



Business School Hiring, Recruitment, and Skills

U.S. Trends in Career Services & Employer Perspectives



Table of contents



Introduction..... 4

Key findings..... 6

MBA hiring trends8

Specialized business master’s MBA recruitment trends..... 18

MBA recruitment trends..... 22

Skills in demand 26

Conclusion.....29

End Notes.....30

About GMAC 31

About Career Services & Employer Alliance..... 31



Introduction

In the wake of new work modality expectations, persistent recession fears, and seemingly exponential advancements in technology, the past five years have seen a significant evolution in how business programs prepare students for the job market. Many institutions have adapted their offerings to better align with industry needs and student preferences. Employers hiring MBA and other business master's graduates have also adapted their practices to better meet the changing landscape and leverage the skills these graduates bring. The goal of this research is to explore how employment of newly minted MBA and other business master's talent in the United States has changed—and what it signals for years to come—from the perspective of career services professionals and corporate recruiters.

To that end, this paper combines the unique perspectives of the career services professionals in the [Career Services & Employer Alliance](#) (CSEA, formerly known as the MBA Career Services & Employer Alliance) network with those of the employers who respond to the Graduate Management Admission Council's (GMAC) annual [Corporate Recruiters Survey](#). Blending these perspectives offers a more holistic view of the core topics presented in this report, including recent U.S. hiring trends of MBA and other business master's talent; changes in recruitment trends in the age of hybrid work and learning; and business skills most in demand among employers.

With this paper's insights, program leadership such as deans and program directors can enhance their strategic initiatives to advance the success of their schools and their students. By aligning the curriculum with market needs and incorporating emerging trends, they ensure that graduates are well-prepared for the job landscape. For instance, understanding which skills are most in demand allows them to adjust courses and training accordingly. Furthermore, this report can inform career services offices' targeted support—such as tailored workshops, networking events, and recruitment fairs that better address industry and student desires—and help identify potential employer partners for strategic partnerships and internship programs. Employers can also take note of on and off-campus recruitment trends and compare their hiring practices to similar organizations.

Methodology

This paper draws on 2019-2024 U.S. data from the annual [CSEA Recruiting Trends Survey](#) and the annual [GMAC Corporate Recruiters Survey](#). Due to the availability of data, this paper focuses only on U.S. programs. Likewise, greater attention is paid to hiring and recruitment trends of MBA graduates than other business master's graduates, though the information about employers' desired skills is applicable to all graduate business school talent.

Respondents to the CSEA Recruiting Trends Survey are career services professionals—individuals employed by business schools who work in career services offices. Meanwhile, the GMAC Corporate Recruiters Survey data is representative of corporate recruiters and staffing firms who seek to hire GME graduates on behalf of their organization or a third-party company.

Both data sources are complementary in understanding GME employment trends but have varying response rates. For example, the GMAC Corporate Recruiters Survey in 2024 had nearly 1,000 respondents, though some crosstabs presented below result in sample sizes less than 30. Some findings from the CSEA survey also drop below 30 respondents, in part because the aim of the survey is largely intended to offer insights about the academic institutions of CSEA members. The analysis in this report will note when sample sizes drop below 30—as caution should be warranted when interpreting results for samples with fewer than 30 responses—though the data can still be helpful in understanding a snapshot of broader groups.

In addition, several external publications are leveraged as secondary sources throughout the paper to add context to the narrative found in the primary CSEA and GMAC data analysis.



Key findings



MBA hiring trends

MBA graduate hiring over the past five years has largely matched employer expectations despite a leveling off of job postings following a post-pandemic hiring peak. Health care and manufacturing sectors demonstrate the strongest hiring plans for MBA talent in the United States, while mid-sized firms outpaced small businesses in hiring these graduates.



Specialized business master's hiring trends

Across degree types, specialized business master's graduates were hired by a greater share of employers than pre-pandemic 2019. The Master of Data Analytics has appealed to the most firms among non-MBA business master's programs over the past five years, while job postings for all U.S. specialized business master's talent have been largely stable after an initial leveling off following a pandemic-related peak in 2021.



MBA recruitment trends

Nearly all employers are increasing their use of virtual and AI-powered platforms for recruitment, information sessions and interviews, offering greater flexibility and reach. However, full-time MBA students' virtual career fair participation has diminished somewhat in recent years amid a resurging interest in in-person recruitment activity.



Skills in demand

Currently, employers prioritize problem-solving, strategic thinking, and communication skills in GME graduates. These competencies are essential for navigating complex business challenges, developing long-term plans, and ensuring effective collaboration within teams. Looking forward, U.S. employers are anticipating a growing focus on leadership, innovation, advanced technological skills, and proficiency with AI tools. As businesses undergo digital transformation and integrate AI into their operations, the ability to drive innovation, manage technological solutions, and leverage AI for data-driven decision-making will become increasingly valuable.



MBA hiring trends

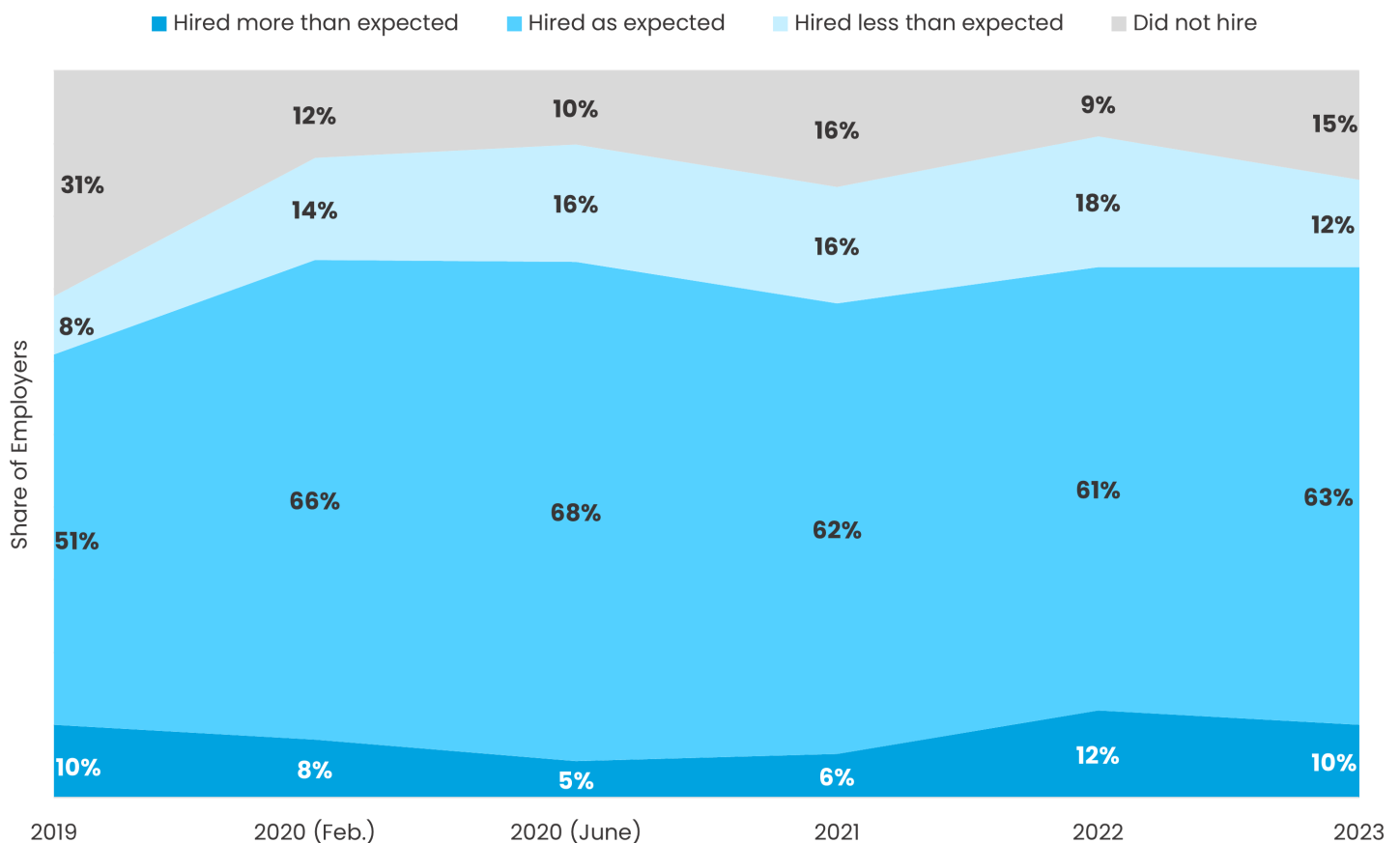
MBA graduate hiring over the past five years has largely matched employer expectations despite a leveling off of job postings following a post-pandemic hiring peak.

Employment rates for MBA graduates remain strong, with top business schools reporting over 90 percent employment within three months of graduation.¹ In the United States, the vast majority of employers report hiring MBA graduates as expected, based on data from the GMAC Corporate Recruiters Survey (Figure 1). In the past year alone, nearly two-thirds of employers hired graduates as expected, though there was a small uptick in the share of employers who did not hire MBA graduates at all.

Figure 1: Over the past five years, a majority of employers reported hiring MBA graduates at the rates they expected.

In 2023, a greater share of employers did not hire U.S. MBA graduates compared to 2022.

