The Full-time MBA Program
Virtual Information Session
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Chat with Berkeley Haas
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Brooke Baranzano, Associate Director of Admissions
Sandra Cruz-Lezama, Admissions Specialist
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Talin_Moderator: Hi, everyone. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Talin Abrahamian. I’m a member of the Admissions Committee at Berkeley Haas. I am going to be hosting the webinar today. I am joined by my colleagues Brooke Baranzano and Angela Fleekop, members of the Admissions Committee as well, and they will be answering questions as they come in. Also, joining us from the Operations team are Sandra Cruz-Lezama and Andrea Brougher who will be answering your questions as we go through.

Anand: I am an international candidate, interested in a future in the Healthcare Industry - specifically Strategic Commercial Operations in pharma/biotech. What are the aspects of your program that you would say are very helpful for those looking at such careers?

Answer: Thanks for your interest, Anand! You may want to look into our dual degree with the Masters in Public Health program: http://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/academics/concurrentdegrees.html.

Bitun: I have an offer from my current company to re-join them post MBA. We plan to start our operations in the US and will be incubating new technology/trying to build investor relations while I am at B-school (as well as me focusing on my own personal development into a CEO role post MBA). Does Haas encourage incubating start-ups that have some maturity in terms of both the product and revenue in a different region of the world (the company and I are both currently based in India)?

Answer: Yes, there are many opportunities to support your entrepreneurial efforts while at Haas: http://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/academics/entrepreneurship.html.
Alyssa: Good morning! I’m working on putting together some supplementary materials, and I’m wondering: **Is there an advantage to submitting materials sooner vs. later (i.e. - closer to the 4/28 review date)?**

Answer: Good morning Alyssa! Thank you for joining us. There is no particular advantage in submitting your supplemental materials before 4/28 as these materials will not be reviewed before that date.

Rooh: **Can we send the official transcripts after the application deadlines or do they have to be sent before the application deadlines?**

Answer: Dear Rooh, for the initial review process, we require applicants to upload copies of their official transcripts onto their application. Applicants can request to have their official transcripts sent to us, but we recommend to upload your official copies onto your application to avoid any delays on your evaluations.

Raghav: Hi. I am an Indian applicant. **I completed my graduation through a 3 year commerce degree from Delhi university - Bachelor of Commerce (Hons.). Is it accepted? If yes, does that put my application at some sort of a disadvantage?**

Answer: Dear Raghav, applicants with a three-year Indian bachelor’s degree and no additional degree may apply, but are at a significant competitive disadvantage when compared to applicants with similar backgrounds and eligible education. We usually suggest for applicants in a similar situation to complete a one year master’s degree or certificate program to have the same number of study as the majority of the applicants.

Asante: Hi I am an international candidate and want to pursue the MBA program. **What are my chances of gaining admission?**

Answer: Hi! We do not discriminate by international or domestic candidates. About 40% of our class is made up of international students every year.

Akhan: **Hi! Could you please comment on the kinds of roles that are available for international MBA candidates at tech companies in Silicon Valley for internships and post-graduation?**

Answer: Hi! There are a multitude of different roles available to all of our full-time MBA students, international or domestic. I’d suggest that you research our career management group at: [http://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/careers/career-management-group.html](http://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/careers/career-management-group.html).
Rohit: Hey! I’d like to learn more about how the Haas MBA is associated with the Energy Institute at Berkeley. Any insight on this would be great.

Answer: Here is some information on the Energy Institute at Haas: [http://ei.haas.berkeley.edu/](http://ei.haas.berkeley.edu/).

Attendee: When should Consortium candidates fill out the extra essay (referencing activities they did in support of consortium mission)? Is it an opportunity for the candidate to tell you more?

Answer: Hello, this is an optional essay that Consortium applicants are able to answer. If you would like to provide us with more information that you have not yet touched upon on your application, feel free to use this space.

Alejandro: Hi, I’m having difficulty selecting my recommenders. What would be your general recommendation? What are the characteristics of a strong recommender?

Answer: They should be able to speak to the tangible impact you’ve have at your organization. You want to select someone who has worked with you extensively and can provide specific examples of your success in the workplace. We’ve seen great letters from clients, current and former supervisors, just to name a few.

Rohit: Also, do you accept an IELTS as against the TOEFL?

Answer: We accept both the IELTS and the TOEFL.

Attendee: Do you have the option of selecting concentrations? For example, I would like to pursue a combination of Business Analytics and Finance.

