

2016 MBA Applicant Survey

Program Consideration

Reasons for Applying

Test Prep/Admission Consultant Engagement

Expectations



Background Information

Findings reflect applicants who plan on enrolling in Jan 2017 or sooner, and who applied to at least one school (N=1,114)

- 65% male, 35% female
- 35% are U.S. citizens, 61% international
- 44% live in the U.S.
- 56% live in 83 other countries represented
- 19% already have a master's degree

Survey open dates: February 15 through May 2, 2016

Total respondents: 3,586



Executive summary

- MBA applicants remain as optimistic as in past years about their post-MBA employment prospects
 - Confident that an MBA education would enable them to secure a significantly higher salary post-MBA
 - Continue to focus on Consulting, Finance/Accounting, & Technology
- While optimistic about the future, many MBA applicants are realistic about the competitiveness of the process
 - Turn to multiple sources for support with application process
 - Friends, admissions consultants, & family members top list of resources sought out
 - Fewer than 20% of applicants "go it alone"



Executive summary

- Applicants are also mindful of program costs
 - Declining interest in two-year programs reflects openness to options perceived as more cost-effective
 - 41% of respondents indicated that school choice was partly influenced by affordability
 - 21% of applicants report modifying list of target schools based on cost & access to financial aid
 - Cost appears to loom larger in applicants' minds than it did in the first AIGAC MBA Applicant Survey in 2009
 - Net cost of program attendance can be difficult to assess, skewing choices of where to apply



Executive summary

- Applicants have so far adapted well to newer application components
 - Nearly half of applicants (49%) said the video essay represented them "well" or "extremely well"
 - While not all applicants feel that video responses represent them well, the format doesn't seem to create undue stress
 - Applicants appear fairly comfortable with group exercises;
 while they are still only employed by a handful of schools, so far, applicants indicate they are not overly challenging



The Life of an MBA Applicant

Decide to apply

Timing/Trigger

Types of programs considered

Factors in selecting schools

Plan for career outcomes

Desired industries and functions

Predicted salary outcome and raises

Entrepreneurship

Apply and find fit

Test taking

Consultant services

Video essays

Letters of recommendation

Connection with schools

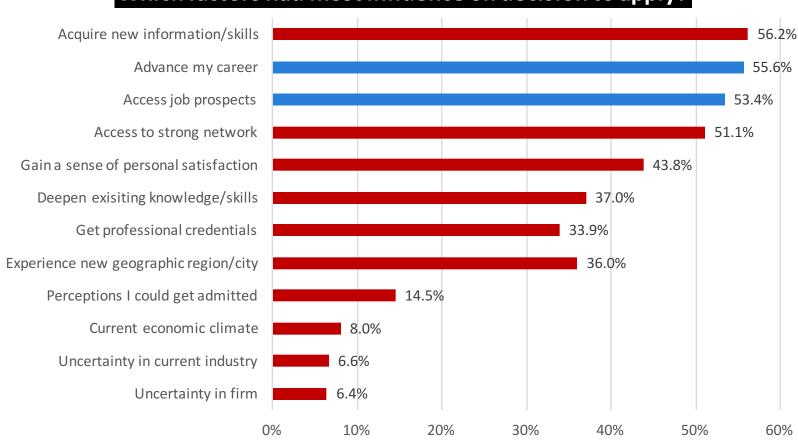


MBA Applicants are optimistic about the future



Short-term career outcomes are core drivers of the decision to apply

Which factors had most influence on decision to apply?

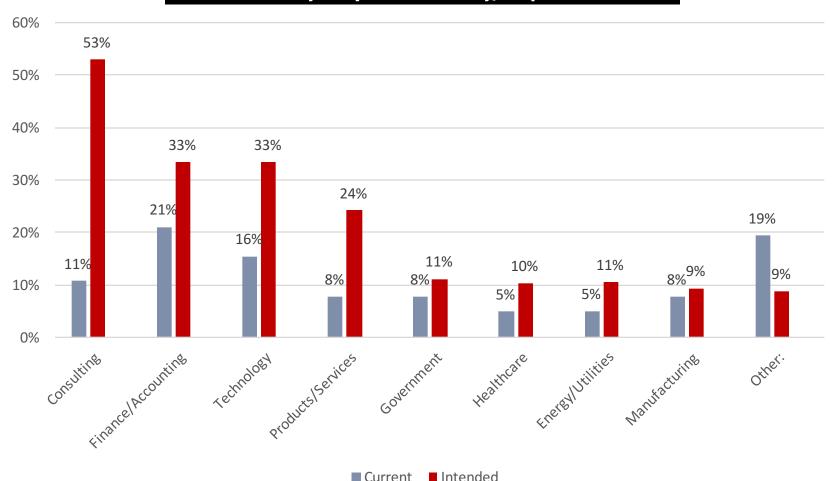


Source: 2016 MBA Applicant Survey, n=1143 (those intending to start by January 2017)

Applicants continue to desire traditional post-MBA roles



What industry do you currently/hope to work in?



