You have a vision for what you want to achieve in your career and life, and Kelley Direct’s flexible MBA program will help you achieve your goals on your terms. Our large and connected alumni network, talented and attentive faculty, and committed staff are here for you through every step of the program. Find what’s at the heart of your success with world-class and real-world business skills plus individualized coaching at the elite Kelley School of Business.

Attend a Virtual Open House  
Apply Now
8. TOP MBA PAY IN 2013
Graduates from the No. 1 B-school boast an average base salary of $375,000

9. THE NINE BIGGEST RANKING MISTAKES
A rankings blogger weighs in on what’s really wrong with ordering B-schools

UP FRONT

6. WACKY RANKINGS
Which B-school has the most competitive students? The most beautiful campus?

10. THE MOST VALID MBA RANKING
A dean reveals why she’d consult U.S. New & World Report first

FEATURES

14. MBA RANKINGS AND B-SCHOOLS: A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP
What business schools really think of the rankings and why they can’t ignore them

18. CONFESSIONS OF A RANKING GURU
The making of the first regularly published ranking of business schools in the world

23. THE TOP 100 U.S. MBA PROGRAMS
Poets&Quants’ annual ranking of the best B-schools in America

29. Harvard University
Harvard Business School

33. Stanford University
Graduate School of Business

37. University of Chicago
Booth School of Business

41. University of Pennsylvania
The Wharton School

45. Northwestern University
Kellogg School of Management

49. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Sloan School of Management

53. Columbia University
Columbia Business School

57. Dartmouth College
Tuck School of Business

61. Duke University
Fuqua School of Business

65. University of California Berkeley
Haas School of Business

69. THE TOP 50 NON-U.S. MBA PROGRAMS
Poets&Quants’ annual ranking of the best B-schools outside the U.S.

73. London Business School
London, England

77. INSEAD
Fontainebleau, France

81. IMD
Lausanne, Switzerland

85. IESE Business School
Barcelona, Spain

89. IE Business School
Madrid, Spain
94. U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT'S 2014 MBA RANKING
Wharton muscles its way into a three-way tie with Stanford and Harvard

98. THE FINANCIAL TIMES’ 2014 GLOBAL MBA RANKING
Yale, Darden, Ross, and Kenan-Flagler register big gains in the publication’s world-wide listing

102. BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK'S 2012 MBA RANKING
Chicago Booth nabs No. 1, while a calculation error leads to reshuffling among the lower ranks

106. FORBES’ 2013 MBA RANKING
Stanford surpasses Harvard to top the leading return-on-investment list

110. THE ECONOMIST’S 2013 MBA RANKING
Chicago Booth tops this list, while the big three — Harvard, Stanford, and Wharton — lose ground

114. MBA RANKINGS: TAKE WITH A GRAIN OF SALT?
A master admissions consultant explores the dangers of rankings overload
What’s the best business school? It’s a question that any competitive MBA applicant has asked—mainly because it’s essential to answering the second-most-important question: What’s the best business school I can get into?

Prior to 1988, the answer was problematic—an annual, systematic ranking of business schools did not exist. That year, Poets&Quants Editor-In-Chief John A. Byrne, then the management editor at BusinessWeek, offered a solution: A 35-question survey sent to graduating MBA students that measured what they thought of their education. That questionnaire, coupled with another poll of MBA employers, led to the first regular ranking of business schools. Ever. “What we were doing was putting valuable information—even intelligence—into the marketplace that would otherwise be completely unavailable,” Byrne writes in “Confessions of a Ranking Guru.”

Since then, there’s been a proliferation of rankings, with publications ranging from established players like U.S. News & World Report to niche websites like Military MBA rushing to print their own orderings of the very best MBA programs. There are now so many rankings that many schools employ full-time staff to manage them all—one administrator at Southern Methodist University’s Cox School refers to autumn as “high rankings season” due to the influx of survey requests.

What does this ballooning of rankings mean for the marketplace? Confusion, for one thing. After all, a handful of schools can now rightfully claim to be No. 1. But it also means that students can select an ordering that aligns with their interests. Want to carve out a career in social entrepreneurship? The Princeton Review and Entrepreneur magazine partnered to provide the top 25 B-schools in the field. Returning from military service and eager for a business education? Military MBA lists the best-value programs for vets. Both of these rankings have their flaws: Top schools like Harvard and Stanford opted out of the entrepreneurship ranking until last year, and Military MBA uses U.S. News’ ranking in its own calculations, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy, where top-ranked schools dominate by virtue of high marks on other lists.

These are just a few of rankings’ flaws, according to market researcher Matt Turner, the ranking steward for the University of Texas’ McCombs School of Business. “How does one quantify such things as intellectual vigor, creative thought, ambition, leadership, interpersonal skills, stellar teaching, innovative curricula, networking prowess, and success in the workplace?” he asks in “The Nine Biggest Mistakes In MBA Rankings.”

But rankings still have a purpose. The challenge is to make sense of them, recognizing their shortcomings but also their insights. For this reason, we’ve devoted our second issue of Poets&Quants’ digital magazine to providing a deep and meaningful look at rankings, ranging from what they mean for students and business schools to how business schools stack up against one another across the different lists. We’ve also published our own survey, which combines the five most influential business school rankings (BloombergBusinessWeek, The Economist, Financial Times, Forbes, and U.S. News & World Report) and weights them according to their credibility. In doing so, we aim to capture each academic institution’s overall reputational value.

For all their flaws, rankings matter. As our own rankings guru, John A. Byrne, points out: “People chose the business school they will go to based on a wide variety of factors: cost, length of time, location, teaching methods, size, and faculty quality. But the single most important factor is brand reputation—and that is largely determined by rankings over the years.”
WACKY RANKINGS

Which B-schools have the most competitive students? The best campuses?

BY LAUREN EVERITT

Rankings reign supreme as the most-consulted information source for prospective MBA candidates. But not all of them have to be serious. The Princeton Review’s category rankings, ranging from the best campus to the most competitive students, offer a peek into the environment aspiring MBAs can expect at different schools.

While it’s unlikely an admit to Harvard Business School will ditch an HBS diploma for UCLA Anderson’s balmy southern California campus, another student may opt for the Pacific coastline over two years at Michigan State’s land-locked Broad College of Business in East Lansing, Michigan.

For all their entertainment value, wacky rankings come with a few caveats. The Princeton Review’s Top 10 lists are no exception. The publication surveys some 19,000 business students across 296 B-schools. However, in many cases the differences between schools are so slight as to be statically meaningless; in other words, a school’s score may represent a mere anomaly or a dip in another school’s fortunes.

The ranking methodology is also unclear. For instance, the best campus environment is assessed according to students’ opinions on their respective school’s safety, attractiveness, and location; however, The Princeton Review provides no indication of the questions used in the ranking or their weight in the final score.

Plus, it often boils down to comparing apples with oranges. After all, how does one really weigh Stanford’s Mission Revival architecture and palm tree-lined drives against Columbia Business School’s close proximity to a smorgasbord of culinary options, art installations, and top financial centers.

For all their faults, these rankings offer a handy way to find schools with your top attributes. They’re also just plain fun.
WACKY RANKINGS

TOUGHEST TO GET INTO

1. Stanford University
2. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
3. Harvard University
4. University of California (Berkeley)
5. University of Pennsylvania
6. New York University
7. Columbia University
8. Dartmouth College
9. Yale University
10. Northwestern University


GREATEST OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN

1. Simmons School of Management
2. University of San Diego
3. Brandeis University
4. Pepperdine University
5. The George Washington University
6. University of California (Davis)
7. University of California (Berkeley)
8. University of Washington
9. University of California (Los Angeles)
10. Babson College


MOST COMPETITIVE STUDENTS

1. Acton School of Business
2. Purdue University
3. Texas A&M University (College Station)
4. University of Pennsylvania
5. Bryant University
6. Howard University
7. University of Rochester
8. University of Miami
9. Texas Christian University
10. The University of Texas at Dallas


BEST PROFESSORS

1. University of California (Berkeley)
2. Harvard University
3. The University of Texas at Austin
4. Yale University
5. University of Virginia
6. Vanderbilt University
7. The Ohio State University
8. Rice University
9. Cornell University
10. Dartmouth College


BEST CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

1. Columbia University
2. University of California (Los Angeles)
3. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
4. Dartmouth College
5. Stanford University
6. The University of Texas at Austin
7. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
8. Vanderbilt University
9. The University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa
10. Pennsylvania State University

Most MBAs shoulder more than $100,000 in debt when going to business school. That’s a hefty price to pay for a paper diploma. In essence, they’re making an investment in themselves and hoping to reap the dividends in career satisfaction, life experience, and--it goes without saying--a fat paycheck.

So what are the highest paid graduates from business school pulling in? Poets&Quants crunched the numbers from employment reports at most of the world’s top business schools to bring you the top 10 highest MBA salaries for 2013. It’s worth noting that these figures do not include sign-on bonuses, guaranteed year-end bonuses, tuition reimbursements, and equity interests--figures that result in even more astounding paydays for these MBAs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>COMPENSATION</th>
<th>INDUSTRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Northwestern (Kellogg)</td>
<td>$375,000 (Base salary)</td>
<td>Investment Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pennsylvania (Wharton)</td>
<td>$350,000 (Base salary)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Columbia Business School</td>
<td>$310,000 (Base salary)</td>
<td>Private Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Duke (Fuqua)</td>
<td>$260,000 (Base salary)</td>
<td>Energy/General Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Chicago (Booth)</td>
<td>$250,000 (Base salary)</td>
<td>Private Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. INSEAD</td>
<td>$247,000 (Base salary)**</td>
<td>Hedge Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. NYU (Stern)</td>
<td>$237,600 (Base salary)</td>
<td>Private Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Stanford Graduate School of Business</td>
<td>$225,000 (Base salary)</td>
<td>Private Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Harvard Business School</td>
<td>$222,000 (Base salary) *</td>
<td>Private Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. London Business School</td>
<td>$193,877 (Base salary)</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Business school employment reports for 2013

* Conservative estimate based on Harvard Business School only disclosing the top 75th percentile of base
** INSEAD data for 2012 due to December graduation date
THE NINE BIGGEST MISTAKES IN MBA RANKINGS

What you need to know about B-school surveys by the guy who studies these things

BY MATT TURNER
Rankings of academic institutions are inherently tough. It’s difficult to put metrics around a nuanced educational environment. Thinking of business schools, how does one quantify such things as intellectual vigor, creative thought, ambition, leadership, interpersonal skills, stellar teaching, innovative curricula, networking prowess, and success in the workplace? That being said, here are some of the most common ranking mistakes that we, at the University of Texas’ McCombs School, see from the school side, which should at least give us pause:

**IMPRECISE QUESTIONS**

Media outlets need to take the time to educate themselves on the appropriate terms and lingo for higher education, admissions, salary earnings, and other data. Failure to do so leads to howling discrepancies.

**EXAMPLES**

An admitted student is not the same as an enrolled student: What is meant by “full-time” versus “part-time” when speaking of faculty (are we talking the percentage of time hired or tenure-track status)? Are emeritus professors included in the faculty count (how about adjuncts, joint-appointments, faculty from other departments who routinely teach B-school classes)? Different schools use different methods to calculate standard exam (SAT, GMAT) scores. Is the school following MBA Career Services & Employer Alliance guidelines for reporting salary data?

**FAILURE TO SHOW SCORES AND CLUSTERING**

Ranks are inherently misleading because you don’t know by how much one school outranks another. Some major MBA rankings now include index scores, but many others do not. The same issue occurs within ranking subcategories, where you get a rank instead of actual data. One doesn’t know if there is essentially a tie between schools or if a yawning abyss separates them.

**FAILURE TO ADJUST SALARY FOR COST OF LIVING OR FOR INDUSTRY SECTORS**

This is perhaps less a “mistake” and more a “critique” because there are strong biases at play that are likely to be overlooked. Among MBA rankings, only Forbes attempts to adjust salary for cost of living and only the Financial Times adjusts for variation between industry sectors. Since roughly 45% of all ranking weight averaged among the five main MBA rankings (U.S. News and World Report, BusinessWeek, Forbes, the Financial Times, and Economist) relies on salary and placement—by far the most heavily weighted area—failure to make these adjustments creates a strong hidden bias. The cost of living in New York City and San Francisco is not the same as Denver and Minneapolis. Bicoastal salaries are often 5% to 10% higher than those not on the coasts. And regarding industry sectors, consulting and finance tend to pay (sometimes considerably) more than marketing, general management, or non-profit sector jobs. In short, schools on the coasts, in large metro areas, or those heavily focused on consulting and finance will have a large advantage. Foreign schools also have made huge inroads into global rankings based on higher salaries (than the U.S.).

Barring a catastrophe, it is difficult to believe that any school could rise or drop 10 ranks in a single year on any comprehensive ranking, and yet this happens all the time because of poor methodology.
FAILURE TO SEPARATE APPLES FROM ORANGES

As Malcolm Gladwell pointed out, you can rank all things on a single dimension (miles per gallon, GMAT scores, percentage employed at graduation, etc.), but if you want to attempt a holistic or comprehensive ranking, you need to limit the scope to a class, type, or specialty. We rank SUVs, trucks, and sports cars separately for a reason. Rankings often combine one-year MBA programs with two-year ones, 800-student programs with 40-student ones, foreign programs with domestic ones, programs with senior managers as students with programs with 21-year-olds as students. While it’s tempting to do so, because they offer the same basic degree, the results quickly become meaningless.

RECRUITER SURVEYS

These pose a variety of problems. Companies have differing hierarchies (national versus regional recruiters), with differing levels of autonomy, so it is difficult to know if the right people are being targeted for the survey. What a senior HR person might say about a school at the national level could vary radically from what a local recruiter would say about the same school. What recruiters have to say about students may reflect more a given year’s hiring quota than the quality of the students overall. Media usually keep schools in the dark about the details, and the results are often quite at odds with what recruiters report to the schools about their own satisfaction with a school and its graduates.

FAILURE TO GATHER DATA CONSISTENTLY

Sometimes ranking outlets will attempt to gather data from many schools, but when those schools decline to participate, they gather the data anyway from “various public sources,” such as websites or by emailing enrolled students. This inevitably leads to inconsistent data.

FAILURE TO CHECK VOLATILITY

Academic institutions tend to change slowly. Barring a catastrophe, it is difficult to believe that any school could rise or drop 10 ranks in a single year on any comprehensive ranking, and yet this happens all the time because of poor methodology. Older, more established rankings have learned to check volatility somewhat by conducting biennial (rather than annual) rankings or by weighting past surveys in the current-year rank, or both, but many rankings fail to do either, which produces roller-coaster effects.

SELF PROMOTION

Several surveys contain criteria which are tied to outcomes from their own surveys, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts. For instance, a school will get extra points if their graduates take up another degree or a faculty position at a top-ranked business school, “top-ranked” being defined by the media outlet’s own ranking of top schools.

FAILURE TO AUDIT DATA

Only the Financial Times officially audits MBA ranking data. All other rankings assume the data is good and clean. Rarely do media outlets even spot-check data against what schools publish on their own websites (which sometimes differs radically).
A dean reveals why she’d consult U.S. New & World Report first

BY JOHN A. BYRNE

If Dawn Iacobbuci were a prospective MBA applicant instead of an accomplished professor, the MBA ranking she would most definitely consult before applying to business schools would be the annual list published by U.S. News & World Report.

Iacobbuci’s preference isn’t without deep study or consideration. As senior associate dean of Vanderbilt University’s Owen School and a marketing professor who has also taught at Kellogg, Wharton, and Owen, she has just completed a major study of the reliability and validity of three major rankings: U.S. News, Bloomberg BusinessWeek, and the Financial Times.

The professor, who does not have an MBA degree, looked at every full-time MBA ranking ever published by those three publications: 13 separates lists from BusinessWeek, which began ranking schools in 1988 and has published updated rankings every two years; 15 rankings from the Financial Times, which began its list nearly ten years after BusinessWeek, and 27 lists from U.S. News & World Report, which started rating MBA programs annually in 1987.

Iacobbuci prefers U.S. News largely because she believes its ranking has shown greater reliability over the years and has greater validity. It tends to change less, especially at the top, than some of the other rankings. She views that stability favorably.

Higher rankings, she believes, have immediate consequences for a business school and its graduates. Her number crunching also found that every rank improvement toward the top on U.S. News yielded an additional $908.03 more on average for the school’s graduates in their first post-MBA job, significantly more than BusinessWeek’s $605.27 or the Financial Times’ $377.58.

“I would favor U.S. News as a result of this research,” she concludes, “partly due to objectivity of the measures and components
that go into the ranking. They are less easily gamed. The Financial Times is pitched to favor the more international schools, and the BusinessWeek student poll has a good deal of variability to it. You don’t want to see schools slipping up and down and all over the place. If there is that much variance, what good can there possibly be to the ranking?”

From an academic viewpoint, variability is bad if you’re looking for consistency from one ranking to another, or as this academic puts it, “The simplest expression of reliability is that of consistency.” And it’s true that wide swings in a school’s rank over a short period of time tend to lack credibility. That’s why Poets&Quants routinely points out the biggest changes in every ranking, which tend to occur further down each list when the differences in the underlying data are slim at best.

Iacobbuci, however, focuses less on this issue than the variability in the student satisfaction poll used by BusinessWeek. “Comparing across media,” she writes, “we see that BusinessWeek varied quite a bit over its first 15 years or so, and it has become stable since approximately 2004. We can laud the U.S. News as yielding the most stable results, year to year, even from its inception.”

From an applicant perspective, however, measuring the subjective opinions of the latest graduating class—which is what BusinessWeek tries to do every two years—can yield valuable information about the quality of the full MBA experience. It’s not unreasonable to assume, for example, that a school can fall down on critical elements of what makes a top-ranked MBA worthwhile, from the ability of a school to get students the jobs they want, to the quality of the teaching in the classroom. Those things tend to be variable—and important to applicants.
MBA RANKINGS AND B-SCHOOLS: A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP

What business schools really think of the rankings and why they can’t ignore them

BY LAUREN EVERITT

On November 11, 2010, the deans at Southern Methodist University’s Cox School of Business were on edge. *BusinessWeek* editors were online, releasing the magazine’s biennial ranking of the best full-time MBA programs in a live countdown from the lowest-ranked school that year to the highest.

As Cox administrators gathered around their computers, they watched No. 18–Cox’s rank in 2008–go to New York University’s Stern School of Business. A few more schools were announced, but still no SMU. Dartmouth’s Tuck School of Business came in at No. 14, followed by Cornell University’s Johnson School.

Where was Cox, they wondered anxiously. Had it cracked the top 10? Finally, the school popped up at No. 12, its highest rank ever in the *BusinessWeek* survey. Indeed, it was the highest rank ever achieved by the school in any of the top five most influential rankings of business schools. Cox’s staff indulged in a brief celebration and drafted press releases trumpeting the school’s six-point rise.

*BusinessWeek*, however, was less satisfied with the results, even slightly embarrassed by them. “Everyone was saying it didn’t pass the smell test,” explained *BusinessWeek* associate editor Lou Lavelle in a 2011 interview with Poets&Quants. “We looked at why that was happening and the reason was we had some schools, like SMU, which had very few recruiter mentions—-not a really deep base of recruiters—-but that small base was wildly enthusiastic about the school.”

FLABBERGASTED OVER A 17-PLACE FALL TO 29TH FROM 12TH

The magazine then changed its methodology to favor schools with larger, and sometimes less enthusiastic, recruiter bases. As a result, SMU’s business school slid 17 spots to No. 29 in 2012. Nothing at the school had changed: not the MBA program, not the faculty who teach it, or the quality of students enrolled in it. If anything, the program had gotten better thanks
to the higher rank BusinessWeek assigned the school two years earlier, which brought the school more applicants than it otherwise would have received.

RANKINGS ARE IMPORTANT TO THE MARKET, AND SO IT’S IMPORTANT FOR US TO PARTICIPATE

But now SMU’s MBA program had plunged in an unprecedented way: from 18th in 2008 to 12th in 2010 to 29th in 2012. Cox officials were flabbergasted. “We were absolutely astonished because the methodology was changed after everything was complete,” says Marci Armstrong, Cox’s associate dean of graduate programs. “While that’s certainly legal, and they certainly have the right to do it, to me it seemed incredibly unethical... It was stunning to be really honest with you--not that we would move in the ranking, but that they would make a substantial change in the rankings because they didn’t like how we were ranked.”

Like it or not, Cox isn’t about to withdraw from the rankings rat race. “You can’t not play the game if your competitor schools are doing the same,” Armstrong points out. “If you’re a Wharton or Harvard, you can make a decision not to participate, but for the majority of schools, it’s not a choice we can make. They are important to the market, and so it’s important for us to give accurate data and participate.”

Hate them or love them, B-schools ignore rankings at their peril. The lists, however flawed, are obsessively consulted by applicants, alumni, and employers. Surveys have shown that rankings are the most regularly consulted source for MBA applicants--more influential than work colleagues, family and friends, current students, alumni, faculty, or MBA admissions consultants.

RANKINGS IMPACT STUDENT QUALITY, EMPLOYER RECRUITING, EVEN FACULTY HIRING

These annual or biennial lists impact everything from the number and quality of applications a business school receives to the quantity and quality of employers who recruit there. They have even become influential in the ability of a school to attract faculty. Srilata Zaheer, dean of the University of Minnesota’s Carlson School of Management, tells the story of a young and highly promising Chinese scholar who decided not to join the Carlson faculty because her mother implored her to take an offer from a higher-ranked school--even though her discipline--management information systems--is a major strength at Carlson.

“Nearly all schools have a love-hate relationship with rankings,” concedest Idalene “Idie” Kesner, dean of Indiana University’s Kelley School. “You love them when they go in your direction, and you are frustrated when they don’t. For a long time, we said that if you do good things, the rankings will follow. We have woken up to the fact that we need to focus on the rankings in and of themselves. Rankings are a critical part of student decisions as to what school they will go to, and rankings allow a school to reflect on what they do well and areas where they can improve.”

You can’t not play the game if your competitor schools are doing the same.

Ilian Mihov, a Princeton-trained economist and dean of INSEAD, which has campuses in France, Singapore, and Abu Dhabi, agrees. “Rankings are important,” he says. “Some of them are very informative. When I look at what our students think of our career services office or their aims achieved [the latter is a metric in the Financial Times’ survey of alumni], it gives me a signal to go back to alumni and students and dig a little deeper. Having said this, there are some rankings that cannot pass the simple test of reasonableness.”

REPUTATIONAL RANKINGS ARE ‘PREJUDICES’

Obviously, the relationship between rankings and business schools is complicated: On the one hand, B-schools rely on rankings as a benchmark against their peers, a third-party guide for students, and a marketing tool. On the other, a proliferation of rankings has created widespread fatigue, a serious time and resource drain, and a potential PR disaster when the numbers take a nosedive. Too many applicants take them at face value, not understanding that the results of any ranking might be based on little more than the subjective judgments of a journalist, with little, if any,
understanding of business education.

In his pivotal *New Yorker* piece on rankings, Malcolm Gladwell recalls an anecdote in which Thomas Brennan, a former chief justice of the Michigan Supreme Court, sent out an informal survey to roughly 100 lawyers. He asked them to rank a list of 10 law schools, ranging from Harvard and Penn State to John Marshall. The attorneys positioned Penn State in the middle of the pack. The problem? Penn State didn’t have a law school at the time. “Reputational ratings are simply inferences from broad, readily observable features of an institution’s identity, such as its history, its prominence in the media, or the elegance of its architecture. They are prejudices,” Gladwell concludes.

Rankings go up, rankings go down. If you hang everything on rankings, then you’re going to have some wildly ecstatic, wonderful years when you go up, but you’re going to have some really tough years when you go down.

Penny Paquette, Tuck’s assistant dean for strategic initiatives, calls the reputation component a “beauty contest.” “People vote for themselves, they have personal preferences that are not necessarily based on true knowledge of the school,” she says. “When you’re asked to pick the top 10 schools in this field out of a list of 200, how do you do that and on what basis do you do that? On the whole, the results are not that out of whack, but they have the potential to be.”

