The Berkeley MBA – Online Waitlist Chat
January 31, 2007

Chat with the Haas MBA Admissions Directors
Jett Pihakis -- Director of Domestic Admissions
Peter Johnson-- Director of International Admissions

Jeff_Moderator
Hello and welcome to the Berkeley MBA Waitlist Chat. My name is Jeff and Laquel and I will be moderating the chat today. I would like to introduce Jett Pihakis and Peter Johnson, co-Directors for Admissions. Please send us your questions!

Pete_Berkeley
Good morning!

Jett_Berkeley
Hi everyone! And congratulations for being offered a spot on the waitlist! We look forward to answering all of your questions during the next hour.

dhsu
Thank you for hosting this chat. Is it acceptable for an additional recommender to write a free-form essay, or do you prefer that the recommender stick to the questions on the recommendation form?

Jett_Berkeley
Ideally, a recommender will answer the questions that we have posed on the form, but we will accept a free-form letter as well.

jean
I was put on the waitlist. What are the necessary steps going forward?

Pete_Berkeley
Jean, that depends on whether there are additional steps you feel that you can take to strengthen your application. As noted in the waitlist communication, there are some things that you may wish to do.
jean
Is it necessary to re-take the GMAT or re-write the personal statements?

Jett_Berkeley
It is up to the applicant herself/himself to decide how to strengthen the application. If you suspect that your GMAT score is low by our standards, then you can certainly retake it and that may very well benefit you. Similarly, if you wish to update your personal statement, we welcome that as well.

RogerMBA09
Hi, Good morning! I've not been interviewed to date, and my waitlist letter states that I should initiate an interview request now. However, there aren't any interviewers in my country right now (India) What does this imply for my application

Pete_Berkeley
Roger, it doesn't impact your application. We will have interview opportunities in India before we revisit the waitlist. We should have an interviewer available in about 2 weeks.

mchou
Morning! Thanks for having this chat. I understand it's typically been Haas' policy to evaluate Round1 Waitlisters at the end of March?

Jett_Berkeley
We will next evaluate the Rd 1 waitlisters as we make decisions on Rd 2 applicants, which should be around March 19.

acrago
My question relates to process and timing. For round one applicants placed on the waitlist, when does the Admissions office see "movement" in terms of people accepting or declining admissions offers? In other words, when would be the next likely time that we could hear a status update?

Pete_Berkeley
Acrago, we will begin seeing some replies within a few weeks, but there isn't likely to be significant movement until early April. We will revisit the waitlist after we have released our Round 2 decisions.

ecf
Is there a deadline for submitting additional materials?

Pete_Berkeley
There isn't a formal deadline to submit additional materials, but I would encourage you to do so before our Round 2 decision date.
Sach
How should candidates with strengths in all areas but from a highly competitive
demographic view being waitlisted?

Jett_Berkeley
Everyone should view being waitlisted in the same way, regardless of the demographic
you represent. Waitlisted applicants should consider their status a very positive sign that
the admissions committee remains interested in their candidacy. They should evaluate
their application to try to identify possible weaknesses, and they should attempt to
strengthen those weaknesses however possible.

acrago
Is there a specific person that we should send our additional materials to? Or should we
just send to the general admissions email?

Laquel_Moderator
You should send any supplemental materials to the main admissions address at 430
Student Services Bldg, MC#1902, Berkeley, CA 94720

John H.
So in terms of timeline, once we interview at what point will we get a decision?

Jett_Berkeley
We will next look at Rd 1 waitlisted candidates in mid-March, so you will likely hear
something from us before the end of March.

gretchen
I've accepted a place on the waitlist and your email says "You may provide an additional
letter of recommendation (or two) to your file, if the letter will add information that was
not provided in the original letters submitted." Since I haven't seen what my
recommenders submitted, under what circumstances is it appropriate to provide an
additional recommendation?

Pete_Berkeley
Gretchen, you should feel free to provide an additional letter. Most applicants don't know
what their letters say, but occasionally, we have had applicants submit additional letters
from the same recommenders, which hasn't been very useful.

robin
For waitlist candidates that have not yet had an interview, it appears on the website that
there are only openings for on campus interviews next Monday - Wednesday. Will
additional spots open up, or is this the only week we will have this opportunity?

