



# Best MBA Programs: A Guide to Selecting the Right One

An Accepted.com Report

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## Which MBA Programs Should You Apply to Next Season?

It's late winter or early spring, already in the ebb of the current MBA admissions season. That means it's the perfect time for people planning to apply next season to break out of hibernation and start tackling a part of the application process that is often shortchanged: school selection. Doing this part right sets the course for an efficient, productive application process with greater likelihood of satisfying results.

In 15 years of MBA admissions consulting I have found that otherwise highly capable and focused people often basically wing it when it comes to creating their school list. "I'm just applying to all the top ten." Top ten according to what source? "I realize now [after R2 deadlines have passed] I was overreaching. Are there any good schools I can still apply to?" Probably. "I'm applying to H/S/W, with Duke as my safety." Duke as your safety?

By starting to develop your list of prospective schools now, you can avoid these and similar problems (yes, these responses are all problems – real ones I've heard, more than once).

By approaching school selection thoughtfully and systematically, you will save time, money, and effort in the long run (even if you expend more of all initially). You will conserve precious energy for the nitty-gritty work of the applications. You will be able to start planning school visits and recommendations, two things that often get tangled up when first addressed in the heat of the application season.

In this latest edition I provide various tips and approaches to developing a solid list of schools. Each person's needs are unique, and there is no one formula that works for everyone, so I will guide you in asking the right questions, answering (or finding answers to) those questions, and deciding accordingly. This special edition will cover, among other topics:

- assessing your profile
- the role of rankings
- how many schools you should apply to
- identifying and prioritizing your b-school needs and wants.

Ready? Here are a couple of things you can and should do right now to get started on the school selection process for next season:

- Capture on paper or your preferred electronic medium those random thoughts that have been floating around in your head, for example, "top 10," "friendly to older applicants," "strong quant focus," "need to be within an hour by plane from my ailing mother."

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- Read blogs of MBA students not just at schools you're already interested in but from a wider array of schools – both the substance and the tone of those blog posts will give you a subjective feel for different programs and your own responses to them.
- If possible talk to MBA students and ask them about their school selection process; what went well and what proved difficult or problematic; ask what they would do differently.
- Visit schools now! Visit schools you know you are interested in (you can always re-visit later), schools you might be interested in, and even schools on the margins. It's the perfect time: schools are in session, you're not pressed by the application process yet, and it's close enough to application time for your insights from the visits to be relevant if you discuss them in essays. Take advantage of travel you may do for business or pleasure to schedule a visit, rather than trying to cram everything in the fall—when you'll be even busier than usual with applications plus work. Moreover, visiting now gives you time to digest and reflect on your campus experiences.

## Assessing Your Profile

Thinking about what you want and need in an MBA program is the fun part. Before you do that, tackle the less fun part: assessing your profile. Knowing a program has everything you've ever dreamed of is nice, but if it does not welcome people like you, it's just a fantasy, not something to expend effort and money applying to. Conversely, learning that a seemingly so-so program would likely value your candidacy might prompt you to take a closer, and warmer, look.

Break down your assessment into several basic areas, as follows.

- **Work experience.** There are many dimensions to this element: your industry and company, your role overall, how you compare to accomplished peers, how fast you've advanced and/or how impressive your impact has been, and your leadership (formal and/or informal). What are your strengths in this area, and what are the weaknesses or challenges? A challenge might be, for example, that you've increased responsibility significantly but because you work for a "flat" company you don't have promotions. Another challenge: You work in the [tech side](#),<sup>1</sup> so you have to illustrate your business knowledge and exposure. One more: You're a successful [consultant](#)<sup>2</sup> or [financial analyst](#),<sup>3</sup> but how do you differentiate yourself in this group? Strengths would be distinctive roles or industries, visibly rapid advancement, clear leadership.
- **Academics.** This part includes your undergrad GPA and transcript, grad GPA and transcript (if any), and GMAT or GRE score(s). What are the strengths and weaknesses in each area, and how do they add up overall? For example, a [weak undergrad GPA](#)<sup>4</sup> and solid GMAT will not be great if the GPA trended down and the quant section of the GMAT was under 80%. However, if the GPA trended up and the GMAT quant was 90%, you're in much better shape. A strong grad GPA won't completely neutralize a low undergrad GPA but it can go a long way to doing so. (NOTE: If your GPA is low and you have time to take a class or two and earn A's—I recommend doing this even if you have a high GMAT.)
- **Goals.** What industry? What function? What specific position(s) are you considering immediately post-MBA? Is it a major career change? A slight career shift? What is the link between your current work and your goals? If it's a [career change](#),<sup>5</sup> how will you build your bridge between here and there?