‘I LITERALLY SWEAT BULLETS OVER THESE ANSWERS’

*BusinessWeek* began ranking MBA programs a quarter of a century ago, starting in 1988. Then, it was a relatively simple survey. Now, given all the rankings that have followed *BusinessWeek’s* list, it’s a time-consuming job. Many B-schools have a dedicated professional, ranging from a media relations director to a compliance officer, who aggregates the ranking data; other schools spread the work across multiple personnel. Regardless of the person in charge, top rankings require the input of multiple offices and deans, who must review and sign off on the stats.

Tuck’s Paquette spends roughly one-third of her time on rankings and supervises another employee who devotes half his time to them. The school participates in five rankings each year, some of which take months to complete. Numbers such as employment statistics and undergraduate GPAs must be collected from departments across the school. But often the stat is only a starting place, according to Paquette. “One data point requires multiple stages to develop that data point. A percentage requires a numerator and denominator, so you have to get two pieces of data and those are built up from other pieces of data,” she says. “The number of questions isn’t the point; the point is how precise and detailed is the question.”

At Cox, Martinez manages the rankings almost single-handedly. She divvies up the questions, sends them to the offices with the relevant data, collects the answers, and assesses them. These stats are then reviewed by Associate Dean Marci Armstrong before going to Cox Dean Albert W. Niemi, Jr. for a final sign off. The school participates in at least eight major rankings, and juggling all the forms is no easy task, according to Martinez. “I literally sweat bullets over these answers; I’ve become the most paranoid person that works at this school because I’m always afraid I’m the one...
who’s going to somehow mess up—that maybe I didn’t see the right information or God forbid I miss a deadline, which is truly a nightmare that has awaken me more than once in a cold sweat,” she says.

**WHY B-SCHOOLS CAN’T GIVE THEM UP**

A proliferation of rankings has undoubtedly diluted the value of them. After all, when 10 rankings dub 10 different schools No. 1, it’s difficult to determine who’s really top dog. Martinez receives such an influx of ranking requests in the fall that she now calls it high ranking season. Organizations ranging from Military MBA to Canada’s Corporate Knights now offer their own orderings of B-school programs. “We turn a lot down because we just statistically and emotionally can’t participate in all of them,” says Lynda Oliver, Cox’s assistant dean of marketing and communications.

Despite their drawbacks, rankings’ reach and influence mean that few business schools dare shun them. “Rankings are undoubtedly an important signaling tool, and hence, they fuel the brand of the school with prestige. It’s like having a respected, unbiased third opinion about the relevant players in the market,” says Erik Schlie, the associate dean of MBA programs at IE Business School in Spain.

It’s also free publicity. “When you think about the PR and media attention that a school can get, some of it you have to work hard for and others come your way due to rankings. If you do well, you get a lot of free PR,” Tuck’s Paquette points out.

**THE UPS AND DOWNS OF RANKINGS**

But on the flipside—a major fall in the rankings or a reporting gaffe—can cost schools big time. Rankings are often a signal of quality to incoming students and potential employers, so a drop can reduce applications and deter future employers from seeking a B-school’s MBAs.

“Nearly all schools have a love-hate relationship with rankings. You love them when they go in your direction, and you are frustrated when they don’t.”

Armstrong says Cox’s slip in BusinessWeek’s full-time MBA ranking hasn’t significantly impacted applications. But the school made a point to communicate the methodology change to anyone questioning the fall. She’s also adamant that while schools can’t ignore rankings, they also can’t be ruled by them. “My philosophy is that’s just one part of what you are,” she says. “Rankings go up, rankings go down. If you hang everything on rankings, then you’re going to have some wildly ecstatic, wonderful years when you go up, but you’re going to have some really tough years when you go down.”

Cox has certainly experienced the highs and lows of the rankings roller coaster. Last year, BusinessWeek ranked Cox’s EMBA program No. 3, right behind Northwestern (Kellogg) and Chicago (Booth). “We were kind of waiting to get that, ‘Oh, we changed the methodology again,’ especially given that it was us,” says Oliver, an assistant dean. She recalls receiving several calls from the publication verifying their information. “I think they were like, ‘Oh God, we’ve just knocked them down under full-time and now we have to say they’re No. 3.’ That felt pretty sweet.”
CONFESSIONS OF A RANKING GURU

The making of the first regularly published ranking of business schools in the world

BY JOHN A. BYRNE
The year was 1988. As management editor of BusinessWeek magazine, I had just walked into the office of our editor-in-chief with the results of a 35-question survey sent to graduating MBAs at all the top U.S. business schools. I was trying to convince him to publish the first ranking of MBA programs. For me, this was a labor of love. I crafted the focus groups of MBAs to come up with the right questions—questions that everyone considering an MBA wants answered. Among the questions were:

- To what extent did your overall graduate experience fulfill or fail to meet your expectations of what a good business school should be?
- Do you believe your MBA was worth its total cost in time, tuition, living expenses, and lost earnings?
- Do you feel the business school has connections that can help you throughout your career?
- How did the teachers in your MBA program compare with others you have had in the past?
- In classes with popular or distinguished professors, how would you rank their accessibility after class?
- Were you given a way of thinking or approaching problems that will serve you well over the long haul?
- What percentage of your classmates would you have liked to have as friends?

In other words, these were substantive questions that got to the very heart of the MBA experience. They were the most basic questions every applicant would want answered—and still wants answered.

I created the survey on my Macintosh computer at home. I copied about 3,000 of the surveys at work, and with the help of my own family, I stuffed envelopes with the paper surveys for weeks on end. The completed surveys were returned by MBAs from the Class of 1988 at Harvard, Stanford, Wharton, Columbia, and every other major U.S. business school. One by one, I tallied the results.

What BusinessWeek ultimately published on the cover of the magazine would become one of the best-selling covers of all time. More importantly, though, it would become the first regularly published ranking of business schools in the world.

Some 26 years later, the surveys still address the two key demographics: business school students and their prospective employers. There are now 50 questions on each graduate survey. Instead of mailing out 3,000 surveys to grads at 25 or so U.S. schools, the magazine sends nearly 18,000 to graduating MBAs at 101 academic institutions around the world. In 2000, BusinessWeek added a third component to the mix: a measurement of intellectual output by faculty at the schools, which now accounts for 10% of the ranking. But the ranking is still largely an attempt to measure customer satisfaction—not GMAT scores, selectivity, MBA pay packages, or the percentage of MBAs employed at graduation.

My thinking then—and now—was that anyone could get those numbers from the schools. Anyone could put together his or her own ranking with that data. What we were doing was putting valuable information—even intelligence—into the marketplace that would otherwise be completely unavailable. That is still true today, even as many others have rushed to copy what BusinessWeek, now Bloomberg BusinessWeek, pioneered.

Of the five most influential rankings of business schools, the BusinessWeek list remains the most consulted in the field, followed by the Financial Times, U.S. News & World Report, The Economist, and Forbes. Surprisingly, Poets&Quants’ own composite ranking, which I started with the launch of PoetsandQuants.com in 2009, is now more popular than either The Economist or Forbes rankings, according to a recent survey of MBA applicants by the Association of International Graduate Admissions Consultants.

Each of the five media outlets has its own
methodology for ranking business schools—and each system obviously results in different standings based on the metrics the organization uses. That’s why it is rare for one ranking to look like another—and that is a good thing. Each method of ranking and stacking business schools has flaws, but all are well-intentioned efforts to measure something that matters.

For an applicant to a business school, rankings are a great place to start the search for an MBA program. Along with giving every prospective student a good idea of the value and reputation of a school brand, they unleash highly valuable (and more standardized) statistics into the market, allowing you to make your own judgments on the quality of the MBA experience at any given institution.

It’s common for people to pooh-pooh rankings and tell you not to pay too much attention to them. They’re dead wrong. Don’t listen to them. Before there were rankings, there were 50 schools that pretended to be among the Top 25 and at least several hundred that claimed to be in the Top 100. Rankings, however imperfect, keep the schools honest and allow for transparency in graduate business education that would not otherwise occur. They offer a quick glimpse into the prestige of the MBA degree. And they encourage business schools to work harder to satisfy their core constituents: students as well as the companies that recruit them.

People choose business schools based on a wide variety of factors: cost, length of time, location, teaching methods, size, and faculty quality. But the single most important factor is brand reputation—and that is largely determined by rankings over the years. A highly ranked business school simply delivers more career value than a lower-ranked school. Deciding to go to a school based on its brand value is a pretty good bet.

That’s not to say that the actual MBA education you receive is all that different from one school to another, but a highly ranked school is more typically a highly selective one. It attracts the best students and faculty, boasts greater resources, has greater access to jobs and career opportunities, and typically has a tighter alumni network that can benefit you over the course of your professional life. That is what rankings—in general—tell you about MBA programs, and that is why they are so valuable as a decision-making tool.

Sure, different lists convey different things. If you’re interested in simple return-on-investment, you’ll want to look at the Forbes ranking. If you’re interested in a more global look at MBA programs, you should consult the Financial Times. If you’re keen to wade through a lot of quality data—from GMAT and GPA scores to acceptance and placement rates—you’ll want to check out U.S. News & World Report.

And if you want an overview of them all—and a better sense of the reputation and image of a business school—you should examine the Poets&Quants list. By combining the rankings and weighting them according to their credibility, Poets&Quants eliminates the anomalies that occur in any one list every single year and brings an applicant to the greater truth revealed in the rankings.

As important as all these data points may be, I still believe that the bottom line is how well a school serves its students. MBAs, given their age and their work experience, are discerning enough to make valuable judgments about graduate education. And they want to be able to measure the full MBA experience as they make one of the most important decisions in their lives: whether to go to business school and which one to go to.

The greatest concern over the BusinessWeek survey is obvious: To the extent that MBA graduates are affecting the value of their degree when they fill it out, wouldn’t they simply rate their schools as highly as possible? It turns out that there is, indeed, a fair amount of cheerleading that goes on in these surveys.

But because these grads have spent more than a quarter of a million dollars to get their degrees, they take the survey seriously. They tend to tell it like it is. And the few MBAs with an axe to grind, by the way, tend to cancel out the pure cheerleaders.

With survey response rates of 50% to 60%, the sample size gives greater reassurance in the result. BusinessWeek also employs statistical consultants to examine the completed surveys to ensure there was no coaching or cheating.

Another legitimate concern is that the differences in scores on these questions are so minute that they are not statistically meaningful. That is often true, depending on the school
and the specific question. Yet, when you add the scores from 50 or so questions together, the differences do tend to be relevant and meaningful—though not in every single case.

Then, there is the question of expectations. Do students at Harvard Business School have far higher expectations of their MBA experience than those at Notre Dame or Michigan State? It’s safe to say they do. If you go to the number-one business school in the world, you expect nothing but the absolute best. So Harvard may, in fact, be at a disadvantage in a survey that measures graduate satisfaction, even though the education and the experience it delivers to its students may be better than at a school that ranks higher.

Bottom line: Like all rankings, the BusinessWeek take is a very useful source of information for applicants. So is the composite ranking now published by Poets&Quants. You simply need to be aware of the potential flaws and interpret the importance of these results for yourself.

BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK’S TOP 10 U.S. B-SCHOOLS (1988)

1. Northwestern (Kellogg)
2. Harvard
3. Dartmouth (Tuck)
4. Pennsylvania (Wharton)
5. Cornell (Johnson)
6. Michigan (Ross)
7. Virginia (Darden)
8. North Carolina (Kenan-Flagler)
9. Stanford
10. Duke (Fuqua)

Source: Bloomberg BusinessWeek
Achieve on your terms.

ONLINE MBA PROGRAM
#1 Best Online Graduate Business Programs — U.S. News & World Report, 2014

Watch our video on ultimate flexibility.

You have a vision for what you want to achieve in your career and life, and Kelley Direct’s flexible MBA program will help you achieve your goals on your terms. Our large and connected alumni network, talented and attentive faculty, and committed staff are here for you through every step of the program. Find what’s at the heart of your success with world-class and real-world business skills plus individualized coaching at the elite Kelley School of Business.

Attend a Virtual Open House

Apply Now
Harvard, Stanford, Booth, Wharton, and Kellogg again top the list of the best American business schools

BY JOHN A. BYRNE

The 2013 Poets&Quants ranking of the best full-time MBA programs in the U.S. proves that the best business schools tend to stay put: There is not a single difference between the top eight MBA programs in our new 2013 composite ranking and the top eight in 2012. What’s more, all top 10 schools remained firmly in the top 10 this year.

The steadiest institution is still Harvard Business School, which took the very first spot for the fourth year in a row. Despite less-than-flattering publicity generated by a New York Times’ front page story on gender inequality at Harvard, an MBA from the school remains the quintessential credential in business. No rival beats Harvard in the formidable resources it brings to the game: the outsized number of superstar professors, the diversity of its course offerings, the stellar quality of its students, the size and scope of its campus, and the career achievements of its alumni spread all over the world.

This year’s entering class at Harvard, moreover, is one of the most impressive ever. Drawing from an applicant pool that was up 3.9% from last year to 9,315 hopefuls, Harvard welcomed just 941 incoming MBA students, with the highest percentage of women ever at 41% of the class. The median GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) score was a hefty 720, while the average undergraduate grade point
average for the newest crop of MBA students was an impressive 3.67.

IT'S A WIN-BY-A-NOSE FINISH FOR THE TOP FOUR BUSINESS SCHOOLS

Yet, it's worth noting that the underlying index scores in our composite ranking—which annually weighs the five most influential MBA lists ranging from BusinessWeek to U.S. News & World Report—are especially close. The scores of No. 1 Harvard, No. 2 Stanford, No. 3 Chicago, and No. 4 University of Pennsylvania are fractions away from each other; a mere 0.35 separates No. 1 Harvard and No. 2 Stanford, its perennial West Coast rival.

No rival beats Harvard in the formidable resources it brings to the game: the outsized number of superstar professors, the diversity of its course offerings, the stellar quality of its students, the size and scope of its campus, and the career achievements of its alumni spread all over the world.

This is also the fourth year in a row that Chicago Booth has ranked ahead of Wharton on the Poets&Quants list, giving slightly more credence to the view that it is no longer H/S/W at the top, but rather H/S/C. Wharton was the only top-10 school that saw a decline in applications for the Class of 2015. Its applicant pool shrunk by 5.8% in the 2012-2013 admissions season, while Chicago Booth reported the biggest percentage boost in applications of any top-10 school--a healthy 9.9% that made Chicago slightly more selective than Wharton for the first time.

The immovable top eight differ in many ways—size, region, culture, and so on. But the schools do have one feature in common: They’re all private, pricey, highly prestigious institutions with powerful global brands and career enriching alumni networks.

This is business school, after all.

RELATIVELY MINOR SHIFTS AMONG THE TOP 20 MBA PROGRAMS

The top 20 did change—but not much. UC-Berkeley’s Haas School of Business and Duke University’s Fuqua School switched places this year: Fuqua took the ninth spot, and Haas landed in 10th place. Meanwhile, the University of Michigan’s Ross School and the University of Virginia’s Darden School also pulled a switch. The Midwestern titan rose to No. 12, while Darden slipped to No. 13. In the middle of all the swapping, Cornell University’s Johnson Graduate School of Management remained stable at No. 11.

Though its Northern Californian cousin slipped a little, UCLA climbed from No. 17 to No. 14. It even bumped NYU’s Stern School out of the No. 14 spot, sending it down to No. 15. Meanwhile, -the Yale School of Management finished 17th, down from 15th in 2012. U.S. News and the Financial Times actually placed Yale above UCLA, but the other rankings—in particular, the return-on-investment-focused Forbes list—favored the Los Angeles school.

THE FURTHER DOWN THE LIST, THE MORE ACTION

Most of the real movement takes place further down the list. That’s generally true of all rankings because the underlying differences among schools are not nearly as great as their numerical ranks may suggest. The deeper one goes in the list, the less information there is to work from. Many schools are ranked by only one or two sources, instead of the full five. Though U.S. News ranks more than 100 MBA programs, Forbes only tackles 70 and BusinessWeek ranks just 63. The Economist gives a numerical rank to 52 U.S. schools, while the Financial Times ranks just 50 in the U.S.

In any case, private schools might absolutely dominate the top, but two of the biggest gains
came at public universities. The University of Washington and Georgia Tech both rose nine spots: the former from 33 to 24, and the latter from 40 to 31.

Southern Methodist University’s Cox School of Business, a private institution in Dallas, also gained ground. Last year, the school slid from 29 to 47 after Bloomberg BusinessWeek changed the way it calculates recruiter scores, but this year, the school pulled itself up to 39th in our composite ranking.

**THE FINANCIAL TIMES KEPT ONE SCHOOL OFF ITS LATEST LIST AND HELPED DRIVE ITS P&Q RANKING DOWN**

Sometimes, schools drop for reasons that are peculiar to a given ranking. That’s certainly the case this year with the University of Minnesota’s Carlson School, which fell to 36th place on our list from 27th. It’s not that the school did badly in its rankings. In fact, U.S. News ranked Carlson a full seven points higher this year. Nevertheless, things were tougher across the pond: The Economist pushed the school from 34 to 69, and the Financial Times didn’t rank it at all.

The reason: The Financial Times occasionally audits school data, and Minnesota privacy law prevents the school from disclosing some of the information the auditor requested. Short of breaking the law, there’s not much the business school could’ve done to keep itself on the Financial Times’ list. If a reader were only consulting the British newspaper’s ranking, he or she could easily draw the wrong conclusions: that the school isn’t good enough to be included.

That’s certainly not true—and there’s a lesson in all this for everyone who consults a ranking. You can’t make too many assumptions for why a school isn’t performing as well as you might think it should. It could be because the methodology of a single ranking is flawed in some way that penalizes a school. Or in Carlson’s case, it could be because a rule by the ranking organization torpedoes a school for no good reason.

So while the Poets&Quants ranking does minimize these oddities, it doesn’t completely eliminate them. Still, you would be hardpressed to find a more reliable, definitive list of the best business schools.

### RANK & SCHOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Bloomberg BusinessWeek</th>
<th>Best Value</th>
<th>Forbes</th>
<th>Times</th>
<th>The Economist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Harvard Business School</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stanford GSB</td>
<td>99.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chicago (Booth)</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>UPenn (Wharton)</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Northwestern (Kellogg)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>MIT (Sloan)</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Columbia Business School</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dartmouth (Tuck)</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Duke (Fuqua)</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>UC-Berkeley (Haas)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cornell (Johnson)</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Michigan (Ross)</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Virginia (Darden)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>UCLA (Anderson)</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>New York (Stern)</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Carnegie Mellon (Tepper)</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Yale School of Management</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RANK &amp; SCHOOL</td>
<td>INDEX</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Bloomberg Businessweek</td>
<td>The Economist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. UNC (Kenan-Flagler)</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Texas-Austin (McCombs)</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Indiana (Kelley)</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Emory (Goizueta)</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Georgetown (McDonough)</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Washington (Olin)</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Washington (Foster)</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Vanderbilt (Owen)</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Ohio State (Fisher)</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Rice (Jones)</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. USC (Marshall)</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Maryland (Smith)</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Wisconsin-Madison</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Georgia Tech (Scheller)</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Notre Dame (Mendoza)</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Penn State (Smeal)</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Texas A&amp;M (Mays)</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Iowa (Tippie)</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Minnesota (Carlson)</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Rochester (Simon)</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Michigan State (Broad)</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. SMU (Cox)</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Boston University</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Purdue (Krannert)</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Arizona State (Carey)</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Brigham Young (Marriott)</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Illinois-Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Boston College</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Wake Forest (Babcock)</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. UC-Irvine (Merage)</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Florida (Hough)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Georgia (Terry)</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. George Washington</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. South Carolina (Moore)</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Case (Weatherhead)</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. Babson College</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. UC-Davis</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. Missouri (Trulaske)</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RANK &amp; SCHOOL</td>
<td>INDEX</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Bloomberg Businessweek</td>
<td>Forbes</td>
<td>FT Financial Times</td>
<td>The Economist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. Northeastern (D’Amore-McKim)</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. Buffalo-SUNY</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. Arizona (Eller)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. Tulane (Freeman)</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. William &amp; Mary (Mason)</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. Pittsburgh (Katz)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. Temple (Fox)</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. Texas Christian (Neeley)</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. Connecticut-Storrs</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. Thunderbird</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66. Alabama (Manderson)</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67. UC-San Diego (Rady)</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68. Rutgers</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69. Utah (Eccles)</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70. Tennessee-Knoxville</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71. Louisiana State (Ourso)</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72. Syracuse (Whitman)</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73. Fordham</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74. Texas-Dallas (Jindal)</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75. CUNY</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76. Colorado-Boulder (Leeds)</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77. San Diego State</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78. NC State (Jenkins)</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79. Massachusetts (Isenberg)</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80. Rollins (Crummer)</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81. University of Miami</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82. Howard</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83. Pepperdine (Graziadio)</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84. Arkansas (Walton)</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85. Oklahoma (Price)</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86. Baylor (Hankamer)</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87. Iowa State</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88. Hult International</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89. Auburn</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89. Virginia Tech (Pamplin)</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91. Binghamton-SUNY</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92. Brandeis</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93. Bentley (McCallum)</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RANK &amp; SCHOOL</td>
<td>INDEX</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Bloomberg Businessweek</td>
<td>Forbes</td>
<td>FT Financial Times</td>
<td>The Economist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93. St. Louis (Cook)</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95. Albany--SUNY</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96. Oklahoma State</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97. Oregon (Lundquist)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98. DePaul (Kellstadt)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98. Kentucky (Gatton)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98. Tulsa</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When people think about the MBA degree, the very first place that springs to mind is Harvard Business School (HBS). HBS is synonymous with the degree and literally sets the pace for the industry. Everything it does instantly makes news—both good and especially bad.

The latest was a September 2013 front-page story in The New York Times on gender inequality at the business school that contained the kind of sensational detail that would send a public relations chief into orbit. The story revealed the existence of a secret society of ultra-wealthy, mostly male, mostly international students called Section X who were known for decadent parties and travel. It told of male MBA students who commandeered classroom discussions and hazed female students and younger
faculty members. According to the story, these male Masters of the Universe openly ruminated on whom they would “kill, sleep with or marry” (in cruder terms) in their classes.

Of course, the trouble with the story—and the ensuing controversy it caused—was that most of the issues had already been fairly resolved. Never mind the fact that they were hardly unique to Harvard but were common at many of the elite business schools where the men, students and faculty, have outnumbered women forever. The Times’ reporter was welcomed to the school because administrators believed they had made considerable progress in making a male-dominated culture much fairer than it otherwise had been. Harvard Dean Nitin Nohria, in fact, has been a champion of dramatic changes that have helped to level the gender playing field for students.

Since assuming leadership of HBS on July 1, 2010, Nohria has racked up accomplishments that would have taken some B-school deans a decade or more to achieve. They include crafting and communicating a new agenda for the school known as “the five i’s” for innovation, intellectual ambition, internationalization, inclusion, and integration; pushing through significant changes to the MBA program against concerns by some that he was moving too fast; and raising millions of dollars in donations, including a $50 million gift from India’s Tata Group and its philanthropic interests. All of these moves build on the formidable reputation and clout of the so-called “West Point of Capitalism,” a business school that, frankly, is a university unto itself, with 34 separate buildings on 40 acres of property along the Charles River.

Harvard’s case method curriculum is designed to prepare students for the challenges of leadership in the real world. Though case studies maintain their dominant role at Harvard, the school has introduced several major changes that mix up the traditional HBS formula for training leaders. MBA students now take turns leading a group engaged in specific, assigned projects. They are also sent to work for a week with one of more than 140 firms in 11 countries, ranging from a Brazilian soap maker to a Chinese real estate management company. Groups are also given eight weeks and seed money of $3,000 each to launch a small company. The most successful, as judged by a vote of their fellow students, receives additional funding.

These very ambitious changes—especially for an MBA program the size and scope of Harvard’s—build on what has long been an engaging and proactive learning environment, where students develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to face a variety of difficult decisions they’ll encounter throughout their careers.

Students spend their first two terms completing the required curriculum with a section of 90 students to which they are assigned. This group of students takes all first-year classes together and forms an intellectual and social circle. During the second year, students choose up to five courses per semester to build their elective curriculum of choice. The new curriculum changes this up a bit, adding shorter courses into the course catalog.

In the 2013-2014 admissions season, Harvard announced significant changes in the way it assesses MBA applicants. The school cut the number of required essay questions in half, from two to just one (even making that single one optional), and required 24-hour test for applicants who make the first cut and get an interview with admissions. Those candidates have to write a brief essay on what they wish they’d said but didn’t during the interview and put it on their online application within 24 hours of the interview.

