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# 8 Tips for a Successful MBA Application



Now that you have taken the time to find the right MBA program for you, the next step is to prepare an exceptional MBA application. However, this is sometimes easier said than done! A successful application requires a significant amount of thought, time, effort and planning. Below, we have noted down a few tips to help you along in the process and ensure that your application will be a successful one.

## 1. Start early

The business school application can be like a marathon. You will have to coordinate with your recommenders, get transcripts, figure out how to write your application essays and all at the same time keep your day job. This is going to take a lot of time and effort, so you have to get the process started as early as possible. Remember that you will most likely have a lot of other events going on in your life, so keep this in mind as you plan out your timeline for completing the application process.

## 2. Get organized

The last thing you want to do is submit an application that isn't as good as it could be because your transcript didn't arrive on time or you forgot to include a document. There is only one way to avoid that: don't procrastinate! Get organized and try to work on your application a little bit each day to in order to decrease the stress. We suggest creating a spreadsheet which summarizes the key information about your application (due dates; application format; contact person; items requested, etc) and keep a checklist of what has been done and what still needs to be completed.

## 3. Take the time to prepare for the GMAT and the TOEFL

The GMAT is something you can study and prepare for, so you should! It may have been quite some time since you last worked on complex calculus equations or had to apply integrated reasoning to evaluate data, so take the time and properly prepare for the exam. Set a time every day if possible to study and take practice tests. You should allow at least 3-6 months to properly prepare for the exam and be sure to take the test early enough so that you can re-take it if necessary.

As all of our MBA programs are taught in English, some applicants may be required to take the TOEFL. If you are not a native English speaker nor did you study for at least three years in an English-language college or university, then you will also need to prepare for and take the TOEFL.

## 4. Refine your résumé

While your résumé is an important tool in describing your professional responsibilities, the goal is give the admissions committee a snapshot of your achievements, not to overwhelm the reader with everything you have done since high school; so remember to keep it simple and make sure it fits on one page. Also, don't hesitate to include information about your personal activities as it will make your application a bit more personal and it will help the admissions committee get to know you better. Finally, make sure to fill in any gaps about unemployment periods, a lower than average GMAT score or a low undergraduate GPA. Address the issues head on and offer to provide complementary information so that the admissions committee doesn't think you are hiding something.

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### *5. Decide what story you want to tell*

Admissions officers go through hundreds, if not thousands of admission essays each year. The question you need to consider is how do you plan on differentiating yourself? Before you sit down to write your essays, take the time to reflect on who you are, why you want to attend your chosen program and what makes you stand out from the other candidates. Make sure that your essay is personalized and really shows what you are about.

### *6. Make sure your applications and essays are immaculate*

Keep in mind that your MBA application will be the first time that the admissions officer is going to “meet” you. Making a good first impression is absolutely crucial and you can’t do that if your application is riddled with spelling errors or grammatical mistakes. Recruiters are looking for people who are thorough and pay attention to detail, so be sure you have someone proof read your application.

### *7. Choose the best recommenders for your profile*

When choosing your recommenders, it’s important to choose someone who has first-hand knowledge of your accomplishments. Picking someone who knows you well will ensure that their recommendation complements or reinforces the key points from the rest of your application. Preferably, your letters of recommendation will be related to your professional experience, and will represent a mix of supervisors and colleagues, or potentially clients if you were in a sales, consulting, or service role. To avoid a time crunch before the application due date; deliver an organized packet to the recommenders early. Give your recommender *PLENTY* of notice when you’re asking them for letters – we recommend at least 4-6 weeks before you need to submit the letters. Also, don’t hesitate to send reminders 10-14 days before your agreed upon deadline.

### *8. Don’t hesitate to ask around*

A crucial part of the actual MBA is learning how to network, so why not get started now? Don’t hesitate to talk to colleagues, friends or family members that have already completed an MBA application process. Ask for their opinion about your essay topic, any advice they may have for the GMAT prep or even how they prepared for their interview. Or better yet, chat with one of ESSEC’s program ambassadors. Ask any questions or gather any insight about the application process or the program from current students.

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