U.S. MBA Graduate Hiring Trends, 2019–2023



Source: GMAC Corporate Recruiters Survey 2024

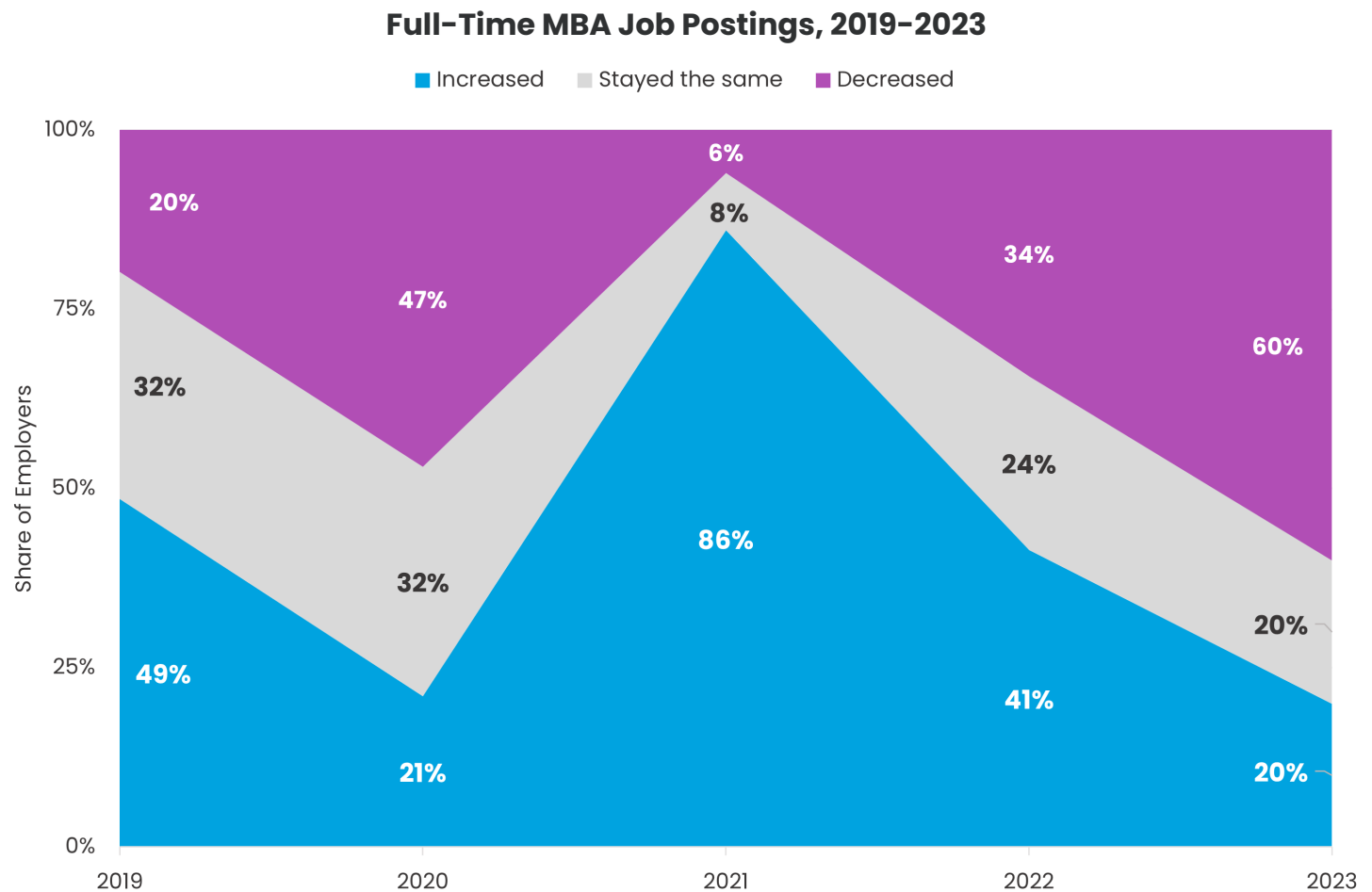
Note: GMAC conducted two rounds of Corporate Recruiters Surveys in 2020 (February-March and June-July) to capture changing perspectives and projections as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conversely, Figure 2 depicts that career services offices have seen year-over-year decreases in the number of job postings for full-time U.S. MBAs since a peak in growth in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 2). When trying to understand what appears to be different realities in the market, it is important to note that neither the GMAC nor CSEA's survey deal in absolute numbers. GMAC's Corporate Recruiters Survey asks how employers hired against their plans, and the CSEA Recruiting Trends Survey asks how job postings changed from the previous year. What this means is that employers could have been planning to hire fewer full-time MBA graduates, which could result in relatively stable numbers in GMAC's Corporate Recruiters Survey as well as decreasing job postings in the CSEA survey.

Still, this possible decline in the immediate employment rates for full-time MBA graduates may reflect broader challenges in the job market. Economic downturns, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic uncertainties, have led many companies to reduce hiring. Organizations tend to become more conservative in their hiring practices during times of economic instability, focusing on essential roles and cutting back on new full-time hires.² More specifically, key industries that traditionally hire MBA graduates, like finance and technology, have faced specific challenges. For instance, the finance sector has seen decreased deal-making activities and job cuts, while the tech sector has experienced significant layoffs after an initial hiring surge during the pandemic.³ The next section digs deeper into industry trends like these.

Figure 2: Fewer career services offices reported increases in full-time MBA job postings in 2023 following a peak in 2021

In 2023, a majority of career services professionals reported year-over-year decreases in MBA job postings.



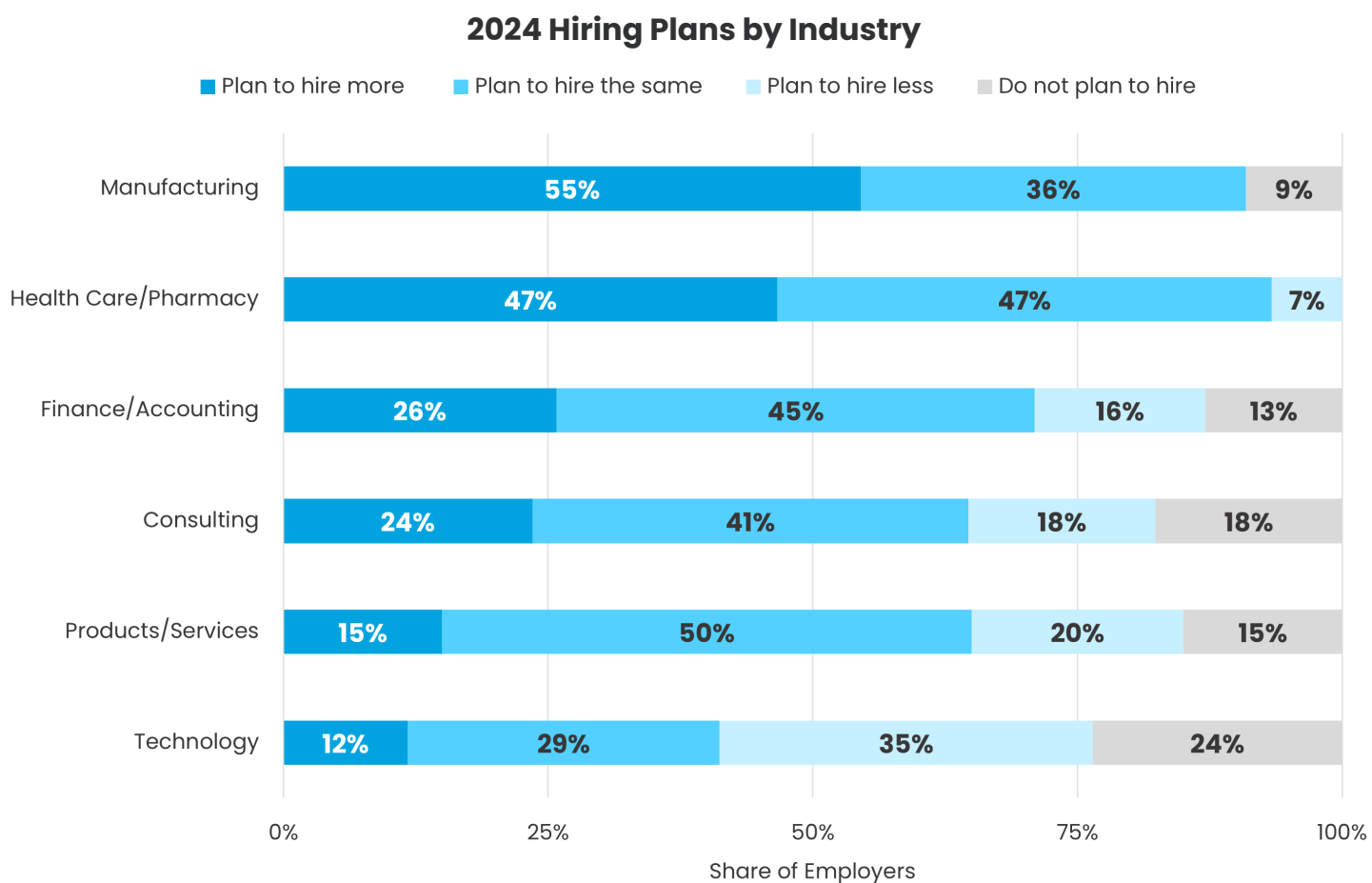
Source: CSEA Recruiting Trends Survey 2024

Health care and manufacturing sectors have the biggest plans to hire more MBA talent.

Knowing that employers are going to post jobs and set hiring trends based on specific needs, the industries that plan to hire can provide important insights. As shown in Figure 3, data from the 2024 GMAC Corporate Recruiters Survey reveals that in most cases, a plurality of U.S. industries plan to hire the same amount in 2024 as they did in 2023. By industry, the most hiring growth potential is in the health care and pharmaceutical sector and in the manufacturing industry.

Figure 3: Plans to expand hiring of MBAs in the United States is most concentrated in the manufacturing and health care and pharmaceutical sectors.

MBA hiring is least optimistic among employers in the U.S. technology industry.



Source: GMAC Corporate Recruiters Survey 2024

Note: There were fewer than 30 responses for employers in each industry except for finance and accounting.

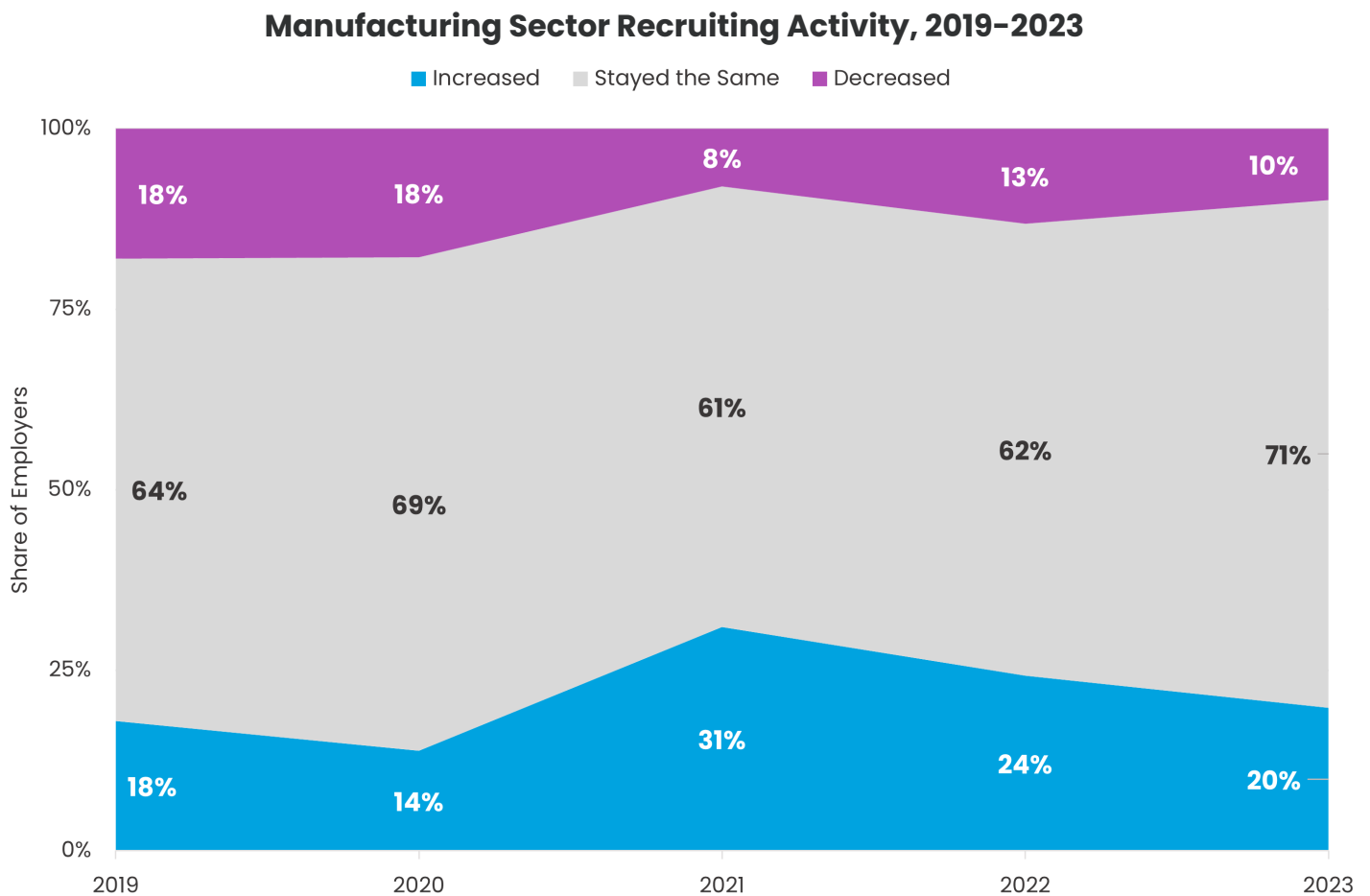
Notably, the health care and pharmaceutical industries experienced a significant increase in hiring driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, which spurred a need for ongoing focus on innovation and management efficiency.⁴ The manufacturing sector has increasingly adopted automation and AI technologies to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance production capabilities. This shift has likely created demand for MBA graduates with expertise in these areas to manage and integrate these technologies effectively.