If you can pass Harvard’s muster, don’t worry about the negative publicity from The Times’ article or, for that matter, any other harping that goes on from about the school. Many academic institutions promise MBAs a “transformational experience.” HBS actually delivers on it.
RANKING ANALYSIS:

Harvard Business School maintained its No. 1 ranking in Poets&Quants’ 2013 survey, repeating its top status for the fourth consecutive year since the survey was first published in 2010. The truth is, there is HBS, and then there is everyone else, including the other elite privates: Stanford, Wharton, Chicago Booth, Northwestern Kellogg, Columbia, MIT Sloan, and Dartmouth Tuck.

Many candidates believe HBS runs neck and neck with Stanford, its West Coast rival in Silicon Valley. But the truth is that Harvard’s formidable resources so completely dwarf Stanford and its other competitors that no other business school in the world is an equal to HBS. If a business school ranking fails to give Harvard its due, it’s merely the result of quirky methodology and little else. There is no business school in the U.S.–and even in the world—that can genuinely lay claim to having a better MBA program than Harvard. With the largest endowment of any business school by far, the institution’s resources are vast and so is the quality of the school’s faculty, students, and alumni. And because Harvard has been at this for so many years, its MBAs are far ahead of any others in landing and occupying powerful and influential leadership positions in one industry after another. That’s why HBS always leads rankings of B-schools with the most CEOs at the world’s top corporations.

In fact, the biggest misconception that business school rankings propagate is that Harvard is just another school on the list and its rivals are close competitors. Harvard is in a class by itself.

So when an individual ranking fails to take account of Harvard’s considerable history, you can rightly discount or completely disregard it. The Economist, for example, gives Harvard the lowest rank of any of the most influential rankings—sixth place globally in 2013—putting the University of Chicago’s Booth School, Dartmouth’s Tuck and Virginia’s Darden School ahead. That just goes to show how foolish and flawed some of these individual rankings can be—and why when it comes to Harvard, you should ignore them.

This year, the school held its ground across most of the major rankings. At U.S. News & World Report, Harvard repeated its first-place finish, tying both Stanford and Wharton for the No. 1 spot in the Financial Times’ 2014 ranking, which it gained in 2013 after an eight-year lapse (the FT had last placed HBS first in 2005.) The school maintained its No. 2 rank from the biennial survey by Bloomberg BusinessWeek, which will publish its next ranking in the fall of 2014. However, the school lost ground in Forbes’ ranking, which measures schools on return on investment, falling from first in 2011 to third in 2013.

If you’re an applicant and are fortunate enough to be accepted by Harvard, there are legitimate reasons to turn the school down: you want a smaller, more intimate experience; you prefer a less competitive school; you want more of a mix of lectures, case studies, and experiential learning; you want to live and work in a completely different part of the country; or another school has nailed a specialty discipline that makes it a no-brainer. But you’d be making a difficult call to say no to what is, without question, the best business school in the world.
# Harvard Business School


### Class of 2015 Profile:
- **Average GMAT:** 727
- **GMAT Range:** 550-780
- **Average GPA:** 3.67
- **Acceptance Rate:** 12%
- **Full-Time Enrollment:** 932
- **International:** 34%
- **Female:** 41%
- **Minority:** 25%
- **Mean Age:** 27

### Class of 2013:
- **Median Base Salary:** $120,000
- **Median Signing Bonus:** $25,000
- **Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation:** 87%
- **Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later:** 93%

### Where Harvard’s Class of 2013 Went to Work:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC/PE/LBO</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Management/Hedge Funds</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Products</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Banking</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Profit/Government</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment/Media</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Financial Services</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media/Entertainment</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stanford’s Graduate School of Business, known simply as GSB, is the most selective B-school in the United States. The school accepted only 7% of the applicants who applied for admission to the Class of 2015, a smaller percentage than Berkeley, Harvard, or any other U.S. or European business school.

The selectivity is a function of the school’s relatively small size; the class of 2015 was the largest in the B-school’s history at 406 students. Stanford GSB’s location in the heart of Silicon Valley, and its stellar reputation in academic circles draw in thousands of applications. Stanford also boasts the highest average GMAT score of any U.S. business school: a breathtaking 732, a new record set by the incoming Class of 2015. GSB MBAs
land top-dollar jobs after graduation. The Class of 2013 reported median base salaries of $125,000.

The B-school’s goal is ambitious: to only accept students who, in Dean Garth Saloner’s words, “have the leadership capacity to change the world.” The tagline of the school? “Change Lives. Change Organizations. Change the World.” This lofty mission is taken seriously by the admissions staff, which annually sorts through more than 7,000 applications from top-tier candidates and looks for the kind of DNA that signals truly exceptional people who will do something extraordinary with their lives.

If you’re thinking of starting a company, working for a technology startup, or going into venture capital, it would be hard to beat Stanford. Sure, you can do any of those things with an MBA from just about any top business school. But a lot of self-selection goes on here to give the school critical mass in startups, technology, and venture capital. In fact, a record 18% of the Class of 2013 started companies right out of school—the average across business schools hovers around 4% to 5%.

The hunger to do something different is more a function of the Silicon Valley mindset than the school’s curriculum. You can actually get an MBA from Stanford without taking a single course in entrepreneurship. At Harvard, in contrast, every student is actually required as part of the curriculum to launch a microbusiness with seed capital provided by HBS. Harvard has an extensive business plan contest for students and alumni. Stanford doesn’t have to try as hard because of its location in the land of Google, Apple, and Facebook.

There are several big differences with Harvard, of course. Besides the smaller classes, the teaching style is more varied at Stanford than it is at HBS, where case study dominates. Students with experience in a certain field can enroll in more advanced courses in the core curriculum instead of taking lockstep classes that teach them what they already know. And then there is the weather: In January, Stanford students stroll around campus in shorts and flip-flips under palm trees. No one is trudging through snow. Boston is another story.

Those are some of the reasons why Stanford tends to win more of the dual-admit contests with Harvard. It really comes down to four basic factors: 1) Stanford is more selective (6.8% admission rate vs. Harvard’s 12%), so being offered a seat at the GSB is considered a more prestigious achievement. 2) The significantly smaller student body at Stanford (800 vs. Harvard’s 1,800) suggests that there is greater intimacy, collaboration, and bonding at GSB. 3) GSB’s proximity to Silicon Valley promises unbeatable access to tech startups for individuals following that career path—and a definite “coolness” factor. 4) Last but not least, there’s the California sunshine. Given the choice, many dual admits don’t want to endure two New England winters. Palo Alto’s average annual temperature is 10 degrees warmer than Boston’s—with just half of the precipitation.

What’s more, Stanford GSB recently completed a major upgrade by opening a $345 million world-class campus in 2011. The complex gives Stanford’s business school some 360,000 square feet of space, roughly 30% more than it had in its previous location. There are now 13 tiered classrooms, 20 flat-floored classrooms, and 70 breakout/study rooms. The larger number of breakout rooms, in particular, helps the school more effectively deliver a curriculum that emphasizes smaller seminar-style courses. A 600-seat auditorium replaced the previous 324-seat model. There are also eight 16-person seminar rooms to allow for more intimate instruction, eight showers for MBA students, and an 870-car parking garage—a big selling point on a campus where parking was always an ordeal.

The windowless classrooms in the B-school’s former blocky building, which was built in 1966, are completely gone. With the exception of a behavioral lab, all of the classrooms now have natural light.

In 2012, there was a fairly dramatic change in Stanford’s intake. The representation of international students increased by 10 full percentage points over the previous class to an all-time high of 42%—the school has maintained that high through the Class of 2015, which is 41% international.

Stanford isn’t cheap. The school’s recommended two-year budget is $189,232, a sum that includes a $1,500 global study trip. On the other hand, the median total compensation package landed by a Class of 2013 grad was an eye-popping $180,000. That goes a long way toward paying down student debt.
RANKING ANALYSIS:

Stanford GSB firmly held on to its No. 2 ranking in the 2013 Poets&Quants’ survey—the school only strengthened its position in several key lists. GSB ended up in a three-way tie for first place with Harvard and Wharton in U.S. News & World Report’s 2014 ranking. In both 2013 and 2012, Stanford and Harvard shared first place, though in 2011 Stanford was No. 1 all on its own.

GSB rose one place in Bloomberg BusinessWeek’s 2012 ranking, which largely measures graduate satisfaction and recruiter sentiment. BW ranked the school fourth, up from fifth two years earlier. The school tends to suffer under BW’s methodology, a possible victim of its small size and the fact that many students prefer jobs with startups that are not surveyed in BW’s corporate recruiter poll. Still, the school’s standing in the magazine’s student survey was eighth, while its ranking in the corporate recruiter poll was fifth, up from seventh in 2010.

Stanford ceded first place in the Financial Times’ ranking to Harvard last year and held steady this year. The B-school finished second in the U.S. and globally in the FT’s 2014 survey. Stanford remained relatively stable in the only ranking where it doesn’t have a stellar showing: The Economist ranked the school ninth globally and seventh in the U.S.

One Class of 2012 grad summed up his Stanford experience to BW this way: “Every person at the GSB has that intangible special something. a sparkle in their eye. They are passionate, quirky, unique, charismatic, interesting, and interested. Despite world-class intelligence, they are not interested in bragging or peacocking. It’s all about the growth mindset. The culture and GSB family dynamic is second-to-none. The focus on personal transformation through classes like Interpersonal Dynamics (Touchy-Feely) is the hallmark of the program.”

LATEST UP-TO-DATE MBA RANKINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking Source</th>
<th>2013 Rank</th>
<th>2014 Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poets&amp;Quants</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BusinessWeek</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. News &amp; World Report</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forbes</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Times</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2014)</td>
<td>2 (Global)</td>
<td>2 (U.S.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Economist</td>
<td>9 (Global)</td>
<td>7 (U.S.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STANFORD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS


CLASS OF 2015 PROFILE:
Average GMAT: 732
GMAT Range: 550-790
Average GPA: N/A
Acceptance Rate: 7%
Full-Time Enrollment: 809
International: 41%
Female: 36%
Minority: 21%
Mean Age: N/A

CLASS OF 2013:
Median Base Salary: $125,000
Median Signing Bonus: $25,000
Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation: 77%
Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later: 94%

WHERE STANFORD’S CLASS OF 2013 WENT TO WORK:
Technology: 31%
Finance: 26%
Consulting: 19%
Healthcare: 6%
Non-Profit: 5%
Consumer Products: 4%
Media/Entertainment: 3%
Energy/Clean tech: 3%
Real Estate: 2%
The University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business has been on a roll among the world’s elite business institutions. It started in 2008, when alumnus David Booth gave his $300 million naming gift to Chicago (the largest donation ever given to a B-school).

Booth been more aggressive than ever in recruiting top faculty talent to a school that already has more Nobel Prize winners (seven) than any other business institution in the world and in awarding generous scholarship money to capture the best and brightest MBA students on the market.

All of that makes sense at Chicago Booth, which is a business school that is all about ideas—creating them and equipping students with the skills, confidence, and knowledge to use them to transform the world (or at least business). In particular,
students focus on generating, analyzing, comparing, and refining ideas in order to elevate them to better ones.

Despite the famous saying that the University of Chicago is where fun goes to die, there’s a great sense of community and fun among the MBAs here. The business school’s reputation as a place for quants is not entirely deserved, especially in the past 10 years when Chicago Booth has made poets just as welcome as any other B-school.

The full-time MBA program consists of 20 classes plus Leadership Effectiveness and Development (LEAD). The flagship of the program is its flexible curriculum. Unlike many other top schools with lockstep first-year MBA programs, Booth does not require its MBAs to go through every class together. One key exception is the LEAD course, which all MBAs must take. But, by and large, students enjoy the freedom to design a program tailored to their own career goals.

In 2009, after a faculty review of the curriculum, the school added a new academic concentration in analytical management and also required all students in the evening and weekend MBA programs to take a leadership development course similar to the one required of full-time students.

In addition to analytical management, the school’s 14th concentration, students can graduate with an academic focus in accounting, econometrics and statistics, economics, entrepreneurship, and finance. Other choices include analytic finance, general management, human resource management, international business, managerial and organizational behavior, marketing management, operations management, and strategic management.

Graduation requirements for students in the full-time MBA program include nine required courses, 11 electives, and a leadership course; though in 2009, more substitute classes have been added to satisfy the nine required courses. To meet the 11 elective requirements, students can choose from several hundred courses across the business school and other university departments.

Since the curriculum review, the school has also added more rigorous courses in the required portion of the program, an adjustment made to account for increasing variation in the past experiences and skill sets of students in the mainstream MBA program. For example, the school added a hybrid finance class, containing five weeks of corporate finance and five weeks of investments, that is much more difficult than the standard finance or investment courses.

The three foundation areas of accounting, microeconomics, and statistics did not change after the curriculum review. In addition to the basics, students are expected to complete coursework in several key business topics: functions (finance, marketing, and operations), management (decisions, people, and strategy), and business environment (macroeconomics, ethics, banking, and business law).
RANKING ANALYSIS:

Booth maintained its No. 3 Poets&Quants rank in 2013, despite slipping in the 2013 U.S. News & World Report ranking from fourth to sixth. In the 2014 Financial Times’ global ranking, the school continued its sixth-place streak among all U.S. schools for the fourth straight year. Booth also held on to its No. 1 spot in The Economist’s survey, which includes both international and U.S. programs.

For all the good news on the rankings front, the most positive development came with Bloomberg BusinessWeek’s 2012 biennial ranking. For the fourth consecutive time, Booth retained its No. 1 ranking from BW, which largely measures graduate satisfaction and corporate recruiter sentiment. Chicago's win ties the school with Wharton, which also has been No. 1 in BW's ranking on four different occasions. The only business school that has done better is Chicago’s rival Kellogg, which has won five No. 1 rankings from BW (the publication has published 13 surveys of full-time MBA programs so far).

It’s worth noting why Booth retained its top dog status in the BW survey. The school ranked first in BW’s important employer survey, which accounts for 40% of the ranking, 11th in the graduate satisfaction survey, which also accounts for 40% of the ranking, and fifth in intellectual capital, which accounts for the remaining 20% of the methodology and measures the publication output of a school’s professors.

Much of the school’s improvement in the rankings can be traced to the previous dean, Edward “Ted” Snyder, who had a highly successful nine-year run in the job from 2001 to 2010. The year before Snyder arrived in 2001, Booth had sunk to a lowly rank of 10 in the BW survey. By 2006, it captured the No. 1 spot and hasn’t given it up since. The new dean, Sunil Kumar, an academic from Stanford, passed a big test by continuing the school’s BW reign in 2012.

As one Class of 2012 MBA told BW: “There’s no faculty at a business school like that at Booth in terms of being highly regarded, highly quoted, and fully accessible. I also appreciate the sense of humility or Midwestern values that permeates Booth.”

As is often the case, not everyone was completely positive about their experience. Another Booth MBA said: “The alumni network could use some work. Unfortunately the type of person who attends this institution is generally the type of person who is not entirely outgoing and/or willing to reach out.” That particular critique has not gone unnoticed. Dean Kumar is trying to strengthen the alumni network, which is not as strong as several of Chicago’s rivals.
BOOTH SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

2013-2014 Tuition & Fees: $121,566 | School Recommended Two-Year Budget: $180,108

CLASS OF 2015 PROFILE:
- Average GMAT: 723
- GMAT Range (middle 80%): 660-760
- Average GPA: 3.57
- Acceptance Rate: 21%
- Full-Time MBA Enrollment: 581
- International: 36%
- Female: 35%
- Minority: 24%
- Mean Age: 28

CLASS OF 2013:
- Median Base Salary: $115,000
- Median Signing Bonus: $25,000
- Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation: 86%
- Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later: 94%

WHERE BOOTH’S CLASS OF 2013 WENT TO WORK:
- Financial Services: 35.0%
- Consulting: 30.7%
- Technology: 12.3%
- Food/Beverage/Tobacco: 4.2%
- Manufacturing/Chemicals/Plastics: 3.8%
- Health Care: 2.5%
- Health Care Products and Services: 2.5%
- Consumer Products: 2.1%
- Food Service/Lodging: 2.1%
- Retail: 1.3%
- Energy: 1.1%
- Media/Entertainment: 0.6%
Last year, The Wall Street Journal provocatively asked “What’s Wrong with Wharton?”

The answer is absolutely nothing. For the first time ever, Wharton muscled its way into a three-way tie for first place with Harvard Business School and Stanford University’s Graduate School of Business in U.S. News & World Report’s 2014 MBA ranking. It was the highest rank ever achieved by Wharton in the U.S. News survey. Throughout the survey’s history, the school had finished as high as second place and as low as fifth, and last year it was third.

Yet, in September of 2013, the Journal had written a negative article on the highly prominent business school, citing application declines and quoting admissions consultants.
who claimed the school had lost momentum and stature. But record-high average GMAT scores of 725—just two points shy of HBS—and stellar compensation and placement stats helped Wharton improve its standing in the *U.S. News* ranking.

Wharton MBAs earned average salary and bonus last year of $141,243, beating every other surveyed school including Harvard ($138,346) and Stanford ($137,525). The compensation numbers reported by Wharton to *U.S. News* were especially surprising because they represent something of a reversal of the normal pecking order for MBA pay. In 2012, for example, HBS grads’ average salary and bonus was $142,501, while Stanford MBAs landed salary and bonus packages of $140,459. Wharton trailed both schools, as well as MIT Sloan and Dartmouth Tuck grads, with a $138,302 average.

Wharton, of course, is to finance what Harvard is to general management or Northwestern is to marketing. There’s an impressive variety of financial electives here taught by some of the best finance faculty in the world. Even with Wall Street in decline, some 39% of Wharton’s Class of 2013 headed into the financial services industry—more than triple the next most popular field: technology.

Yet, we agree with this assessment of Wharton’s programming strengths by a recent graduate: “The strength of the finance program probably overshadows other departments, but the school is strong in marketing, real estate, entrepreneurship, and is growing its social impact focus.”

In fact, when *U.S. News & World Report* asked deans to name the best schools in specific disciplines, Wharton emerged as one of the very few that was in the top 10 in all 10 categories: No. 1 in finance, No. 2 in marketing, No. 2 in production and operations, No. 2 in international business, No. 3 in accounting, No. 3 in management, No. 5 in entrepreneurship, No. 6 in supply chain management and logistics, No. 7 in information systems, and No. 9 in non-profit management. That is quite an impressive list of expertise for a single school.

Yet, with finance in decline since the Great Recession of 2008-2009, an increasing number of people are questioning the school’s prestige and status, including *The Wall Street Journal*. After all, Wharton was the only school in the top 10 in the U.S. that year that suffered a decline in applications. The dip, however, could easily be attributed to a new group discussion test that admissions had launched, a hurdle that probably put off applicants who speak English as a second language.

We agree with Dan Bauer of The MBA Exchange, a leading admissions firm, who put it this way: “A Wharton MBA education is like a ‘blue-chip stock’ with a long history of growth. Yes, the market’s enthusiasm and demand for any investment will ebb and flow over time, but in this case, the long-term ROI is rock solid.”

Wharton has recently rolled out a new MBA curriculum that promises life-long education to MBA graduates, along with more leadership and communication experiences. The basic program will still revolve around an intensive core in general management, plus the depth of 18 majors and breadth of nearly 200 electives. The school’s month-long pre-term session includes a two-day, off-campus retreat where students begin the process of learning to lead in a team environment. The first year’s focus is a core curriculum that students complete together in learning teams of six. The core gives students a foundation of broad management skills that are applicable across industries.

During the summer months between the first and second years, students are busy with internships, career treks, and volunteer projects around the world. When they return, the second-year curriculum offers flexibility to follow personal interests and career goals. Students select from a wide range of majors and electives that help to develop one or more areas of expertise.
RANKING ANALYSIS:

For Wharton, the big rankings news was its first-place tie on U.S. News & World Report’s 2014 list with Harvard and Stanford. The move up from third place in 2013 could allow the school to overtake Chicago Booth in Poets&Quants’ composite ranking for 2014.

Otherwise, Wharton maintained its fourth place finish in Poets&Quants’ ranking for 2013, with mostly steady finishes across the most influential underlying lists. In both Bloomberg BusinessWeek’s biennial ranking in 2012 and The Economist’s 2013 annual ranking, the school stayed in exactly the same place it was before: third in the BW poll behind only Chicago Booth and Harvard Business School and 10th among U.S. schools in The Economist ranking. Forbes, which does its ranking every other year, still has Wharton in fourth place on its listing, which measures MBA programs by return on investment. Wharton’s straight streak continued with U.S. News and World Report—the school held on to its No. 3 spot for the third consecutive year.

There was a more interesting result when it came to the 2014 ranking by the Financial Times. Wharton fell to fourth, its lowest ranking by the British newspaper for at least a dozen years. For ten of those 12 years, Wharton had been ranked first by the FT. Because the FT’s methodology is complicated, measuring 20 different criteria, from adjusted compensation three years after graduation to the percentage of female students, faculty, and board members (schools that have a 50:50 male-female composition receive the highest possible score), yes, we know. It’s rather silly. So it’s best not to take this decline too seriously.

Although BusinessWeek had Wharton ranked third again, the magazine’s survey of graduates showed some slippage in satisfaction with the school and the MBA program. The school’s graduate satisfaction rank fell five places to 16th from 11th in 2010. While notable, it’s not a huge deal because these scores are clustered closely together with other schools. Wharton, on the other hand, maintained its recruiter ranking in the BW survey at second, behind only Chicago Booth, and the school improved its standing in BW’s intellectual capital measurement, ranking seventh from 13th two years ago. That latter part of the BW ranking, accounting for 20% of the total weight of the methodology, tracks the publication of professors’ articles in both scholarly and practitioner journals.

So what brought down Wharton’s graduate satisfaction scores? Most likely the quality of teaching in the core. Wharton’s satisfaction scores on teaching quality warranted it a grade of B from BW, compared with an A+ at Harvard, Chicago, Dartmouth, and a few other schools known for stellar teaching, such as Virginia’s Darden School and Cornell’s Johnson School. Several graduates griped that teaching quality fell below their expectations for such a world-class institution.

As one Wharton Class of 2012 MBA put it, “They could place more emphasis on teaching and incentivize professors to care about it more. Research is most professors’ top priority.” Added another: “The quality of instructors for the core courses could improve substantially. Many of my professors were of high quality, but those that were not, were not engaging at all.” Echoed a third MBA from the Class of 2012 to BW: “Core classes should only be taught by the professors who get highest marks for teaching, as, by definition, students are there by force and not choice.”

LATEST UP-TO-DATE MBA RANKINGS

Poets&Quants (2013): 4
Forbes (2013): 4
Financial Times (2014): 4 (Global), 3 (U.S.)
The Economist (2013): 15 (Global), 10 (U.S.)
THE WHARTON SCHOOL


CLASS OF 2015 PROFILE:
Average GMAT: 725
GMAT Range: 630-790
Average GPA: 3.60*
Acceptance Rate: 22%
Full-Time MBA Enrollment: 837
International: 35%
Female: 42%
Minority: 30%
Mean Age: NA

*Estimate

WHERE WHARTON’S CLASS OF 2013 WENT TO WORK:
Financial Services: 38.5%
Consulting: 29.3%
Consumer Products & Retail: 6.5%

CLASS OF 2013:
Median Base Salary: $125,000
Median Signing Bonus: $25,000
Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation: 86%
Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later: 98%

Energy & Utilities: 1.4%
Health Care: 3.9%
Manufacturing: 1.6%
When you think about the Kellogg School of Management, two distinctive aspects of this MBA experience immediately spring to mind. First off, the school’s culture is the ultimate representation of collaboration and teamwork. Secondly, there is no other school in the world with a stronger reputation in the field of marketing. But Northwestern’s Kellogg School is a lot more than a premier marketing school where highly personable students work in teams.

It is one of the world’s best schools of general management, and because the school attempts to interview every applicant, its graduates have unusually strong interpersonal skills. That is one reason why it is a favorite hunting ground for...
the consulting industry, which requires smart, thoughtful people who are especially good at working with others. In 2013, Kellogg sent 38% of its class into the consulting field, which typically pays MBA graduates among the highest starting salaries. By way of comparison, some 22% of Harvard Business School’s Class of 2013 headed into consulting, while only 19% of Stanford’s graduating class became consultants. Not surprisingly for a school with a stellar reputation in marketing, all of the world-class consumer goods companies make their way to Evanston every year to recruit at Kellogg, including PepsiCo, General Mills, and the Target Corporation.

