



Application Trends: Full-Time MBA Programs in Asia and Australia

Introduction

This paper, derived from the Graduate Management Admission Council® 2008 Application Trends Survey Report series, focuses on the responses of full-time MBA programs in Asia and Australia, hereinafter referred to as “Asian” programs. Data presented in this publication are a summary of responses from 11 participating Asian full-time MBA programs—a small fraction of the overall 197-program sample.

Key Findings

- Full-time MBA programs in Asia received an average of 898 applications per program. More applications were submitted to one-year programs than to two-year programs, on average.
- Nearly all participating programs (90%) indicated that they received more applications in 2008 than in 2007. However, 30% of Asian programs received fewer applications from domestic candidates than last year.
- Application volume from foreign citizens was strong according to the 80% of programs that reported more foreign applications in 2008 than last year.
- Seven of 11 reporting Asian full-time MBA programs conducted special recruitment or outreach, all targeting foreign citizens. All programs that actively recruited foreign candidates (100%) reported an increase in foreign application volume.

Program Profile

Six of 11 participating Asian and Australian full-time MBA programs (55%) were two-year programs (Table 1). The same number of programs (55%) reported a relatively small class size, with 100 or fewer students. The majority of programs (73%) begin classes once a year, and five programs (45%) received funds from the government. Based on average media rankings, four of the Asian full-time MBA programs that provided data for the survey (36%) ranked in the top 100 and are classified as first- and second-tier programs.

Table 1. Asian Full-Time MBA Program Profile	
	<i>n</i> = 11
Length^a	
Two-year programs	55%
One-year programs	45%
Total	100%
Tier^b	
First	18%
Second	18%
Third	64%
Total	100%
Class size	
100 students or fewer	55%
More than 100 students	45%
Total	100%
Funding sources	
Receives government funding	45%
Operates with private financing	55%
Total	100%
Enrollment type	
Class begins once a year	73%
Class begins several times a year, including rolling admissions	27%
Total	100%
<p>^{a.} For the purposes of this report, programs with a duration of 18 months or less are classified as one-year, those of 19 months or more are classified as two-year programs.</p> <p>^{b.} For the purposes of this report, full-time MBA programs were classified by tier based on their average media rankings across those published by <i>Business Week</i>, <i>Financial Times</i>, and <i>U.S. News and World Report</i>. First-tier programs are those in the top 50 (1 through 50), second tier are the next 50 programs (51 through 100), and third tier are 101st and lower-ranked or unranked programs.</p>	

Applicants

Six of 10 applicants for full-time MBA programs in Asia were residents (58%) and citizens (60%) of the countries where they applied (Table 2). Data reported by nine programs suggest that about a quarter of applications (26%) were submitted by women—a slightly smaller percentage than that in the United States or in Europe.

By location	<i>n</i> = 10
National ^a	58%
Local	52%
International	42%
Total	100%
By citizenship	<i>n</i> = 10
Domestic	60%
Foreign ^b	40%
Total	100%
^a Includes permanent residents. ^b The term “foreign” is defined by applicant citizenship and is used to refer to any applicant whose citizenship differs from that of the country where they apply. For example, U.S. citizens would be considered foreign by a program in China, and Chinese citizens would be considered foreign by a U.S. program. Foreign applicants include permanent residents of a given country if they do not have the country’s citizenship.	

The majority of applications for surveyed Asian programs (77%) were sent by candidates who were in the workforce for three years or more (Table 3). Half of the candidates (52%) had three to less than six years of work experience.

	<i>n</i> = 10
Less than 1 year	5%
1 year, but less than 3 years	18%
3 years, but less than 6 years	52%
6 years, but less than 10 years	19%
10 years or more	6%
Total	100%

All 11 participating programs reported that applicants this year were either more academically qualified when compared with last year (82%) or were as academically qualified as those who applied last year (18%) (Table 4).

	<i>n</i> = 11
Significantly more academically qualified	18%
Moderately more academically qualified	9%
Slightly more academically qualified	55%
About the same quality as last year	18%
Slightly less academically qualified	—
Moderately less academically qualified	—
Significantly less academically qualified	—
Total	100%
More qualified	82%
About the same	18%
Less qualified	—
Total	100%

Overall Application Trends

On average, full-time MBA programs in Asia received 898 applications per program (Table 5). Although the average number of applications per program reported by Asian programs was greater than that in other world regions, including the United States and Europe, further analysis revealed that the average number of applications submitted to two-year MBA programs in Asia yielded to those submitted to programs in the United States and Europe. However, the average number of applications for Asian one-year MBA programs was the largest among surveyed regions. Based on the data reported by participating programs, one-year programs in Asia received more applications than two-year programs received.

	<i>n</i> = 11
All applicants	<i>n</i> = 11
Mean	898
Median	514
Domestic applicants	<i>n</i> = 10
Mean	578
Median	137
Foreign ^a applicants	<i>n</i> = 10
Mean	385
Median	241
^a The term "foreign" is defined by applicant citizenship and is used to refer to any applicant whose citizenship differs from that of the country where they apply. For example, U.S. citizens would be considered foreign by a program in China, and Chinese citizens would be considered foreign by a U.S. program. Foreign applicants include permanent residents of a given country if they do not have the country's citizenship.	