Jeff_Moderator
Yes, we will be setting up future interview times on our site soon. Right now we are
preparing for this semester’s on-campus interviews. Check back on our website soon. There is plenty of time for you to interview.

**Matt Pearson**
Can we arrange a time to meet with you to discuss the short-comings in our application, so that we may address them in our statement?

**Jett Berkeley**
Unfortunately, we are simply too busy this time of year to meet with individual applicants. We are not able to provide such feedback at this time. If for some reason you are not offered admission, we will be happy to provide such feedback over the summer months, once we've completed the review of all applications for fall 2007 admission.

**Thomas Robertson**
What kind of additional recommender would be best to use?

**Pete Berkeley**
Any person that could provide additional information that would be useful to the AdCom. It is not helpful to provide an additional letter from someone who has already written a recommendation. (I know that sounds odd, but applicants have done it in the past).

**Amir**
Can you clarify what you mean when you guys say "we periodically review all waitlisted candidates?" Do you simply look at everyone's application once a month or do you give candidates a fresh look once they send additional materials? Just want to know what happens on your end.

**Jett Berkeley**
There's no hard and fast rule here. It really depends on the rate at which admitted applicants are accepting our offer of admission. That being said, to provide you with general guidelines, we tend to review Rd 1 waitlisted candidates around the same time as we make decisions on Rd 2 applicants. This should be around March 19.

**Sachin-NC**
I am currently overseas (India). I want to schedule an interview. Should I wait until I come back on March 2nd and then schedule it on-campus or are there any alumni available in India either in person or via phone? What do you suggest? If I wait until march 2nd, will it affect my chances of getting in? I live in North Carolina and I have already visited the campus in October 2006.

**Pete Berkeley**
It will not affect your chances if you wait until March 2, especially as we will not be reviewing the waitlist again before that date. As for alumni, we will have alumni interview opportunities in India before that date, but we do not conduct telephone interviews--only in-person interviews.
twopoint0
Good morning Pete, Jett, and Jeff. Could you give us a sense for how Round 1 looked relative to last year? Were applications up? Was the acceptance rate up or down? Is the waitlist longer or shorter? Thx.

Jett_Berkeley
This is a great question. Apps were up 33% in Round One, and the acceptance rate was slightly down as a result, as you would expect. The Rd 1 waitlist is a tad bit larger this year as a result, but the difference really isn't terribly significant.

John H.
Can you offer any historical perspective on what % of waitlisters receive an offer?

Jett_Berkeley
Historically, approximately half of the waitlisted candidates get an offer. This is why you should all be very encouraged by this news. We truly are very impressed with your applications!

mlarkin
I am enrolled in a calculus class to strengthen my quant background, but I will not receive a final grade for several months. Will the adcom take unofficial "progress reports" for the class, or will the final grade be what counts?

Pete_Berkeley
Although the final grade will probably be most significant, we would review mid-term grades or progress reports.

gaia
Thank you for having this chat. The letter mentioned that we can add two more recommenders but the website has the ability to add only one more. Can I bring in the letter when I come for my campus interview?

Pete_Berkeley
Gaia, yes, it would be fine to bring the additional letter when you come to interview.

jan
Morning. My GMAT score is a bit below the average, but I think my GPA is enough to cover the AT score. Do I need to retake the exam to reach the average?

Jett_Berkeley
This is really your call, Jan. You should try to assess the overall strengths and weaknesses of your application, and do what you feel is necessary to strengthen your overall profile.
mchou
For my new statement updating the Admissions Committee, do you prefer that I sent a letter through mail or would it be better to attach a Word document to an e-mail?

Jeff_Moderator
You may submit through regular mail, fax or email to mbaadm@haas.berkeley.edu

class09
Would it be seen negatively if i scheduled an interview 2 weeks later..and not immediately like next week!

Jett_Berkeley
Absolutely not. That's no problem at all!

class09
Would you rather see an additional recommendation or an essay?

Pete_Berkeley
Class09--that is up to you--what we prefer is whatever provides useful additional information rather than a restating of information that we already know.

Kim
Are we allowed to send in additional paper recommendations rather than only online recommendations?

Jeff_Moderator
Yes, you may send paper recommendations if necessary.