There’s also new excitement at Kellogg due to Dean Sally Blount, who arrived at Kellogg in July of 2010 from New York University’s Stern School of Business, where she headed the undergraduate program. Blount has been shaking up the place. In her first year on the job, Blount decided to launch plans to build a new $220 million modern home for the business school on the waterfront of Lake Michigan. The school broke ground on its new home in November of 2013. The new building, to be completed in late 2016, will offer dramatic vistas of Lake Michigan and Chicago’s skyline. To support the five-story, 410,000-square-foot “global hub,” Dean Blount is in the midst of a $350 million capital campaign to help fund new faculty appointments and scholarships for MBA students, among other things.

Blount has also led a reorganization of the top leadership team, the launch of Kellogg’s new branding campaign, and a major strategic review that will put substantive content behind Kellogg’s new positioning statement: “Think Bravely: We believe that business can be bravely led, passionately collaborative, and world changing.” The school poached Linda Darragh, formerly director of entrepreneurship programs at Chicago Booth, to significantly increase its game in entrepreneurship.

Blount also wants to dramatically increase the size of Kellogg’s superb one-year MBA program, in which students forego the chance of a summer internship in exchange for getting the degree in 12 months. Kellogg is the highest ranked school in the U.S. offering a one-year MBA.

Changes in the MBA curriculum seem inevitable. For now, however, the core curriculum for the two-year MBA program at Kellogg consists of nine courses in fundamental areas, including accounting, finance, business strategy, marketing, business analytics, microeconomics, operations, and organizational leadership. In the beginning of the second year, students are required to complete the half-credit Leadership and Crisis Management course, where students apply their first-year knowledge to a challenging set of case studies and crisis simulations. MBAs who began their studies before or during Spring 2013 must also meet a one-credit global elective requirement through an approved course or foreign immersion experience.
**RANKING ANALYSIS:**

Among the top 25 business schools, the biggest news is that Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management is beginning to show improvement under Dean Sally Blount, who has turned the business school upside down, rethinking every aspect of the MBA program and the entire institution. In 2012, Kellogg rose two places to finish fifth in Poets&Quants’ ranking, jumping over MIT Sloan and Columbia and falling in behind elite company: Harvard, Stanford, Chicago, and Wharton. The school held on to that ground in 2013.

The B-school moved forward on the basis of improvement in two key rankings: U.S. News & World Report and the Financial Times. U.S. News ranked Kellogg fourth in both 2013 and 2012, up from fifth in 2011. More importantly, perhaps, the school moved up two places among the best U.S. schools in the FT survey, rising to ninth in 2012 from 11th in 2011--Kellogg again held on to that ground in 2013. Kellogg showed even greater upward movement on the FT’s full global ranking, rising six spots in just three years--from 21st in 2010 to 15th in 2013. The school also gained ground in the Forbes listing, jumping from seventh in 2011 to fifth in 2013. (Forbes, which ranks schools solely on the basis of the return on investment of their MBA, did not publish a list in 2012.)

As is often the case with rankings, what one source gives another can often take away. The Economist ranked Kellogg 15th among U.S. schools in 2013, down two places from 13th a year earlier. Kellogg also slipped one notch in BusinessWeek’s 2012 ranking to fifth from fourth in 2010. Behind that overall rank, BW, which measures schools on the basis of graduate satisfaction, corporate recruiter sentiment, and the publication of academic research by professors, hands out rankings for all three of those metrics. The school maintained its fourth-place ranking among recruiters, improved its intellectual capital ranking to 24th from 28th two years earlier, and slipped in graduate satisfaction--possibly because of all the changes going on at the school.

In graduate satisfaction, Kellogg ranked 13th, down from sixth in 2010. Blount, however, has put Betsy Ziegler, a former McKinsey partner, in charge of the MBA program. Ziegler has put a laser-like focus on improving satisfaction and trying to exceed the expectations of MBA students. That effort is bound to pay off the next time BW surveys Kellogg students in 2014. As one Class of 2012 MBA summed up the experience on a BW survey: ‘Kellogg teaches you to reach deep inside yourself and do some ‘discovery’ during the business school process. For me, that meant learning subjects that I had little experience in (finance, marketing). For many others it means leading teams and learning to manage processes. Kellogg teaches you how to work in a team with diverse and highly talented individuals and how to achieve great results through collaboration.’

---

**LATEST UP-TO-DATE MBA RANKINGS**

- **Poets&Quants (2013):** 5
- **BusinessWeek (2012):** 5
- **U.S. News & World Report (2014):** 4
- **Forbes (2013):** 5
- **Financial Times (2014):** 15 (Global), 9 (U.S.)
- **The Economist (2013):** 23 (Global), 15 (U.S.)
**KELLOGG SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT**

2013-2014 **Tuition: $118,170 | School Recommended Two-Year Budget: $174,380**

### CLASS OF 2015 PROFILE:
- **Average GMAT:** 715
- **GMAT Range:** N/A
- **Average GPA:** 3.54
- **Acceptance Rate:** 23%
- **Full-Time Enrollment:** 465
- **International:** 36%
- **Female:** 36%
- **Minority:** 20%
- **Mean Age:** 28

### CLASS OF 2013:
- **Median Base Salary:** $120,000
- **Median Signing Bonus:** $25,000
- **Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation:** 84%
- **Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later:** 97.4%

### WHERE KELLOGG’S CLASS OF 2013 WENT TO WORK:
- **Consulting:** 38%
- **Finance:** 18%
- **Marketing:** 17%
- **Management:** 11%
- **Other:** 7%
- **Strategic Planning:** 6%
- **Business Development:** 3%
At MIT’s Sloan School of Management, there’s a sense that engineers and gear heads are favored. After all, this is the business school for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, one of the world’s premier universities of engineering.

But Dawna Levenson, Sloan’s director of admissions, says that it’s just not true. “Clearly, MIT Sloan is part of MIT so people feel that,” she concedes. But that is not what we are looking for. The ideal candidate thrives in ambiguity and is willing to challenge him or herself outside their comfort zone. They are academically successful and can show a pattern of accomplishments. MIT Sloan is a collaborative environment, so they must show an ability to be able to work with people.
from diverse backgrounds and an open attitude to multiple perspectives. Since we are a mission-driven school focused on innovation and making an impact, we look for candidates who are passionate and have a history of innovation and innovative thinking.

Lots of buzzwords there in common with many other business schools. Still, MIT is among the very elite MBA programs in the world and arguably the top school for action-based learning. The coupling of classroom lessons with real-world experience is a cornerstone of the curriculum, which comprises a combination of case studies, team projects, lectures, live case discussions, interactions with industry leaders, and hands-on lab classes. Throughout the first-semester core curriculum, students build the foundation for their MIT Sloan education. Working with a team of six to seven classmates, they gain fundamental skills through required coursework in economics, accounting, managerial communication, business statistics, and organizational processes, in addition to one elective offering.

Only one semester long, the core allows students the freedom and flexibility to pursue their own personal goals throughout the rest of the program. Students enjoy the company and intellectual stimulation of their cohort—a group of roughly 68 students who take classes together.

Sloan MBAs also have access to a wide array of Action Labs, where they gain intensive hands-on experience by partnering with companies, NGOs, and/or government agencies to tackle a real-world problem or project. During winter break, MBAs can expand their horizons through the Independent Activities Period, a four-week term of credited and non-credited learning experiences, ranging from An Introduction to Nuclear Power to Mediterranean Cooking.

Despite the somewhat esoteric nature of some of these classes, the school is aiming to select students who are great schmoozers, too. “Relationship building for us is so important as an indicator of success both in our classroom and at work,” adds Levenson. “The reality is we live in a world where there are other people involved. Being able to prove you are a productive member of a team and realizing that what you do is one piece of doing something bigger is important to us. We want to make sure that the people we bring into the program are comfortable working in a team environment and are able to build meaningful relationships.”
RANKING ANALYSIS:

In Poets&Quants’ 2013 survey of the best U.S. MBA programs, MIT Sloan carried its sixth-place finish over from 2012. The B-school had slipped slightly in 2012 from fifth place in 2011. That decline had little, if anything, to do with the school and more to do with the rise of Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management under its new dean. Sloan’s repeat rank in Poets&Quants’ listing is indicative of the B-school’s relatively stable rankings year, marred by only a few dips.

The school held steady in U.S. News & World Report’s 2013 ranking, retaining its No. 4 spot again this year from 2012. Sloan also maintained its No. 5 rank in the Financial Times’ 2014 survey of the best school in the U.S. but slipped one spot, from seventh to eighth, this year in the worldwide listing. The Economist bumped the school down a few notches so that it finished ninth, from seventh last year. Forbes, which measures schools solely on their return of investment, also saw fit to lower the school’s rank by two places, from 10th in 2011 (Forbes did not release a ranking in 2012) to 12th in 2013. However, Bloomberg BusinessWeek, which largely ranks schools on graduate satisfaction and corporate recruiter sentiment, delivered good news. The magazine ranked MIT ninth in its 2012 biennial survey, up from 10th in 2010.

BW, which publishes separate rankings for each of its three core metrics, ranked the school ninth in graduate satisfaction (the school was third in 2010), 10th in its poll of recruiters (14th in 2010), and 15th on its measurement of professors’ scholarly output in key academic and practitioner journals (18th in 2010). Based on comments by graduates on BW’s surveys, the decline in graduate satisfaction can be attributed to some complaints about the strength of the Sloan alumni network, the diversity of recruiters brought to campus by career services, and the lack of emphasis on leadership and communication skills in the MBA program.

However, as one Class of 2012 graduate explains, “Sloan really breeds an ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship—whether from its connection to the rest of MIT or from within (professors, coursework focus). This innovation creates a groundswell of ideas and discourse that runs in the veins of the programs that comprise Sloan.”

LATEST UP-TO-DATE MBA RANKINGS

Poets&Quants (2013): 6
BusinessWeek (2012): 9
Forbes (2013): 12
Financial Times (2014): 8 (Global), 5 (U.S.)
The Economist (2013): 12 (Global), 9 (U.S.)
**SLOAN SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT**

2013-2014 Tuition: $122,880 | Recommended Two-Year Budget: $185,654

**CLASS OF 2015 PROFILE:**

- Average GMAT: 713
- GMAT Range (middle 80%): 670-760
- Average GPA: 3.53*
- Acceptance Rate: 15%*
- Full-Time MBA Enrollment: 406
- International: 45%
- Female: 34%
- Minority: 10%
- Mean Age: 28
  *Estimate

**CLASS OF 2013:**

- Class of 2013:
- Median Base Salary: $120,000
- Other Guaranteed Compensation: $26,000
- Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation: 86%
- Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later: 92%

**WHERE SLOAN’S CLASS OF 2013 WENT TO WORK:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software/Internet</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Banking/Brokerage</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers/Electronics</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biotechnology</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Products</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Equity</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venture Capital</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil/Energy</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media/Entertainment/Sports</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmaceutical/Healthcare/Auto</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automotive/Aerospace</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt./Nonprofit</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Management</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2013, Columbia Business School launched a new branding campaign that perfectly captures the school’s greatest advantage: Its location in New York City. Indeed, Columbia is very much “At the Very Center of Business,” as its new tagline states.

New York allows this Ivy League university to attract a world-class group of MBA students and faculty in a city that is one of the greatest laboratories for business ever created. As Sarah Shen, a Class of 2014 student puts it, “For a lot of schools, having a big speaker on campus is a big event. For us, this happens practically every day. Over the past week alone students have met with the CEOs of Godiva, Saks Fifth Avenue, and J.Crew, and tomorrow morning the CEO
of Morgan Stanley will be on campus to share his views on the role and responsibilities of financial institutions in the new economy. This regular access to business titans does not happen everywhere, and it is one of the amazing benefits Columbia Business School affords us as students.”

Of course, its location also plays a factor in how important Wall Street is to the school’s overall progress. When Wall Street tanks, Columbia Business School flinches. The B-school’s fortunes are so closely aligned with the financial sector that a prolonged downturn inevitably has a big impact on the uptown school. Nearly 40% of Columbia’s MBAs go into finance after graduation. As Wall Street continues to lay off large numbers of people, the cascading effect on Columbia has been obvious. In 2012, for example, MBA applications plunged 19%, vastly exceeding the decline at any other big-brand school around the world. The drop in applications pushed the school’s acceptance rate up five full percentage points to 21% in 2012 from 16% a year earlier. The school righted the balance a bit in 2013 with a more rigorous acceptance rate of 18.1%.

The earlier dip came on the heels of the provocative 2010 documentary Inside Job, which chronicles the origins of the global financial crisis of 2008. Columbia Business School endured a nasty beating due to its close and cozy alignment with Wall Street. No matter. If you’re headed into financial services, you’ll be hard pressed to find a more direct route than Columbia, which probably has more alums on Wall Street than any other business school in the world (Wharton and NYU also are good bets, but they don’t rival Columbia).

Despite the recent setbacks, including a steep decline in the latest Bloomberg BusinessWeek ranking, Columbia has a much brighter future ahead. Dean Hubbard has been able to raise considerable funds toward the construction of a sorely needed new home for the business school in the Manhattanville section of New York City, where Columbia University is developing another campus. The business school will eventually be housed in two new buildings at a cost of $600 million. This location will allow MBAs to tap into one-of-a-kind executive talent in an international hub. Since becoming dean of the business school in July of 2004, Glenn Hubbard has raised an extraordinary $770 million, making him one of the most successful academic fundraisers in history.

Until it can occupy its new home, Columbia Business School remains centered in Uris Hall, a 12-story, concrete building that opened in 1964 amid protests from architecture students who objected to its design, and Warren Hall, a 1999 facility shared with the law school. Unfortunately for current students, the new campus isn’t expected to open until 2018.

Aesthetics and space constraints aside, the school’s revised core curriculum, unveiled in fall 2008, provides students with the tools to be successful as business leaders across a wide array of industries. The core courses comprise roughly 33% of the degree requirements—two full courses and nine half-term courses. Students with deep expertise in a core subject have the option to test out and choose an elective instead. MBAs can further tailor their academic programs by earning a maximum of six credits through independent study, a global business project, cross-cultural seminars, or graduate-level courses from Columbia’s other schools.
RANKING ANALYSIS:

Columbia Business School repeated last year’s seventh-place finish in Poets&Quants’ 2013 ranking of the best U.S. MBA programs. The spot marks Columbia’s lowest rank in the four years that Poets&Quants has been publishing its composite survey.

The reason for the slip? The school’s significant drop in the 2012 Bloomberg BusinessWeek ranking is largely to blame. Columbia fell five places from ninth in 2010 to 14th in the 2012 BW poll. It’s the worst showing by Columbia in the BW survey since it began in 1988--then, the magazine ranked the school 14th. Some MBA students are pointing a finger at Dean Glenn Hubbard, who had been former Governor Mitt Romney’s economic advisor during his unsuccessful presidential bid. According to BW, Columbia’s fall can be attributed to a 10-point drop in the student satisfaction portion of the BW analysis to a lowly 20--down from No. 10 in 2010.

In the BW survey, MBAs complained about the uneven quality of teaching in the first-year core curriculum, the dearth of university resources devoted to the business school, the lackluster career services outreach to companies outside consulting and banking, and the acceptance of “connected” applicants. “Too many students are ‘sons of,’” claimed one MBA graduate. “They are plain dumb but got in because dad or mom wrote a big check to the school. This is not acceptable.”

Even so, most MBAs had good things to say about the school and the MBA program. As one wrote on the open-ended portion of the BW survey: “We have incredible speakers every day due to the NYC location. The finance program is unparalleled. Teamwork is emphasized over personal achievement, creating a fantastic, collaborative environment. Finally, the approach to teaching is practical and hands-on, teaching us real on-the-job skills.”

Columbia had a more mixed result in the other metrics measured by BW, which ranks MBA programs on graduate satisfaction, recruiter sentiment, and the publication record of the faculty in key academic journals. On the measure of faculty intellectual capital, the school fell to a rank of 19th from 12th in 2010. However, it moved up one place with corporate recruiters, who ranked it eighth in 2012, up from ninth in 2010.

The school’s downward slide continued across other key rankings. The Economist pushed the program down to eighth among U.S. B-schools in 2013, down three spots from fifth in 2012. Forbes’ 2013 survey also lowered the school a few notches from the publication’s last ranking in 2011--Columbia took seventh this year, down from fifth in the previous survey.

But it wasn’t all bad news for the B-school in 2013. Columbia held steady in the Financial Times’ 2014 ranking with a fourth-place finish among U.S. schools, the same as 2013 and 2012. It also retained its No. 8 spot in U.S. & World Report’s 2013 ranking, the same as 2012.

LATEST UP-TO-DATE MBA RANKINGS

Poets&Quants (2013): 7
Forbes (2013): 7
Financial Times (2014): 5 (Global), 4 (U.S.)
The Economist (2013): 10 (Global), 8 (U.S.)
COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

2013-2014 Tuition: $121,440 | Recommended Two-Year Budget: $186,576

CLASS OF 2015 PROFILE:
- Average GMAT: 716
- GMAT Range (middle 80%): 680-760
- Average GPA: 3.50
- Acceptance Rate: 18.1%
- Full-Time MBA Enrollment: 749
- International: 36%
- Female: 36%
- Minority: 34%
- Mean Age: 28

CLASS OF 2013:
- Median Base Salary: $110,000
- Other Guaranteed Compensation: $30,000
- Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation: 85%
- Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later: 97%

WHERE COLUMBIA'S CLASS OF 2013 WENT TO WORK:
- Financial Services: 37.9%
- Consulting: 29.7%
- Media/Technology (non-health): 13.2%
- Manufacturing: 7.5%
- Real Estate: 3.4%
- Healthcare: 1.8%
- Aerospace/Aviation/Defense/Transportation: 1.8%
- Retail: 1.8%
- Other: 1.8%
- Education/Government/Nonprofit: 1.1%
If an MBA education were ice cream, Tuck would be one of a handful of premium brands. The Tuck MBA is a super rich and delicious concoction that combines a rigorous education, a picture-perfect campus, and top-notch faculty dedicated to providing students with the ultimate MBA experience. There are no business undergraduates sharing the halls, no part-time MBAs in evening classes, and no executive MBAs who come in on Friday nights (even the school’s executive education offerings are limited). All this allows Tuck to focus virtually all its resources on one thing: the full-time MBA program.

In a day and age when most business schools juggle a portfolio of programs that siphon off the best faculty from the full-time MBA, Tuck stays true to its mission of guaranteeing
every student a truly transformative and intimate experience. This is a rare and beautiful thing if you want the top-notch version of the degree.

The B-school is nestled next to the Connecticut River and surrounded by the White Mountains on arguably one of the East Coast’s most naturally stunning campuses. Some MBAs have complained about the school’s isolated location in Hanover, N.H., but others laud the absence of big city distractions. At Tuck, most students have the option of living in lavishly appointed dorms on campus.

To attend a Tuck class is to witness a master teacher in action, soliciting different opinions in rapid-fire style, moving every student along a challenging but entertaining journey to some final destination where the big idea or thought waits to be revealed. The school’s faculty members are in league with those at Harvard Business School and the University of Virginia’s Darden School. The three schools have at least two attributes in common: 1) MBA students are taught almost exclusively by the case method, and 2) the first-year curriculum is a lockstep program where cohorts of the same students move through the courses together. Harvard’s cohorts are 50% larger than those at Tuck and Darden. At the smaller schools, there is less pressure to fight for airtime during classes, where participation often accounts for half of students’ grades. The bonds students form in their sections often endure a lifetime.

Tuck, like Darden, has a highly collaborative and caring culture where MBA candidates genuinely support and encourage each other. Backstabbing at Tuck is unheard of. In fact, some corporate recruiters say the students there are just too nice. That’s an accusation that also befalls Darden. And unlike many of the big MBA factories, Tuck offers the quintessential intimate experience. By the time a student graduates from Tuck, he or she knows every single classmate who’s wearing a cap and gown at commencement.

“We’re pretty happy people here,” says Sprague Brodie, 27, a former Deloitte Consulting analyst who graduated from Tuck in June 2013. Brodie accepted a new role with Deloitte Digital, and the company reimbursed her for two years of MBA tuition. Without the degree, she believes it would have been far less likely for her to have made the transition from Deloitte’s government consulting practice in Washington, D.C. to its digital consulting arm.

Even students who are taking out massive student loans express no regret. “I feel like I’m Charlie in the Chocolate Factory and got the golden ticket,” quips Kensington Schmidt, 29, a first-year student who says she will leave Tuck in 2014 with $250,000 in student debt, including debt from her undergraduate studies at Babson College. But Schmidt, now weighing internship offers from two tech firms, has interviewed with a wide range of tech companies, including Amazon, Symantec, Intel, Microsoft, and Verizon. “There is no way in hell many of these companies would have looked at me a year ago,” she says.

The integrated core curriculum at the Tuck School covers key functional areas and disciplines, including statistics and decision science, corporate finance and capital markets, managerial and global economics, marketing, organizational behavior and personal leadership, strategy, communications, and operations. A student with an extensive background in a particular discipline can take an elective in place of the core course, though opting out is often discouraged because it takes students away from their assigned cohorts.

With the core curriculum as a foundation and more than 100 electives to choose from, students can customize their education to meet individual needs and interests. Students must also satisfy an ethics and social responsibility requirement through a mini-course (1.5 credits) or an independent study project.

Once Tuckies complete their MBAs, their ties to the school are among the strongest of any business school. More than 70% of Tuck’s living alumni contribute to the school’s annual fundraising efforts, the highest participation rate in the world. Even though their expectations of Tuck’s network are high to begin with, students say those expectations get vastly exceeded. Second-year MBA Mike Devine, 29, says that for just one job interview, he spoke with more than 20 Tuck alums, doing extensive phone calls with half of them. They shared candid info on what it was like to work at their company, provided intelligence about the pluses and minuses of different opportunities, and dispensed advice on how to best prep for the interviews. “It’s a lot of paying it forward,” he says.

Devine had worked for GE Capital and Credit
Suisse before coming to Tuck, interned with Cargill during school, and graduated with a job lined up at Blackstone in Boston, where he will do M&A advisory work for technology companies. Devine, who earned his undergraduate degree in economics from Dartmouth College, wasn’t expecting to come back to Hanover, N.H. for his MBA. “When I was here, I had no idea why anyone would get an MBA at Dartmouth,” he says. “But after working in New York for four years, I understood it. We all know each other’s names. My fiancée is a classmate here. There are seven couples in our class who came here together.”

Of course, Tuck’s rural location in New Hampshire, the small size of the school, and the ability to live on campus in MBA housing contribute to the strong bonds that often last for many decades. “A lot of other schools will pay lip service to the value of their alumni networks,” adds Schmidt. “I’ve never really seen it executed like Tuck. You eat, sleep and breathe your classmates, your professors and your school here. When you go to the grocery store, the gym or a restaurant for dinner, you see your classmates. This is a small town, and that is what Tuck is about.”

RANKING ANALYSIS:

Overall, it was a year of stasis for Dartmouth College’s Tuck School of Business. The B-school maintained its No. 8 ranking on Poets&Quants’ 2013 composite list. Tuck held on to its No. 9 spot from 2012 in U.S. News & World Report’s 2013 ranking. Forbes, which issued its last ranking in 2011, also saw fit to keep the school in the exact same spot: No. 6.

Internationally, the B-school maintained its second-place finish in The Economist’s survey, right after the University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business. The biggest blow came from the Financial Times’ 2014 survey, which put the school in 12th among U.S. schools, down from 10th in 2012.

On the upside, Tuck gained two places in Bloomberg BusinessWeek’s 2012 survey, finishing at a rank of 12th among U.S. schools, up from 14th two years earlier. BW, which largely measures schools on the basis of graduate and corporate recruiter satisfaction, is still ranking the school below its true standing, but the improvement shows Tuck is moving in the right direction.

