CONSIDERING GRADUATE SCHOOL IN BUSINESS

Bryant University
Amica Center for Career Education
### MBA vs. MS – which is right for you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MBA</th>
<th>MS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Suited for students who want greatest career flexibility that may lead to advancement.</td>
<td>1. Best option for students who are very clear about their career path and want highly specialized knowledge in a specific area.</td>
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<td>2. Multi-subject degree that covers topics from Finance to Marketing.</td>
<td>2. Highly specialized degree dives deeply into one topic, often preparing students for professional certification such as CPA.</td>
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<td>3. Prestigious MBA can leverage opportunities.</td>
<td>3. Degree is a means to the certification. Less concern with prestige and more with meeting specific requirements.</td>
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<td>4. May be more competitive, requiring minimum GMAT score &amp; professional experience.</td>
<td>4. Often shorter programs, completed in 8-12 months.</td>
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Before you decide, ask yourself these questions:

• What are my short and long-term goals? Where do I see myself in 5 or 10 years?

• Am I motivated to go to graduate school right now and can I “get into” the school/program I want?

• Do I have time to research and apply right now or would I be better off waiting?

• Is it necessary to get a degree immediately after I graduate, or is it better to work first?

• Do I need a graduate degree or is there a professional certificate program that might be a better option: such as Six Sigma, Human Resources, Project Management etc..?

• Can I afford a full-time graduate program or is attending graduate school on a part-time basis, while working, a better choice?

• **How will graduate school help me to succeed?**
A few facts about Accounting

• MS Accounting (or MPAC) degree can help you accumulate the required 150 credits necessary to sit for the CPA exam.

• If you are graduating with undergraduate credits that equal or are close to 150, you may not need a Master’s degree (an MS degree is NOT required for CPA certification in most states).

• CPA certification requirements differ from state to state. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the requirements for your state.

Resources for CPA Certification Requirements

American Institute of CPAs
National Association of State Boards of Accountancy
Deciding Where to Apply
Do your research! Consider..

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For MS Accounting degree</th>
<th>For MBA degree</th>
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| **Cost & convenience**   | **Reputation/ranking**
(Sometimes an online program may better suit your needs.) | (for an MBA program, reputation matters in the eyes of many employers. Strive to get into the best MBA program you can.) |
| **Accreditation** (Important! Some firms may require that your degree is from an accredited MS program.) | **Culture & Fit** |
| **Location** (Some MS Accounting programs teach to the CPA requirements for that state.) | **Campus Recruiting Program**
(Know what companies recruit on campus, what percentage of graduates have jobs and where they are finding jobs.) |
| **Campus Recruiting Program**
(If you don’t already have a job offer, make sure you are aware of the companies that recruit on campus.) | **Specialization areas within the program** |
Resources for Researching Graduate Schools

- **Best Biz Schools**
- **Top MBA**
- **US News**
- **Business Week School Finder**
- **Mba.com**
- **Forbes find the right Business School**
- **gradschools.com**
- **graduateschools.com**
- **collegesource.org**
- **petersons.com**
- **princetonreview.com**
- **graduateguide.com**
Application Checklist
similar for MBA & MS programs

- Official transcripts
- Graduate Admissions Exams
- Letters of recommendation
- Statement of Purpose
- Resume
- Application Fee
Requesting Transcripts

• To request your Bryant Transcript go to: http://www.bryant.edu/transcript

• Make sure you request an “official transcript” which insures confidentiality

• Fees are charged
Graduate Admissions Exam: GMAT

- Preferred exam for admission to graduate programs in Business
- 3 ½ hours
- Administered year-round and on demand
- 4 Sections – adjusts to your individual ability level
  - Analytical Writing Assessment
  - Integrated Reasoning
  - Quantitative and Verbal (majority of test)
- Scores range 200-800 (most score between 400-600)
- You can repeat the test, but all scores will be shown

Register: MBA.com
Graduate Admissions Exam: GRE

- Taking the [GRE for Business School](https://www.ets.org)

  Not always needed for applying to graduate business programs, check with the graduate school first!

- 3 hours 45 minutes
- Administered year-round and on demand.
- 3 Sections - adjusts to your individual ability level
  
  **Verbal Reasoning**
  
  **Quantitative Reasoning**
  
  **Analytical Writing**

- Scores range 200-800 (most score between 400-600)
- You can repeat the test, but all scores will be shown.