Nearly all Asian programs (90%) reported that they received more applications than last year, including 40% of those whose application volume increased significantly (Table 6). None of the participating programs in Asia received fewer applications than last year.

Table 6. Change in Asian Full-Time MBA Program Total Application Volume Compared with Previous Year, Percentage of Programs	
	<i>n</i> = 11
Up significantly (21%+)	40%
Up moderately (11–20%)	10%
Up slightly (1–10%)	40%
Flat (no change from previous year)	10%
Down slightly (1–10%)	—
Down moderately (11–20%)	—
Down significantly (21%+)	—
Total	100%
Up	90%
Flat	10%
Down	—
Total	100%

Domestic Application Trends

Although domestic applications accounted for more than half of participating programs' application volume, two programs (20%) experienced a significant decline in the number of domestic applicants, and one program (10%) reported a slight decline (Table 8).

Table 7. Change in the Asian Full-Time MBA Program Domestic Application Volume Compared with Previous Year, Percentage of Programs	
	<i>n</i> = 10
Up significantly (21%+)	30%
Up moderately (11–20%)	—
Up slightly (1–10%)	10%
Flat (no change from previous year)	30%
Down slightly (1–10%)	10%
Down moderately (11–20%)	—
Down significantly (21%+)	20%
Total	100%
Up	40%
Flat	30%
Down	30%
Total	100%

Foreign Application Trends

The vast majority of participating programs (80%), including all programs (100%) that undertook special outreach initiatives to attract foreign applicants, reported increased numbers of foreign applicants this year (Table 8).

Table 8. Change in Asian Full-Time MBA Program Foreign^a Application Volume Compared with Previous Year, Percentage of Programs	
	<i>n</i> = 10
Up significantly (21%+)	40%
Up moderately (11–20%)	40%
Up slightly (1–10%)	—
Flat (no change from previous year)	10%
Down slightly (1–10%)	10%
Down moderately (11–20%)	—
Down significantly (21%+)	—
Total	100%
Up	80%
Flat	10%
Down	10%
Total	100%
^a The term “foreign” is defined by applicant citizenship and is used to refer to any applicant whose citizenship differs from that of the country where they apply. For example, U.S. citizens would be considered foreign by a program in China, and Chinese citizens would be considered foreign by a U.S. program. Foreign applicants include permanent residents of a given country if they do not have the country’s citizenship.	

Special Recruitment and Outreach

Seven reporting Asian full-time MBA programs (64%) conducted special recruitment and outreach efforts to attract applicants, all of them (100%) targeting foreign candidates (Table 9). Unlike programs in other parts of the world whose recruitment efforts of foreign candidates focused predominantly on countries outside of their own world regions, all participating Asian programs that conducted special recruitment of foreign candidates (100%) reported that they actively recruited from other countries within the region. Among countries where Asian programs actively recruited, Japan and South Korea were referred to the most.

Table 9. Involvement of Asian Full-Time MBA Programs in Special Recruitment or Outreach and Their Targeted Population Groups	
	<i>n</i> = 11
Conducted special recruitment or outreach	64%
Foreign candidates	100%
Working professionals	43%
Women	29%
Occupational specialties	29%
Undergraduate students	14%
Underrepresented nationalities	14%
Underrepresented U.S. minorities	—
Military	—
Other groups	—

Offers of Acceptance, Enrollment, and Class Size

On average, participating Asian programs reported that they extended an offer of acceptance to every third applicant (33%) (Table 10). Of those applicants, two in three (67%) were likely to enroll in the program, according to admission professionals' estimates.

Table 10. Asian Full-Time MBA Program Offers of Acceptance and Estimated Enrollment Rates	
Percentage of total applicants that received acceptance offer	<i>n</i> = 11
Mean	33%
Median	40%
Estimated percentage of accepted applicants who will enroll	<i>n</i> = 10
Mean	67%
Median	67%

Similar to the average number of applications per program, the average class size of a typical Asian full-time MBA program (150 students) was larger than those in other surveyed regions (Table 11). In addition, on average, participating one-year MBA programs in Asia that received more applications than those submitted to two-year programs also reported having a larger class size than their two-year counterparts as well.

Table 11. Targeted Size of the 2008–2009 Asian Full-Time MBA Program Entering Class

	<i>n</i> = 11
Average class size	
Targeted 2008–2009 (#)	
Mean	156
Median	100
Actual 2007–2008 (#)	
Mean	150
Median	102
Percentage change (%)	4.0%
Growth plans	
Expect to increase	36%
Do not expect to change	55%
Expect to reduce	9%
Total	100%

Conclusion

The number of participating full-time MBA programs from Asian and Australian business schools combined increased from eight programs in 2007 to 11 programs this year. A greater interest in data sharing among programs in the region allowed us to prepare this special report. GMAC® extends its sincere appreciation to business schools in Asia and Australia that have been supporting the Application Trends research for years as well as to schools that have recently joined our research community. This data excerpt would not have been possible without their contribution.

Findings presented in this paper are based on analysis of the 2008 GMAC Application Trends Survey data. For questions or comments regarding the study findings, methodology, or data, please contact the GMAC Research and Development department at research@gmac.com.

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