Source: 2016 MBA Applicant Survey, n=1040 (those intending to start by January 2017)

We need to manage applicants' career expectations

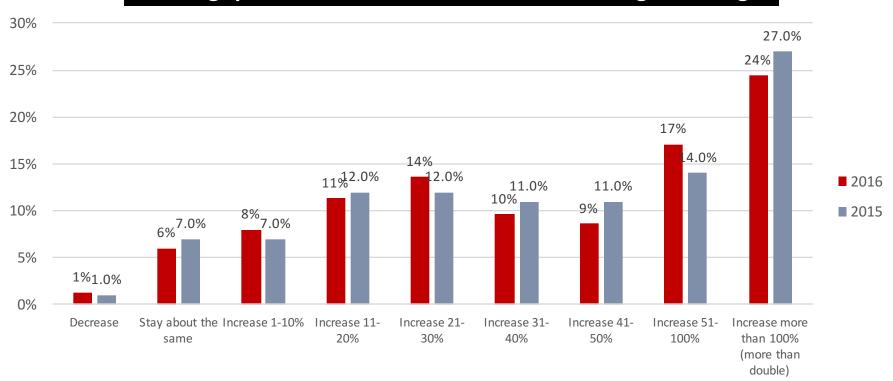


- In 2007, **consultants** represented 26% of MBA graduating classes and by 2013, that grew to 29%*
 - Little room left to grow; based on last downturn, total hires may fall
- Finance has faced greater long-term pressure
 - 43% of graduates from top MBA programs went into finance in 2007
 - By 2013, 29% of graduates from top MBA programs went into finance
 - Consistent with results at most top business schools
- Technology has grown consistently since 2007
 - 8% of graduates from top MBA programs went into technology in 2007, by 2013, 17% of graduates had entered technology

Nearly half of applicants expect a salary increase of >50% within 6 months of graduation



What effect do you expect completing an MBA to have on your earnings potential within the first six months of graduating?



Source: 2016 MBA Applicant Survey, n=1040 (those intending to start by January 2017)

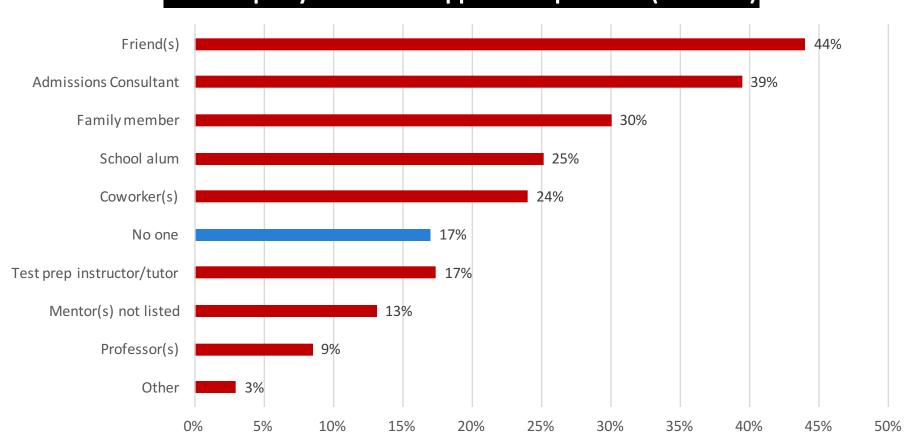


2016 MBA applicants are realistic about the competitiveness of the process



Many applicants seek out multiple sources of support, ~20% "go it alone"

Who helped you with the application process? (select all)