- Register: [ETS.org](https://www.ets.org)
Test Taking Strategies

• **DO** study. Consider a test prep course.

• **DON’T** wait until the last minute to take the GMAT. Scores are valid for 7 years, so take the GMAT, even if your graduate school plans are not immediate.

• **DO** plan to take the GMAT more than once, if your score is lower than expected.
Letters of Recommendation

Choose individuals who:
• Have had **significant direct involvement** with you
• Know you well and can provide **details and examples**
• Are **truly enthused** to write a recommendation

How many Letters?
• Typically 3 – professional, workplace, peer

It’s all in the asking…
• Give your recommender enough time
• Make sure they are willing to write on your behalf!
• Inform them about your graduate plans
• Give them a copy of your resume
• Keep in touch!
Statement of Purpose

Include:
• Your experience and educational background.
• What sets you apart from other candidates?
• How will this degree help you achieve your short and long term career goals?
• Why are you interested in this specific graduate program?

Checklist:
✓ Grammatically perfect
✓ Succinctly written
✓ No spelling errors
✓ Make sure you Answer the Question!
Statement of Purpose

Start writing early and plan for several drafts

Have at least 3 people review:

- Faculty (or someone who understands your area of study)
- Amica Center for Career Education
- Bryant Writing Center - Unistructure Room 275

Resource: statementofpurpose.com
Financing Graduate School

Most MBA and MS programs do NOT award financial assistance

Tips for being Financially Ready
• Get your finances ready: save, reduce credit card debt, pay down car loan, prepare a budget
• Understand financial aid process
• Get your credit report and credit score. Close lines of credit you no longer use.

Loans
• Unsubsidized Stafford Loans; Graduate PLUS Loans; Perkins Loans – given by schools based on need; Private Loans

Merit-based Scholarships
• Typically awarded from school and required early round-application

Outside Scholarships
• Merit or need based and often have criteria applicants must meet such as: major, gender, ethnicity etc..

Graduate Assistantships
• Part-time employment at the university that provides
• Compensation toward your tuition or living expenses. Offered
• at time of application or after you enroll.
Resources for Financing Graduate School

- Scholarships.com
- Profellow — a fellowship database
- Fastweb — list of fellowships
- Gradschools.com — list of funding resources
- USA Government Scholarships — list of funding resources
- FinAid — student guide to financial aid
- Federal Student Aid for Graduate Studies
- College Grants Database
- Paying for Graduate School — US News & World Report resource
Ideal Timeline

November
Senior Year

• Figure out your plan
• Start your research
• Talk to Bryant faculty

Spring/Summer
Junior Year

• Register & study for tests
• Build your resume
• Attend a Bryant graduate school orientation session (even if not applying to Bryant, the application process information is helpful)

August/Sept.
Senior Year

• Finalize list of prospective schools
• Contact your recommenders
• Begin your statement of purpose

October
Senior Year

• Request transcripts
• Send recommenders extra materials
• Contact schools and arrange campus visit (optional)
**Ideal Timeline**

- **December**
  - Senior Year
- **January – March**
  - Senior Year
  - Complete and submit all applications (earlier the better)
  - Verify that recommendations have been sent
  - Apply for assistantships (if applicable)
- **April**
  - Senior Year
  - Focus on Financial aid, private loans, grants and fellowships
  - Once accepted, withdraw from other applicant pools
  - Inform and thank references
  - Mail required deposit
  - Appeal aid package or apply for alternative loans

**CELEBRATE!**
Additional Resources

**B-School Q&As** (US News & World Report)
Here you'll find answers directly from admissions officials from business schools across the country detailing what students can do to heighten their chances of being accepted.

**Applying to Business School** (US News & World Report)

**Why It's Harder To Get Into A Top Business School** (Linkedin)

Bryant University Graduate Programs

**RANKINGS:**
**Best Graduate Programs in Accounting** (US News & World Report)

**Best MBA Programs** (US News & World Report)
For Questions Contact:

**Amica Center for Career Education**

*Located in the Unistructure, next to Salmanson Dining Hall*

**Phone:** (401) 232-6090  
**Email:** [careers@bryant.edu](mailto:careers@bryant.edu)  
**Website:** [http://career.bryant.edu/](http://career.bryant.edu/)

- [Bryant Career Connection (BCC)]
- [Events Calendar]

**Hours:** Monday-Friday 8:30AM - 4:30PM