With a greater understanding of employer plans for 2024 hiring, we looked back at how this might fit into a historical context. According to CSEA data, a plurality of career services offices reported stable recruiting activity (i.e., job opportunities) among manufacturing employers over the past five years. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in global supply chains, prompting manufacturers to reassess and strengthen their supply chain resilience and likely explaining the uptick in recruitment activity in 2021.

Altogether, the health care and pharmaceutical and manufacturing sectors signal increasing demand for MBA talent, reflecting their growing needs for innovation and efficiency. In recent years, the manufacturing sector has shown stable hiring trends—this historic stability, coupled with the sector’s new focus on automation and AI, highlights a sustained need for MBA graduates to manage these advancements.

Figure 4: A plurality of manufacturing employers reported stable recruiting activity among manufacturing employers over the past five years.

The share of career services offices reporting stable hiring in manufacturing employers’ recruitment activity has increased since 2021.



Source: CSEA Recruiting Trends Survey 2024

Note: In 2019, there were fewer than 30 responses about employers in the manufacturing sector.

Mid-sized firms outpaced small businesses in hiring U.S. MBAs, though hiring has been largely stable regardless of company size.

Analyzing hiring trends by company size reveals distinct differences in recruitment practices, role expectations, and the working environment. Large corporations typically offer stability and structured career paths; mid-sized companies can provide dynamic growth and versatile roles; and small businesses and startups often present entrepreneurial opportunities and hands-on experience. CSEA defines small firms as fewer than 100 employees; mid-size companies as those with 100-500 employee; and large organizations as those with more than 500 employees. Understanding these nuances helps MBA graduates align their career goals with the type of company that best fits their aspirations and skills.

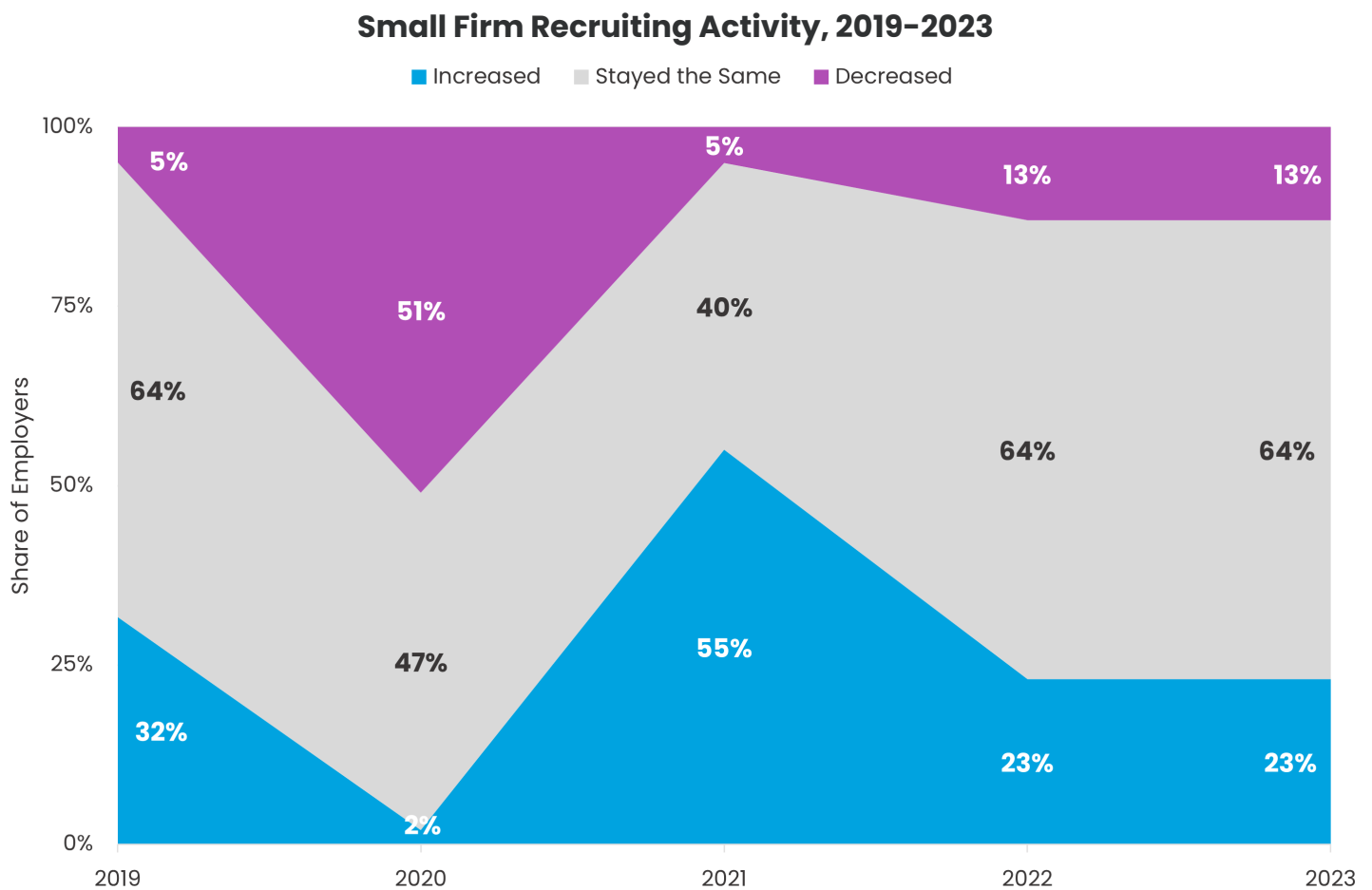




Small businesses and startups offer an entrepreneurial environment that can be very attractive to MBA graduates interested in innovation and business development. These companies often look for MBAs to help with scaling operations, securing funding, and strategic planning.⁵ Small sized organizations depend heavily on personal networks, referrals, and niche job boards. They may also leverage incubators, accelerators, and startup events to find suitable candidates. The CSEA survey data indicates how smaller sized organizations—defined as fewer than 100 employees—have seen fluctuations in their recruiting activity over the course of the past five years (Figure 5). Looking at the most recent years, however, we can see that the majority of the recruiting activity has stayed the same among small businesses.

Figure 5: In 2023 and 2022, nearly two-thirds of small firms had stable recruiting activity of MBA students.

The share of career services offices reporting year-over-year increases in small firms' recruitment activity in 2023 and 2022 is less than a peak in 2021.



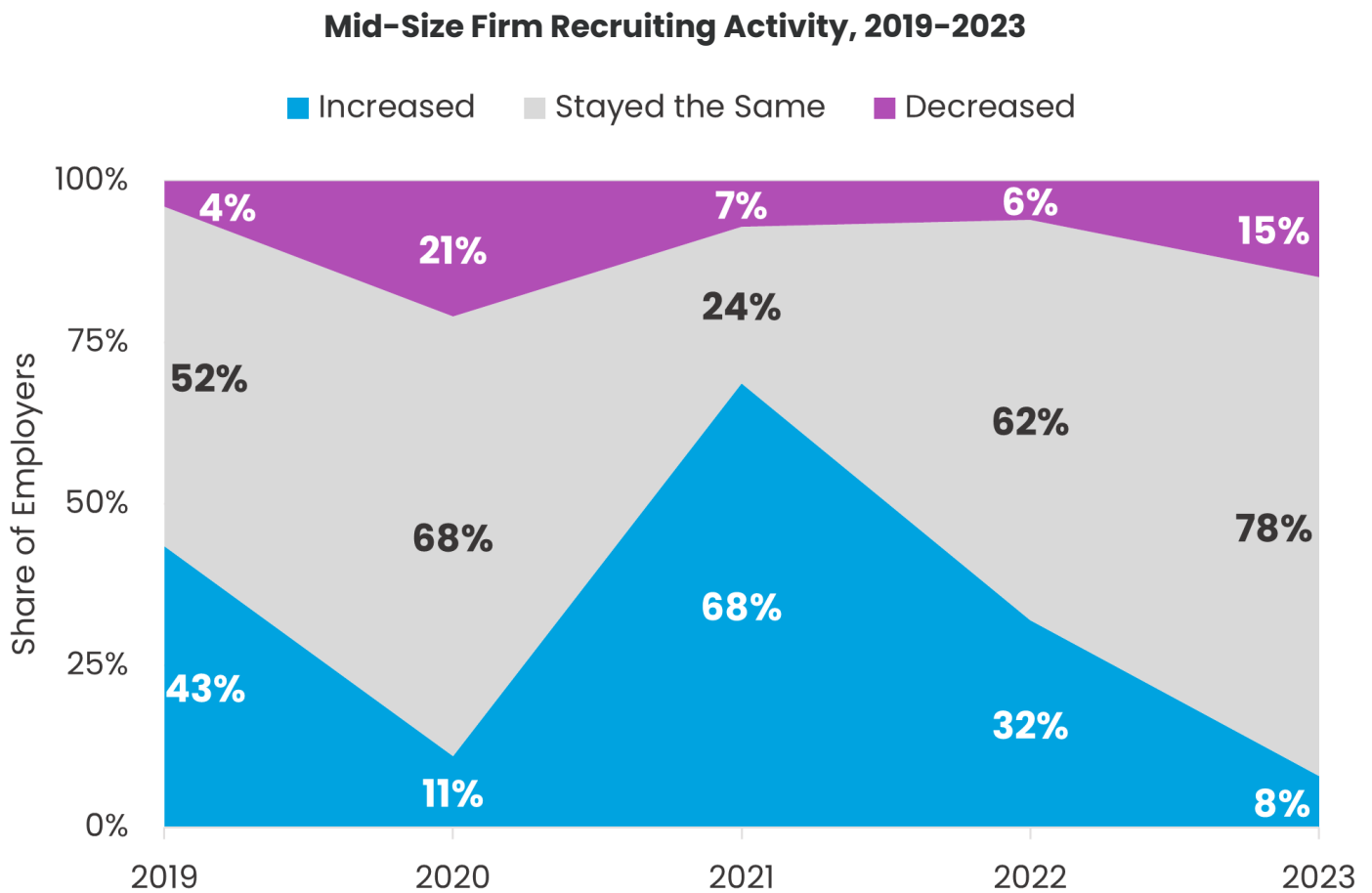
Source: CSEA Recruiting Trends Survey 2024

Note: In 2019, there were fewer than 30 responses about employers from small firms.