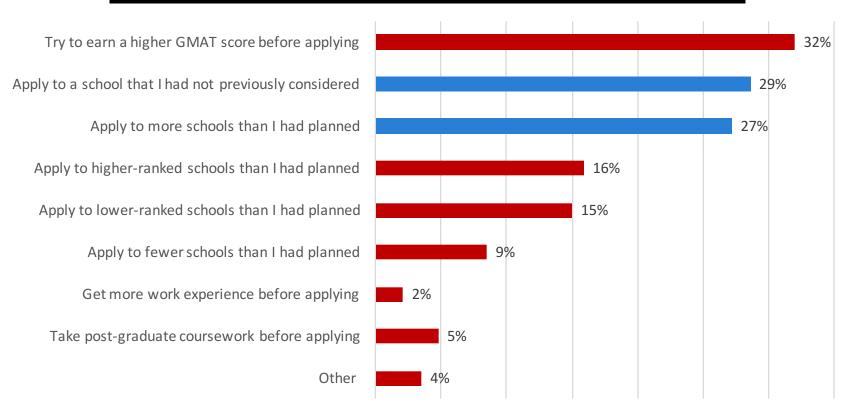


Source: 2016 MBA Applicant Survey, n=1141 (those intending to start by January 2017)

Admissions consultants helped applicants to evaluate choices



How did your admissions consultant influence school choice?



Source: 2016 MBA Applicant Survey, n=434 (those intending to start by January 2017)

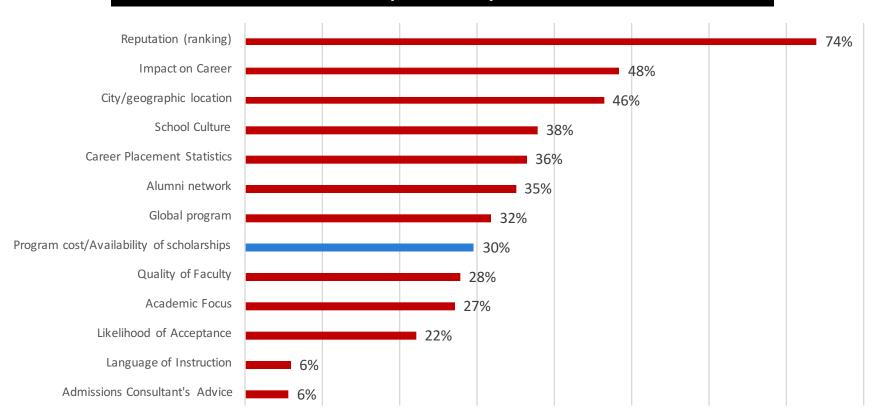


Applicants are also mindful of program costs

30% of applicants consider net cost when selecting programs



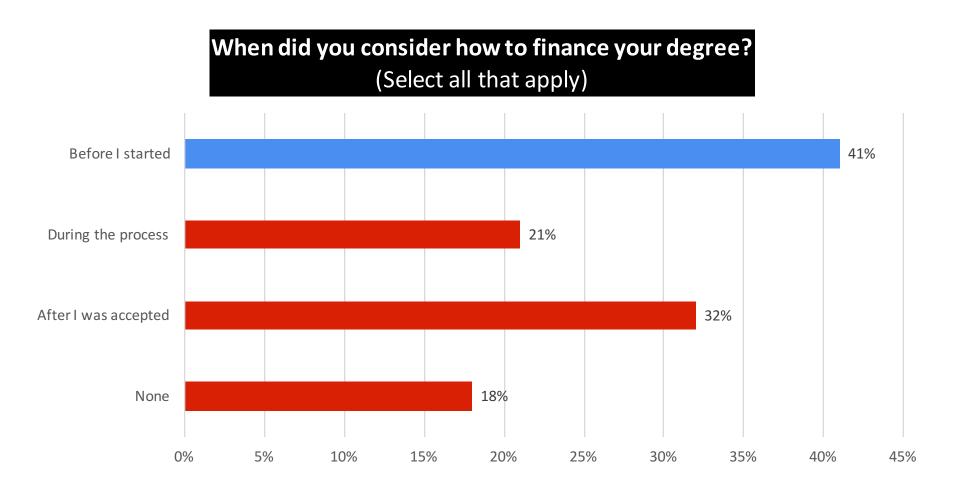
Which factors had the most influence on specific school choice? (select all)



Source: 2016 MBA Applicant Survey, n=1144 (those intending to start by January 2017)