Answer: We have areas of emphasis at Haas, but you are not required to select a track/concentration. You can learn more here: [http://www.haas.berkeley.edu/MBA/academics/areas-of-emphasis.html](http://www.haas.berkeley.edu/MBA/academics/areas-of-emphasis.html).

Attendee: I’m an International candidate. There’s no GPA available on my official transcript, so what should I input for the application?

Answer: Hi! Please do not try to convert your GPA. We will see your grades from your transcript that you send to us. You may leave it blank.
Jannhvi:
In the supplemental information section, the extracurricular section asks for "size of organization." I’m finding it a bit difficult to find the size of the nonprofit organizations I volunteer for - what should I do if I can’t find that for some of the activities?
Answer:
Just make your best guess. You can also share other details, like the population the organization serves or how many staff to work with, etc. if you can’t find the exact size. The more detail, the better!

Attendee:
My GPA and GMAT is below the average student profile, what are the ways to improve my profile?
Answer:
Our review process is very holistic, so we read every application despite GPA and GMAT scores. We would look for you to excel in other parts of your application like the GPA or essays, letters of recommendation, or work experience.

Rooh:
Can we take IELTS for the language proficiency or only TOEFL is required for Haas? I am an International Student from India and I am looking forward to pursue a Full Time MBA.
Answer:
Dear Rooh, this is a great question. Applicants are able to take either the TOEFL or IELTS for the English Proficiency test.

Sweta:
Is it okay to put hyperlinks to certain items on the resume? For example link the company name to its website or the undergrad institution to its website - so that the reader can direct themselves to these organizations if they click on the names.
Answer:
I would suggest that you not put hyperlinks on the resume.

Fernanda:
Hello, I’m Fernanda from Brazil. I would like to ask if there is a minimum score required in TOEFL.
Answer:
We do not have a minimum score requirement.

Rooh:
What determines a better quality of work experience?
Answer:
We look at the impact and leadership that you’ve displayed in your work experience, along with the depth and breadth of your work experience as it applies to MBA prep.
Asante: I am a university undergraduate and would want to know if I still need the GMAT before I can start my application process? If yes, how do I get registered for the GMAT exams? Thank you.

Answer: A GMAT or GRE test score is a required element of the application and must be taken before the application deadline. There is no preference between the two tests, but if you would like to take the GMAT, you may sign up for the GMAT here - [https://www.mba.com/us/the-gmat-exam/register.aspx](https://www.mba.com/us/the-gmat-exam/register.aspx).

Jannhvi: As a follow up, for the activities and full-time/part-time sections, should we include descriptions of what we did? If so, is there a word limit for the section?

Answer: You can include a short description. There is no word limit.

Gary: What kind of global experience can students get through HAAS? (i.e. study abroad, internship abroad, formal trip to overseas, etc.?)

Answer: There are many opportunities to gain global experience, whether it’s through our international business development program, a global trek with classmates, or courses through the global network for advanced management. You can lean more here: [http://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/academics/global.html](http://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/academics/global.html).

Rohit: I notice that the fees provided on the website only mentions year 1. Please provide total expenses, including living costs for the total duration of the program.

Answer: Hi Rohit, the estimated expenses are calculated each year, though they stay fairly similar year to year. You may also contact the financial aid office for further detail ([http://www.haas.berkeley.edu/finaid/index.html](http://www.haas.berkeley.edu/finaid/index.html)).

Attendee: Thoughts on applying 3rd round? Is it worth it? Do you see applicants that apply in 3rd round as maybe lazy or see your school as 'backup'?

Answer: Not at all! We accept applicants in all rounds. We want you to apply when you are ready to submit your very best application.

DaJuan: For Consortium applicants - do you look at the core essay to cover the topic in essay 3 since it is not included in the Consortium app?

Answer: Dear DaJuan, we have a holistic review process for when it comes to reviewing applications. We review each applicant’s essays, professional experience, academic aptitude, GMAT or GRE examination results, TOEFL or IELTS examination results (if applicable), and letters of recommendation.
Asante: I am a Commerce undergraduate holder and would want to know if I can apply for the MBA program? Do I still need the GMAT certification in my application process?

Answer: Dear Asante, the GMAT or GRE exams are a requirement on our application. Feel free to review our website for full details about the application process.

Rooh: By approximately, how much do the chances decrease if we apply in a 3rd deadline rather than a 2nd deadline? I mean right now I am preparing for my GMAT, I need more practice to achieve the average GMAT score required for Haas MBA. So if I slip to applying for MBA in 3rd deadline instead of 2nd deadline, by approximately how much will my chances of getting admission will decrease?