Amir
As far as updating the application goes, you state that we should provide an additional letter of recommendation if the letter will add information that was not provided in the original letters submitted. Since the letters are confidential, how do we know if a 3rd letter of rec will add information?

Jett_Berkeley
Excellent question! You should add another letter if the letter writer offers a new perspective. For example, if both of your letters came from your current employer, you can submit a letter from a former employer. If neither of your letters is from someone who supervised you directly, you should secure such a letter. Etc. Etc.

Kelly
The waitlist guidelines state that if your GMAT scores are below average it might be retaken, but what are the average scores?
Laquel_Moderator
The average GMAT score for the entering class this past year was 707. The 80% range was 650-760

Jon
I am hoping that you can give us some insight as to what you think has been a common "differentiator" btw those with offers for admission and those taking part in this chat. Thanks...

Pete_Berkeley
Jon, as to the differentiators between those with offers, it is difficult to pin down a particular issue. In some cases, the professional profile just wasn't as strong as that of others; in other cases it is an academic profile that is not as impressive or an interview that was ok, but not great. It could be any number of things.

Young
Besides the additional materials and the interview, does HAAS discourage directly contacting admissions while we're on the WL?

Jett_Berkeley
If you have specific questions, you are always welcome to contact us. We're here to serve you, after all. That being said, if you're simply calling to check on the status of your application, we will not have any new information to share with you. We make every effort to keep you informed throughout the waitlist process, and you will next be hearing from us around March 19 or so.

Xiao Lan
Hi, morning! I am considering providing additional information to add the proof of my proficiency in math. Among others, does an outdated GMAT score with higher score in math part work?

Jett_Berkeley
I'm afraid not. If the GMAT score is outdated, we cannot consider it. Sorry!

RogerMBA09
I know last year around 50% of the waitlisted candidates were offered an admit. Can we expect stats to be similar this year?

Pete_Berkeley
Roger, it's hard to say. It is entirely dependent on the strength of the candidates in other rounds, and we have no way to know that at this point in the process.

kelly34
How would you rate the waitlisted candidates compared to admitted candidates in terms of the overall quality of the admitted application pool this year?
Jett_Berkeley
This is a very difficult question to answer, Kelly. Anyone who receives a waitlist offer is certainly a strong candidate for admission. I guess it's safe to say that they aren't quite as strong on paper as those who were offered admission.

jan
How will you update the status? In a regular basis say..monthly? I am an international student so I am worry that late decision would delay the visa process

Pete_Berkeley
Jan, we usually update everyone on the waitlist around the time we make decisions on the following round. You shouldn't worry about visa issues--we have not had trouble with students getting visas even when they are admitted off the final list after Round 4. With the exception of a couple of specific countries, it is not generally an issue.

Jean
What happens after Round 2 deadline to those who are not taken off the wait list

Pete_Berkeley
Jean, they either remain on the waitlist or are released (denied) at that time.

John H.
So are there any ways to get feedback as to those areas of possible weakness or are we to make a best guess at that?

Jett_Berkeley
We ask that you self-assess and make your best estimation. Given that the profile of our first-year class is available to you, this might help for comparative purposes. And you can self-assess your essays, extracurricular involvement, work experience/resume, etc.

Megha
Hi - Do you have any suggestions for waitlisted candidates that are younger than most MBA candidates?

Jett_Berkeley
Age is not a factor in our process at all. Not at all. So we wouldn't advise younger applicants any differently than older applicants. Good question, though.

Megha
What types of supplemental materials should I send to demonstrate that I'm taking an Finance/Business class at a local college to strengthen my quant skills?

Jett_Berkeley
Ask your professor to give you a mid-term evaluation and then send that to us. When you receive your end-of-term grade, be sure we receive an official transcript.
Amir
Does that mean everyone on the waitlist will get a decision after Round 2 decisions are released? Or is it possible to still remain on the waitlist?

Pete_Berkeley
Amir, no, it doesn't. At that point, we look at how many offers we have made, how many more we anticipate, and the size of the waitlist. Some R1 applicants may get an offer, some may be denied, and others will remain on the waitlist into Round 3. This is why your waitlist communication notes that you could receive a final decision as early as one month later or as late as August.