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/itapplicants.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/managementconsultant.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/investmentbankers.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/lowstats.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/careerchanger.aspx>

- **Extracurriculars.** At the least, extracurricular activities will round out your profile. At most, they will set you apart and give your application extra sparkle. They will be more important to some programs than to others. And the weight they have in any individual application will vary depending on the other factors, as adcoms review the applications holistically.
- **Other miscellaneous factors.** Honor code infraction, DUI, DWI, academic probation—all clear negatives, but again, *how* negative truly will vary. Perhaps the worst is the honor code infraction. On the positive side: obstacles overcome, extraordinary level of achievement in almost any area, and military experience.

With a clear understanding of your profile and your competitiveness, you can determine which schools are likely safeties, on-pars, and reaches.

## Determining Your Needs and Wants

Now that you did the hard work of assessing your profile, it's time to focus on the future: what you want and need in your MBA program.

If you are visiting schools now, the visits can help you sort through these points and see them in a new light. For example, you might have thought you could never spend two years outside a city, but stopping by [Tuck](#)<sup>6</sup> on a skiing trip opened your eyes to the abundant diversity and culture the campus and town offer, and you give the excellent program a closer look.

Whether or not you get a chance to visit schools before compiling your school list, consider the following factors and decide what's important to you in each category:

- **Academics.** This category includes the curriculum structure and approach (e.g., preset concentrations versus flexible), strength in particular disciplines, professors in your areas of interest, degree of analytic rigor, opportunity to take courses outside the b-school, and study abroad options.
- **Recruiting and career services.** Recruiting for both internships and post-MBA positions should be relatively strong for your goals. But students' actual need for this service varies depending on their existing contacts and resources. Similarly, some people have more need than others of career services support.
- **Extracurricular opportunities.** Most people will want to see clubs and activities in their areas of professional interest. Other than that, do you want certain volunteering activities, arts or cultural activities, religious resources, or political opportunities? Are you looking for people who share your interests? If you don't find something you need, would it be easy to initiate a club or activity?
- **Brand.** This factor is critical to some, insignificant to others, and somewhere in between for most. There is brand in your own perspective, and brand in the eyes of your prospective employers. Probably the latter is more important and less open to compromise. Do not mistake "brand" for "ranking." If you need a highly competitive program such as Columbia or Wharton, that's fine. But the issue isn't "top 5"; it's the value of the specific school brands for your context.
- **Environment and ambience.** Do you prefer a warm and fuzzy or a hard driving learning environment? Everyone wants diversity it seems, but what kind: geographic, professional, functional, ethnic, religious? Do you prefer a small,

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/DartmouthTuck.aspx>

close-knit campus or a large, teeming one? Does it matter to you if the student body has a more conservative or liberal orientation?

- **Geography.** Where would you like to be? Start broad, like continent. Many non-US applicants think globally, considering programs in Asia, Europe, or the US. Many Americans however remain fairly US-centric almost reflexively. If you are an American traveling abroad, try to visit some of the overseas MBA programs. You will be pleasantly surprised.
- **Other personal factors.** Do you need quick access to an international airport? Special medical resources? Resources for a spouse or partner? Or maybe you're really into bobsledding and want a track nearby....

## Weighting Your Needs and Wants

A little more work is needed on the needs and wants issue. It will be helpful to weight them—though not rigidly. Simply, understanding the importance of a given factor will save you time up front by not considering schools that don't meet your core needs. It will also help to uncover any contradictions that you might need to resolve (e.g., prefer to attend schools in the southeast, but also want to be near boyfriend in Boston).

For each of the wants/needs you've identified, assign one of the following categories:

**Essential** – This category applies to things that you must have no matter what – without them, you can't attend a program. If you are making a career change into marketing, you need a program with strong marketing curriculum and recruiting. Period.

**Very important** – This category applies to the things that are highly important to you, but are not “must-haves” like those above. Things that you would consider compromising on if you really, really had to, but really, really don't want to. For some people that might mean a geographic location, for others a warm and open community, for others the chance to take courses in the university's law or public policy program.