Meanwhile, Figure 6 shows that mid-sized firms are most likely to demonstrate stable recruiting activity in 2022 and 2023 despite the fact that firms at this size are often more likely to be in phases of expansion and growth. Typically, this stage necessitates a higher volume of hires to support strategic initiatives, manage increasing operational complexities, and drive business development. They offer more defined roles with clearer career paths, making them attractive to MBA candidates seeking stability and professional growth. The structured nature of these roles, combined with the firms' ability to offer competitive compensation packages, often result in a higher rate of successful hires compared to small-sized firms. Thus, while mid-sized firms may engage in less broad-based recruitment than small firms, their focused approach and greater hiring capacity can lead to a higher number of actual hires.⁶

Figure 6: In 2023, more than three-quarters of medium-sized firms had stable recruiting activity of MBA students.

The share of career services offices reporting year-over-year increases in medium-sized firms' recruitment activity has declined since a peak in 2021.



Source: CSEA Recruiting Trends Survey 2024

Note: In 2019, there were fewer than 30 responses about employers from mid-size firms.



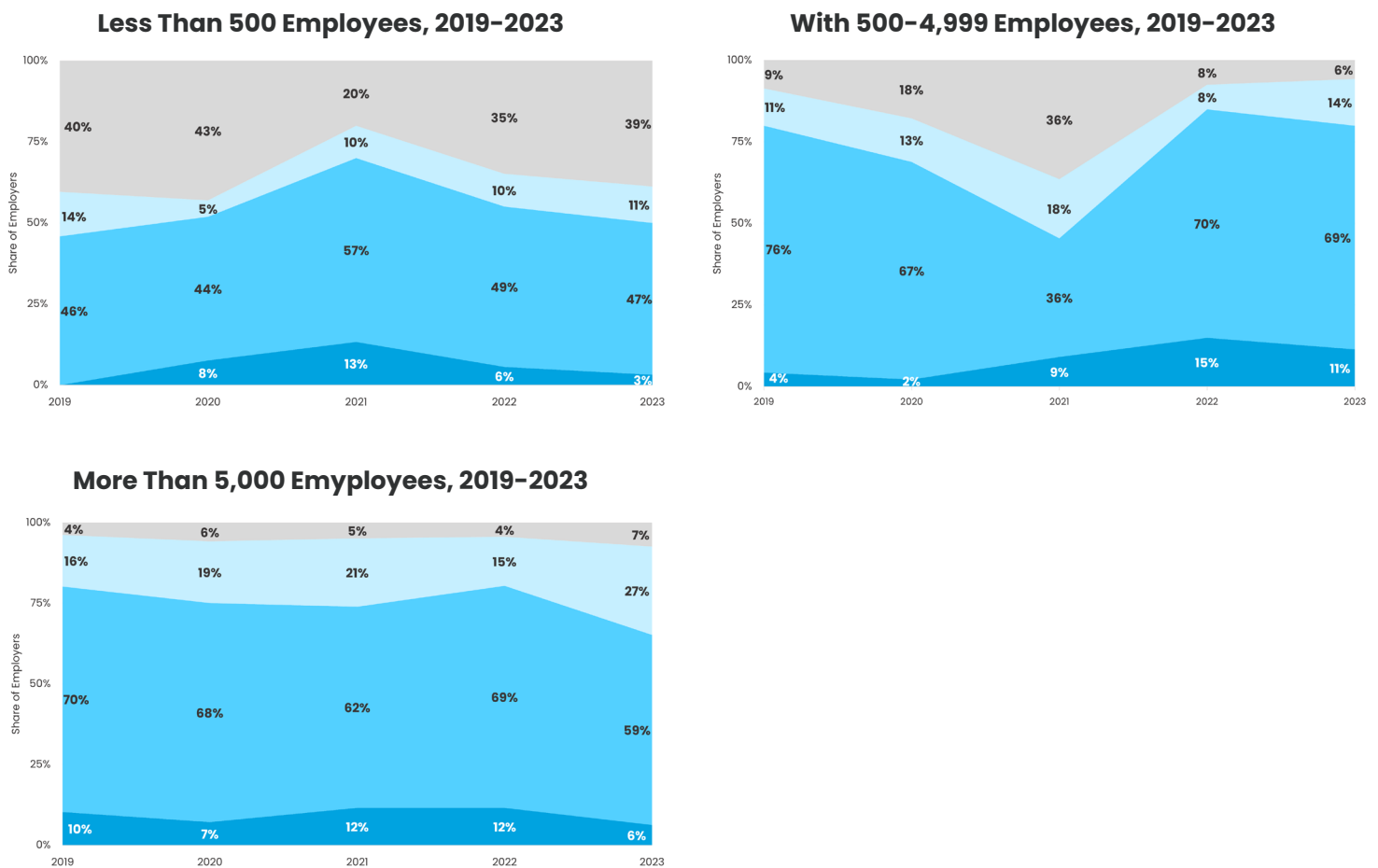
GMAC survey data affirms a trend of largely stable hiring across company sizes (though uses slightly different employee headcounts to define small, medium, and large companies). A plurality of companies regardless of size reported stable MBA hiring in most cases over the past five years (Figure 7). Generally, as company size increases, an organization is more likely to hire MBA talent. However, this is not always the case. In 2023, more mid-size and large companies reported that they hired less MBA talent than expected compared to 2022. In fact, more than a quarter of large companies hired less talent in 2023, which is the largest share in a five-year period. Mid-sized companies also edged out large companies in terms of total hiring in 2023 by just a point.

Figure 7: Large firms have consistently been the most likely to hire MBA talent compared to small and mid-size companies.

A plurality of employers of any size has generally reported stable hiring of MBA graduates over the past five years.

Actual MBA Hiring Results Among Companies

■ Hired more than expected
 ■ Hired as expected
 ■ Hired less than expected
 ■ Did not hire



Source: GMAC Corporate Recruiters Survey 2024

Note: In 2021, there were fewer than 30 responses from mid-sized U.S. companies.

The recruitment and hiring dynamics based on company size reveal nuanced strategies and outcomes in the MBA job market. Small-sized firms typically engage in extensive recruiting efforts to enhance their visibility and attract a diverse pool of candidates. They often participate in numerous job fairs, actively engage in online recruitment, and leverage personal networks and referrals to reach potential hires. Consequently, their recruiting activities might appear more vigorous than their actual hiring outcomes.⁷ In contrast, mid-sized firms tend to adopt a more targeted approach to recruitment. They focus on attracting candidates with specific skillsets and experience levels that align closely with their organizational needs. Additionally, mid-sized and large firms generally have more resources and a larger number of positions to fill, enabling them to hire more MBAs to support their growth and operational demands.⁸ In other words, while small-sized firms are often seen to engage in broader recruiting efforts, mid-sized and large firms tend to actualize more hires—a relatively intuitive disparity that can be attributed to differences in resources, strategic approaches, and hiring capacities.



Specialized business master's hiring trends

Total hiring of U.S. specialized business master's talent is higher than pre-pandemic levels, and the Master of Data Analytics has appealed to the most firms among non-MBA business master's programs.

Graduates of specialized business master's programs are often valued for their focused knowledge and skills that align closely with specific industry needs. Since 2019, non-MBA business master's graduates were hired by a greater share of employers across degree types (Figure 8). Related to the pandemic, most of these degree types saw a dip in total hiring in 2021, followed by an increase in hiring in 2022, with a small leveling off in 2023. Master of Accounting hiring has been the most stable over the past five years, while Master of Data Analytics graduates have been hired by the largest share of employers.

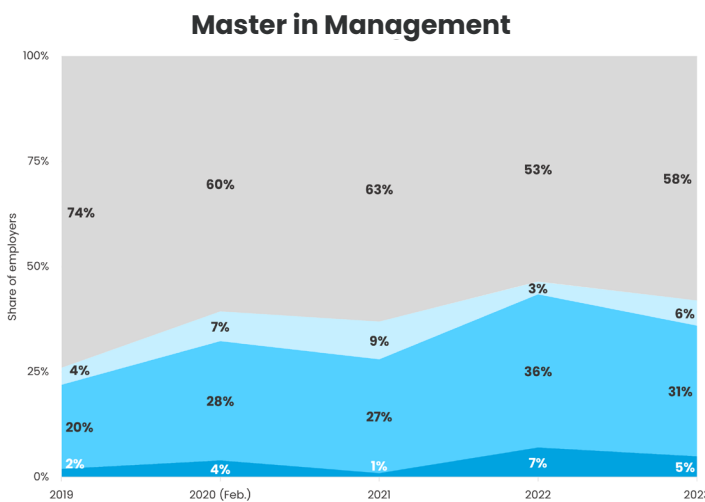
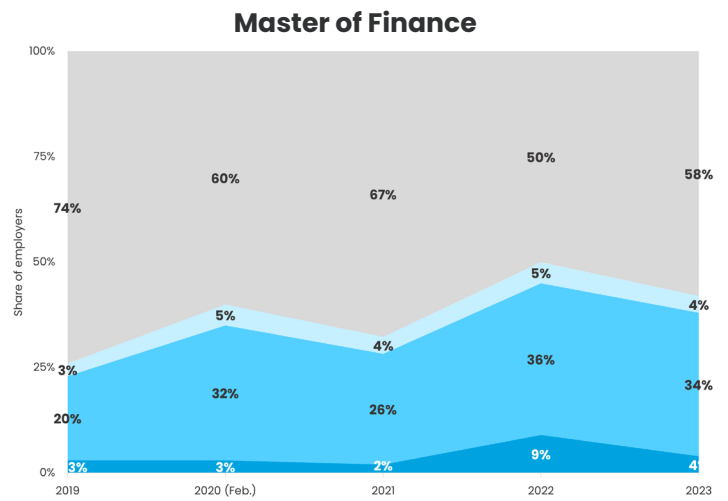
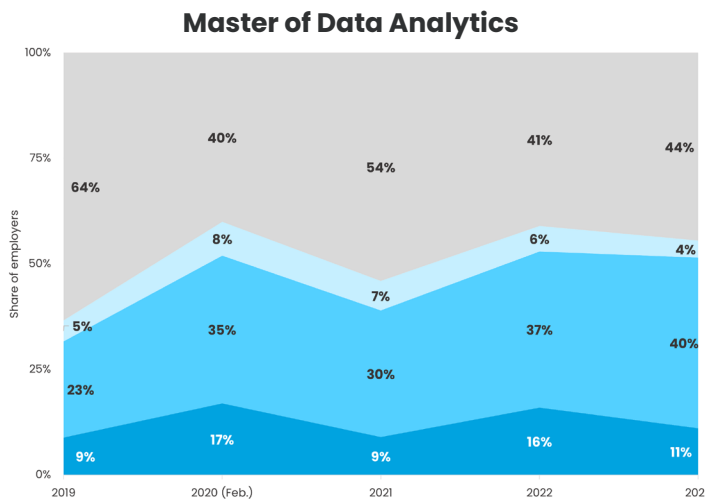
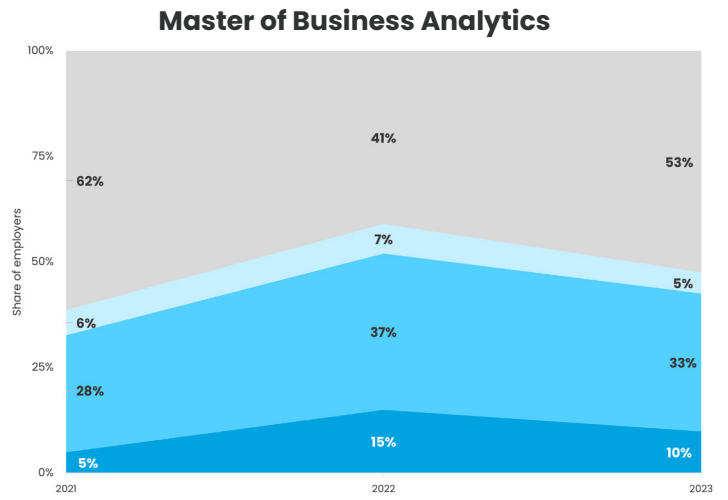
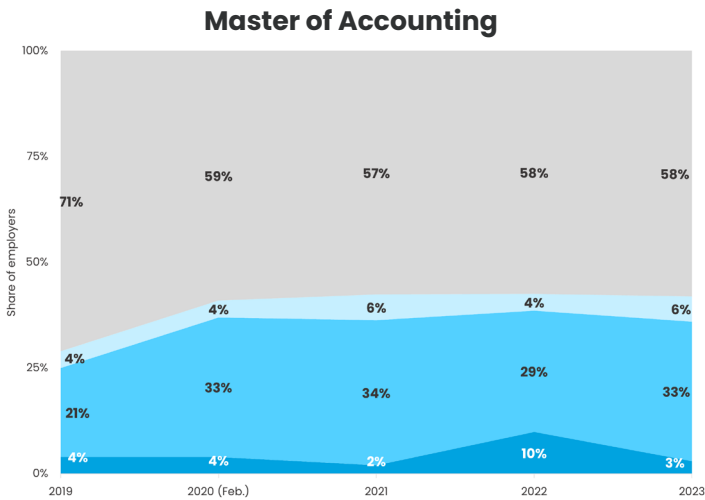


