommender has submitted the letter to the appropriate business school, remember to THANK them. This person probably leads a busy life like the rest of us, and they cared enough about you to take time out of their busy schedule to write this letter for you. A little bit of heartfelt gratitude goes a long way in helping to maintain the relationship into the future.

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