**Important** – Consider this the “nice to have” category—things that would make a program more attractive to you but wouldn't necessarily be a deciding factor.

**Neutral** – This category means simply not a factor. Some people would just as readily have curriculum flexibility or structure; would just as readily live in Palo Alto or Fontainebleau, strange as that may seem.

The main purpose of this exercise is to think about and define your priorities. Some people may be comfortable keeping these rankings in their head as they go through the next steps; others will make a spreadsheet with them.

## Reaches, On-Pars, and Safeties

It's now time to determine what types and levels of MBA programs you're competitive and qualified for, and what if any are out of reasonable reach. I use the following categories:

- **Reasonable reach:** Acceptance is not likely but with a great application is within reach.
- **On-par:** With a great app you'll have a solid chance of acceptance.
- **Safety:** You will likely be admitted if you present your case credibly.

There's a fourth category: out-of-reaches. Conceding the wisdom and validity of "never say never" and "nothing's impossible," there are still much, much better ways to spend your energy and time than applying to such schools.

Several factors determine your qualification for various levels of programs. Keep in mind that they all work together holistically.

First the basics: **GPA and GMAT**. How do yours stack up versus the mid 75-80% of students in a given program? To be fundamentally qualified you'll want to be in the higher two-thirds of that range at least. If you're above or in the upper one-third of this range, you're competitive in this area. If you're in the middle third you're qualified, and if you're in the lower third or below, you're reaching.

**Work experience** is the next factor to consider, specifically, quality of experience. The more competitive the MBA program, the more important it is to have strong and demonstrable advancement, impact, and leadership relative to accomplished peers, regardless of your function, industry, or organization. Quality of work experience is a key factor in determining the level of program you would be competitive in; top tier programs turn down many applicants with near perfect stats who lack the requisite professional accomplishment.

Being in an **overrepresented or underrepresented industry, demographic group, or global region/country** will affect your competitiveness. Perhaps the largest overrepresented group is [Indians](#)<sup>7</sup> in technical fields, a group that also has relatively high average stats. Schools that might be reasonable reaches for others will be almost out of reach for many in this group. On the other hand, no matter how underrepresented you are, if the adcom doubts you can handle the program, you won't be admitted. As you can see, this factor influences what programs would be reasonable reaches, on-pars, and safeties.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/indianapp.aspx>

A myriad of other factors will also affect your qualification and competitiveness. Having [fewer than three](#)<sup>8</sup> or [more than eight years](#)<sup>9</sup> of work experience or already holding an MBA from another program usually makes you less competitive.

If you have an unconventional background, such as teaching or airline pilot, you face extra burdens in making your case. However if you successfully make the case for your qualifications and need for an MBA, your non-traditional background may become a plus in this competitive process.

Qualified means you meet the basic standards of a given program. You can be fully qualified but not competitive—this is exactly the problem that many excellent Indian IT applicants face. Competitive is more nuanced; it encompasses the preferences and character of the program, the commonality or distinctiveness of your background, and even sometimes political and/or economic trends and events. When you happily conclude that you are qualified for [Columbia](#),<sup>10</sup> don't forget to ask yourself whether you are also competitive there.

As you research and visit MBA programs, determine how qualified *and* competitive you are for them.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/younger.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/older.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/Columbia.aspx>

## Researching Schools

You may be researching schools already. Going through the steps previously outlined in this guide will help you do so efficiently. It will also help you remain objective.

That means eliminate from consideration programs that

- lack elements you consider essential and/or
- where you are not qualified.

Some applicants will immediately run into a dilemma here: What if you need a globally recognized brand, yet you don't qualify for schools that carry the desired panache? In some cases, you might find it worthwhile to apply to such schools' part-time or [EMBA](#)<sup>11</sup> programs. Or you may target programs recognized globally in your niche, but not for overall brand. Or you may decide it's not worth it to pursue an MBA. Luckily, most people can find programs that offer their must-haves.

When you identify schools that meet your needs and important wants, determine whether they are reasonable reach, on-par, or safety schools. First examine the GMAT and GPA ranges, and analyze student profiles. How do you compare? The numbers are easier to compare; it might take some digging and some thoughtful self-critique to determine how you stack up in terms of quality of work experience and leadership. But it's at least as, if not more, important than the numbers for competitive programs, so buckle down and do the *qualitative* evaluation of your work experience and compare it to the level of achievement of students in your desired schools. Otherwise you won't know where you really stand.