Figure 8: Across degree types, non-MBA business master's graduates were hired by a greater share of employers in 2023 compared to pre-pandemic 2019.

Master of Data Analytics graduates have typically been hired by the largest share of employers.

Actual MBA Hiring Results Among Companies, 2019–2023

■ Hired more than expected
 ■ Hired as expected
 ■ Hired less than expected
 ■ Did not hire



Source: GMAC Corporate Recruiters Survey 2024
 Note: GMAC started collecting separate Master of Business Analytics hiring data in 2021.

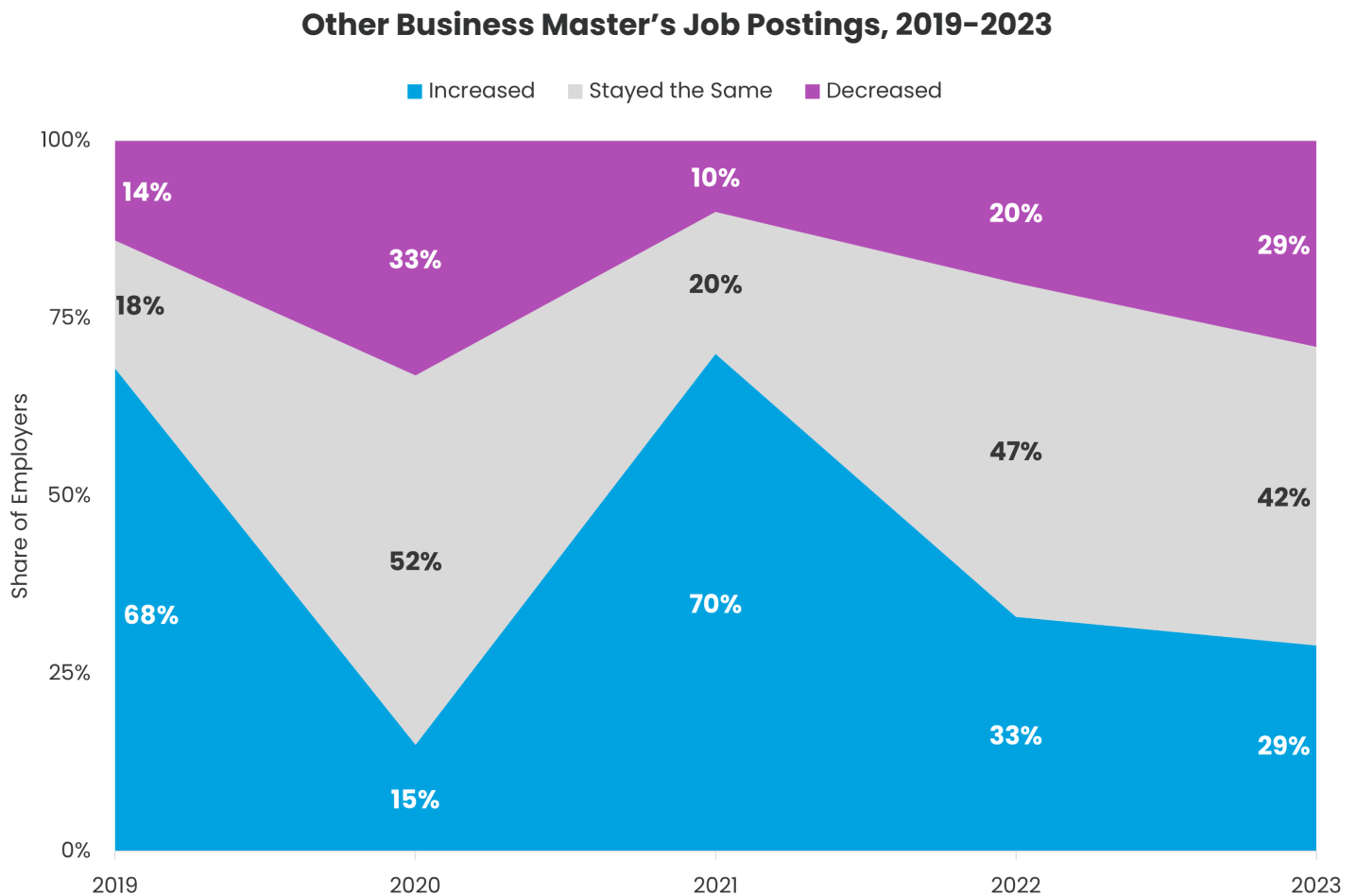
Data from Purdue and other sources illustrate employers' growing interest in specialized master's degrees.⁹ Graduates with degrees like a Master of Business Analytics or Master of Finance are in high demand due to the increasing emphasis on data-driven decision-making and financial management, especially in certain industries. This shift indicates a move toward hiring candidates with specific skillsets that meet technical and strategic needs in various industries.

CSEA data affirms this pattern among specialty master's programs, though the timing is slightly different (Figure 9). However, both datasets indicate a pandemic-related drop in hiring followed by a pandemic-related surge in hiring that has recently leveled off.

Compared to 2019, there are more firms hiring specialized business master's degrees than before. The gains in hiring seen following the pandemic have not continued to grow at the same rate, but have become more stable in the past two years. As schools expand their portfolios of non-MBA business master's programs, it appears the job market has welcomed the influx of specialized talent.

Figure 9: Job postings for non-MBA business master's programs increased significantly following the pandemic followed by a period of stability.

In 2023 and 2022, a plurality of specialized master's programs reported stable year-over-year job postings.



Source: CSEA Recruiting Trends Survey 2024

Note: In all years except 2020, there were fewer than 30 responses from other business master's programs.



MBA recruitment trends

Employer use of virtual and AI-powered recruitment tactics is on the rise while student engagement in virtual career fairs is wavering.

In recent years, MBA student engagement with in-person and virtual resources has become a critical aspect of recruitment trends, reflecting the evolving landscape of employer expectations and career services strategies. As organizations seek to attract top MBA talent, the integration of diverse engagement platforms has emerged as a key differentiator.

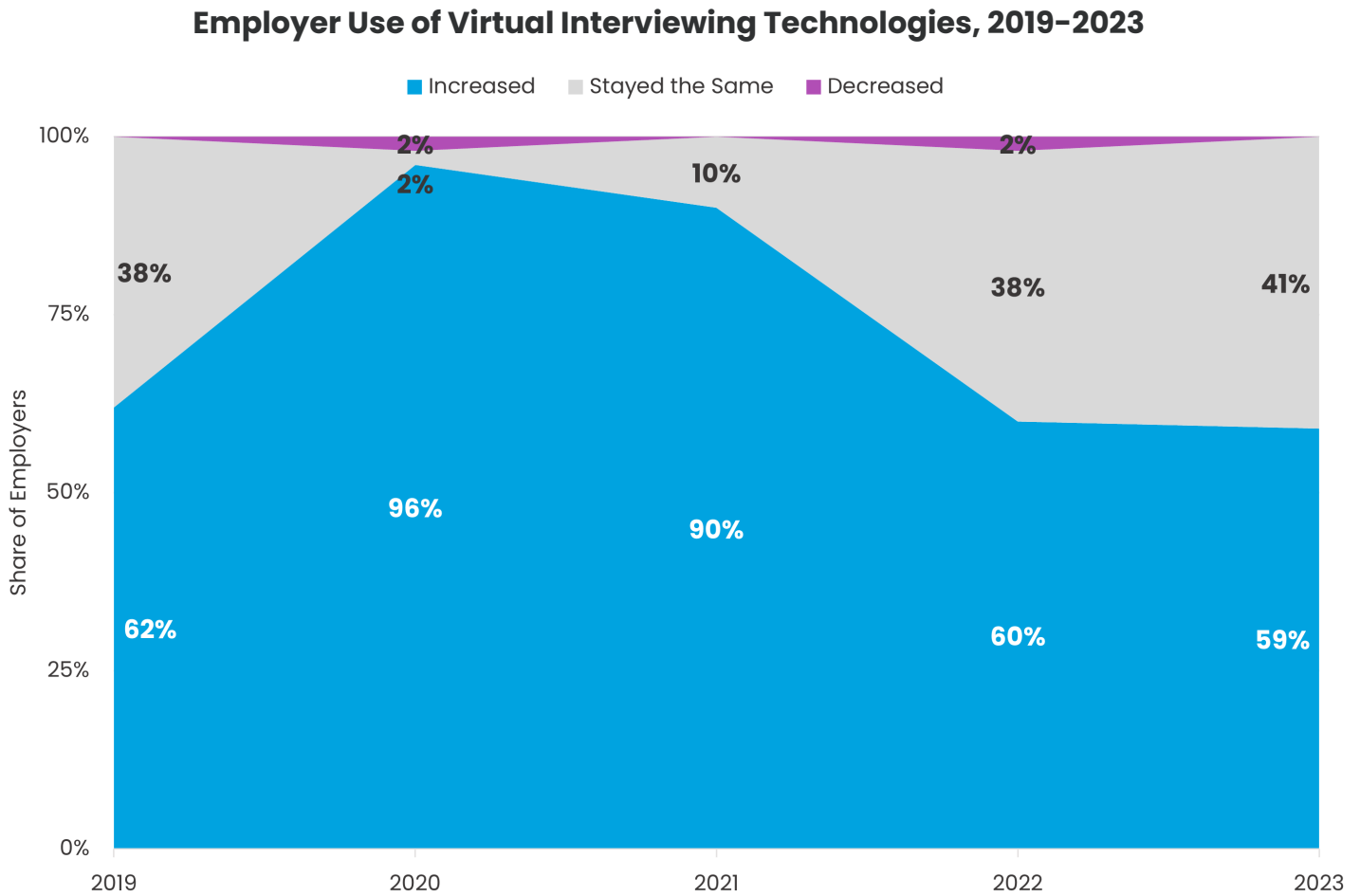
Employers are increasingly leveraging virtual resources such as online career fairs, webinars, and digital networking events to reach a wider pool of candidates while maintaining efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Concurrently, career services offices at business schools are enhancing their offerings to include both traditional in-person coaching and innovative virtual tools, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the dynamic job market. This dual approach not only accommodates varying student preferences but also aligns with the flexible, hybrid working environments that have gained prominence post-pandemic—especially in the United States. These trends underscore the importance of a multifaceted engagement strategy in successfully bridging the gap between MBA students and potential employers.¹⁰

Some employers have found that in-person interviews better align with their corporate culture and hiring practices. Additionally, many candidates, especially those vying for high-stakes MBA roles, prefer the opportunity to visit the company premises, meet potential colleagues, and get a firsthand sense of the working environment.¹¹ Still, virtual interviewing techniques continue to expand. As demonstrated in Figure 10, there is no measurable decrease in the use of virtual interviewing technology among the CSEA survey respondents—just growing or stable usage.