It’s worth explaining Tuck’s two-spot jump in the BW survey. The school had a very strong showing on the graduate satisfaction portion of the BW ranking, moving up 10 places to finish fourth in graduate satisfaction, up from 14th in 2010. If those scores weren’t so closely clustered together, Tuck would have jumped several more spots upward. The school also did better on the corporate recruiter section of the BW poll in 2012, moving up to a respectable 11th-place finish, up from 15th in 2010. For a small school outside a major urban center, this is a very good showing because the BW methodology inherently penalizes elite schools with small graduating classes, which tend to draw fewer corporate recruiters to campus than institutions like Harvard, Wharton, Booth, or Kellogg.

Ask any Tuckie if they would trade that intimacy for a higher ranking and most would laugh. As one Class of 2012 graduate told BW on its satisfaction survey, “Tuck is unique because it truly has a culture and community that nurtures and helps develop the entire student. I know that I can walk into the office of any of the deans without an appointment, and he or she will know my name and will take the time to meet with me as soon as possible. The professors go the extra mile to get to know their students. I regularly have informal conversations with professors from the first year in the hallways at Tuck, I have traveled to India with my favorite professor from the core, and I’ve had dinner parties at the homes of professors where the conversation goes until 1 a.m. The students here put each other first, and the size of our program allows our students to truly appreciate the true diversity of our class.”
**TUCK SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

**2013-2014 Tuition:** $117,870 | **Recommended Two-Year Budget:** $182,518

### Class of 2015 Profile:
- **Average GMAT:** 719
- **GMAT Range:** 530-780
- **Average GPA:** 3.53
- **Acceptance Rate:** 20.4%
- **Full-Time MBA Enrollment:** 277
- **International:** 31%
- **Female:** 33%
- **Minority:** 16%
- **Mean Age:** 28

### Class of 2013:
- **Median Base Salary:** $115,000
- **Median Signing Bonus:** $25,000
- **Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation:** 91%
- **Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later:** 95%

### Where Tuck's Class of 2013 Went to Work:
- **Financial Services:** 30%
- **Consulting:** 27%
- **Technology:** 13%
- **Consumer Goods, Retail:** 10%
- **Manufacturing:** 6%
- **Healthcare/Pharmaceuticals:** 5%
- **Energy:** 3%
- **Real Estate:** 3%
- **Other:** 3%
Alums who go off and become successful always reflect well on the school. Duke can lay claim to providing the MBA education for one of the world’s most famous executives: Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook, the handpicked successor of Apple’s late founder Steve Jobs. No school could get a better living advertisement for itself.

A 1988 Fuqua MBA, Cook came to campus in 2013 to celebrate his 25th reunion and participated in an hour-long interview with Fuqua Dean Bill Boulding. During the session, Cook was asked by a current student, “When is it okay to break the rules?”

His response: “I think you should rarely follow the rules. I think you should write the rules. If you follow things in a
formulaic manner, you will wind up at best being the same as everybody else. ... If you want to excel you can’t do that. I watched a lot of companies do that, and I think that’s a rotten strategy. I think you need to write your own rules.”

At the Fuqua School, writing your own rules is an important part of the culture. Students are encouraged to assume leadership roles in the tight-knit “Team Fuqua” community because the administration gives MBA candidates the freedom to shape much of their experience. Many of the day-to-day activities at Fuqua are run by students.

Fuqua builds off the prestige of Duke University, one of the premier universities in the world. But the business school is also rated highly by peers in many business disciplines and areas. When U.S. News & World Report asked rival deans and MBA directors to identify the business schools that are best in certain categories, Fuqua came up in five key areas: In non-profit management, the school was ranked sixth, behind only Yale, Stanford, Harvard, UC-Berkeley and Northwestern Kellogg. It was seventh in marketing, 11th in management, 11th in international business, and 13th in finance.

The first term at the Fuqua School of Business focuses on the development of collaborative leadership and organizational management skills along with a global outlook. The full-time MBA program begins with a 3.5-week Global Institute featuring three core courses: Leadership, Ethics and Organizations; Global Institutions and Environments; and Consequential Leadership I. This institute initiates the process of shaping students into collaborative leaders within a global business environment. Students then dive into the major functional areas in business including economics, finance, marketing, and operations management.

Throughout the remainder of the program, MBA candidates can undertake a wide-ranging general management education or focus on a particular career path through a variety of interdisciplinary concentrations and certificate options.

In recent years, the school has had great success in matching its MBA graduates with world-class companies seeking the best and brightest. The breadth and diversity of the recruiters coming to Fuqua are a testament to the quality of its students and the school’s educational experience. The top ten corporate recruiters at Fuqua in 2013 were a strong and varied bunch: Deloitte Consulting, Microsoft, Bain & Co., Boston Consulting Group, McKinsey & Co., Accenture, Citigroup, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Bank of America, and Amazon.

It’s also worth noting that Apple brought aboard six Fuqua summer interns from the Class of 2014 and hired four MBAs full-time out of the Class of 2013. So Cook obviously likes what he gets out his old alma mater.
RANKING ANALYSIS:

Duke’s Fuqua School of Business either went up or held steady in most of the major rankings, which boosted it up one spot to 10th on Poets&Quants’ 2013 ranking, from ninth a year earlier. The school also saw upward movement in Forbes’ 2013 ranking, jumping four spots from 12th in 2011 to eighth in 2013. The school made gains in the Financial Times’ 2013 ranking too, moving from 11th among U.S. schools in 2013 to 10th in 2014, and improved its spot on The Economist’s survey, edging up from 19th in 2012 to 18th among U.S. programs in 2013.

Two of the other major rankings remained unchanged: Bloomberg BusinessWeek’s biennial ranking of sixth remained the same from 2010 to 2012, and U.S. News & World Report’s 2013 ranking of 11th carried over into 2014.

BW, which largely ranks MBA programs on the basis of satisfaction surveys by students and recruiters, captured some highly favorable comments on Duke’s MBA program from recent graduates. As one Class of 2012 MBA told BW, “Fuqua is an incredibly diverse institution with outstanding professors, strong-caliber students and a focus on teamwork and the goal of becoming a future leader of consequence. This all comes in a package with a fantastic location. Duke has the perfect blend of southern style and living (lower costs, friendly residents, beautiful weather, amazing food) with world-class business opportunities (RTP is right in our backyard) and a rich history (NCAA Championships at Duke and UNC, Civil War, Raleigh’s founding, etc.). Having lived in the Northeast the majority of my life, including six years in NYC, I was blown away by how much there was to do and how easy it was to acclimate to southern living.”

LATEST UP-TO-DATE MBA RANKINGS

Poets&Quants (2013): 9
BusinessWeek (2012): 6
Forbes (2013): 8
Financial Times (2014): 17 (Global), 10 (U.S.)
The Economist (2013): 29 (Global), 18 (U.S.)
FUQUA SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

2013-2014 Tuition: $110,600 | Recommended Two-Year Budget: $156,166

CLASS OF 2015 PROFILE:
Average GMAT: 694
GMAT Range (middle 80%): 640-740
Average GPA: 3.40
Acceptance Rate: 26.0%
Full-Time MBA Enrollment: 437
International: 38%
Female: 33%
Minority: 10%
Average Age: 29

CLASS OF 2013:
Median Base Salary: $110,000
Median Signing Bonus: $25,000
Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation: 79%
Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later: 91%

WHERE FUQUA’S CLASS OF 2013 WENT TO WORK:
Consulting: 31%
Finance: 19%
Consumer Goods: 13% Technology Services: 10%
Health: 9%
Manufacturing: 5%
Airlines: 4%

Social and Environmental Impact: 3%
Energy: 2%
Insurance: 2%
Other Services: 2%
Real Estate: 1%
Media/Entertainment/Sports: 1%
It’s been more than 40 years since political activist Mario Savio passionately implored thousands of Berkeley students to “put your bodies upon the gears…of the machine” to halt racial discrimination in the U.S. Yet, that spirit to tackle injustice is still part of the DNA of the University of California at Berkeley—even at Berkeley’s Haas School of Business where one of the institution’s core cultural attributes is to “question the status quo.”

Haas Dean Rich Lyons is arguably the first B-school dean to clearly articulate his school’s culture and, more importantly, to consciously use it to shape the school’s MBA experience and its students. At Berkeley, it’s less a fundamental rewire of the school than it is making the existing wiring more evident. As
Dean Lyons puts it, “We wanted to find the heartbeat that has been here a long time. We went after culture because we felt we could write things down that other schools couldn’t.”

As a result, he has codified the school’s four guiding principles:

- **Question the status quo:** “Being able to envision a different reality, to take intelligent risks, and to learn from failure, as well as having the courage to speak our minds.”
- **Confidence without attitude:** “Being able to make decisions based on facts and analysis, giving us the confidence to act without arrogance, leading through trust and collaboration.”
- **Students always:** “Having a mindset of curiosity and lifelong learning, seeking personal growth, and practicing behavior that tells others we can learn from them.”
- **Beyond yourself:** “Considering the long-term impact of our actions and the facility for putting larger interests above our own.”

If you’re tempted to think this is little more than a public relations exercise, Dean Lyons will tell you that he is making these cultural attributes a key part of the admissions process, of orientation, and of the ongoing MBA program. The upshot: The principles are reinforced at every stage, from the questions Berkeley asks of applicants on its required essays and in alumni interviews to the classroom discussions in core and elective courses. You’ll find several, if not all, of these principles in evidence at many of the best business schools, including Stanford, but you will be less likely to find a better champion of them than Dean Lyons, who is walking the talk. There’s also a California mellowness that pervades the cultures of each of these schools. They are small, tight-knit, and highly collaborative places. For institutions that attract smart, already accomplished, yet still highly ambitious people, the competition among students is kept to a minimum.

Insiders may still joke that Berkeley’s Haas School of Business is the MBA for hippies. But that has never been true. The flippant reference ignores the fact that Haas is one of the hardest B-schools in the world to get into. And if you’re interested in tech, entrepreneurship, and innovation, Haas is arguably the best school for earning your MBA.

The highly selective program, which enrolls a small class of roughly 250 full-time MBA students each fall, is anchored by 13 required courses that promote a general-management perspective and provide a framework for the more function-specific courses that follow. An MBA candidate can choose from a wide array of electives and has the option to design his or her own elective under the guidance of a faculty member.

The design-your-own-course approach is a testament to Haas’ emphasis on innovation—a theme that permeates the MBA curriculum and is formalized in the Berkeley Innovative Leader Development (BILD) strategy. As part of this approach, students must complete the Problem Finding, Problem Solving course, which requires them to apply different modes of thinking to identify, define and solve problems.

Dean Lyons had been instrumental in getting the course to be a required part of the MBA curriculum. “It is really not very helpful to tell people to think outside the box,” he says. “People don’t know where the box is. An important element of this course is developing a capacity in our students to be explicit about the typically implicit assumptions that frame opportunities and problems. That shows you where the box is, and allows you to move one side or the other to see solutions you wouldn’t have seen. We believe society needs more people with this skill.”

The BILD initiative culminates in a required applied innovation course, where MBAs must use their newly acquired skills to solve real-world problems. Options for meeting the requirement include Haas@Work, a course that assigns student teams to innovation challenges at a select group of companies that have included Cisco, Walt Disney, Visa, Virgin America, and Yahoo!
RANKING ANALYSIS:

Haas’ 2013-2014 rankings season was relatively calm compared with the school’s roller coaster rankings ride of 2012. As a case in point, in the Financial Times’ 2014 ranking, the school dropped only one spot to eighth among U.S. schools, from seventh in 2013. It also gained three spots globally, moving from 14th to 11th this year. These fluctuations are relatively minor in light of the school’s six-place leap in the FT’s 2012 survey, when it jumped to seventh from 13th among U.S. schools and to 14th globally from 25th. Despite its positive rise in the FT ranking, Haas suffered a five-spot fall in Bloomberg BusinessWeek’s 2012 listing, slipping from eighth in 2010 to 13th in 2012 (BW releases its ranking every other year).

The situation was more stable on U.S. News & World Report’s 2014 ranking, where Haas maintained its seventh-place spot from 2013 again this year. Forbes also kept the B-school’s ranking more or less consistent in its 2013 survey, and Haas slipped just one place to 13th, from 12th in the publication’s last ranking in 2011. Haas made its best showing this year in The Economist’s survey, which bumped the B-school up from sixth globally in 2012 to third in 2013.

The cumulative impact of these ups and downs resulted in a one-spot slide from ninth in 2012 to 10th in 2013 on Poets&Quants’ 2013 ranking.

It’s worth having a closer look at why Haas fell in the BW ranking, which largely measures graduate and corporate recruiter satisfaction. BW gave Haas a 10th-place ranking for graduate satisfaction, down from fourth in 2010. The school also slid two places in BW’s recruiter survey, to 13th from 11th two years earlier. The drop in student satisfaction was likely the result of new curriculum changes that require the test of time along with slightly lower teaching scores, which reflect the school’s emphasis on research productivity over masterful classroom instruction. A change in BW’s corporate recruiter methodology is also a likely culprit because the fall in student satisfaction alone wouldn’t have resulted in a five-place drop; the recruiter poll weighs more heavily on the overall result, and Haas, as a smaller school with a smaller base of recruiters, likely didn’t fare as well under the new methodology.

Nonetheless, satisfaction with the program remains high. As one Class of 2012 MBA told BW on the open-ended portion of its satisfaction survey, “Haas is very unique because of the school and student body’s willingness to explore creative solutions to some of the world’s most challenging problems by not accepting the status quo. Haas students generally lack the typical B-school attitude found at other programs, but still carry the same degree of individual confidence. For example, the programs offered in clean energy and non-profit careers are best-in-class.”

LATEST UP-TO-DATE MBA RANKINGS

Poets&Quants (2013): 10
BusinessWeek (2012): 14
Forbes (2013): 14
Financial Times (2014): 11 (Global), 8 (U.S.)
The Economist (2013): 3 (Global), 3 (U.S.)
### HAAS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

**2013-2014 Tuition:** $77,096 (resident) / $82,190 (non-resident)

**Recommended Two-Year Budget:** $156,584 (resident) / $161,678 (non-resident)

#### CLASS OF 2015 PROFILE:
- **Average GMAT:** 714
- **GMAT Range (middle 80%):** 680-750
- **Average GPA:** 3.61
- **Acceptance Rate:** 13.9%*
- **Full-Time MBA Enrollment:** 252
- **International:** 37%
- **Female:** 29%
- **Minority:** 40%
- **Median Age:** 28
  *Estimate

#### WHERE HAAS’ CLASS OF 2013 WENT TO WORK:
- **Technology:** 33%
- **Consulting:** 24%
- **Financial Services:** 15%
- **Energy:** 11%
- **Pharma/Biotech/Healthcare:** 7%
- **Consumer Goods/Retail:** 4%
- **Nonprofits and Social Enterprise:** 3%
- **Real Estate:** 3%
- **Other:** 1%

#### CLASS OF 2013:
- **Median Base Salary:** $120,000
- **Median Signing Bonus:** $23,540
- **Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation:** 84%
- **Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later:** 96%
London Business School leads the pack, while INSEAD comes in second

BY JOHN A. BYRNE

For the third time in four years, London Business School won top prize in *Poets&Quants* ranking of the 50 best MBA programs outside the United States. INSEAD again came in second, while Switzerland’s IMD claimed third place. Two schools in Spain rounded out this year’s top five, with IESE Business School at the University of Navarra in Barcelona fourth and IE Business School in Madrid fifth.

Europe dominates the top 10 schools, with two from the United Kingdom, two from France, three from Spain, as well as one each from Switzerland and Italy. The only exception: No. 9 Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, proving once again that after the U.S., the best place to study business and management is in Europe.

London’s dominance at the top—with INSEAD nudging it aside only once in 2011—is testament to a school that continues to prove that MBA students do not have to go to the U.S. for a world-class business education. The latest LBS entering class of 409 students was chosen from more than 2,000 applicants. Nine out of 10 matriculants are from outside the United Kingdom, with 69 nationalities represented in the class. Each brings an average 5.5 years of work experience to the classroom, along with an average GMAT score of 695.
London’s graduating MBAs boast true global mobility. Some 53% of the class of 2012 found work abroad, yet 92% of the class secured employment within three months of graduation at salaries that were every bit as impressive as the MBAs at Harvard, Stanford, or any premier U.S. business school. Among the class’ major employers were McKinsey (hiring 36 LBS grads), Boston Consulting Group (31), Citicorp (12), Deutsche Bank (11), Bain & Co. (11), Amazon (5), and Google (4).

INSEAD’s latest class of 1,024 students entering its superb one-year MBA program is no less impressive. With an average GMAT score of 702, the students represent 84 nationalities and each boasts five years of work experience. McKinsey & Co. routinely hires more than 100 MBAs out of INSEAD’s class every year, many of them sponsored by the prestigious firm to attend the school.

Outside of the top-five schools, which merely reshuffled their order from last year, several B-schools made notable gains. The University of Bath’s School of Management jumped 15 places to a rank of 28th, the single biggest leap of all the MBA programs outside the U.S. Hong Kong University of Science and Technology rose eight places to finish ninth, and the University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management also gained a half dozen spots to achieve its highest rank ever in the Poets&Quants survey at 21st.

Several highly prominent international schools suffered setbacks. McGill University’s Desautels Faculty of Management School had the biggest dive, plunging 20 places to rank 31st. Durham Business School fell off the top 50 list entirely from a position of 38 last year. Double-digit drops also impacted EMLYON, IPADE, British Columbia’s Sauder School, and Manchester Business School.

The new Poets&Quants list of non-U.S. schools is a composite of four major MBA rankings published by Bloomberg BusinessWeek, The Economist, the Financial Times, and Forbes, all equally weighted. U.S. News does not rank international MBA programs. The ranking takes into account a wealth of quantitative and qualitative data captured in these major lists, including surveys of corporate recruiters, MBA graduates, and deans; faculty publication records; median GPA and GMAT scores of entering students; and the latest salary and employment statistics of alumni.

In 2013, London Business School boldly announced its first comprehensive fundraising campaign to raise £100 million over the next five years to support a major expansion. The money will be used to develop for the school an iconic London building, Old Marylebone Town Hall; double scholarship aid; and recruit world-class faculty, among other things. The Marylebone plans include the construction of an additional three-story building with six new lecture theaters, a library, 35 seminar rooms, offices, staff and faculty suites, a student lounge, broadcast facilities, and a new alumni center.

By blending these rankings via a system that takes into account each of their strengths as well as their flaws, we’ve come up with what is arguably the most authoritative ranking of MBA programs ever published.

In 2013, London Business School boldly announced its first comprehensive fundraising campaign to raise £100 million over the next five years to support a major expansion. The money will be used to develop for the school an iconic London building, Old Marylebone Town Hall; double scholarship aid; and recruit world-class faculty, among other things. The Marylebone plans include the construction of an additional three-story building with six new lecture theaters, a library, 35 seminar rooms, offices, staff and faculty suites, a student lounge, broadcast facilities, and a new alumni center.

Outside of the top-five schools, which merely reshuffled their order from last year, several B-schools made notable gains. The University of Bath’s School of Management jumped 15 places to a rank of 28th, the single biggest leap of all the MBA programs outside the U.S. Hong Kong University of Science and Technology rose eight places to finish ninth, and the University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management also gained a half dozen spots to achieve its highest rank ever in the Poets&Quants survey at 21st.

Several highly prominent international schools suffered setbacks. McGill University’s Desautels Faculty of Management School had the biggest dive, plunging 20 places to rank 31st. Durham Business School fell off the top 50 list entirely from a position of 38 last year. Double-digit drops also impacted EMLYON, IPADE, British Columbia’s Sauder School, and Manchester Business School.

The new Poets&Quants list of non-U.S. schools is a composite of four major MBA rankings published by Bloomberg BusinessWeek, The Economist, the Financial Times, and Forbes, all equally weighted. U.S. News does not rank international MBA programs. The ranking takes into account a wealth of quantitative and qualitative data captured in these major lists, including surveys of corporate recruiters, MBA graduates, and deans; faculty publication records; median GPA and GMAT scores of entering students; and the latest salary and employment statistics of alumni.

By blending these rankings via a system that takes into account each of their strengths as well as their flaws, we’ve come up with what is arguably the most authoritative ranking of MBA programs ever published. The combined list tends to eliminate anomalies and other statistical distortions that often occur in one ranking or another.

BusinessWeek, for example, ranks Canada’s Queen’s University the fourth best MBA program outside the U.S. But the school is completely snubbed by Forbes, the Financial Times, and The Economist, which don’t include the school in their rankings. The school’s exclusion from three of the four rankings doesn’t completely eliminate it from Poets&Quants’ list, but rather than fourth, it’s more appropriately rated 39th due to its failure to get on any other major radar screen. In any case, the Poets&Quants ranking measures the overall quality and reputation of flagship full-time MBA programs across multiple rankings, thereby mitigating their individual shortcomings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK &amp; SCHOOL</th>
<th>INDEX</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>Bloomberg Businessweek</th>
<th>Forbes</th>
<th>FT FINANCIAL TIMES</th>
<th>The Economist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. London Business School</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. INSEAD</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. IMD</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. IESE Business School</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. IE Business School</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ESADE Business School</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Oxford (Said)</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. HEC Paris</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Hong Kong UST Business School</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. SDA Bocconi</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. York University (Schulich)</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Cambridge (Judge)</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Warwick Business School</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Manchester Business School</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Cranfield School of Management</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. City University (Cass)</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Rotterdam School of Management</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. CEIBS</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Mannheim Business School</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. National University of Singapore</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. University of Toronto (Rotman)</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Lancaster University</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. University of Hong Kong</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. IIM–Ahmedabad</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Imperial College</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Melbourne Business School</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Nanyang Business School</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. University of Bath</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Western Ontario (Ivey)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Australian Graduate School of Mgt</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. McGill University (Desautels)</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. British Columbia (Sauder)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Strathclyde Business School</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. University College Dublin (Smurfit)</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. HEC Montreal</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RANK &amp; SCHOOL</td>
<td>INDEX</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Bloomberg Businessweek</td>
<td>Forbes</td>
<td>FT FINANCIAL TIMES</td>
<td>The Economist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. University of St. Gallen</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Vlerick Business School</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. EMLyon Business School</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Queen’s University</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Queensland Business School</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. ESMT European School</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. CUHK Business School</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Ipade</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Indian School of Business</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. S.P. Jain</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Macquarie Graduate School</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Sungkyunkwan University</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. EDHEC Business School</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. The Lisbon MBA</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Grenoble Graduate School</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you’re looking for a truly global MBA experience, London Business School should be high on your shortlist. First off, London is one of the world’s greatest cities, an international capital of both culture and business. Secondly, it’s a great jumping off point for nearly all of Europe. And third, the school attracts an annual incoming class of some 400 MBA students representing some 70 nationalities.

No matter where they hail from, most have either completed undergraduate degrees outside their home countries, accumulated significant work experience abroad, or traveled extensively around the world. From day one, they share a profound interest in the global economy. In fact, every London Business School MBA must achieve competency in one language.
other than English by graduation.

The full-time program can be completed in 15 months by taking fewer electives, or extended to 18 or 21 months. Most LBS MBA candidates opt for the full 21-month program largely because they like it so much. The program begins in late August each year with orientation and a leadership module, which runs through September. This is followed by three study periods: Autumn Term (October to December), Spring Term (January to March), and Summer Term (April to July).

Students learn chiefly through structured lectures and case discussions, sometimes alongside tutorials or workshops. Group work is also an essential part of all courses. In the first year, students develop core knowledge and skills and gain a thorough grounding in business frameworks and general management concepts. They attend lectures in groups of approximately 75 and work in study groups of six or seven. At the end of the first year, students can put their learning into practice through a range of options that include summer internships and consultancies or Entrepreneurship Summer School, which allows MBA candidates to pursue their own business ideas.

Students describe the school’s culture as diverse, driven, and collaborative. “Diversity is something that strikes you when you come to the school,” says **Orel Hashmatia, a 2013 Graduate of LBS**. “I wanted a diverse environment, and I think LBS answers for that more than any other top school. Coming from Israel, I didn’t want to go anywhere I would feel like an outsider. So diversity was a key factor for me. We work in study groups, and on one of the first days of school they match you up with your group. We had six people in ours, two women and four men. The other girl was from Namibia and used to work for McKinsey & Co. One of the guys was from the British army. The others came from Canada, Korea, and Portugal and had backgrounds in finance or consulting. This gives you a microcosm of how diverse the school is. For me, it was a great opportunity to learn from people with different life experiences.”