Then look at other qualitative factors that would make you a great fit or a challenging fit for the school. One main point is status in an under- or over-represented group. Then there are the individual qualitative factors. For example, you're a [finance professional](#);<sup>12</sup> one program you're considering has a great finance curriculum but is not reputed for it. Your finance status would be a plus for such a school, whereas you might not stand out from the army of finance applicants at a known finance school.

Finally, combine all these factors—your scores, qualitative analysis of your work experience, and any other issues pro or con—to refine your determination of reasonable reach, on par, or safety for each school of interest.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/embaadmissionscourse.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/investmentbankers.aspx>

It's true that you should be objective. Still, don't ignore the subjective factor in your research. If you find yourself falling for a school that doesn't seem like a great fit – you wanted intimate campus and yet when you visited [NYU](#)<sup>13</sup> while on a business trip to the Big Apple, you found its downtown vibe utterly scintillating—well, great! It's possible you're momentarily infatuated, and it's also possible that there's a side of you that this environment has opened up and brought to light. Allow yourself to be enchanted and surprised in the process.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/NYUStern.aspx>

## How Many Schools Should You Apply To?

Deciding how many schools to apply to is another often shortchanged step in the pre-application process. It's something that people seem to think just happens. And it will just happen, but not necessarily in an advantageous way, unless you make it. Your specific situation and needs should drive your decision of how many schools to apply to—in each category: reasonable reach, on-par, and safety. Having a clear idea before you start your applications of how many schools you'll be targeting will help you plan and allocate your resources. Please note: By “number” I mean roughly; a short range such as “five or six” is fine.

A “typical” applicant would apply to about five or six programs: two to three reasonable reaches, two to three on-pars, and one to two safeties. The rationale for this scenario is that it yields a decent possibility of acceptance at a reach, likelihood of acceptance at an on-par program, and certainty through the safety.

This typical case doesn't apply to a lot of people though. Here are some common exceptions:

- You're on the [older side](#),<sup>14</sup> so getting in this year is essential—next year you will be solidly in EMBA territory. Consider applying to more programs—as many as you can manage.
- You're [fairly young](#),<sup>15</sup> have a spectacular career and stats, and don't think it makes sense to take off two years now if it's not HBS or Stanford. You should apply to those two only, because you can reapply next year if need be without worrying about age.
- The brands you require are all reaches, some reasonable and some almost out of reach. It wouldn't be worth it to you to attend other programs. Apply to as many as you can that fit your criteria and offer some realistic hope of acceptance to increase the possibility of a hit.
- You are applying with a handicap—a DUI or honor code infraction, were fired for cause, etc.—if you write a frank and compelling essay about growing from the situation (and if it didn't happen yesterday), you should have a shot. But because it's such an unpredictable factor and adcoms often react defensively, apply to more schools than you otherwise would need to.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/older.aspx>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/younger.aspx>

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- You're unsettled about geographic region and want to keep options open. Apply to more programs to keep options open.
- You're pressed for time. Maybe you can't devote more than two hours a week, or maybe you must have all your apps done by a given deadline. Select a number that will allow you to deliver quality, even if it's fewer than you would normally do under other circumstances.

Last but not least, this number isn't written in stone. The application process is dynamic, and you are not closing off opportunities by deciding on a number to target now.

## Putting It All Together – Your Initial List

Creating the actual list of schools may seem like a formality by now. As you have gone through the previous steps, a group of feasible and appealing programs most likely has evolved almost organically. It's time to firm it up in preparation for the hands-on application process.

Establish your desired balance among the three categories: reach, on-par, and safety. (Note that these categories have variation within them.) Whether you are applying to ten programs or two, you should be clear about where each falls on this continuum vis-à-vis your profile. **Out of the total number of programs you'll apply to, how many do you want in each category, and why?** Answer this question based on your previous evaluations, and make your list accordingly. This allocation should be deliberate and informed, not accidental.

Now take the list of schools that [meet your needs and, ideally, fulfill your important wants](#),<sup>16</sup> and also are viable targets (i.e., they are not out of reach). Sort these schools by [reach, on-par, and safety](#).<sup>17</sup>

If your research yielded more programs than you want to apply to, you'll need to further weed down the list. Which programs in a given category meet the most of your wants and/or *best* meet your needs? You can also factor in where you have the better chance of admission, since the programs within a category will vary in competitiveness.