Figure 10: A majority of employers increased their use of virtual interviewing technologies in each of the past five years.

Employer use of this technology largely continues to grow, though may be growing at a slower rate since its peak during the pandemic.



Source: CSEA Recruiting Trends Survey 2024

Note: In 2019, there were fewer than 30 responses about employers.

The growth of virtual interview technologies has significantly transformed recruitment practices in recent years. These advancements offer numerous benefits, including increased efficiency, broader candidate reach, and enhanced data-driven decision-making. Both candidates and employers have adjusted their expectations to align with these new tools, resulting in a more dynamic and responsive hiring landscape.

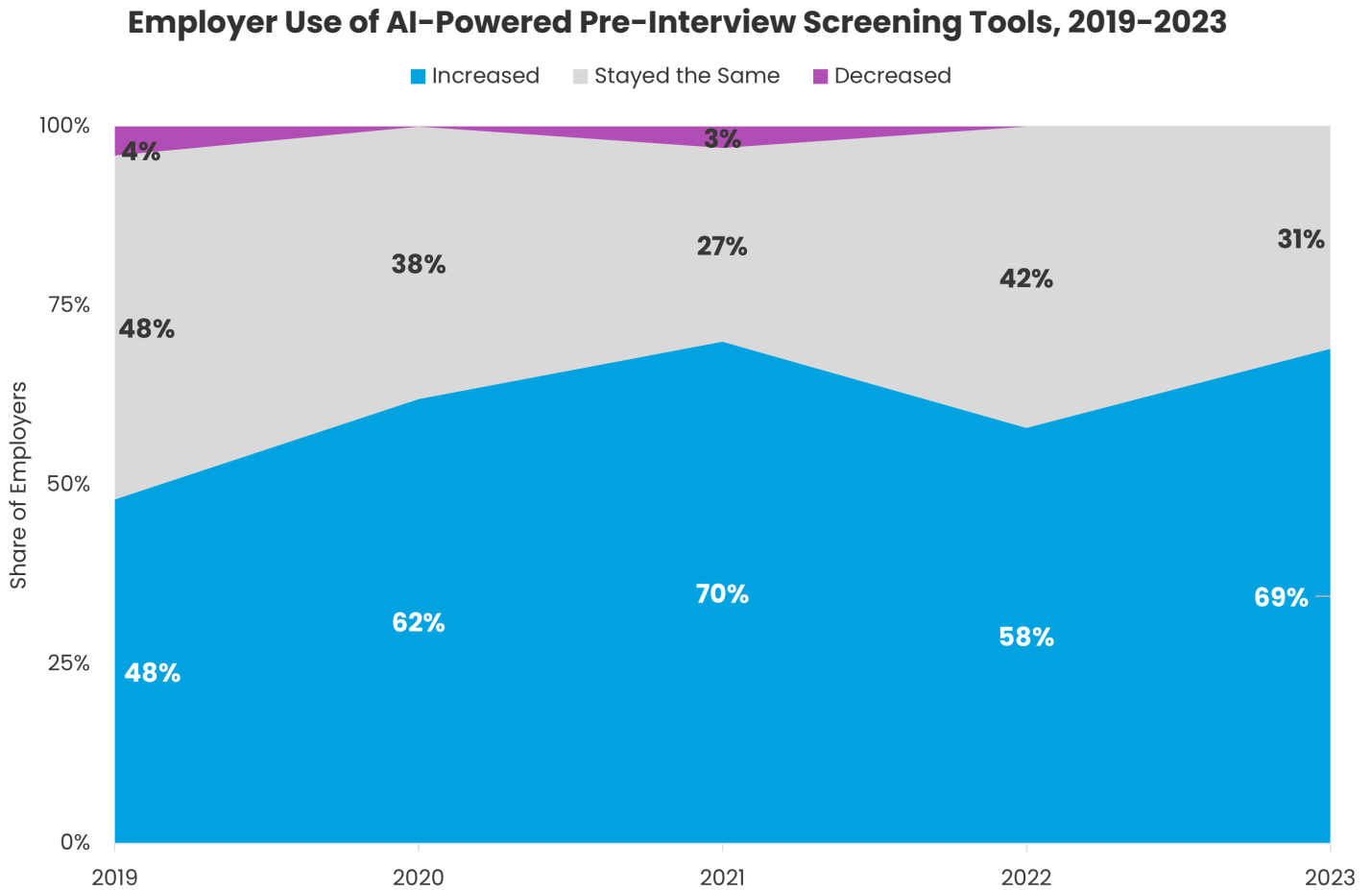
For instance, virtual interviews enable employers to access a global talent pool, removing geographical barriers and expanding the diversity of potential hires. This is particularly beneficial for multinational companies and roles that require specific skills that may not be readily available locally.¹² It also helps online and part-time students who are not able to step away from their full-time jobs to interview on campus.

In addition, AI algorithms can analyze candidate profiles and job descriptions to match applicants with roles that best fit their skills and experiences. This enhances the accuracy and relevance of the hiring process, improving both employer satisfaction and candidate experience. AI tools can be designed to minimize human biases in the recruitment process, promoting a more diverse and inclusive hiring practice. By standardizing evaluation criteria, AI can help ensure that candidates are assessed based on their qualifications rather than subjective judgments.¹³

As these technologies continue to evolve, they will likely play an even more significant role in shaping the future of recruitment. According to the CSEA survey data shown in Figure 10, almost 70 percent of respondents indicated employers have increased their use of AI for pre-interview screening in the past year alone.

Figure 11: Since 2020, a majority of career services offices continue to report increased employer use of AI-empowered pre-interview screening tools.

No offices have reported a decrease in this technology usage in the past two years.



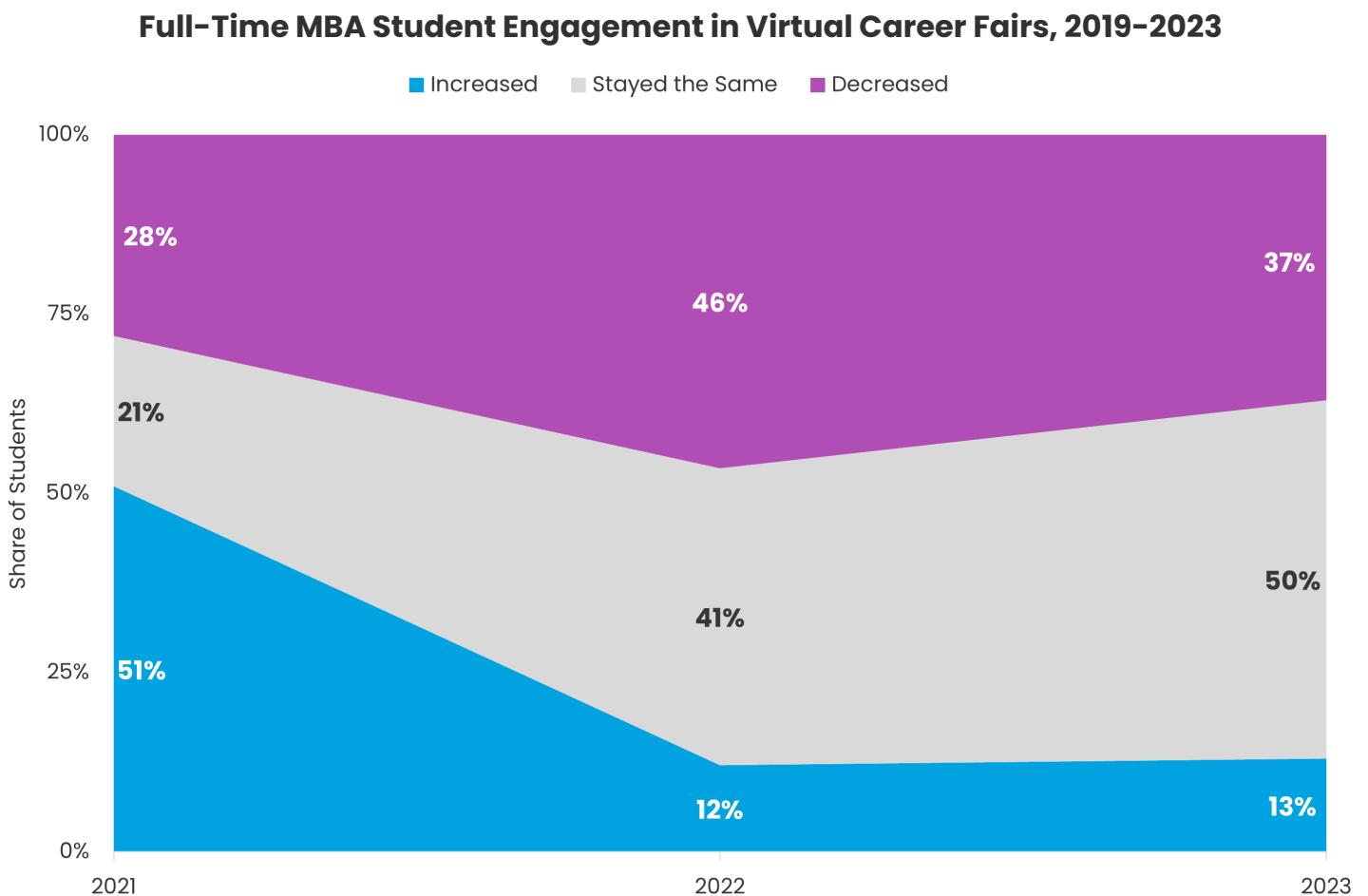
Source: CSEA Recruiting Trends Survey 2024
 Note: In 2019, there were fewer than 30 responses about employers.

