

What is an MBA?

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A Master of Business Administration (MBA) is a graduate degree designed to develop executive-level leadership skills and holistic decision-making capabilities. Beyond its academic and professional merits, an MBA also offers a path for personal growth, self-discovery, and transformation. While you'll gain technical expertise in areas like accounting, marketing, and finance, the program also fosters leadership development.

An MBA is:

- A graduate degree in business.
- Accessible to people with a BA in any field.
- Intended to help you build and grow an organization of any kind.
- A significant investment of time and money.
- A tool for both career advancement and career transition.
- An environment to take risks and explore.

An MBA is not:

- A magic wand that automatically creates new career opportunities.
- A placeholder or something to pursue when you're unsure of your next step.
- A guaranteed path to your dream job or salary.
- An "easy" way to spend a few years -- expect intellectually challenging coursework.

Typical MBA requirements:

- **Test Scores:** GMAT, GRE, or EA (with some schools offering waivers).
- **Academics:** Submission of official transcripts.
- **Recommendations:** 1-2 professional recommendations from someone who knows your work (not academic peers or personal references).
- **Videos:** Short-answer questions to provide additional context to your application.
- **Application Form:** Detailed responses on your bio, academic/work history, school preferences, and possibly behavioral assessments. This is time-consuming, so don't wait until the last minute.

Online vs. in-person MBA

- **Structure:** Online MBAs generally offer more flexibility in scheduling.
- **Faculty Interaction:** In-person programs often provide more direct engagement with faculty through office hours and campus events.
- **Networking:** Whether online or in-person, building connections with classmates and faculty is crucial. If you're in an online program, don't just complete assignments—actively seek out opportunities to connect.
- **Career Support:** If you're considering a career transition, look for programs with robust support from the Career Center. Ensure this support is readily available to online students as well.
- **Financial Considerations:** While online MBAs tend to be less expensive, they may also offer fewer scholarships. Evaluate the return on investment based on time away from the workforce and other commitments.
- **ROI Alignment:** Make sure the MBA aligns with your career aspirations. If your target companies and industries aren't well-represented in a program, it might not be the best investment for your specific goals.

Pursuing an MBA is a rewarding journey, offering both professional advancement and personal development. Your unique background and experiences will enrich whichever program you choose, helping you stand out as a valuable asset to any school or future employer.

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