Despite the vast cultural differences among students, London fosters a highly collaborative environment. “You can always ask people for help, and you probably will never hear a no,” adds Hashmatia. “Whether it’s for career advice, starting a business or planning school events, people are always willing to roll up their sleeves and help each other. You don’t come to business school just to sit in a classroom and learn by listening to lectures. For me, the majority of the experience and the knowledge comes from my classmates and my friends. That’s the important thing about business school—that you can connect with this amazing network of future leaders.”

During the second year, students select between 10 and 12 electives from over 70 choices, which include science, technology, and real estate. As part of the MBA curriculum, students can spend a term at one of more than 30 partner schools worldwide.

There are some significant changes in store for London in upcoming years. Short on space for its faculty and students, LBS is in the midst of transforming Old Marylebone Town Hall in London into a new educational facility. The building will become an integral part of London Business School’s campus, creating a triangle of educational facilities between Sussex Place, the Taunton Centre, and Old Marylebone Town Hall.

The Town Hall will transform the school’s future, providing a dynamic space where people can come together to test, share, and apply new ideas and ways of thinking. The plans involve the construction of a three-story building, complete with six lecture theaters, a library, 35 seminar rooms, offices, staff and faculty suites, a student lounge, broadcast facilities, and a new alumni centre.

The administration is also in the midst of an ambitious fundraising campaign to raise $160 million over the next five years to attract more world-class faculty, double its scholarship offerings, invest in the latest technology, and develop an unrestricted fund in support of the school’s strategic priorities. The money and upcoming changes will keep LBS competitive with the very best business schools in the world.

When it comes to the job market, **London MBAs Do Extraordinarily Well**. For the 398 graduates in London’s Class of 2013, an increasing number of MBAs streamed into the corporate sector, which absorbed 43% of the students. About 29% ventured into consulting, significantly down from the peak of 36% only two years ago. The decline in finance was far more significant. Only 28% accepted jobs in the financial sector, down from a high of 46% in 2007 before the Great Recession wrecked havoc on Wall Street.
“The growth in the technology, media, and telecoms sectors demand top-quality MBA talent, and students’ interest in this sector is the main driver behind this [career trend], with Amazon and Google among our high-quality MBA employers,” said Fiona Sandford, executive director of careers and global business at London Business School.

Though the three largest employers of the Class of 2013 were all consulting firms—McKinsey (24), Boston Consulting Group (20), and Bain (13). A wide variety of corporate-sector companies scooped up MBAs from London, including Amazon (11), Google (7), Shell (6), American Express (5), Microsoft (5), British Petroleum (4), and Samsung (4).

All told, 96% of the Class of 2013 had at least one job offer three months after graduation, the highest job placement figure in six years for LBS. It is also a job offer percentage that bested Harvard (93%) and Stanford (94%) and trailed only four U.S. schools, including Wharton (97.8%) and Columbia (97%).

It’s an especially impressive placement rate because 55% of London’s graduates headed into employment outside the United Kingdom. The Class of 2013 went to work at organizations in 69 cities in 42 countries around the world. After the U.K. (where 45% took jobs), the most popular regions were Europe (17%), Asia (11%), Latin America (10%), and North America (10%).

RANKING ANALYSIS:
London Business School retained its No. 1 standing in Poets&Quants’ 2013 ranking of the top 50 non-U.S. MBA programs.

The most important ranking news for LBS came with the release of the 2012 Bloomberg BusinessWeek ranking of international schools. LBS moved into first place on the list, up from fifth place in 2010. The school leaped ahead of four rivals to steal the No. 1 spot from INSEAD, the French business school that had claimed first place for six of the 12 years that the magazine has been ranking international programs. LBS’s victory represents only the third changing of the guard at the top of BW’s international ranking and the first time ever that a U.K. school has topped the list. It’s the major reason why LBS moved into first place on Poets&Quants’ 2013 ranking.

The B-school also recovered lost ground in the Financial Times’ global MBA ranking, moving from fourth best in the world in 2013 to third this year. London had been on top of the FT list for three consecutive years until 2012, when it slipped three places to fourth. The decline, however, could be largely attributed to Europe’s economic troubles. “Average alumni salaries three years after graduation were lower in 2012 when compared with the previous year for 16 out of the 23 European schools listed. This compares with increases for 26 out of the 48 alumni groups from U.S.-based schools,” the FT reported.

The school slipped slightly in Forbes’ international survey, moving from first in 2011 to fourth in 2013. However, LBS retained its No. 3 rank in The Economist’s 2013 survey of non-U.S. B-schools, and improved its global status by moving from 12th in 2012 to 11th in 2013.

LATEST UP-TO-DATE MBA RANKINGS

Poets&Quants (2013): 1 (Non-U.S.)
Forbes (2013): 4 (International)
Financial Times (2014): 3 (Global), 1 (Non-U.S.)
The Economist (2013): 11 (Global), 3 (Non-U.S.)
LONDON BUSINESS SCHOOL

Tuition for Class Commencing in August 2014: $106,722
Recommended Budget: $181,594*

*Average expenses for food, accommodation, books and travel are based on 2007 school survey.

CLASS OF 2015 PROFILE:
Average GMAT: 695
GMAT Range: 600-790
Average GPA: N/A
Acceptance Rate: N/A
Full-Time Enrollment: 409
International: 89% (69 nationalities represented)
Female: 32%
Mean Age: 29

CLASS OF 2013:
Median Base Salary: $112,000
Median Signing Bonus: $26,282
Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation: N/A
Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later: 96%

WHERE LBS’ CLASS OF 2013 WENT TO WORK:

Consulting: 29%
Finance: 28%
Internet: 11%
Hi-Tech/Telecommunications: 9%
Energy and Utilities: 5%
Media/Entertainment: 3%
Consumer Products: 3%

Health Care/Pharmaceutical/
Biotech: 3%
Credit Cards: 2%
Diversified Industrials: 2%
Retail: 2%
Agribusiness: 1%
Metals/Mining: 1%
Other: 1%
INSEAD proudly calls itself “the business school for the world.” And at the school, that phrase is more than just a marketing slogan. With one of the most diverse collections of MBA students in the world, INSEAD delivers a unique global perspective on business in an intense and often breathless 10-month MBA program.

Ask Dean Ilian Mihov how INSEAD is differentiated from other elite business schools and he’ll pull out the global card every time. “No other school in the world is as global as INSEAD,” he insists. “I don’t want to brag about this thing, but I went on the website of the Financial Times and saw an interview there with Tom Robertson, the dean of Wharton. He was asked, ‘What is the big problem at Wharton?’ He said, ‘The biggest issue for us
is internationalization. We still cannot crack this nut.’ INSEAD is number one in this. If you try to think who is number two or three, there is nobody. There are other schools that have very diverse students and good programs. But with our dual campuses and integrated program between Singapore and Fontainebleau, INSEAD is unique.”

The school offers its accelerated MBA program on both campuses: in Fontainebleau, France, and Singapore. Fontainebleau is, obviously, very European—rather than standard student housing, many MBA candidates opt for a room in a chateaux. The campus is situated in the middle of a forest, but the cosmopolitan hub of Paris is only a 45-minute train ride away. The Singapore campus looks like any other skyscraper from the outside.

The programs run in parallel, and students have the opportunity to spend at least one eight-week period on another INSEAD campus: this includes an elective course at the B-school’s Abu Dhabi location and exchange programs with the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School, Northwestern University’s Kellogg School, and CEIBS.

Regardless of where they are, students are guaranteed to get a healthy dose of multiculturalism with nearly 90 different nationalities represented in the classroom. The MBA curriculum is designed to quickly and thoroughly prepare students for a career in international business over five eight-week periods that rush by in the blink of an eye.

The first few study periods are based on a structured series of 14 core courses. These courses cover all of the key management disciplines, as well as the environment in which business takes place. The second half of the program can be customized to each MBA candidate’s interests. By choosing 11 electives from a portfolio of more than 70 courses, students create a unique mix of topics to support their individual educational and professional goals. MBA students can pursue a generalist path toward management or concentrate on a specific area, such as finance or entrepreneurship.

Throughout the core curriculum, students work in study groups of five to six—these groups become a key part of the MBA experience. Once students begin their elective courses, groups are no longer predetermined. Teaching methods are largely at the discretion of the faculty member and range from case studies and role play to group projects and computer simulations.

“At INSEAD,” adds Dean Mihov, “we have people representing 89 nationalities from all over the world. But the most important thing about our diversity is that there is no dominant culture in the classroom. We have capped people from one nation to 10% to 12% of the intake. It makes people not feel they are a minority. It’s a key characteristic of the experience. When you talk to people who are not like you, these are the people who challenge you and make you a better person. So diversity is very important in the classroom.”

And because INSEAD students are often slightly older than MBA candidates at some of the best U.S. schools, they have slightly more to contribute. “Everyone’s going to say their classmates are intelligent,” says Mike Davis, a 2010 INSEAD grad. “But INSEAD MBAs have applied knowledge, and they’re humble about it.”

Mihov says INSEAD is almost like a cult. “We want to be very rigorous, and we want to keep the academic standards very high, but we want to be relevant. We want to translate this research in a way that our MBA students and executives can understand. It was a very teaching-oriented school, but even after we began focusing on academic research, the teaching culture persisted. Today we have many people who want to be both great researchers but also deliver very well in the classroom. This is something that all top schools should be striving to achieve. If you deliver to students the frontiers of knowledge, then they are really learning something.”

Insiders say that the school accepts about 31% of its 4,000 applicants in any given year—substantially more than the 6.8% acceptance rate at Stanford, or the 12% at Harvard. The average GMAT score for the latest entering class at INSEAD, 701, is lower than any Top 10 U.S. school and 31 points behind U.S. leader Stanford, whose average GMAT score is now 732. The size of the entering class is the largest of any of the big-brand schools: 1,024.

On the other hand, a majority of INSEAD’s prospective students apply only to the school and nowhere else. They prefer a one-year MBA program that is as truly global an experience as any MBA student can get. So the school’s yield—the percentage of admitted applicants who enroll—is as high as 75%, 10 points higher than Wharton’s 65.2% yield and 15 points lower than Harvard’s 90%.

On the job front, INSEAD grads are among the most wanted in the world, though the brand travels best in Europe. Some 94% of the latest graduating class had a job offer within three months, with 44% accepting positions in Europe and 29% taking jobs in Asia Pacific. About 9% of the class landed jobs in North America.
RANKING ANALYSIS:

Second place is the theme of INSEAD’s ranking season. The school held on to its No. 2 spot for the second year running in Poets&Quants’ 2013 ranking of the world’s best MBA programs outside the U.S. The self-proclaimed “business school for the world” was ranked first in 2011 but was topped by London Business School in 2012, which claimed the No. 1 spot again in 2013.

INSEAD’s slippage from first to second is largely due to Bloomberg BusinessWeek’s significantly improved ranking for London Business School. Even so, INSEAD actually did much better in the BW survey, which largely ranks schools on the basis of graduate and corporate recruiter satisfaction. INSEAD jumped three places to finish second in 2012, from fifth in 2010. As a Class of 2012 INSEAD MBA told BusinessWeek, “INSEAD is not just a business school experience, it is a life experience. The intensity of the program both academically and socially forges a very strong bond between classmates, and the dual campus structure and numerous opportunities for travel only serve to reinforce that.”

The school also preserved its No. 2 spot on both the Financial Times 2014 ranking of non-U.S. schools and Forbes’ 2013 international ranking. This feat is more impressive than it sounds given that Forbes consolidated one-year and two-year MBA programs in its newest ranking, meaning that INSEAD is now in the mix with two-year programs, such as London Business School, IESE, and HEC-Paris. However, INSEAD’s one-year program is less expensive than some of its rivals’ degree plans, giving it an advantage because Forbes ranks programs according to their return on investment.

But not every publication saw fit to keep INSEAD at the top of the list. The B-school was hit hardest by The Economist’s survey. The school fell three notches from seventh place among non-U.S. schools in 2012 to 10th in the publication’s 2013 ranking. It was a definite blow but one that was buoyed by the B-school’s stellar performance across the other publications.

LATEST UP-TO-DATE MBA RANKINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Rank 2013</th>
<th>Rank 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poets&amp;Quants (2013)</td>
<td>2 (Non-U.S.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BusinessWeek (2012)</td>
<td>2 (International)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forbes (2013)</td>
<td>2 (International)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Times (2014)</td>
<td>5 (Global), 2 (Non-U.S.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Economist (2013)</td>
<td>26 (Global), 10 (Non-U.S.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INSEAD

2014-2015 Tuition: $86,608 | Recommended Budget: $118,339*
*For Fontainebleau campus

CLASS OF 2015 PROFILE*:
Average GMAT: 701
GMAT Range: 610-780
Average GPA: N/A
Acceptance Rate: 30%
Full-Time Enrollment: 1024
International: 90 nationalities represented
Female: 32%
Minority: N/A
Mean Age: 29
*I4D and I4J classes combined

CLASS OF 2012:
Median Base Salary: $124,000
Median Signing Bonus: $22,000
Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation: N/A
Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later: 94%

WHERE INSEAD’S CLASS OF 2012 WENT TO WORK:
Consulting: 41%
Consumer/Luxury Goods: 10%
Finance: 14%
Hi-Tech/Telecommunications: 8%
Energy/Petroleum: 6%
Manufacturing: 5%
Health Care: 3%
Primary Industries: 3%

Public Sector/Social Impact: 3%
Media/Entertainment: 2%
Construction: 1%
Advertising/Publishing: 1%
Corporate Services: 1%
Transportation: 1%
Travel/Leisure Services: 1%
IMD is possibly the only top business school in the world where MBA students are treated to a sumptuous lunch every day for free. The reason? The school, located in Lausanne, on the shores of one of Switzerland’s most beautiful lakes, is an executive education powerhouse that caters to visiting execs. These elite businessmen and women are served top-notch cuisine while on the campus, which is roughly 40 minutes from Geneva.

Though IMD’s primary business is executive education, the school offers an intensive and intimate one-year MBA experience for just 90 students. It may well be one of the most thoughtfully crafted MBA programs for individuals available. The program—which focuses on leadership, entrepreneurship,
and social responsibility—starts in January and ends in December. During that time, students work directly with startups and global companies.

IMD’s “Real World, Real Learning” approach provides the foundation for the MBA program. Taught in English, IMD claims that its MBA covers the same amount of material as a traditional two-year program and incorporates unique leadership experiences, startup projects, network building, and intensive personal coaching. Just about every MBA here, in fact, talks up the strength of the leadership development program and how personalized it can be.

In fact, each student goes through therapy as part of IMD’s personal development. “The therapists try to analyze and understand what you’re going through,” says Ohad Goldberg, a 2010 graduate of the school. “These are weekly, one-on-one meetings that last an hour or an hour-and-a-half. I learned that seeing things through other people’s eyes is one of the biggest gifts one can have. I tried to look at situations from another perspective and to understand what makes other people do what they do—to understand things you’re feeling, not in a selfish way but in a situational way.”

The MBA curriculum opens with business fundamentals in core areas such as accounting, finance, marketing, and operations. Students are exposed to the functional areas of organizations and how they work together. The second half of the year is highly project based, allowing advanced application of the fundamentals to real leadership situations. Final grading is based on exams, class participation, and consulting projects.

Given the brevity of the program, it is intense. “The year is a sprint until June,” adds Goldberg. “Then, it becomes more of a marathon. May was totally incomprehensible. IMD MBAs are a group of more-than-your-average experienced MBAs in age and profiles. Faculty tend to assume, rightly so, that you can take it. You study six days a week until May. That same month, you have to deliver a startup project [and have exams].”

He describes the MBA experience at IMD in four words: Overwhelming. Challenging. Inspiring. Real. “IMD, rightfully so, goes strong on leadership skills,” adds Goldberg. “It’s quite challenging for people and puts them out of their comfort zone. It makes them deal with situations that I know happen on the outside. During the nine-week projects, you’ll feel that. It’s a lot about how you manage a team, how you manage within a team, and how you manage client and stakeholder expectations. This is a tremendously good thing.”

Students also say that close bonds are formed with IMD’s faculty; MBA candidates often forge personal relationships with professors that endure well beyond the 11-month program. That’s partly a result of the small class size, the compressed schedule, and the culture of the school.

And befitting its location, one student maintains that the “school runs like a Swiss watch” with “efficiency, precision, and effectiveness. The only way this can happen without any glitches is the professionalism, sensitivity, and excellent organization of the MBA office.”

The small size of IMD’s program also permits the school’s career services office to adopt a customized approach to each student’s job search. MBA candidates have a personal career coach who helps to match them with jobs that are ideal for their careers. In 2012, the latest year for which figures are available, the average starting salary for an IMD grad was $131,566, with 57% of the class receiving sign-on bonuses that averaged $32,894.

Roughly 60% of the class stayed in Europe, while 26% landed jobs in Asia. Only 8% of the class found jobs in the Americas, a category that includes Canada and Latin America. An impressive 99% of the class managed to change function, industry, or geography, while 71% changed two or more dimensions of their career. Some 34% changed all three dimensions.
RANKING ANALYSIS:
The 2013-2014 ranking year marked a number of key successes for IMD. The B-school rose two ranks in Poets&Quants’ composite list of the top 50 non-U.S. MBA programs, from fifth in 2012 to third in 2013.

The school made a notable gain in the Financial Times’ 2014 global ranking, jumping seven spots from 19th in 2013 to 12th in 2014. Among non-U.S. schools, IMD rose four spots, from eight in 2013 to fourth in 2014.

Forbes’ 2013 survey also invited cause for celebration. The publication kept the school in its No. 1 spot from 2011, despite consolidating one-year and two-year programs for its latest ranking.

However, not all of the results were positive. The school lost its second-place status among non-U.S. program on The Economist’s 2013 ranking, slipping down to fourth.

Globally, the school moved from 10th in 2012 to 13th in 2013.

IMD’s rise was also marred by a dip in Bloomberg BusinessWeek’s biennial ranking—the school fell from seventh to ninth in the publication’s most recent international survey in 2012. Despite these slips, the school remains one of the top non-U.S. MBA programs, as evidenced by its No. 3 spot on Poets&Quants’ 2013 ranking.
**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT**

**Tuition:** $68,705 | **Recommended Budget:** $138,556

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS OF 2014 PROFILE:</th>
<th>CLASS OF 2012:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average GMAT:</strong> 670</td>
<td><strong>Median Base Salary:</strong> $119,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GMAT Range (80%):</strong> 610-730</td>
<td><strong>Median Signing Bonus:</strong> $32,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average GPA:</strong> N/A</td>
<td><strong>Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation:</strong> N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptance Rate:</strong> N/A</td>
<td><strong>Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later:</strong> 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full-Time Enrollment:</strong> 90</td>
<td><strong>International:</strong> 96% (39 nationalities represented)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International:</strong> 96%</td>
<td><strong>Gender:</strong> Male 74% Female 26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female:</strong> 26%</td>
<td><strong>Minority:</strong> N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minority:</strong> N/A</td>
<td><strong>Mean Age:</strong> 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean Age:</strong> 31</td>
<td><strong>Where IMD’s Class of 2012 went to work:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Manufacturing:** 24% | **Energy:** 8% |
| **Consumer Goods:** 19% | **Entertainment/Travel:** 4% |
| **Consulting:** 16% | **Other:** 4% |
| **Healthcare:** 13% | **Financial Services:** 3% |
| **Technology:** 11% | |
IESE Business School at the University of Navarra is one of a handful of the very best business schools in Europe. The school’s MBA program in Barcelona consistently ranks among the best in the world, and graduates have high praise for the small and intimate MBA experience. The B-school’s open-door policy ensures that students form close working relationships with each other and faculty members over the course of the 19-month program.

Similar to all of the best non-U.S. MBA programs, this is a truly global MBA experience—85% of the students come from outside of Spain. Unlike many other MBAs in Europe, however, it is a 19-month program, with 30 exchange partners and four overseas modules in New York, San Paulo, Nairobi,
and Shanghai.

“We emphasize our global scope,” insists Jordi Canals, the long-time dean of the school. “Every single day, students from all over the world are working together in small and larger groups at IESE. They spend a lot of time together. If you do it at the right scale, it’s a unique advantage for our students. There are a few other schools that do this, including INSEAD. But my question for INSEAD is—can you really do it in 10 months?”

Classes at IESE employ the Harvard-originated case study method, which bases learning on actual management situations. Students and professors analyze and discuss hundreds of cases to devise and implement solutions to real business scenarios. The goal: to prepare students for significant leadership roles when they leave with their MBA.

As Canals points out, “The second thing we have an interest in is leadership. Leadership isn’t just soft skills. It’s about how you implement change. You need both an analytical education and you need to know how to work with people to make change possible. Everything you do in management you do with people. At some point in our life, we as human beings are going to be treated the way we treat others. People have families that are as good as your family. So we need to treat people with dignity and act always with integrity. If these things are important to you, then IESE is one of your choices.”

IESE is part of a university that is affiliated with Opus Dei, an institution that attracts the most devout followers of the Roman Catholic Church. But the school is open to all, regardless of religion or background. “It doesn’t matter if you are a Catholic or a Muslim,” says Dean Canals.

“We are not going to ask you about that and we don’t care about that. We have 30 different nationalities who work on campus in Barcelona. The purpose of the school is to create a learning context for entrepreneurs, senior executives, and MBA students where they can think about how they can have a deep, lasting impact on people, organizations, and society. They do that through professional excellence, integrity, and service.”

As noted earlier, MBA students can expand their horizons through the International Exchange Program in the second year with one of 30 partner B-schools. International elective options are also available in New York, Sao Paulo, Shanghai, and Nairobi. MBA candidates have the option of learning Spanish alongside their business studies and earning a bilingual degree in the language.

Entrepreneurship is a hallmark of the IESE MBA program. Students are introduced to entrepreneurship in the first year through a core curriculum course. A second-year course provides MBA candidates with the opportunity to develop business plans and present them to real-world investors for seed money. Roughly one-third of IESE MBAs create their own businesses within 10 years of graduation.

Spain’s lackluster economy hasn’t put a dent in the ability of IESE’s graduates to land some very lucrative post-MBA jobs. The top full-time recruiters at the school are similar to the leading hirers at the world’s best business schools: Amazon, Bain & Co., Citigroup, McKinsey & Co., Nomura, Siemens, and The Boston Consulting Group. In total, the school boasts 479 recruiting companies for its students and graduates.
RANKING ANALYSIS:

In Poets&Quants’ 2013 composite ranking of the best business schools outside the U.S., IESE finished fourth. The B-school fell one spot from third in 2012.

The school received a big boost from Bloomberg BusinessWeek’s most recent ranking in 2012, where it jumped four places to the eighth-best international MBA program, up from 12th in 2010. BW largely ranks schools on the basis of graduate and corporate recruiter satisfaction. IESE came in sixth in graduate satisfaction and 11th on the publication’s recruiter survey.

The school also gained ground in The Economist’s ranking, jumping a whopping four spots from ninth among MBA programs globally in 2012 to fifth in 2013. It also held on to first place among non-U.S. programs for the second year in a row.

The school held steady in the Financial Times’ 2014 survey as well, coming in seventh globally and third among non-U.S. programs in both 2013 and 2014.

Forbes dealt the school its biggest rankings blow. When Forbes, which ranks schools on the basis of return on investment, last did its last biennial ranking of global business schools in 2011, IESE finished third. In 2013, the school finished 14th.

However, the dive doesn’t appear to have tarnished the school’s appeal in the eyes of its MBAs. One IESE graduate summed up his MBA experience for BW: “IESE has been a great experience. The school has a very hands-on approach to teaching a comprehensive and integrated general management course. The small class size [210 people] yields a very friendly, informal, and close-knit atmosphere among students and professors. … Barcelona is a great city, and international students are able to learn Spanish.”

LATEST UP-TO-DATE MBA RANKINGS

Poets&Quants (2013):
4 (Non-U.S.)

BusinessWeek (2012):
8 (International)

Forbes (2013):
14 (International)

Financial Times (2014):
7 (Global), 3 (Non-U.S.)