Despite the growing use of technology to facilitate the hiring process and interviewing, there are visible shifts to in-person recruitment strategies in some scenarios; namely, career fairs. The reliance on virtual career fairs has shown dips in student engagement since 2021 (Figure 11). A renewed interest in in-person career fairs among MBA students may reflect a desire for more personal and effective networking opportunities, fatigue from virtual interactions, or the perceived effectiveness of in-person recruitment. Employers and recruiters may find in-person career fairs more effective for assessing candidates. Personal meetings may allow for a more comprehensive evaluation of a candidate’s fit within the company culture and team dynamics. Some studies and reports suggest that in-person interactions at career fairs can lead to higher success rates in terms of job offers and hires compared to virtual fairs.¹⁴

While virtual events remain an important tool, many institutions are adopting hybrid models that combine both in-person and virtual elements, catering to the preferences of a broader audience.¹⁵ As the job market continues to evolve, a balanced approach that includes both in-person and virtual elements may provide the best outcomes for students and employers alike.

Figure 12: About one-third of career services professionals reported a drop in full-time MBA student engagement in career fairs in 2023.

However, half of these professionals reported stable participation, indicating some staying power of virtual engagement.



Source: CSEA Recruiting Trends Survey 2024

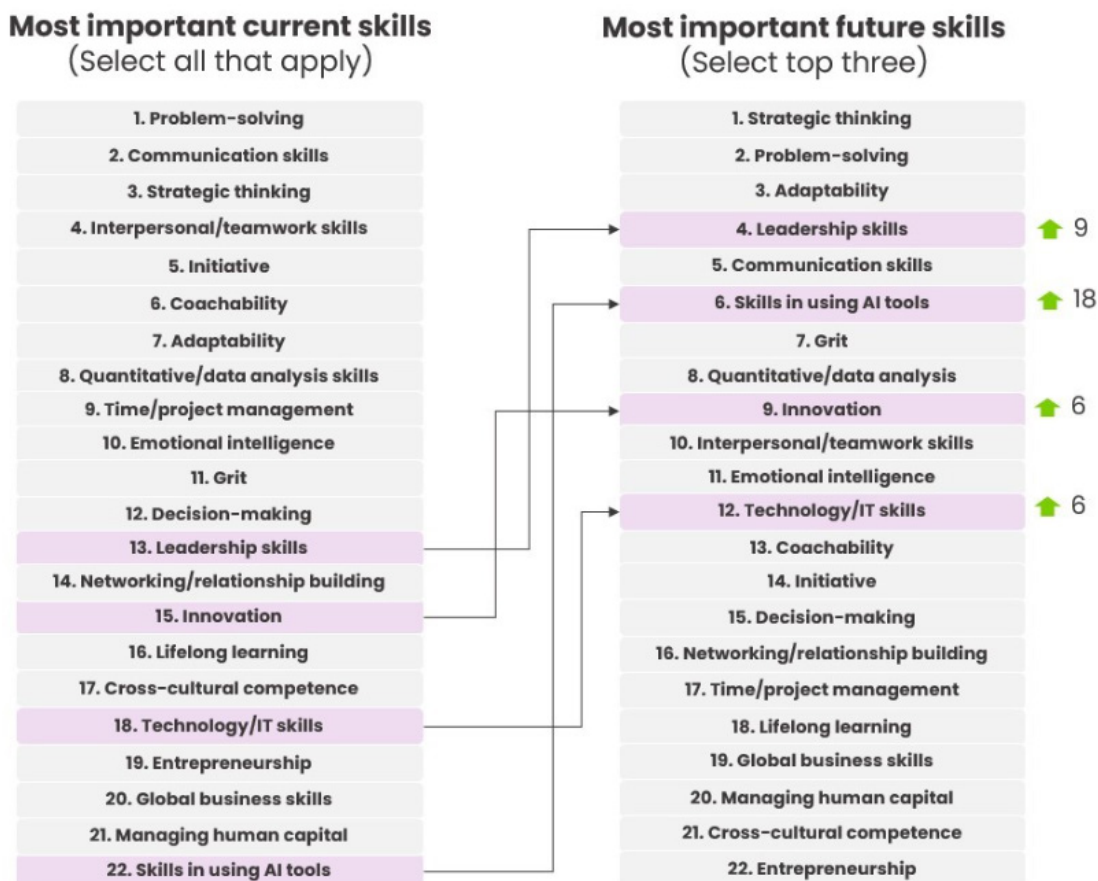
Skills in demand

U.S. employers predict continued importance of strategy and problem-solving in the next five years, with increasing importance in AI and technology skills, leadership capabilities, and innovation.

Figure 13 identifies which skills employers in the United States deemed essential today and what they designated as their most important skills for the future. The top three most important skills for current GME graduates are problem-solving, communication skills, and strategic thinking. U.S. employers' top three most important skills in the next five years are strategic thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability. Notably, employers are also quite satisfied with business schools' capabilities to prepare their graduates on these key dimensions.

Figure 13: When asked to select three skills that will be most important in five years, employers valued AI and leadership skills much more than when asked which skills are currently important.

To compare current and future importance, we examined the rank of which skills employers selected most often for each question.



Source: GMAC Corporate Recruiters Survey 2024

Employers value problem-solving skills because MBA hires often face complex, multifaceted challenges that require innovative solutions. The ability to analyze problems, identify root causes, and develop effective strategies is crucial for driving business success.¹⁶ Employers need individuals who can think clearly and act decisively in high-stress situations, ensuring continuity and minimizing disruption.¹⁷

Strong communication skills are vital for facilitating effective team collaboration. MBA hires must be able to articulate ideas clearly, listen actively, and engage with diverse teams to achieve common goals.¹⁸ Communicating effectively with stakeholders, including clients, partners, and executives, is essential. Good communication ensures that everyone is aligned and informed, fostering trust and cooperation.¹⁹

Strategic thinking enables business school hires to contribute to long-term planning and vision setting. Employers seek individuals who can anticipate future trends, understand market dynamics, and align business goals with these insights.²⁰ Strategic thinkers help organizations stay ahead of the competition by identifying opportunities and mitigating risks.²¹

Innovation is the key to driving growth and staying competitive in a rapidly evolving market. Employers will increasingly value MBA hires who can foster a culture of innovation, generate creative solutions, and bring new products and services to market.²² The ability to innovate is crucial for adapting to technological advancements and shifting consumer preferences. GME hires with a strong innovative mindset will be essential for navigating these changes and capitalizing on new opportunities.²³

As businesses continue to undergo digital transformation, technological skills become indispensable. Employers will prioritize GME hires who are proficient in emerging technologies, such as cloud computing, cybersecurity, and data analytics, to drive digital initiatives.²⁴ Tech-savvy business school talent can leverage technology to enhance operational efficiency, streamline processes, and reduce costs. Their ability to implement and manage tech solutions will be critical for organizational success.²⁵

Integration of AI into business operations is accelerating. MBA hires with AI skills will be in high demand to develop and manage AI-driven processes, enhancing productivity and enabling data-driven decision-making.²⁶ AI skills are essential for utilizing predictive analytics to forecast trends, optimize supply chains, and improve customer experiences. Employers will seek individuals who can harness AI to provide actionable insights and strategic advantages.²⁷

Currently, employers emphasize problem-solving, strategic thinking, and communication skills in MBA hires because these competencies are crucial for navigating complex challenges, developing long-term plans, and ensuring effective collaboration. Looking ahead, there is expected to be increased focus on innovation, technological skills, and AI expertise as businesses strive to stay competitive in a technologically advanced and rapidly changing market. GME graduates equipped with these future-oriented skills will be well-positioned to drive growth, enhance operational efficiency, and leverage AI for strategic decision-making.

U.S. employers are not looking for AI skills from today's GME graduates—but they may be looking for talent that can use AI to learn new skills and conduct research in the coming years.

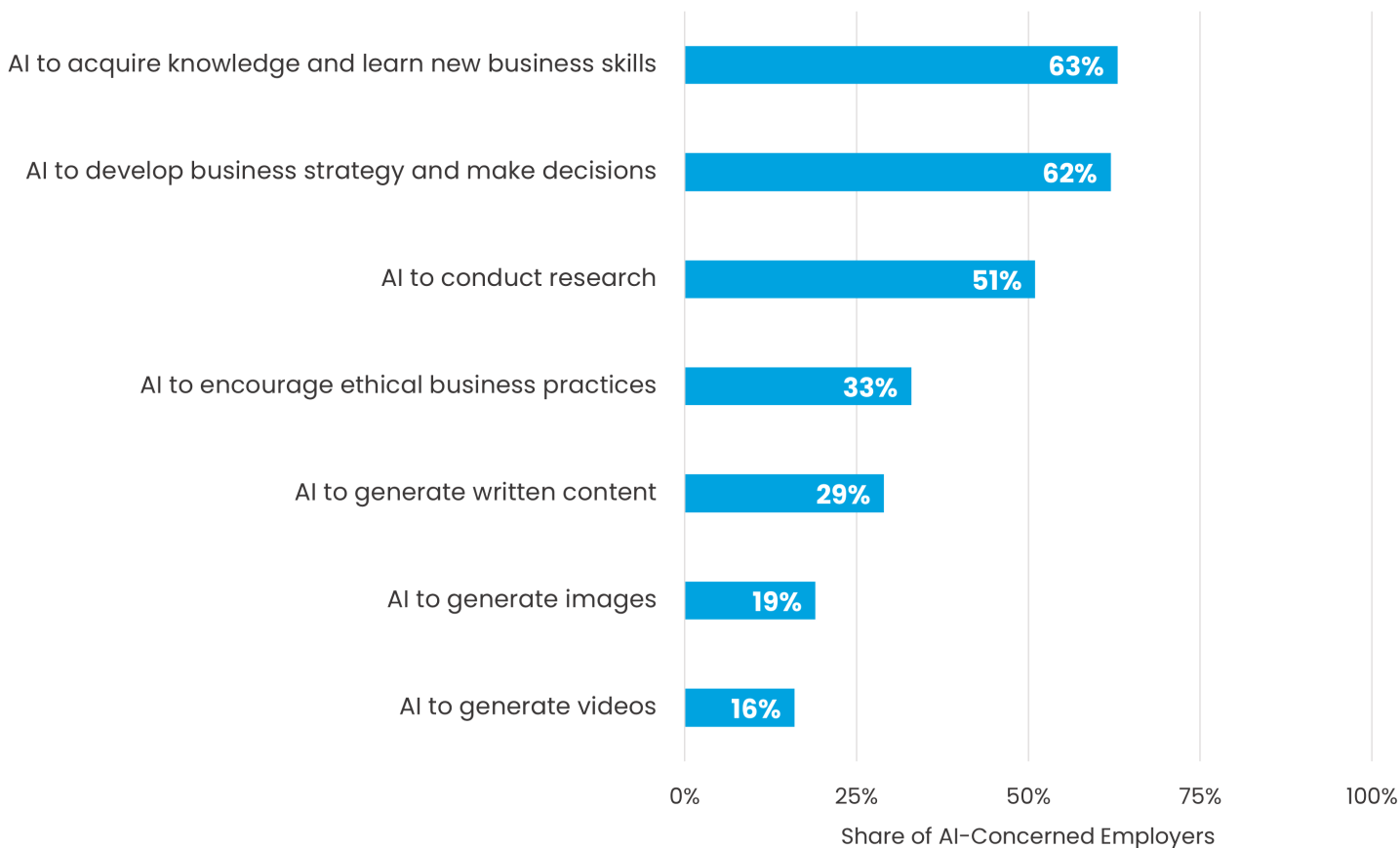
In the latest GMAC [Corporate Recruiters Survey](#), U.S. employers indicated they are not too concerned about hiring GME talent with AI skills just yet. Just 13 percent of U.S. employers said artificial intelligence is an important skill for current GME graduates to be able to leverage in their organization's present roles—ranking last on a list of 22 provided business skills. However, when asked which skills will be most important in the next five years, AI jumps to the sixth position, indicating a medium-term need for GME students to develop their AI capabilities.