Sach
Can the length of work experience (3 years full-time) be viewed by the admissions committee as a weakness?

Jett_Berkeley
We admit many applicants with 3 years of work experience. We are more interested in the quality/richness of that experience than in the number of years per se.

Chris
Good morning. In order to demonstrate quantitative abilities, can we point to work experience, or is the Admissions Committee mainly looking at academic performance?

Pete_Berkeley
Chris, you can point out anything that you feel will give us useful information.

Robert
If I accept a promotion at my company and must delay business school until '08, will a previous admission to Haas positively or negatively affect my '08 admission decision?

Jett_Berkeley
If you accept a promotion, I would simply withdraw your application from consideration. That's the best course of action to take under such circumstances, assuming that you plan to continue working with your company throughout next year. In answer to your question, though, admission one year is no guarantee of admission in a future year, as selectivity depends on the quality and quantity of applicants we receive.

PrestonS
Would you all consider an online calculus class from the Berkeley Extension an acceptable choice given that most live classes in the area are already underway?

Pete_Berkeley
Preston, yes we would consider those results. They may not be as impressive to the AdCom as a full-time, in-class course, but it is still evidence to support your application.
mm
Does that mean everyone has equal odds irrespective of country/professional/academic background?

**Pete_Berkeley**
Yes it does.

**John H.**
Do you have any interviewers in NC. . .so far I do not see NC as an option on the drop-down list.

**Jett_Berkeley**
If you don't see North Carolina in the drop-down list, then we probably don't have interviewers in North Carolina currently. You may need to travel to a nearby state. Sorry!

**Sach**
Is a personal letter of recommendation acceptable?

**Pete_Berkeley**
Sach, it is acceptable, but we probably won't find it nearly as useful as a professional recommendation, since that is more germane to our review of your qualifications.

**dhsu**
Why are some applicants waitlisted prior to an interview? Is this a sign that the applicant has more ground to make up relative to someone who was interviewed prior to being waitlisted?

**Jett_Berkeley**
Great question. Applicants who are waitlisted prior to interview were not quite as strong on paper as those who were offered an interview before being placed on the waitlist.

**gaia**
Are there any further steps to take after the interview process that would require immediate response from me? I will be leaving the country for about three weeks with very little email contact.

**Pete_Berkeley**
Gaia, not really--and as noted in the e-mail, which of those steps you choose to take depends on you and what you feel you need to strengthen in your application.

**Kelly**
Can you tell me the GMAT score average break down for quantitative and verbal scores?

**Laquel_Moderator**
Hi Kelly, we do not currently have the averages for each category. The overall average GMAT for last year was 707.
If I've average GMAT but my undergrad scores in calculus are high, do I need to retake GMAT?

**Pete_Berkeley**
Mm, there are two issues here--demonstrating sufficient quant skills and being competitive in a highly competitive application pool. Even if you have satisfied us that you have sufficient quant skills, if other candidates with similar work experience and skills have stronger GMAT scores, they will be more competitive in the process.

**Sachin-NC**
Do you guys re-consider round 1 waitlist applicant after round 3 is over?

**Jett_Berkeley**
Excellent question. Round One waitlisted candidates will be reviewed around March 19. At that time, some will be admitted, some will be denied, and others will remain on the waitlist. Those who remain on the waitlist will be reviewed again near the end of April, as we finalize our Round Three decisions.

**ecf**
Will on-campus interviews be conducted by a student or by a member of the Admissions Committee?

**Pete_Berkeley**
ecf, they will be conducted by student interviewers. AdCom members rarely conduct interviews--our preference is that all interviews be conducted by our trained student or alumni interviewers.

**robin**
Do waitlisted candidates that have already had an interview have a greater chance of acceptance than those that have not yet had one?

**Pete_Berkeley**
Robin, no--it has no bearing.

**robin**
In the application, we are asked not to provide a recommendation from a peer for Haas. Is this the case as well for waitlisted candidates at this point in the process?

**Jett_Berkeley**
Terrific question! We will accept such a letter from waitlisted candidates, but you should be sure that this individual is able to provide information that we will find valuable.

**Matt_Pearson**
Should we give periodic personal statement updates to our application as the wait continues i.e. every month, two months, etc. or just one updated statement now?
**Pete_Berkeley**
Matt, only if you feel there is additional information to provide. Restating the same information is not generally helpful.