Answer: We cannot guess how detrimental it would be to apply in Round 3. What I can say is that every year we accept applicants from Round 3 and also from the Waitlist. You should apply the soonest that you have your best application possible.

Attendee: Is there any kind of limitation on classes/degrees of other departments (e.g. applied math) which we can take while in Haas?

Answer: You can take up to 3 elective courses outside of Haas in other departments at UC Berkeley, as long as you meet prerequisites for that course & have professor approval.

Attendee: Where in the application may we address the "Why Haas" question?

Answer: You may really address that if you find it necessary but it’s not required because it’s not a required essay question. If you wish and have space you could include it in any essay question answer.

Alejandro: Is it possible to submit an endorsement for one of the current MBA students? Where should this endorsement be submitted? As the optional essay?

Answer: Hi! We ask that you do not submit an endorsement for a current MBA student.

Rooh: Is it better to apply in an earlier application with a low GMAT score or is it better to apply in the later deadline with a better GMAT score? For example, if by 2nd deadline I am able to achieve a GMAT score of around 650 or 670 and before 3rd deadlines, I am able to achieve a GMAT score of around 720 or 730. So is it better for any candidate to go with a better GMAT score or the candidate must prefer an earlier deadline with a RELATIVELY LOW GMAT score?

Answer: Hi! We, unfortunately, cannot answer that question. It is truly up to you based on all of the components of your application. We wish you the best of luck in the application process.
Jaanhvi: How heavily do you weigh the "future industry" noted on an application when you're considering an applicant? For example, is it "safer" to say Tech over Nonprofit because of possible post-grad job prospects?

Answer: It’s most important that you explain your motivations and roadmap for making a career pivot, whatever that may be. If you can make the case for it and explain to us your plan for making it happen, it doesn’t matter what industry it is in.

Joey: Dear team, regarding the full-time MBA curriculum (http://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/academics/curriculum.html), are the classes composed of MBA students only, or would we be taking classes with other Berkeley undergrad/grad students? Is this different for Core versus Elective courses?

Answer: Your electives can sometimes consist of other UC Berkeley graduate students, as well as students in the Haas part-time MBA program.

Rohit: How strong of an alumni community does Haas represent in the Middle East?

Answer: Hi! Please follow this link to find our International Student Representative from the Middle East: http://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/admissions/international-student-reps.html.

Anshul: I wanted to understand if you could share some statistics around the number of applicants and selection done through GRE. Is there a formula to convert GRE score to GMAT score? Thanks.

Answer: Hello Anshul, since we recently started taking the GRE, we do not have stats for this. Feel free to review our class profile on our website to review our average GMAT score. There are websites online that can assist you with converting your GRE score.

Kyong: When I prepare for an application, can I upload the unofficial transcript? Or do I have to scan the official transcript and upload it?

Answer: Dear Kyong, on our application we request for applicant to upload copies of their official transcripts. Please do not upload unofficial transcripts.

Margaret: If I’m unable to visit campus - does that put me at a disadvantage when applying?

Answer: Not at all - we totally understand that it may not be possible to visit. That does not affect our decision whatsoever.
Ahmed: Which kind of dress code would you recommend for the interview?
Answer: Business or business casual is normally fine. I would say no jeans.

Francisco: Do you accept additional support letters from alumni, different from the two in the application?
Answer: Yes we do! They can email them to our general office email address.

Kejun: Should I submit an optional essay if I had a client under current professional context to submit recommendation letter instead of a current supervisor? Thanks
Answer: There is a special space on the application for you to tell us if you are not using a direct supervisor as a recommender, so you can feel free to include that information there.

Wendelyn: Is there a typical a timeline for when interviews are offered after submitting an application?
Answer: There actually is not. We have an internal application shuffling process that does not take into account when you submitted the application. All interview invites go out by at least a few days before the notification deadline.

Attendee: Does working part-time hurt my application?
Answer: Most applicants will have full-time work experience, so please consider how your work experience would look compared to those peer applicants. But it is definitely a holistic application process so we’ll judge all of your work, academic, professional, and personal details as well!

Brittany: When is the notification deadline for round 2?
Answer: Hello Brittany, Round 2 notification deadline is March 22, 2018.

Rooh: Can we send the letter of recommendations after the application deadlines? I am asking this because sometimes it may happen that the recommender may be on a vacation or on a long leave or any such circumstances may incur. So in such a case our LOR’s may get delayed.
Answer: Your letters can come in after the deadline, but keep in mind we cannot review your application until it is fully complete, including both letters.
Francisco: Do you have a specific format or suggestion for additional support letters?  
Answer: We do not. That is up to the supporter.