As such, the Corporate Recruiters Survey also asked AI-concerned employers to select the top three ways they would like GME graduates to be able to leverage AI in their companies (Figure 14). These U.S. employers indicated they want GME talent to be able to use AI to acquire knowledge and learn new business skills (66 percent); use AI to conduct research (59 percent); and use AI to develop business strategies and make decisions (38 percent).

Figure 14: Most AI-concerned U.S. employers want GME graduates to be able to use AI to acquire new knowledge and learn business skills as well as conduct research.

These employers are less concerned about generating multimedia content with AI.

Top Uses for AI Among U.S. Employers



Source: GMAC Corporate Recruiters Survey 2024

For GME programs and career services offices interested in developing these capabilities among their business school students, AI-driven platforms can enable quick upskilling by offering real-time, interactive training sessions. These platforms can identify knowledge gaps and recommend specific courses or materials to fill them, facilitating continuous professional development. Employers may be interested in integrating AI into business school curricula because these algorithms can analyze vast amounts of data to identify patterns, trends, and insights that human analysis might miss, which enables more informed and accurate strategic decisions. AI can automate the collection and analysis of large datasets from various sources, significantly speeding up the research process. This is particularly useful for market research, competitive analysis, and academic studies.²⁸ AI's capabilities to provide personalized learning, data-driven insights, and efficient research processes can enable businesses to stay competitive, innovate continuously, and make informed decisions in an increasingly complex and fast-paced business environment.

Conclusion

In the past five years, the employment landscape for MBAs in the United States has leveled off since pandemic-related peaks, with hiring potential in manufacturing and health care sectors growing the most in the coming year. Other business master's talent saw similar pandemic related trends, though total hiring across several non-MBA degree types remains above pre-pandemic levels. The integration of in-person and virtual recruitment resources has enhanced student engagement, while the rise of AI and virtual interview technologies has reshaped candidate and employer expectations. These trends signal a dynamic future for business education and employment, characterized by greater flexibility, technological integration, and a broader range of career opportunities.

By aligning educational offerings with industry demands and leveraging technological advancements, both schools and employers can create a dynamic and responsive ecosystem that supports the career aspirations of GME graduates while meeting the evolving needs of the business world. Business school leaders can enhance their curricula with in-demand skills. This includes timeless capabilities like problem solving and strategic thinking, but also future-oriented skills in technology that can be leveraged across industries—all of which are reacting in real time to constant advancements in AI and data-driven decision making. GME programs should continue to enhance these skills in their generalist MBA talent, but build on employers' growing interest in other business master's students with tailored job search resources, industry-specific networking events, and partnerships with employers looking for these skillsets. This means maintaining relationships with traditional hirers of business school graduates in the finance and consulting industries, but also deepening ties to sectors projecting hiring growth like manufacturing and health care. Engaging a school's alumni network can not only help expand employer relationships like these, but also reveal career paths for prospective and current students looking to be inspired.

As MBA and other business master's students navigate the evolving job market, they are uniquely positioned to capitalize on emerging hiring trends and the shifting landscape of work. With a noticeable increase in remote and hybrid job postings, employers are seeking candidates who not only possess advanced business acumen but also demonstrate adaptability and proficiency in digital communication tools. Business school graduates bring a competitive edge to companies that are increasingly prioritizing flexibility, efficiency, and global outlooks, equipped with the expertise to excel in dynamic environments and drive innovation. Their ability to seamlessly adapt to remote and hybrid work models while leveraging their comprehensive business education positions them as valuable assets in today's evolving workforce.

End Notes

¹ Murray, Seb. “Is the MBA Job Market Slowing Down?” Find MBA, January 22, 2024. <https://find-mba.com/articles/is-the-mba-job-market-slowing-down>.

² Murray, 2024.

Raine, Clint. “Three trends explaining the MBA market. Wake-Up Call.” Encoura, August 29, 2023. <https://www.encoura.org/resources/wake-up-call/three-trends-explaining-the-mba-market/>.

³ Murray, 2024.

⁴ Gamrat, Chris, Lisa Lenze, Jeffrey Bardzell, and Ed Glantz. “Improved Student Engagement in Higher Education’s Next Normal.” EDUCAUSE Review, March 16, 2021. <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2021/3/improved-student-engagement-in-higher-educations-next-normal>.

⁵ Kellogg School of Management. <https://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/admissions/admissions-events.aspx>.

⁶ “Best Online MBA Programs: A Comprehensive Review and Guide.” Meridian University, October 10, 2023.

<https://meridianuniversity.edu/content/best-online-mba-programs-a-comprehensive-review-and-guide>.

Gamrat et al., 2021.

⁷ Kellogg, Gamrat et al., 2021.

⁸ Meridian, 2023. Gamrat et al., 2021.

⁹ “Employment Reports.” University of Minesota Carlson School of Management. <https://carlsonschool.umn.edu/career-services/employment-reports>.

“Career Outlook with a Master’s in Business Administration.” Purdue University Mitch Daniels School of Business. <https://business.purdue.edu/master-of-business/online-masters-in-business-administration/student-experience/career-outlook.php>.

¹⁰ “Life After an MBA: Job & Career Opportunities for Graduates.” University of Pennsylvania Wharton School. Life After an MBA: Job & Career Opportunities for Graduates.

Carlson School of Management. Mitch Daniels School of Business.

¹¹ Carlson School of Management. The Wharton School.

¹² Carlson School of Management.

¹³ Carlson School of Management. Mitch Daniels School of Business.

¹⁴ Carlson School of Management. The Wharton School.

¹⁵ Mitch Daniels School of Business. The Wharton School.

¹⁶ Carlson School of Business. Mitch Daniels School of Management.

¹⁷ The Wharton School.

¹⁸ Carlson School of Business. Mitch Daniels School of Management.

¹⁹ The Wharton School.

²⁰ Carlson School of Business. Mitch Daniels School of Management.

²¹ The Wharton School.

²² Carlson School of Business. The Wharton School.

²³ Mitch Daniels School of Management.

²⁴ Carlson School of Business. The Wharton School.

²⁵ Mitch Daniels School of Management.

²⁶ Carlson School of Business. The Wharton School.

²⁷ Mitch Daniels School of Management.

²⁸ Carlson School of Management.

About GMAC

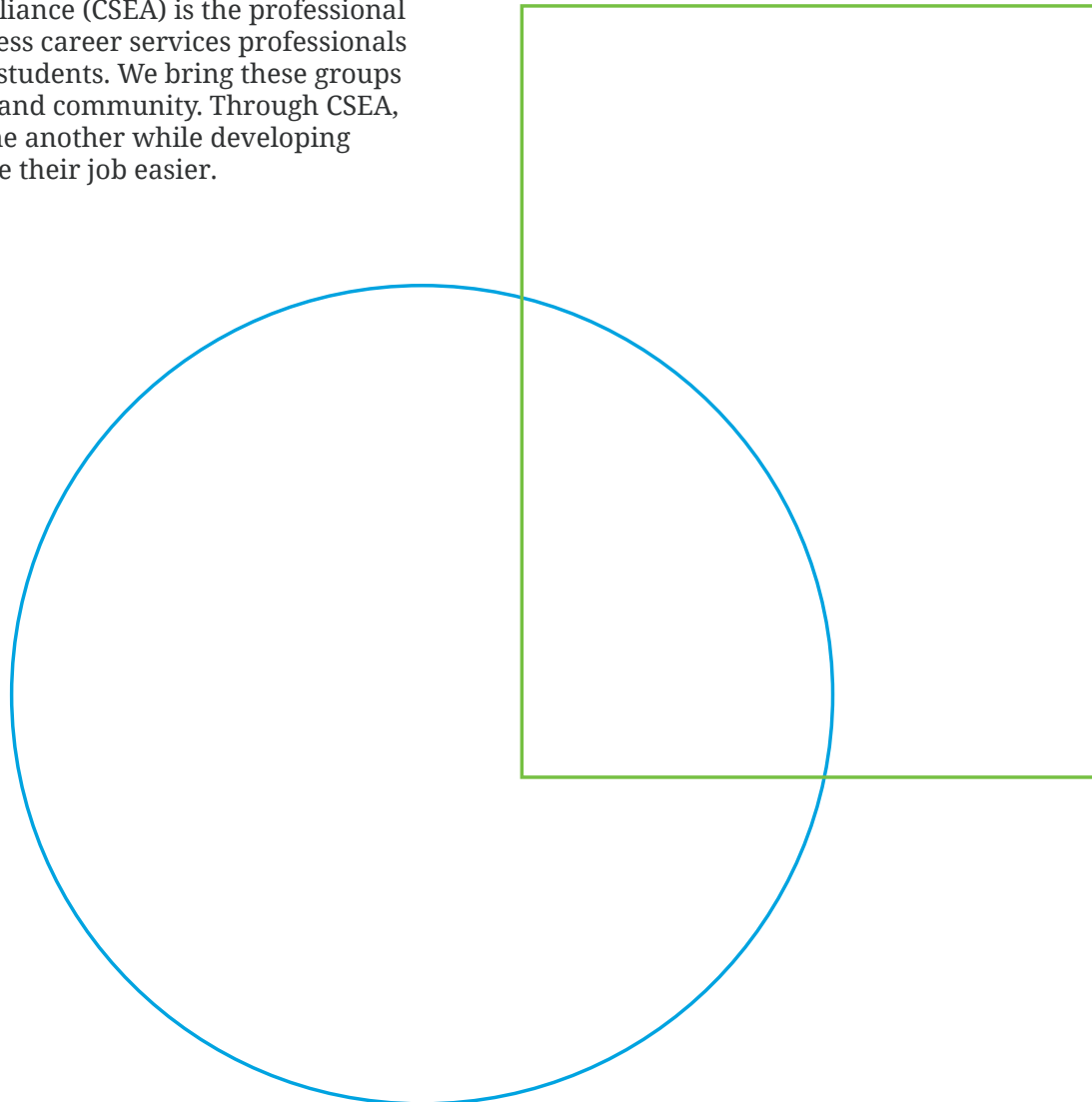
The Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) is a mission-driven association of leading graduate business schools worldwide.

GMAC provides world-class research, industry conferences, recruiting tools, and assessments for the graduate management education industry, as well as resources, events, and services that help guide candidates through their higher education journey. Owned and administered by GMAC, the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) exam is the most widely used graduate business school assessment.

GMAC is dedicated to creating access to and disseminating information about GME. School and industry leaders rely on the Council as the premier provider of reliable data about the graduate management education industry.

About CSEA

The Career Services & Employer Alliance (CSEA) is the professional network for MBA/Masters in business career services professionals and the employers who hire those students. We bring these groups together for learning, networking, and community. Through CSEA, members collaborate to support one another while developing lasting relationships that help make their job easier.





*Authored by Sabeen Sheikh
Edited by Andrew Walker*

©2024 Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC™). All rights reserved. The trademarks referenced herein are owned by Graduate Management Admission Council or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any third-party trademarks referenced herein remain the property of their respective holders. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, distributed or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of GMAC. For permission contact the GMAC Legal Department at legal@gmac.com.