**jan**
I would like to send updating statements, can I send whenever I had new achievement or new tasks in my profession and personal life?

**Jett_Berkeley**
We would prefer one updated statement that includes all new achievements rather than a brief statement each time a new achievement is earned.

**Chris**
Are there many candidates with an environmental background, or who are working towards careers in green business/social enterprise? Do you consider this to be an over- or under-represented category? How might these candidates differentiate themselves?

**Pete_Berkeley**
Chris, the number of candidates with environmental background is usually small. This is a secondary factor in any case, since the strength of the individual candidate is much more important than our seeking some particular industry representation.

**WLCandidate**
Can recommenders send a general letter, and should they send it to the same address mentioned above - 430 Student Services...?

**Pete_Berkeley**
WLCandidate, yes, they can, and it should be to that address.

**Sach**
My resume is now out-of-date since the time I applied. I have been offered a promotion with more responsibility. How do I communicate this to my interviewer who has an older version of my resume?

**Pete_Berkeley**
Sach, I would provide your interviewer with an updated resume and tell them your great news!

**taryngoodman**
If we choose to send in an additional recommendation, should it still be from a work superior? Peer?

**Jett_Berkeley**
Ideally, we prefer letters from superiors, but if there is a peer that you feel can really outline your strengths and weaknesses honestly and articulately, we will gladly accept such a letter. Remember: specific examples are what we're looking for.
Will a non-professional letter of recommendation from extracurricular involvement help?

**Pete_Berkeley**

It doesn't hurt, but again, it may not be as significant to the AdCom as a professional recommendation.

**Daniel - Toronto**

I plan on re-taking the GMAT after the round 2 decision date because I am below the Haas average. Should I indicate this intention in my update letter or wait until I have a result to report? My concern is that I may be released (eek!) before I have a chance to show my improvement.

**Jett_Berkeley**

You can certainly indicate this intention in your update letter, absolutely. This won't guarantee that you won't be released prior to the re-take, however. But it is a good idea to let us know. Great question!

**RogerMBA09**

Your expected class size this year will be around the same as earlier years?

**Jett_Berkeley**

Indeed.

Will a high TOEFL compensate for average verbal at GMAT?

**Jett_Berkeley**

High TOEFL scores can help to compensate for average verbal GMAT scores, yes.

**jean**

Is it viewed negatively if you re-take the gmat more than once?

**Jett_Berkeley**

Absolutely not. We always take the higher score.

**Brian**

I took some graduate finance coursework while employed full-time and the grade in the course was less than stellar. How does the adcom view this in my application? If my GMAT is slightly lower than average (690), what is the best course of action for me at this point to demonstrate my capability. More classes, another GMAT, or more depth to describe the strengths of my academic history from a quant background.

**Pete_Berkeley**

Brian, I doubt that your course grade in the post-UG finance course was a significant issue in our decision. Although we look at everything, your overall academic
performance and quant preparation would have much more significance. Any element in the application that you strengthen will improve your chances, but I can't really give specific advice in this regard.

**PrestonS**
In terms of the new statement, what sort of relevant changes would warrant inclusion? For example, if I have started managing an additional project at work since submitting my application in November, I assume this would apply? What about doing volunteer work for an additional local organization outside of the office? Is there a general word limit for this statement?

**Jett_Berkeley**
No word limit for the statement, but don't get too carried away. Both of the examples you mention would be appropriate to mention in an update letter.

**Thomas Robertson**
Realizing that everyone has a different situation, is there a general piece of advice that you would offer those of us on the waitlist?

**Pete_Berkeley**
Thomas, my general advice would be to provide us with any information that you feel may be helpful, and to try to be patient. (I realize the second piece is difficult!)

**mchou**
In the situation that I am able to get off the waitlist by end of March, can I still attend the "admit weekend", to meet other students? When would they be held? Thanks

**Jett_Berkeley**
Yes, you absolutely would be able to attend the admit weekend. In fact, we have TWO admit weekends. The first is April 12-14 and the second is May 3-5.

**Amir**
If we choose to take the GMAT again, by when would you suggest we take it by? If we don't do improve or if we do worse on the GMAT, would that negatively impact the application? Would taking it again be viewed as a positive at all?

