

myEssay.com Business School eBook

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Business School Application Guide

Application Strategy and Overview

Applying to business school is no easy task. Getting in is even tougher. This guide will help you navigate the sometimes tricky and always demanding process of business school applications. In this guide, myEssay.com tells you what schools look for in a candidate, where they find it, and how you can make sure that they find it in your application.

KNOW WHAT YOU WANT

Before you throw yourself in front of an admissions committee, make sure that you've given some thought to what your true motivations and objectives are. Why do you want an MBA? At first this may seem like a silly question. You probably have a quick answer, or you wouldn't be reading this. But in truth, the answer to this question is the crux of your application. Throughout the application process you will attempt to define for the admissions committee why you want a Masters of Business Administration. Your reasons must be supported by your **experience**. You must demonstrate **intellect** and **character** and establish your **potential**. But finally, you will need to have **direction**—it's not enough to be merely talented and accomplished. Business schools want to see that you have career goals and that an MBA is a logical step to attain them. So, if you don't really know where you are headed or why you are headed there, you have a lot of thinking to do. But once you figure out what you want, it's not so hard to figure out what business schools want.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Business schools are essentially looking for five attributes in candidates. Each candidate will present a different combination of these attributes, with each applicant emphasizing certain attributes over others. But all candidates will demonstrate at least some component of each of the following qualities:

Intellect

While business schools emphasize experience perhaps more than any other academic programs, they are nonetheless academic programs. Business schools are interested in how smart you are, and, in how good of a student you are. In your application, admissions officers will first look to your GMAT score and your academic record to establish your intellect. Next, your recommendations will offer evidence in support of your intellectual ability.

Character

Character is not so easily quantified as your intellect—there are no grades or test scores by which you can be measured. This certainly does not mean that the quality of your character is any less important. It does mean that it may be harder to establish. Your essays, recommendations, and your interview will define the quality of your character in the eyes of the admissions committee. It is up to you to make sure that these components of your application accurately and fully depict you.

Potential

Sure you've accomplished a lot, but that's not all the admissions staff is seeking. Business schools want to be as certain as possible that your past successes are not just flukes. Every business school wants their graduates to continue on to successful careers. How do they gauge potential? Your recommendations will play a big part. Your recommendations will provide the admissions staff with the opinions and perspectives of people who know you well. Where do these people see you heading? Do their expectations of your future jive with your own? The manner in which you present your experience can also indicate your potential for future success. Remember the importance not only of what you have accomplished, but how your accomplishments are presented.

Experience

Your experience will become the substance and framework of your entire application. It will set you apart from the hordes of applicants, or make you disappear into the crowd. But when it comes to the actual business school application, your experiences in-and-of-themselves are not the real issue. Without a compelling narrative crafted out of your experiences, you will have a difficult time distinguishing yourself; even the most sparkling résumé will not, on its own, get you very far. If schools were interested only in the status of your accomplishments, a résumé would make a sufficient application. But schools want to know how you've capitalized on your opportunities. You must find the stories in your life that demonstrate the other four qualities—intellect, character, potential, and direction—that the admissions office seeks. Primarily, you will be relying on your professional experience, but you will also draw on your academic and personal experiences throughout the application process. Your résumé is only the beginning when it comes to conveying your experience to the admissions committee.

Direction

Arguably, this is the most important consideration for admissions officers. Of course, every candidate must demonstrate all of the above attributes. An applicant may be a very impressive person, but without direction is in all likelihood not a good MBA candidate. Career goals matter. The bottom line is, you must know where you want to go and you must have a plan of how to get there. An MBA should be a logical step in your course of action. You may see an MBA as an opportunity to progress or a way to increase your earning power, and you would be correct. Realistically, the desire to increase your earning potential is a completely legitimate motivation. However, the most compelling applicants are not those merely in pursuit of a raise, but those in pursuit of success.

THE APPLICATION

Academic Record

Admissions officers want to know that you will excel in business school. The best way to anticipate how you will fare is to examine your previous experiences in academic settings. Your transcripts are submitted because business schools are interested in you as a student. The quality and difficulty of your coursework will be considered. A solid performance in past academic settings is expected. That said, business schools recognize that people who succeed in business do not always excel in undergraduate academic settings. Therefore, a less than stellar academic record does not eliminate you from ...

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