Affordability is a significant factor in school selection



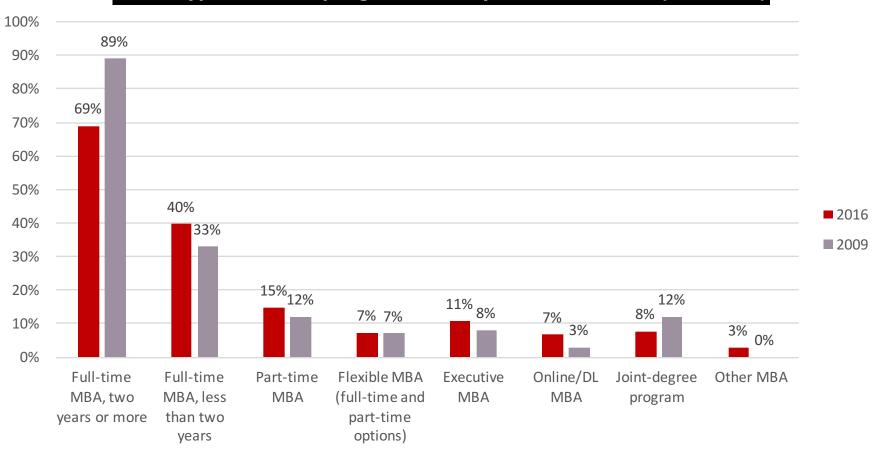


Source: 2016 MBA Applicant Survey, n=1143 (those intending to start by January 2017)

A result is that respondents are increasingly open to programs other than traditional two-year MBAs



What types of MBA programs have you considered? (select all)



Source: 2016 MBA Applicant Survey, n=1144 (those intending to start by January 2017)



Applicants highlighted importance of financial aid in decision making

"The school's ability to give financial aid and merit fellowships helped make an MBA more affordable and therefore my decision making easier." – 2016 Applicant

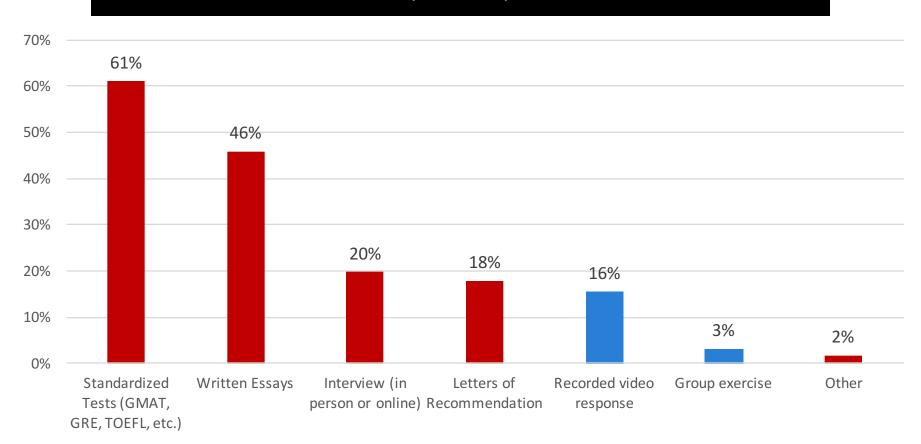


Applicants seem to be adapting well to newer application components





Which application components did you find to be especially challenging? (Select all)

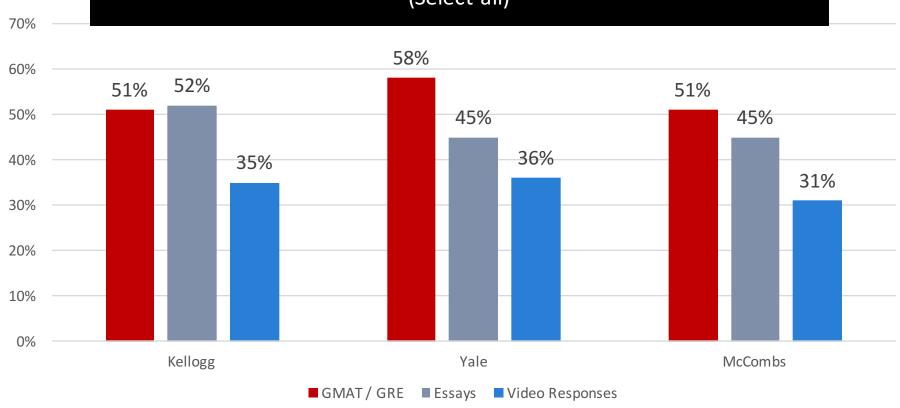


Source: 2016 MBA Applicant Survey, n=1088 (those intending to start by January 2017)



Applicants rated video responses as less challenging than tests and essays

Which application components did you find to be especially challenging? (Select all)

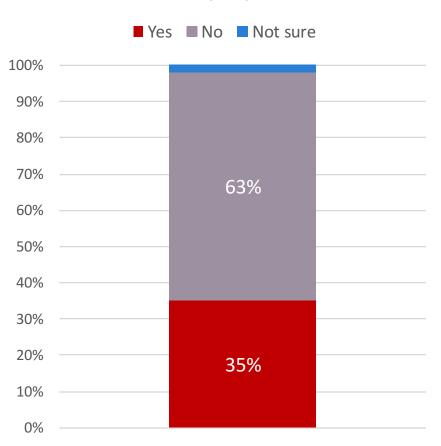


Source: 2016 MBA Applicant Survey, n=198 (Kellogg), n=120 (Yale), n=89 (McCombs)



A tipping point in the percentage of applicants completing video responses

Did you complete one or more applications with a video essay component?