**Jett_Berkeley**
I would suggest you retake the GMAT by mid-March, if you wish us to have your new score when we next review your application. If you do worse, it will NOT harm your chances. We use the highest score only. And taking it again does show us that you're trying to improve, which speaks well for you.

**John H.**
What's the furthest we should go back in time in obtaining a recommendation from a former supervisor?
Jett_Berkeley
I wouldn't go back more than 2.5-3 years.

david
Hi Jett and Jeff - I'm planning on taking a math class to strengthen my application. Would you recommend Stats or Calc? If calc, do I need to take Calc B, or is Calc A sufficient?

Jett_Berkeley
Stats would be my first choice, followed by Calc. And Calc A would be sufficient.

Kim
If my quantitative score on the GMAT was lower than my verbal score, but I showed good quantitative ability in my UG courses, would it still be advisable for me to show quantitative ability in other ways?

Pete_Berkeley
Kim, generally speaking, we look for evidence that you have sufficient quantitative skills in your application--there isn't a cutoff, etc. If you have good UG quant courses (and I mean statistics, algebra, calculus, etc., not accounting) then it may not be a significant weakness. On the other hand, any information you provide that helps us to understand your preparation is useful.

WeComeInPeace
Currently some countries do not have interviewers, and you've stated that you'll have interviewers in international locations available later. Will we receive any notification about this? Or we'll have to keep checking from time to time?

Pete_Berkeley
WeComeInPeace, that comment was relevant to India in particular, not all international locations. If there is no interviewer in your country, we may not be able to provide an interview opportunity there. Although having the interview results is helpful, we don't hold it against a candidate if they are located in a place where it is impossible to interview.

Matt_Pearson
I already sent this, but didn't see the answer....If accepted (forever the optimist), how long will we have to respond?

Pete_Berkeley
Matt_Pearson, optimism is good! Normally, we would give you a two-week window to respond.

mm
Is a letter of recommendation from client/customer helpful?
Pete_Berkeley
MM, it could be--it depends on how well the client/customer knows you and what detail they can provide.

Amir
In the personal statement, do you recommend explaining what we perceive as weaknesses in the application and how we are going about to improve those weaknesses?

Pete_Berkeley
Amir, yes, I think that is helpful.

Ken
Is there a preference between an on or off campus interview?

Pete_Berkeley
Ken, no, they are treated equally.

Amir
Would a letter of recommendation from an undergraduate professor that you worked for and took classes with be helpful?

Pete_Berkeley
Yes, but again, not as helpful as someone that you have worked for in a professional setting.

Kim
What would you recommend to a WL applicant whose work experience may not be as "enriching" as the AdCom would like to see?

Pete_Berkeley
Kim, that is a difficult question--obviously, you can't dramatically change your work experience in three months. That is probably a better question for the end of the process, should you not get an offer...

Amir
More generally, what types of things are you looking for from an interview?

Pete_Berkeley
Amir, the usual things you would expect--communication skills, professional poise, ability to provide thoughtful, well-constructed answers, etc.

Chris
Will interviewers be able to provide any insight or guidance towards strengthening an application? Do they see the entire file, or just a resume?
Pete_Berkeley
Chris, interviews are generally "blind"--the interviewer has seen nothing except your resume, which is intentional.

mm
Will Indian applicants be informed when interview slots become available or should we keep checking?

Pete_Berkeley
mm, although we will let you know, I would also encourage you to check.

dhsu
Is there any preferred format for the new personal statement?

Pete_Berkeley
Dhsu, no, just a standard paragraph format is fine.

Jon
Just to clarify- Waitlisted applicants will be reviewed with Rd2 applicants, but decisions for Waitlisted will be made after March 19?

Pete_Berkeley
Jon, more specifically, after we have made decisions on R2 candidates, we will take a look at the waitlist again. That does not mean that you will receive a final decision at that time--some people will, but many will be held on the waitlist until later in the process. This, unfortunately, is the most difficult part about being on the waitlist--a certain degree of uncertainty.

Pete_Berkeley
Thank you all for participating this morning and for your thoughtful questions. Best wishes to all of you!

Laquel_Moderator
We are signing off. Thanks for all the great questions!