The Economist (2013):
5 (Global), 1 (Non-U.S.)
IESE BUSINESS SCHOOL

Tuition for Class Commencing in Sept. 2014: $97,271 | Recommended Budget: $147,452

CLASS OF 2015 PROFILE:
- Average GMAT: 670
- GMAT Range: 550-780
- Average GPA: N/A
- Acceptance Rate: N/A
- Full-Time Enrollment: 280
- International: 80% (60 nationalities represented)
- Female: 26%
- Mean Age: 28

CLASS OF 2013:
- Median Base Salary: N/A
- Median Signing Bonus: N/A
- Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation: N/A
- Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later: 92%

WHERE IESE’S CLASS OF 2013 WENT TO WORK:
- Strategy/Management Consulting: 22%
- Finance: 18%
- Consumer Goods and retail: 13%
- Healthcare: 12%
- Other industries: 11%
- Energy & Utilities: 9%
- IT/Telecom: 7%
- E-commerce: 4%
- Other services: 4%
When it comes to business school rankings, the general belief is that they are pretty stable over time. The top schools rarely move in any big fashion, and it’s almost impossible to crack into a top 10 position. But that general rule doesn’t apply to Madrid’s highly innovative IE Business School.

Little more than a decade ago, in 2002, the school was ranked 35th on the Financial Times’ global MBA list and ninth in Europe behind Italy’s SDA Bocconi, Britain’s Oxford and Cambridge, and Spain’s IESE. Six years later, IE cracked the top 10 of the FT ranking, placing eighth worldwide and third in Europe behind only London Business School and INSEAD.

The rise can largely be attributed to a highly market-oriented
strategy that caught some rivals by surprise. IE doesn’t play by the normal rules of academia. The school’s leadership is entrepreneurial and innovative, pioneering degrees and programs that meet the demands of the marketplace—not of tenured professors who despise change. The school was among the first in the world, for example, to offer an online MBA program.

IE offers a full-time MBA in 13 months. The program, held on IE’s central-Madrid campus in Spain, targets postgraduates who have undertaken studies and professional activities in a wide range of fields yet seek to sharpen their management skills. Almost all of IE Business School’s classes employ the case method to drive the learning experience, though professors use other techniques, such as role-playing, multimedia applications, and online business simulations. Students are assigned to small working groups designed to maximize diversity in which they discuss and prepare cases and complete assignments.

The school’s LAUNCH module kicks-off the program and develops MBA candidates’ personal and interpersonal skills through workshops in areas such as leadership, awareness, understanding, networking, communications, and the humanities. This is followed by the Core Period in which courses on quantitative analysis, economics, marketing, accounting, and organizational behavior lay the foundation for the rest of the program.

The IE MBA also allows students to personalize their programs through a variety of international activities and coursework. The B-school offers exchange programs; a wide-ranging selection of elective options; entrepreneurial projects; dual degree opportunities with Yale, Tufts, and MIT; and an international partnership with Wharton.

IE Business School was founded by entrepreneurs, and so the entrepreneurial vein runs deep. Business creation is seen as an engine for growth, value generation, employment, and social well-being. Around 10% of IE MBAs set up new ventures when they graduate. To facilitate this, the school has a wide range of modules and processes, including the Venture Lab, which supports business plan development and enables participants to pitch their ideas to business angels and venture capitalists.
RANKING ANALYSIS:

As noted earlier, IE has managed to do what very few business schools have done: crack into the top 10 of a widely watched global MBA ranking.

Despite those impressive gains, the school lost some ground in the latest round of rankings. Most notably, the school plummeted 28 spots in The Economist’s world-wide ranking of full-time MBA programs, from 22nd in 2012 to 50th in 2013. The school ranked eighth in the publication’s survey of non-U.S. schools in 2012 and 20th in 2013.

The slide didn’t stop there, and IE fell two spots in the Financial Times’ 2014 ranking, from 11th in 2013 to 13th this year. Forbes also pushed the school down two spots from third in its last ranking of international programs in 2011 to fifth in 2013. It should, however, be noted that the publication combined one- and two-year programs for the 2013 survey.

Better news came out of BusinessWeek’s biennial ranking in 2012. IE maintained its third-place finish from the last ranking in 2010. Despite the fluctuations, Poets&Quants’ composite ranking for the school is revealing. When you combine all of the most influential rankings in the world, IE still comes out very high—fifth among schools outside the U.S.

As one Class of 2012 graduate told BW on the magazine’s survey, “IE Business School is unique not only because it’s a global Top 10 school, but the students, alumni, and faculty are down-to-earth, interesting, and genuinely nice people. The personality of IE is what really drew me to their MBA program over the others I was considering. I also like the entrepreneurial spirit at IE. My experiences there taught me how to solve problems creatively, a skill that is useful both in a big-firm setting and in small-firm, startup business environments.”

LATEST UP-TO-DATE MBA RANKINGS

Poets&Quants (2013): 5 (Non-U.S.)


Forbes (2013): 5 (International)


The Economist (2013): 50 (Global), 20 (Non-U.S.)
IE BUSINESS SCHOOL

Tuition: $83,000 | Recommended Budget: $110,600

CLASS OF 2013 PROFILE:
Average GMAT: 685
GMAT Range: N/A
Average GPA: N/A
Acceptance Rate: N/A
Full-Time Enrollment: 580
International: 91%
Female: 28%
Mean Age: 29

CLASS OF 2012-2013:
Median Base Salary: $98,200
Median Signing Bonus: N/A
Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers at Graduation: N/A
Percentage of MBAs with Job Offers Three Months Later: 91%

WHERE IE’S CLASS OF 2012-2013 WENT TO WORK:
Finance/Accounting: 19%
Consulting: 17%
Consumer Goods: 15%
IT/Telecom: 13%
Others: 13%
Pharma/Healthcare/Biotech: 7%
Manufacturing: 6%
Real Estate/Construction/Infrastructure: 3%
Petroleum/Energy: 3%
Media/Entertainment: 2%
Nonprofit/Int. Org.: 1%
Govt./Public Administration: 1%
relax.

taking the fear out of admissions since 1997

FORSTER-THOMAS
admissions experts free consultation 98% interview with top 5 choice
www.forsterthomas.com/mba (212)-741-9090 www.thembaysterycheck.com
Just six months ago, The Wall Street Journal provocatively asked “What’s Wrong With Wharton?”

Just six months ago, The Wall Street Journal provocatively asked, “What’s wrong with Wharton?”

The answer is absolutely nothing, according to U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT’S NEW RANKING of the best MBA programs in the U.S., published on March 11.

For the first time ever, Wharton muscled its way into a tie for first place with Harvard Business School and Stanford University’s Graduate School of Business. It’s the highest rank Wharton has ever achieved in the U.S. News survey. Throughout the survey’s history, the school has finished as high as second place and as low as fifth; last year, it was third.

Nonetheless, just last September, the Journal wrote a negative article on the highly prominent business school, quoting admission consultants who claimed it has lost momentum and stature. But a record-high average GMAT score of 725–just two points shy of HBS–and stellar compensation and placement stats helped Wharton improve its standing in the U.S. News ranking.

Last year, Wharton MBAs earned an average salary and bonus of $141,243, beating every other surveyed school—including Harvard ($138,346) and Stanford ($137,525). The compensation numbers Wharton reported to U.S. News are especially surprising because they represent something of a reversal of the normal pecking order for MBA pay. In 2012, for example, HBS grads’ average salary and bonus was $142,501, while Stanford MBAs landed salary and bonus packages of $140,459. Wharton trailed both schools, as did MIT Sloan and Dartmouth Tuck, with a $138,302 average.
Moreover, this time around, a slightly higher percentage of Wharton MBAs was employed at graduation and three months later. Some 93.4% of Wharton’s MBAs had jobs 90 days after commencement. It’s the highest percentage of any Top 10 school; at Stanford and Harvard, those percentages were 89.7% and 89.4%, respectively. Those tiny fractions add up in a ranking, allowing Wharton to boast its best U.S. News finish ever. Pay and placement rates account for 35% of U.S. News’ ranking.

VANDERBILT, NOTRE DAME & MICHIGAN TOP 25 WINNERS

Among the top 25 business schools, Vanderbilt University’s Owen School of Business scored the most significant ranking improvement. The school jumped five places to tie for 25th place with the University of Washington’s Foster School. Notre Dame University’s Mendoza School also rose four places to climb into the top 25, placing 23rd. The University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business, which decreased its incoming class size by 47 students to improve its admission stats, climbed three places to 11th place, earning a tie with the University of Virginia’s Darden School.

Notably, Ross brought its acceptance rate to 33.7%, down from an unusually high 40.6% a year earlier. The school’s admit rate had ballooned as a result of a decision to end co-signer loans for international students in the middle of its admissions cycle. Ross expected the decision to cause a greater number of international admits to turn down their acceptances, so it accepted a greater percentage of prospective students to offset a decline in yield (the percentage of accepted applicants who enroll at a school). Ross also managed a one-point increase in its average GMAT score to 704.

For every school that went up in the rankings, there was at least another that lost ground. Duke University’s Fuqua School of Business slipped three places to finish 14th, Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management dropped two places to rank sixth, and UCLA’s Anderson School slid two spots to place 16th (see WINNERS & LOSERS IN THE 2014 U.S. NEWS MBA RANKING).

It’s easy to see just how tightly many schools are clustered by looking at the number of MBA programs tied with others for the same rank. In the top 50, some 32 out of the 50 schools have the exact same rank of at least one other school. Half a dozen schools are tied for 27th place: Arizona State, Brigham Young, Georgia Tech, Ohio State,
Southern California, and Wisconsin. Even worse, eight different schools are tied for a rank of 65th.

**HOW U.S. NEWS RANKS FULL-TIME MBA PROGRAMS**

As is typical of most rankings, the biggest tumbles and gains occur further down the list, where very slim and often statistically meaningless separations among the schools exist. The University of Minnesota’s Carlson School plunged 10 places to a rank of 33, even though its underlying index score fell by only a single point: to 68 from 69 a year ago. The business school at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign jumped 12 places to finish 35th from 47th in 2013, while Temple University’s Fox School in Philadelphia climbed ten spots to rank 48.

Like all rankings of business schools, the U.S. News list often engenders much controversy and debate. But it is among the most influential and most followed of several prominent rankings. The magazine only ranks U.S.-based schools, unlike BusinessWeek, the Financial Times, or The Economist, which publish global rankings, either combined or separately. (One other note: As a marketing ploy, U.S. News claims this is a 2015 ranking to give it greater shelf life. It is based on 2013 data and released in 2014, which is why we label it a 2014 ranking.)

**U.S. News’ methodology takes into account a wealth of proprietary and school-supplied data to crank out its annual ranking of the best business schools. The magazine does its own survey of B-school deans and MBA directors (25% of the score). This year, U.S. News said about 42% of those surveyed responded, but it did not reveal how many deans were actually surveyed or how many replied. It also does its own survey of corporate recruiters (accounting for 15% of the overall ranking and for which 18% of those surveyed responded); starting salaries and bonuses (14%); employment rates at and three months after graduation (7% to 14%, respectively); student GMAT and GRE scores (about 16%); undergraduate GPAs (about 8%), and the percentage of applicants who are accepted to a school (a little over 1%). This is the second year U.S. News included GRE scores in its ranking methodology.

This year, U.S. News assigned numerical ranks to 104 schools, ending the list with No. 104 North Arizona University’s Franke College of Business in Flagstaff.

---

**PROS:**
- Highlights school reputation and student caliber, using a credible range of quality metrics
- Stable (low volatility) and balanced in criteria
- Presents data and scores along with rank; allows ties; with visible clustering

**CONS:**
- Lacks input from students
- Relies on schools to report data faithfully without audits
- Salaries not adjusted for cost of living
- Recruiter survey flawed because surveys go to alumni who recruit at schools
- Peer assessment arguably reflects historical reputation more than current condition
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 RANK &amp; SCHOOL</th>
<th>INDEX SCORE</th>
<th>2013 RANKING</th>
<th>2013 INDEX SCORE</th>
<th>RANKING CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Harvard Business School</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Stanford GSB</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. UPenn (Wharton)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Chicago (Booth)</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. MIT (Sloan)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Northwestern (Kellogg)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. UC-Berkeley (Haas)</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Columbia Business School</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Dartmouth (Tuck)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. New York (Stern)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Michigan (Ross)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Virginia (Darden)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Yale School of Management</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Duke (Fuqua)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Texas-Austin (McCombs)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. UCLA (Anderson)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Cornell (Johnson)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Carnegie Mellon (Tepper)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. North Carolina (Kenan-Flagler)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Emory (Goizueta)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Indiana (Kelley)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Washington Univ. (Olin)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Georgetown (McDonough)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Notre Dame (Mendoza)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Univ. of Washington (Foster)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. News & World Report 2014 MBA ranking
If you want a ranking that best combines all the top business schools in the world on one list, then The Financial Times’ annual global MBA ranking is your best bet. Just about everyone agrees that the British newspaper’s methodology favors schools outside the U.S., but at least you get a view of how Harvard, Stanford, Wharton and the rest of the best MBA programs in the U.S. compare against their European and Asian competitors.

Harvard Business School topped the Financial Times’ 2014 global MBA ranking for the second year in a row and for the fifth time since the FT began ranking full-time MBA programs in 1999. Stanford Graduate School of Business held on to its second-place finish of the previous year, but Wharton slipped from its third-place perch to fourth, replaced by London Business School. Columbia Business School and INSEAD, with its two full-time MBA campuses in France and Singapore, shared fifth place.

The bigger news in the ranking, published in late January of 2014, had to do with other prominent U.S. schools. Yale University’s School of Management jumped four places to tenth in the world, its first appearance among the top 10 in seven years. Only two years ago, the Financial Times had ranked Yale 20th in the world. Yet, curiously, the school’s weighted salaries for alumni fell to $150,880 from $159,370 a year earlier and the average increase over pre-MBA pay also dropped to 114% from 118% in 2013.

The University of Michigan’s Ross School rose seven places to finish 23rd. The University of Virginia’s Darden School rose eight places to finish 27th, while the Kenan-Flagler Business School at the University of North Carolina soared a dozen places to finish 32nd.
**U.S. SCHOOLS HAD A STRONG YEAR ON THIS YEAR’S LIST**

The FT said that the University of Minnesota’s Carlson School, removed from its ranking last year when the school declined to share data on students due to state privacy laws, was back in the ranking, finishing 54th. When Carlson was last included in 2012, the school ranked 72nd. The newspaper added that the highest new entrant on the list is the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore at a rank of 68. IMD also gained seven places to finish 12th from 19th a year earlier.

In general, U.S. schools seemed to do especially well this year on the global list. Many U.S. full-time MBA programs gained two or three places, with the University of Washington’s Foster School and Boston University leaping 20 places each—the largest single gains among the Top 100 ranked schools (see WINNERS & LOSERS IN THE 2014 FINANCIAL TIMES MBA RANKING). On the other hand, many U.K. schools seemed to suffer setbacks. Manchester Business School plunged 14 places to a rank of 43, while Cranfield fell eight places to 46th and Imperial slipped seven spots to 49th.

All five Canadian business schools on the FT list fared less well, declining on average ten places each from their previous perches in the ranking. York University’s Schulich School plunged 14 places to a rank of 66th, while the University of British Columbia’s Sauder School fell 15 spots to finish 72nd. The University of Alberta School of Business, in 100th place last year, fell completely out of the list this year. The highest ranked Canadian school, the University of Toronto’s Rotman School, finished just outside the Top 50 with a rank of 51, down five places, effectively outperforming all its Canadian rivals. A statistician for the newspaper attributed the decline to comparatively lower salaries reported by alumni.

**MBAS FROM FIVE U.S. SCHOOLS DOMINATED WORLD’S HIGHEST ALUMNI SALARIES**

The world’s highest alumni salaries—three years after graduation and calculated by the FT based on alumni surveys—belonged to Stanford MBAs: $184,566. Harvard Business School

---

**PROS:**
- Global in scope
- Allows for ties in rank
- Salaries adjusted for industry sectors
- Counters volatility: 56 percent of survey involves weighted “memory” with previous years: 50 percent current year, 25 percent for each of two previous surveys
- Conducts periodic audits of school-reported data

**CONS:**
- Does not provide index scores; as a result, clustering and gaps are hidden from view
- Salaries not adjusted for cost of living: salaries in Europe and Middle East significantly higher than U.S. salaries in recent years
- Salaries are adjusted for purchasing power parity which tends to artificially inflate the pay of graduates in emerging economies where poverty is significant
- Ignores fact that some foreign MBA programs are closer in class profile to what in the U.S. would be an executive MBA program; not apples to apples
- International bias: 20% of methodology favors criteria at which non-U.S. schools will automatically excel (In 2001 only 19% of the top-25 schools were international, compared with 48% in 2012)
- Criteria oddly chosen: gender and citizenship diversity, number of doctoral students produced, are weighted heavily for survey meant to address quality of MBA program
- Uses its own MBA rankings to determine prestige of doctoral student placement; biased
and Wharton grads followed with $178,300 and $170,472, respectively. Two other U.S. schools, Columbia and Kellogg, rounded out the top five, with Columbia alumni three years out earning an average $164,180 and Kellogg MBAs at $157,719.

But it was the MBA programs in Asia that delivered the largest increases over pre-MBA salary levels. China’s Shanghai Jiao Tong University’s three-year-out alumni reported chart-topping increases that averaged 166% over what they had earned before getting their degrees. They were followed by Fudan University (163%), CEIBs (156%), and Peking University (151%).

The U.S. school delivering the biggest salary boost? The University of Pittsburgh’s Katz School where alums said they received a 132% rise. Stanford alumni doubled their pre-MBA pay (100%), while Harvard alumni did slightly better at 113%. Still, the surveyed alumni began and ended their MBA studies during one of the worst recessions in history. Yet, as a whole they were able to double their pre-MBA salaries within three years of graduation and at many schools do even better than 100%. Roughly 85% of the respondents left annual salaries averaging $64,000 when they entered an MBA program five years ago. Three years after graduation, the FT said, the average alumnus is a 33-year-old senior manager or higher on a salary of $127,000.

The Financial Times ranking is arguably the most consulted global list of full-time MBA programs, largely because U.S. News does not rank schools outside the U.S. and BusinessWeek separates U.S. and non-U.S. schools in different rankings. But there are significant flaws in the methodology the FT uses to rank programs, including the use of far too many metrics–20 in all–that include measures that have nothing to do with the quality of a school’s MBA offering. It’s also widely acknowledged to favor non-U.S. business schools.

A METHODOLOGY THAT IS NOT WITHOUT ITS FLAWS

The single most important factor in the ranking is compensation, which accounts for 43% of the total weight. What the FT terms “weighted salary”—average base salary three years after graduation—accounts for 20% of the methodology. These numbers are adjusted—converted to U.S. dollars according to purchasing power parity (PPP)—and varied between industry sectors—in ways that can severely distort the actual results. For example, according to this year’s ranking data, the alumni of the Indian Institute of Management at Ahmedabad earn $157,459 in annual base salary. That number is vastly inflated due to the PPP adjustment which gives the school a major boost in the FT’s ranking. IIM reported that last year’s graduates who remained in India averaged only $21,154 in salary—a far cry from the FT calculation.

The average difference between pre-MBA salary and current salary accounts for another 20%. Then, the FT makes a “value for money” calculation using current salary, course length, fees and other costs, including lost income while an MBA student. That measurement is given a 3% weight in the ranking.

The remaining 17 metrics have varying weights from as little as 1% for the number of extra languages required on completion of the MBA to as much as 10% for academic research published by a school’s professors in 45 journals in the past two years and ten months. Many of these other metrics would matter little if at all to MBA applicants, including the 5% weight given to the number of doctoral grades from each school in the past three years.

SCHOOLS TRUMPET THEIR FT RANKINGS ON A REGULAR BASIS

Nonetheless, the FT ranking carries considerable clout, magnified largely by the marketing efforts of business schools that trumpet their progress on the list. When it comes to bragging rights, this year’s list gives many individual schools plenty to promote. Schools tend to rank themselves not by the overall numerical number assigned to them by the FT, but by breaking the list down by region or other categories to make themselves look better than their overall ranks would suggest.

For example, although the University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management was placed 51st in the world, it can rightfully claim that it is the highest ranked school in Canada by the FT. The same is true of the highest ranked school in Asia: Hong Kong UST Business School, which came in at 14th worldwide. Or the highest rated school in India: The Indian Institute of Management at Ahmedabad, which retained its status as the best in India, though it fell four places to a rank of 30.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 RANK &amp; SCHOOL</th>
<th>2013 RANK</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
<th>WEIGHTED SALARY</th>
<th>INCREASE IN PAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Harvard Business School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$178,300</td>
<td>113%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Stanford</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$184,566</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. London Business School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$156,533</td>
<td>107%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Penn (Wharton)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>$170,472</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Columbia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$164,181</td>
<td>116%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. INSEAD</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$148,143</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Iese</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$143,168</td>
<td>125%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. MIT (Sloan)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$157,262</td>
<td>101%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Chicago (Booth)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$156,004</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Yale</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>$150,880</td>
<td>114%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. UC-Berkeley (Haas)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$149,487</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. IMD</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>$142,446</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. IE Business School</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>$146,933</td>
<td>112%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Hong Kong UST</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>$125,060</td>
<td>139%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Northwestern (Kellogg)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>$157,719</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Cambridge (Judge)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$144,350</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Duke (Fuqua)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$141,772</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. New York (Stern)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>$140,662</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. CEIBS</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>$127,117</td>
<td>156%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Dartmouth (Tuck)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>$150,754</td>
<td>101%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. HEC Paris</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$120,016</td>
<td>104%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. ESADE</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$120,718</td>
<td>120%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Oxford (Said)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$133,315</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Michigan (Ross)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>$136,828</td>
<td>107%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Warwick</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>$119,121</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 2014 Financial Times Global MBA Ranking*
For the fourth consecutive time, the University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business hit the rankings jackpot, retaining its number-one title for having the best full-time MBA program in the U.S., according to the 2012 ranking by Bloomberg BusinessWeek. (It’s next updated list is due before the end of 2014).

Following Chicago Booth is a familiar cast of elite business schools. Harvard Business School retained its No. 2 rank from 2010 in the biennial MBA sweepstakes by BusinessWeek. The University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School was No. 3 again, while Stanford’s Graduate School of Business and Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management played musical chairs for the No. 4 and No. 5 positions.

The magazine’s biennial 2012 ranking, published in November of 2012, contains many surprises, however. The Johnson Graduate School at Cornell University, for example, jumped six places to rank seventh from 13th in 2010. Carnegie Mellon’s Tepper School rose four spots to 11th from 15th, and Indiana University’s Kelley School of Business also saw a four-place gain to rank 15th from 19th. The University of Texas’ McCombs School rose six places to finish 19th from 25th in 2010. A methodology change also resulted in some other big shifts, including Southern Methodist’s fall from No. 12 to No. 29.

The 2012 ranking was also revised nearly a year later by BusinessWeek due to an embarrassing error. The screw-up resulted in some especially dramatic changes in the intellectual capital component of the ranking given to some schools. (See far right column in the table below). Yale University’s School of Management, for example, zoomed up eight places to 9th from an inaccurate ranking of 17th. The University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business plunged to 11th from fifth, even though it maintained its No. 1 overall rank. Harvard Business School dropped 10 places to
19th from ninth. Rice University’s Jones School climbed to 21st from 27th. And Notre Dame moved up six places to 31st from 37th.

All told, BusinessWeek admitted that “miscalculated intellectual capital scores” had been computed for 40 American business schools and 10 international schools. The mistake had less of an impact on the overall rankings, which more heavily weighs surveys from MBA graduates and corporate recruiters. BusinessWeek said that only two schools had their overall position changed by two positions—the University of Minnesota’s Carlson School and Rice University’s Jones Graduate School of Business—while a dozen other schools suffered a one position change in their overall rank.

In a separate ranking of the best MBA programs at non-U.S. business schools, BusinessWeek ranked London Business School No. 1, moving aside INSEAD, which fell to second place. IE Business School in Spain was third, followed by Queen’s College in Canada and Oxford University’s Said School in fifth. For Oxford, the rank of fifth represented an 11-place climb from 2010, when it was ranked 16th. In an online chat, editor Geoff Gloeckler explained the reason for Oxford’s big move forward.

“Oxford has seen steady improvement in their student satisfaction score over the past three rankings cycles,” he said. “Also, the school’s employer score jumped quite a bit after a less-than-stellar 2010. Oxford is one of only three schools in the ranking that finished in the Top 10 of all three rankings categories. The other two schools are LBS and INSEAD.” (See LONDON TOPS BW’S NON-U.S. SCHOOL RANKING).