Many applicants liked video interviews

"I think the video components are a good way for schools to get a preliminary view into the applicant before inviting them to interview."-- 2016 Applicant

"It's a great addition to the application process. A video can tell something beyond the essays, which is very beneficial to the adcom. It is the logical utilization of the latest technology.

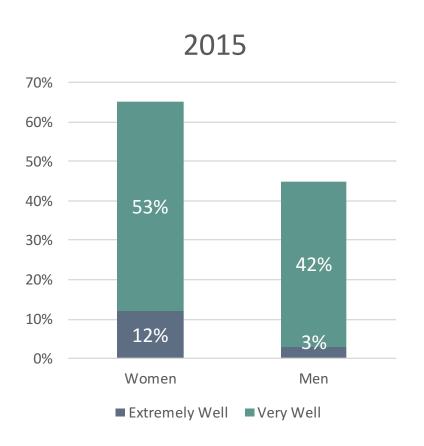
— 2016 Applicant

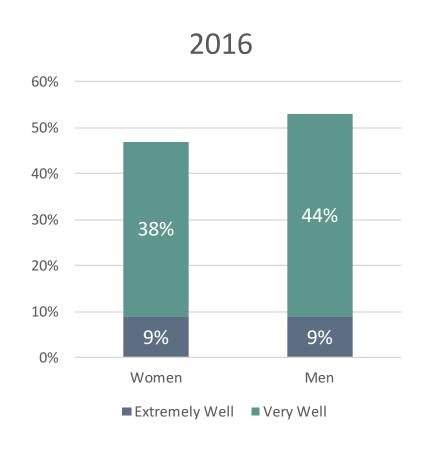
"Although it is a bit nerve wrecking, the video essays are a great way for candidates to show admissions committees their communication skills and to put a personal touch to the application. It was a very interesting exercise for me. -- 2016 Applicant

Source: 2016 MBA Applicant Survey, n=1071 (those intending to start by January 2017)

Videos don't generate a lot of stress for applicants, but still room for improvement with this new medium



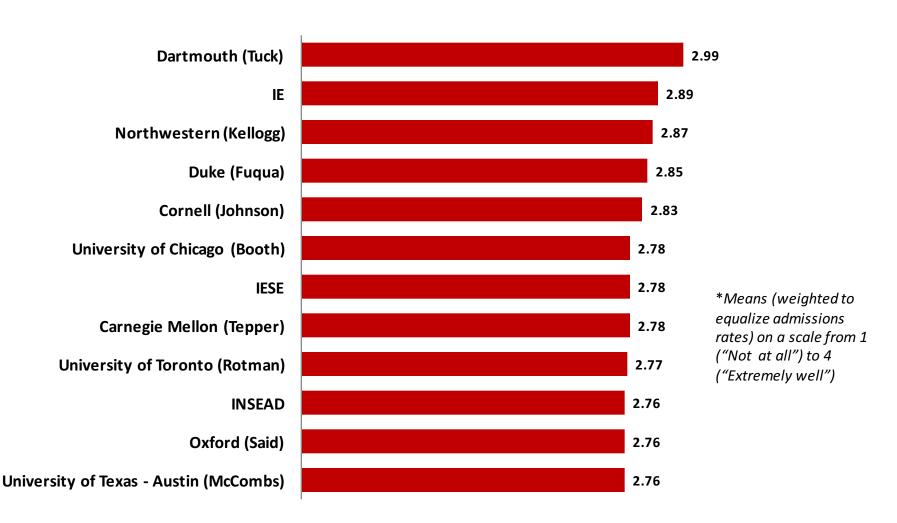




Top 10 Schools Who Got to Know Applicants Well



How well did each of the schools get to know you through the admissions process?*"



Source: 2016 MBA Applicant Survey, n=1114(those intending to start by January 2017)

Candidates expect the schools to be interested in them



"The accessibility of Admission Officers was key to my decision."

"Additionally, schools that were very **responsive** with returning emails and linking me with current students were generally higher on my list than others."

"Georgia Tech took the time to reach out to me during the whole admissions process. The **individual attention** from the beginning showed a commitment to me others schools lacked."

Media Inquiries



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