What if this process results in an imbalance? You wanted two reaches, three on-pars, and one safety. You ended up with no safeties, one on-par, and an overabundance of reaches. It's not uncommon. Remember, competitiveness will vary within category. So some reaches might be close enough to on-par to almost fit in that category or straddle the two. If not, you have some hard choices to make:

- You can proceed with this less than ideal balance, fully aware of the situation and doing your best.
- You can research more programs: Look again at some you previously rejected and/or broaden your scope; maybe consider other geographic regions or part-time programs.

Especially if you are applying to numerous programs, consider balance within categories as well, and try to widen your scope of programs. Say you're a [consultant](#).<sup>18</sup> The majority

<sup>16</sup> [http://blog.accepted.com/acceptedcom\\_blog/2010/3/4/mba-program-selection-post-3-determining-your-needs-and-wants](http://blog.accepted.com/acceptedcom_blog/2010/3/4/mba-program-selection-post-3-determining-your-needs-and-wants)

<sup>17</sup> [http://blog.accepted.com/acceptedcom\\_blog/2010/3/11/mba-program-selection-reaches-on-pars-and-safeties](http://blog.accepted.com/acceptedcom_blog/2010/3/11/mba-program-selection-reaches-on-pars-and-safeties)

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/managementconsultant.aspx>

of consultants will gravitate to the known consulting programs (e.g., Kellogg); but you'll stand out more in programs renowned for other areas (e.g., Chicago Booth). This balance within categories is especially helpful because the vicissitudes of the upcoming admissions season are still unknown. If a flood of consultants apply, your breadth of programs will be all the more important.

Now you should have your list of MBA programs. Or, I should say, your preliminary list. Since you continue to learn as you go through the application process, it's quite possible that you will modify this list. This list should be firm but not rigid; you shouldn't veer from it on a whim (otherwise no point doing it in the first place), but you should for a solid reason that engages your initial assumptions or preferences.

## Examples

Here are two examples that illustrate how this school selection process works.

### Example 1

A 25-year-old male (American of Korean ethnic background) in finance has two years as an [investment banking](#)<sup>19</sup> analyst followed by one year in private equity. His career track record of impact and accomplishment is solid but not exceptional; similarly he demonstrates clear but not outstanding leadership. He has a combined GMAT score of 710 and a GPA from a strong but not elite college of 3.45. His extracurricular activities are consistent but do not elicit a “wow.” His post-MBA goal is to return to his present employment at a higher level. MBA brand is important to him, but he accepts that he may not be competitive at Wharton or Columbia. Given his age, he would rather reapply (at least he knows where he can improve if need be – leadership, impact, and GMAT) than attend a program that does not excite him or that represents a steep compromise, and since no [safety schools excite him, he select only reaches and on-pars](#).<sup>20</sup> Still, he'd love to get in this year, so he decides to apply to eight programs over Rounds 1 and 2 to widen his chances.

During his research he was surprised to find a few on-pars that interested him, and he put all three on his list: [Georgetown](#)<sup>21</sup> (he was unexpectedly thrilled when he visited by the extensive campus resources and the high caliber of students), [USC Marshall](#)<sup>22</sup> (a lot more intense than he'd believed, and he was invigorated by the Asia focus), and [Cornell](#)<sup>23</sup> (where his private equity experience will be a slight differentiating factor, and Cornell actually straddles reach level). The five reaches contain some variation in competitiveness: [Columbia](#),<sup>24</sup> [Wharton](#),<sup>25</sup> [Chicago](#),<sup>26</sup> [NYU](#),<sup>27</sup> [LBS](#).<sup>28</sup>

### Example 2

A 30-year-old female is a junior manager in manufacturing operations, with a record of solid advancement and leadership. Her GMAT score is 680 and she has an undergrad GPA of 3.3 from a second-tier state school and a grad (supply chain and IT) GPA of 3.65