COLUMBIA AND HAAS LOSE GROUND IN BUSINESSWEEK’S NEW RANKING

The losers? Columbia Business School and UC-Berkeley’s Haas School of Business both fell by five places to 14th from 9th and 13th from 8th, respectively. “Columbia’s drop was mostly due to student satisfaction,” Gloeckler said. “In 2010, they were 10th in the student rank, this year they fell to 20th. A lot of the student complaints were about the core curriculum, which is going to be changed starting next year. Columbia did move up one spot in the employer rank, though.”

In fact, it’s the worst showing by Columbia in the BusinessWeek survey since it began in 1988 when the magazine ranked the school 14th. Some MBA students are pointing a finger at Dean Glenn Hubbard who had been former Governor Romney’s economic advisor during his losing Presidential campaign. He had been embarrassed and ridiculed in the Academy Award-winning documentary Inside Job, something that hardly lent him credibility as a leader of the institution. Columbia’s fall is largely due to a ten-point drop in the school’s student satisfaction portion of the BusinessWeek analysis to a lowly 20 from 10 two years ago (See WINNERS & LOSERS IN THE 2012 BW RANKING).

The BusinessWeek ranking, the first regularly
published MBA ranking and often considered the most influential in the U.S., is based on three core measurements: a student satisfaction poll, an MBA recruiter poll, and a measure of a school’s intellectual capital. Polls of students and recruiters are each given a weight of 45% in the overall methodology, while the remaining 10% comes from the magazine’s measurement of published articles by a school’s professors in key academic and practitioner journals. BusinessWeek said it received 10,439 responses for a response rate of 56% on its student Web-based survey. The magazine also surveyed 566 corporate recruiters and received 206 responses for a response rate of 36%.

The BusinessWeek ranking is like no other. Most other rankings include such things as average GMATs, grade point averages, starting salaries, and percentage of graduates employed at graduation and three months later. Instead, the BW listing is the closest one can get to a “customer satisfaction” ranking.

LIKE OTHER RANKINGS, THIS ONE IS HARDLY FLAWLESS

Like any other ranking of business schools, it is not flawless. Though BusinessWeek employs statisticians to comb through the data to verify its integrity, students come to each of these schools with very different expectations that can result in significantly different grades they award their institutions. There is also concern of widespread cheerleading by students who want to push their schools ahead in the rankings so their degrees have more prestige. These issues alone in all probability have kept Harvard and Stanford from ever placing first in the BusinessWeek survey.

Those students come to campus with high expectations and are less likely to care about how a ranking impacts the status of their degree. So they are prone to be more demanding and more honest in their answers to BusinessWeek’s questions. They graduate with the highest starting pay packages and know that a Harvard or Stanford MBA can pretty much open any door in the world.

It’s also helpful to realize that in many cases, BusinessWeek is pretty much splitting hairs by giving a specific numerical rank to a school’s MBA program. Because the magazine publishes the underlying index scores used to assign a given rank to a school, you know that in many cases the difference between a school ranked 26 and 27 is statistically meaningless.

In the 2012 survey, for example, Texas A&M Mays School has an index score of 69.63 which is used by BusinessWeek to give the school a rank of 26. The 27th school, Ohio State University, has an index score that is only .05 lower at 69.58. But it gets even sillier: the University of Southern California’s Marshall School is ranked 27th with an index score of 69.52, while Southern Methodist University’s Cox School is ranked 28th with an index score of 69.46. The upshot: all four of these schools have different actual ranks but their index scores separate them by a tiny fraction of a point.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012 RANK &amp; SCHOOL</th>
<th>INDEX SCORE</th>
<th>2010 RANKING</th>
<th>MBA SATISFACTION</th>
<th>RECRUITER SATISFACTION</th>
<th>INTELLECTUAL CAP RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Chicago (Booth)</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Harvard</td>
<td>97.29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. UPenn (Wharton)</td>
<td>97.21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Stanford GSB</td>
<td>95.99</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Northwestern (Kellogg)</td>
<td>94.22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Duke (Fuqua)</td>
<td>93.59</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cornell (Johnson)</td>
<td>93.50</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Michigan (Ross)</td>
<td>92.65</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. MIT (Sloan)</td>
<td>91.01</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Virginia (Darden)</td>
<td>90.20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Carnegie Mellon (Tepper)</td>
<td>88.71</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Dartmouth (Tuck)</td>
<td>88.67</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Columbia</td>
<td>88.09</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. UC-Berkeley (Haas)</td>
<td>87.51</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Indiana (Kelley)</td>
<td>87.07</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. New York (Stern)</td>
<td>85.60</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. UNC (Kenan-Flagler)</td>
<td>80.48</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. UCLA (Anderson)</td>
<td>79.63</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Texas-Austin (McCombs)</td>
<td>78.78</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Notre Dame (Mendoza)</td>
<td>78.15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Yale</td>
<td>75.65</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Emory (Goizueta)</td>
<td>72.86</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Georgia Tech (Scheller)</td>
<td>72.24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Maryland (Smith)</td>
<td>71.80</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Vanderbilt (Owen)</td>
<td>69.83</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bloomberg BusinessWeek
Every two years, *Forbes* magazine attempts to answer the most common question people have about the MBA degree: Is it worth it? Of the five most influential MBA rankings in the world, *Forbes* is the only one to base its entire methodology on one simple measure: return on investment. The magazine surveys alumni five years out of school and asks them what they’re currently making on the job. *Forbes* then compares alumni income at each school to MBAs’ opportunity costs—two years of foregone compensation, tuition and required fees. It calculates a payback period for the degree to earn, and comes up with the ROI.

The actual ranking is based on the net cumulative amount alums of a school have earned after five years by getting their MBA degrees versus staying in their pre-MBA careers. The magazine adjusts the median five-year MBA gain for cost-of-living expenses and discounts gains using a rate tied to money market yields. It also reduces tuition to account for students who pay in-state rates and for the non-repayable financial aid that schools dole out. This year *Forbes* said it surveyed roughly 17,000 alumni from 100 schools. About 27% of the alums responded.

The latest results?

For only the second time in 14 years, Stanford University’s Graduate School of Business nudged out Harvard Business School and other rivals to become *Forbes*’ highest-ranked business school. **THE BIENNIAL FORBES MBA RANKING**, published in October of 2013, shows the University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business in second place, with Harvard dropping to third from first in 2011.

Wharton, in fourth place this year, again trails Chicago Booth, which is ahead of Wharton in the *Forbes* ranking for the third consecutive time. The last *Forbes* survey in which Wharton topped Chicago was 2007, when Wharton was fifth and Booth was
seventh. Rounding out this year’s top five is No. 5 Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management, up two spots from 2011. Kellogg’s top-five placement is its best showing ever in *Forbes*’ ranking, which for many years placed the school ninth or tenth.

*Forbes* said the median salary today for a Stanford MBA in the Class of 2008, a group of students who graduated just months before the Great Recession hit—is a chart-topping $221,000 a year. Those graduates entered the MBA program at Stanford in 2006 with pre-MBA salaries of $80,000. Median salary for both Harvard Business School and Wharton MBAs is just a bit lower at $205,000, while pre-MBA pay was also $80,000. And at No. 2 Chicago Booth, the median salary is $200,000 in 2008, though pre-MBA pay for Boothies was $76,000.

In the eight different versions of *Forbes*’ business school rankings since 2000, Harvard Business School has topped the return-on-investment list four times (1999, 2001, 2003, 2011), Dartmouth College’s Tuck School of Business did it twice (2005 and 2007), and Stanford captured the ROI crown twice, in 2009 and this year.

*Forbes*, which ranks international schools separately by one-year and two-year MBA programs, reported that IMD again edged out INSEAD in the one-year category. Those two schools were followed by No. 3 SDA Bocconi in Italy, No. 4 IE Business School in Spain, and No. 5 Oxford in Britain. London Business School was another repeat winner, taking first place again in the two-year international category, with the National University of Singapore second (see IMD NAMED TOP INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS SCHOOL).

So at the end of the day, is the degree worth it? After crunching all the numbers, *Forbes* concludes that a top MBA is pretty much a no-brainer.

“Students at a our top-10 U.S. schools entered their programs in the fall of 2006 with an average salary of $72,000,” according to *Forbes*. “Five years after getting their degrees, they were banking $185,000 on average. Fewer investment banking jobs result in slower paybacks on the B-school investment, but the degree stills pay off at the best schools.”

**Pros:**
- The ONLY survey to adjust salary figures for cost of living; arguably puts salary into a much-needed context

**Cons:**
- One dimensional: doesn’t speak to the quality of the education or the student experience
- Salaries possibly misreported by alumni, especially given context of school ranking; possible sample bias

**Payback Periods for the MBA Degree Increased Across the Board**

Still, it’s clear the recession has taken its toll on the MBAs of the Class of 2008. Total gains and payback periods were down across the board. The five-year total gain figure for No. 1 Stanford was $99,700 and the payback period was 4.1 years. That compares with the Harvard Class of 2006’s No. 1 performance in 2011 with a total gain of $118,000 and a payback period of 3.6 years.

This year, according to *Forbes*, the five-year gain for a Harvard MBA shrunk to $79,600, with a payback of 4.0 years. Chicago Booth MBAs weathered the recession better than most. The payback on a Chicago MBA rose just two months to 3.7 years from 3.5 years. The total five-year gain due to the degree was $92,600, off from $112,000 in 2011, but not nearly as big a decline as Harvard.

Movement on the *Forbes* ranking is completely dependent on the compensation numbers reported to the magazine by alumni. Because alums know that the data will be used to rank their schools, it’s possible that some could inflate their actual income so their alma maters would be ranked higher.

When *Poets&Quants* recently asked *Forbes*
Senior Editor Kurt Badenhausen if he knows that alumni honestly fill out the magazine’s surveys, he conceded: “We don’t. We survey the schools and ask them for pre-MBA and post-MBA salaries so we can match up what the alumni say with what the schools say. When there are extreme differences, we’ve knocked out a school. I find the data quite resembles what the alumni report. Could a class get together and game the ranking? Yes. But any sort of ranking is hardly foolproof.”

MIT SLOAN & BERKELEY HAAS DON’T FARE NEARLY AS WELL IN THIS RANKING

That methodology delivers some unusual results. Schools that are typically assumed to be in and around the Top 10, such as UC-Berkeley’s Haas School, MIT’s Sloan School, and Yale University’s School of Management tend to rank lower on the Forbes list. This year, for example, Yale is 18th, MIT Sloan is 12th, and UC-Berkeley is 14th. In comparison, U.S. News & World Report’s latest ranking puts MIT Sloan fourth, Haas seventh, and Yale 13th.

This year’s biggest gainer of all was UC-Davis’ Graduate School of Management, which jumped 22 places to finish 50th. The biggest loser? City University of New York Baruch College, which plunged 16 spots to finish 66th (See WINNERS & LOSERS IN THE 2013 FORBES MBA RANKING).

The Top 25 schools showing the biggest gains were Indiana University’s Kelley School of Business, which leapt eight places to finish 19th, Carnegie Mellon University’s Tepper School and UCLA’s Anderson School, which both moved up seven spots to place 16th and 13th, respectively, and North Carolina’s Kenan-Flagler Business School, which rose five places to finish 11th.

THE NUMBERS BEHIND YALE’S SEVEN-PLACE DROP IN THE SURVEY

The Top 25 schools to suffer the biggest falls? Yale’s School of Management plunged seven spots to 18th this year from 11th in 2011. The University of Virginia’s Darden School dropped six places to finish 15th, while New York University’s Stern School of Business fell five spots to end up in 23rd place.

Yale’s showing in the Forbes survey is its worst ever. In both 2003 and 2005, Yale was ranked fifth among all U.S. business schools by Forbes. Yale typically places more MBA graduates in the social sector, but it’s unclear why Yale could at one time finish fifth and now drop to 18th. Forbes said the five-year gain from a Yale MBA fell to $62,100, from $96,000 in 2011, increasing the payback period to 4.0 years from 3.3 two years ago. The median salary last year for a Class of 2008 alum was $144,000, down from $150,000 in 2011 for the Class of 2006.

University of Virginia’s Darden School also had its worst ever rank in this year’s Forbes survey. As recently as 2007, the school was ranked fourth by Forbes, behind only Dartmouth’s Tuck, Harvard, and Stanford. At 15th, it’s Darden’s weakest Forbes ranking since 2001 when the school placed 13th among U.S. MBA programs.

Several other schools on the Forbes list posted their best-ever years. They include Duke University’s Fuqua School of Business, which placed eighth this year, a gain of four places from its rank of 12 two years ago. In 2003, Fuqua had been ranked 22nd by Forbes. The University of Michigan’s Ross School, which ranked tenth this year, up four places from 14th in 2011, also had its best showing ever. On Forbes’ 2005 list, Ross was ranked 26th. No. 19 Indiana University’s Kelley School, which in 2003 was ranked 35th by Forbes, and No. 25 University of Minnesota’s Carlson School, ranked 35th in 2005, also scored their best ranking years in the new Forbes survey (see FORBES’ HISTORICAL MBA RANKINGS).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 RANK &amp; SCHOOL</th>
<th>2011 RANK</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
<th>5-YEAR GAIN</th>
<th>PAYBACK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Stanford</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$99,700</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Chicago (Booth)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$92,600</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Harvard</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>$79,600</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. UPenn (Wharton)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>$74,400</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Northwestern (Kellogg)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>$73,100</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dartmouth (Tuck)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>$71,000</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Columbia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>$70,200</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Duke (Fuqua)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>$69,800</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cornell (Johnson)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>$68,100</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Michigan (Ross)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>$68,000</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. UNC (Kenan-Flagler)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>$67,100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. MIT (Sloan)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>$66,600</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. UCLA (Anderson)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>$66,100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. UC-Berkeley (Haas)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>$65,400</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Virginia (Darden)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>$64,700</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Carnegie Mellon (Tepper)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>$64,300</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Brigham Young (Marriott)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>$64,100</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Yale</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>$62,100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Indiana (Kelley)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>+8</td>
<td>$62,000</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Iowa (Tippie)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$60,800</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Texas-Austin (McCombs)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>$60,500</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Michigan State (Broad)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>$59,700</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. New York (Stern)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>$58,500</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Emory (Goizueta)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>$57,500</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Minnesota (Carlson)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>$56,700</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Forbes 2013 MBA ranking*
The University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business has topped the *The Economist’s* full-time MBA ranking for the second consecutive year. The global ranking, published in October of 2013, has Dartmouth College’s Tuck School in second place again, while UC-Berkeley’s Haas School jumped into third from sixth place in 2012. Rounding out the top five were No. 4, the University of Virginia’s Darden School and No. 5 IESE Business School in Spain, which rose four spots from ninth a year earlier.

The big three–Harvard, Stanford, and Wharton–all suffered declines in the 12th MBA ranking published by *The Economist* (though the magazine incorrectly stated that it was the 11th survey). Harvard fell to sixth place from fourth. Stanford, declared the best business school in the U.S. by *Forbes* on October 9, slipped to ninth from eighth. And Wharton, which was ranked 13th in the world by *The Economist* last year, fell further behind—to 15th behind such schools as the University of Queensland in Australia, New York University’s Stern School, and HEC Paris.

**BIG JUMPS IN PAY FOR MBAS AT CARNEGIE AND EMORY**

Among the Top 25 schools providing the biggest boost in salaries are HEC Paris, where graduating MBAs saw their pre-MBA salary jump 149% to $123,964, IESE Business School, where pay rose 153% to $117,260, Hong Kong University, where pay jumped 154% to $94,371, and York University, where starting MBA salaries were 157% higher to $89,200, according to *The Economist*.

Only MBAs from two U.S. schools in the Top 25 delivered increases above 100% of pre-MBA pay: Emory University’s Goizueta School, where starting MBA salaries of $103,453 this year were 103% above pre-MBA pay, and Carnegie Mellon University’s Tepper School, where starting MBA pay was 114% higher at $107,700.
The Economist, however, may have made some errors in its calculations. According to the magazine, graduating Wharton MBAs experienced only a 21% increase over their pre-MBA salaries. Given the $120,702 average starting salary at Wharton, that is just not possible. It would mean that MBAs at Wharton quit jobs that already paid them an average above $90,000 a year to attend the school’s MBA program. Only yesterday, Forbes pegged the pre-MBA salary of a Wharton student at $80K.

EIGHT OF TOP TEN SPOTS BELONG TO U.S. BUSINESS SCHOOLS

Eight of the top ten spots on this year’s list belong to U.S. universities. North America and Europe accounted for most of the schools in the top 25. The highest-placed school from outside North America or Europe is the University of Queensland, which is ranked 14th. The University of Hong Kong tops the list of Asian schools, climbing from the 41st spot in 2012, to 24th in this year’s ranking. The Economist’s methodology arguably produces the most peculiar results of the five most influential rankings of business schools. It takes into account new career opportunities (35%); personal development/educational experience (35%); increasing salary (20%); and the potential to network (10%). The figures are a mixture of hard data and the subjective marks given by the school’s students who are surveyed by the magazine.

Measuring MBA programs on those dimensions should insure that Harvard, Stanford, Wharton and London Business School do well. Yet surprisingly, year after year they tend to lag in The Economist ranking. In fact, Harvard, Stanford and Wharton have never topped this ranking even though it has been published every year since 2002. London Business School, ranked by Forbes as having the best two-year MBA program outside the U.S., was ranked 11th in the world this year by The Economist. Yale University’s School of Management, ranked 26th last year by The Economist, again failed to make the magazine’s Top 25 list. It slipped to 28th place.

IE BUSINESS SCHOOL PLUNGE 28 PLACES IN A SINGLE YEAR TO RANK 50TH

A further complication is that even among the top 25 schools this year, there are some massive—and unexplained—jumps in the rankings. For example, the University of Queensland rose 13 places in a single year to gain its 14th place finish. The University of Hong Kong jumped 17 spots to get to a rank of 24 on the list. On the other hand, IE Business School in Spain plunged 28 places to finish 50th from a rank of 22 only a year ago, and Hult International Business School also fell 28 positions to finish 59th (See THE TOPSY-TURVY ECONOMIST RANKING).

Columbia Business School and MIT Sloan both slid five places to rank 10th and 12th, respectively. York University’s Schulich School in Canada fell six spots to finish 22nd from 16th last year. Among
the gainers were UCLA’s Anderson School, up five places to 18th, and New York University’s Stern School, up four spots to eighth.

**STRAIGHT RESULTS ARE COMMON TO THE ECONOMIST SURVEY**

The odd results raise meaningful credibility issues with the methodology and the accuracy of the data some of these schools are providing to *The Economist*. Because 80% of the ranking is based on unaudited information from business schools, there’s a possibility that some data has been fudged. *The Economist* also throws into its ranking formula criteria that have little to do with the quality of education, such as the percentages of international and female students (giving these two questions alone nearly a 17% of the weight in the ranking), the range of overseas exchange programs (a 6.25% weight), and the number of languages offered (also given a 6.25% weight). The latter would be something more appropriate to undergraduate education.

Ultimately, the methodology produces some very strange, roller-coaster like results—and some blistering criticism from *The Economist*’s own readers. Typical comments:

“This does not pass the smell test.”

“These numbers are pure science fiction, unbelievable.”

“This ranking has zero credibility. *The Economist* should go back to what it’s good at and quit spreading misleading information.”

**FOURTH NUMBER ONE WIN FOR CHICAGO IN THE ECONOMIST SURVEY**

Still, Chicago’s first-place repeat will give the school even greater authority and also reflects poorly on Wharton, which has suffered negative publicity in light of application declines. “Chicago’s career-placement statistics are particularly impressive, with graduates getting jobs in a wide range of industries and earning an average basic salary of $115,000, a 66% increase on their pre-MBA salary,” said Bill Ridgers, *The Economist*’s business education editor. “Students, meanwhile, give stellar marks for the education they receive, the quality of their classmates and the school’s career services.”

This is the fourth time Chicago Booth has won *The Economist*’s blessing as the world’s best business school, more than any other school. The school was ranked No. 1 in 2012, in 2010 and in 2007. Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management has made the top three times, along with IESE Business School of Spain. Dartmouth Tuck was named No. 1 once as was IMD in Lausanne, Switzerland.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 RANK &amp; SCHOOL</th>
<th>2012 RANK</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
<th>STARTING SALARIES</th>
<th>RISE ON PRE-MBA PAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Chicago (Booth)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>$115,079</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dartmouth (Tuck)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>$115,302</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. UC-Berkeley (Haas)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>$116,045</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Virginia (Darden)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>$109,335</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. IESE Business School</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>$117,260</td>
<td>153%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Harvard</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>$124,085</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. New York (Stern)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>$107,875</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. HEC Paris</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>$123,964</td>
<td>149%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Stanford GSB</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>$129,652</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Columbia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>$112,728</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. London Business School</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>$115,688</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. MIT (Sloan)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>$118,406</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. IMD</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>$131,566</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Queensland</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>+13</td>
<td>$155,482</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. UPenn (Wharton)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>$120,702</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. ESADE</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>$116,103</td>
<td>117%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Cornell (Johnson)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>$106,064</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. UCLA (Anderson)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>$105,556</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Emory (Goizueta)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>$103,453</td>
<td>103%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Bath University</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>$110,461</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Carnegie Mellon (Tepper)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>$107,700</td>
<td>114%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. York (Schulich)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>$89,200</td>
<td>157%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Northwestern (Kellogg)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>$116,864</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Hong Kong University</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>+17</td>
<td>$94,371</td>
<td>154%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Michigan (Ross)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>$111,047</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Economist 2013 MBA ranking
MBA RANKINGS: TAKE WITH A GRAIN OF SALT?

BY BETSY MASSAR

As prospective students begin thinking about the business school admissions ordeal, one of the first things they often do is market research. Just as if you were to buy an automobile, you might look at surveys and expert opinions before choosing which car to test drive. Similarly, you might look at rankings to get a sense of where you might fit, or perhaps more to the point, where you might get in.

READ THE WARNING LABEL!

Rankings are deceptive. In fact, because they are based on statistics, they lure you into believing that not only are the numbers correct, but that they should drive your decision. I cannot deny that they matter, but they really should come with a caveat similar to those belonging to vices like red velvet cupcakes, home-brewed beer, or salt: Over reliance on rankings can be dangerous for your health.

Still, everybody uses them—but not only do they all have their flaws—as McCombs’ market researcher Matt Turner points out, they rankings are plagued by imprecise questions, inconsistent data, and uneven salary figures. Even Poets & Quants’ John Byrne, who launched the first ever B-school ranking at BusinessWeek, admits that some of the analyses suffer from sample size problems, rendering the data meaningless. “Too many applicants take [rankings] at face value, not understanding that the results of any ranking might be based on little more than the subjective judgments of a journalist,” writes Lauren Everitt, herself a journalist at Poets & Quants.
THE CASE OF TUCK

So if you are understandably confused at this point, you’d be in good company. And you may also ask yourself, how can different rankings vary so widely? Look at Tuck, for example, which has been ranked as #2, #6, #9, #12, and #20, depending on which survey you look at. (The Economist, Forbes, U.S. News, BusinessWeek and the Financial Times, respectively). Tuck’s Assistant Dean Penny Paquette notes that certain rankings rely on more on hard data, and some rankings focus on opinions. And naturally, the value of those opinions depends on whom you ask...

Rankings are particularly weird when considering a school like Tuck, because that’s one of those places that either fits or it doesn’t. And it’s also weird to me, as a gut check, to think of Tuck as not being in the “top 10.” That’s why you too want to consider a mix of hard data – things like career services reports on your target industry, or simply a school’s location, as well as student and alumni opinions–from friends as well as strangers.

DON’T SPLIT HAIRS

Speaking of the top 10, at least 15 schools can claim that position, when you combine the results of any three rankings. So everybody’s a winner!

But please, don’t get hung up on comparing one school to another based on a narrow difference in ranking. I’ve had conversations with students debating whether Chicago or Wharton is the #3 school in the U.S., and personally, I think it is unrealistic to rely on a ranking with schools that are so different in location, temperament, and philosophy.

That’s because the business school experience is different for everyone, and it’s very hard for a rank to represent just how good a school is for you. Rankings can never fully reflect the rich complexity of business schools experience, and they are no substitute for what matters most: finding schools that best fit you.

Bottom line: read rankings, enjoy them, but consume in moderation.