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/investmentbankers.aspx>

<sup>20</sup> <http://blog.accepted.com/2010/3/11/mba-program-selection-reaches-on-pars-and-safeties>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/GeorgetownMcDonough.aspx>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/USCMarshall.aspx>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/CornellJohnson.aspx>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/Columbia.aspx>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/Wharton.aspx>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/chicago.aspx>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/NYUStern.aspx>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/LondonBusinessSchool.aspx>

from the same school. Her extracurricular activities include significant leadership in her church. This applicant's post-MBA goal is to acquire a mid-level management position in global operations at a top-tier manufacturer that will lead to senior management within several years. She needs to get in this year because of her age, since she knows that chances of acceptance become increasingly difficult for each year after the age of 30. Her work experience is a strength, in part because females in operations are relatively few, but also because core manufacturing related experience isn't highly represented in many programs. She doesn't have the time, the resources, or, in fact, the desire to apply to more than six schools, and she feels she should be able to gain acceptance to an exciting program if she approaches her list thoughtfully. She targets two reaches—[Michigan](#)<sup>29</sup> and [MIT](#)<sup>30</sup> (women are even a smaller percentage at MIT than at most US b-schools)—two on-pars—[Kelley](#)<sup>31</sup> and [Tepper](#)<sup>32</sup>—and two safeties—Schulich in Canada and Krannert (Purdue University).

For both of the above hypothetical applicants, objective assessment of their profiles, thoughtful examination of their needs and wants, extensive school research, and consideration of the number of schools to apply to yield promising lists of targeted MBA programs.

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/MichiganRoss.aspx>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/MITSloan.aspx>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/Kelley.aspx>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/CMUTEpper.aspx>

## Adapting Your List as the Season Progresses

As I noted earlier, your initial school list isn't set in stone. It is a firm starting point that allows you to plan and to proceed efficiently and systematically through the often unwieldy application process.

As you progress through your applications, continuously assess and respond to any new developments that might warrant revising your list. For example:

- Evidence that your initial assessment of reaches, on-pars, and safeties was off. E.g., if you applied to reaches and on-pars with competitive interviewing and you don't receive interview invites even from some on-pars, it's a sign that you may have miscalculated your competitiveness. On the other hand, if you receive an interview invite from a high reach that you really didn't expect, a re-assessment might reveal the advisability of adding another reach or two in the second or third round. In either of these cases, revisit your list. Changing it may involve replacing some programs, or simply adding some.
- Your plans or needs change. As the applications progress, life goes on. Personal needs change: geography, partner and family issues, personal interests. Professional needs and goals change: Perhaps you lost your job; perhaps a new healthcare project intrigued you and you now want to consult in this area. Revisit your list, see what works and what doesn't, and adapt it accordingly.
- You encounter a program that appeals to you that you didn't initially consider (like in the NYU Stern example above. Look at your list: Would this program replace another one on your list? Or would you want to add it? Either option is fine, depending on your needs and resources.

Good luck in the upcoming MBA season! By following the steps in this guide you will create a list of MBA programs that meet your needs and will yield admission to desirable programs. This systematic approach will also help you keep sane during the application process. If you would like professional assistance beyond this report with your school selection and/or application process, please visit our [catalog of services](#).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/services/mbaservices.aspx>

## About the Author



*Cindy Tokumitsu*<sup>34</sup> is co-author of *The Finance Professional's Guide to MBA Success*,<sup>35</sup> *The Consultants' Guide to MBA Admission*,<sup>36</sup> and *The EMBA Edge*,<sup>37</sup> and is author of several articles and the free, email mini-course, "[Ace the EMBA](#)."<sup>38</sup>

## Epilogue

Thank you for downloading this exclusive Accepted.com special report. We hope you've learned important tips about self-evaluation and how to choose the best MBA programs for you.

If you still don't feel confident about whittling down your too-long list of MBA programs, determining school fit, or creating and polishing a stellar b-school application, then Cindy and the rest of the talented and knowledgeable [Accepted.com staff](#)<sup>39</sup> would be happy to help you. Even if you think you can accomplish these lofty goals on your own, a second set of experienced, objective eyes can add valuable perspective when you've been thinking non-stop about school choice or when you've just spent too much time looking at and thinking about the words in your essay. Professional writers have editors for good reasons. Shouldn't you, like the thousands of clients who have worked with Accepted since 1994, have a pro on your side for something as important as determining your list of b-school choices and composing a compelling application essays?

[Please click here for our catalog of services.](#)<sup>40</sup> We look forward to hearing from you!



<sup>34</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/aboutus/editors.aspx?editorid=3>

<sup>35</sup> <http://accepted.com/ecommerce/ebook2.aspx>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/Ecommerce/ConsultantsGuide/ConsultantsGuide.aspx>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/Ecommerce/mba/EMBAEssay.aspx>

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/mba/embaadmissionscourse.aspx>

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.accepted.com/aboutus/aboutus.aspx>