Dustin: For Essay 1, if we address a few memories/stories that connect to the six word story (i.e., the story speaks to a theme in my life rather than a specific story), is that alright?  
Answer: Yes! It is up to you how you format your essay answer, but that sounds like it could be impactful.

Yash: Do you need an alumni support letter?  
Answer: You absolutely do not.

Andrea: Can I submit my application before my recommenders?  
Answer: Hello Andrea, yes, you can submit before your recommendations arrive.

Samsung: Hello, happy to attend this event. What favor are you planning for developing countries?  
Answer: We view all applicants equally no matter what country or background they are from in a holistic process.

Francisco: Do you accept a higher GMAT score after the round two deadline?  
Answer: Hello Francisco, out of fairness to all our applications, we will only review scores taken on or before our application deadline.

Francis: If it seems like round 3 is the only available option due to work and other life events, how much of a disadvantage am I at? Would it be better to wait for round 1 in August that year vs applying in round 3? Having said that, if I didn’t get into round 3 because spots filled, how much of a disadvantage am I at if I apply in round 1 only a few months later?  
Answer: Every year we accept applicants from Round 3, but it’s more competitive because there are less seats. That said, if you apply in R3 this year and do not get accepted, then we view reapplicants very positively.

Rooh: So how long can the LOR’s be delayed after the application deadline?  
Answer: Hello Rooh, recommenders are given a grace period, but it is important that they submit their letter as soon as possible.
Attendee: Follow up Q: The part-time work experience is only for the past 5 months (due to a recent move). The rest of my five years of experience is full-time. Does your response remain the same?
Answer: Correct. Most applicants will have worked full-time for their careers thus far. You may describe your work circumstances in the employment section or in the optional essay as well.

Attendee: All of my work experience has been within my family’s company and as a result all of my current and former direct supervisors have been family (brothers, dad, etc.). What do you recommend I do for my Letters of Recommendation?
Answer: Often people who work in family businesses ask clients or others who have worked with the company extensively to provide a letter.

Francis: How is reapplying viewed if you didn’t get in the prior year but are set on attending Haas?
Answer: We love reapplicants! We certainly appreciate your continued interest in Haas.

Rohit: If the application is impressive, along with the interview, do you provide conditional offers if the GMAT score is a little below the median?
Answer: We do not provide conditional offers based on GMAT scores or any other component of the application.

Francisco: In the academic section of the application, what do you mean with primary undergrad (Yes/No)?
Answer: This is a question for candidates who have done undergrad at one or more institutions. The primary undergrad is where you received your degree from.

Alejandro: Hi, in the academic history in the application form, should I submit also summer courses or diplomas, courses, etc.? Or just my undergrad?
Answer: Dear Alejandro, you want to include any education that you have done. If there is anything missing we will contact you. On our application we outline this with further details as well.
Francis: Say you were to reapply to Haas after not getting in the year prior, what further info would you need to help you stand out if you really want to attend Haas and reapply in the first round vs. the 3rd round, especially since there may not be too much that has changed in only a few months?

Answer: We want you to explain to us what has changed since your last application and how you have improved your candidacy. There is a special space for you to do this if you are a reapplicant.

Avaneesh: My interaction with students at HAAS tells me that the school plays a lot of attention on the defining principles. Should I as an applicant look to highlight experiences demonstrating one or two of these defining principles or try to address all four?

Answer: It’s up to you based on your views and experiences. You do not have to address any or you could address them. I’ve seen applications done successfully either way. We can assess fit with defining principles through all aspects of the application, including essays and letters of recommendation.

Rooh: Dear Sandra, it’s a follow up Q, can u please be more specific about how much is that grace period? Because I might be going really tight on this.

Answer: Hello Rooh, if your recommender has not yet submitted, you will be contacted and this will delay your application. Please make sure to have them submit as soon as they can.

Rohit: Should the recommenders expect to be contacted by AdCom at any point through the process?

Answer: We reserve the right to contact them, though it is not common for AdCom to contact recommenders directly.

Olivia: If I transferred three years worth of course credits from junior college to a UC, should I submit an official transcript from both schools?

Answer: Hello Olivia, yes please submit transcripts for both.

Attendee: I worked in summer in Alaska in a fishing company when I was an undergrad in Colombia. Is it something worth to mention in the supplemental section, or do you care more about the formal work experience?

Answer: You can include that if you find it meaningful to your candidacy. It is up to you!
Alejandro: In the employment part in the application form, should I include side projects? I currently involved in a startup, apart from my full time job.

Answer: If you feel that information enhances your application, feel free to include it.

Kyong: I transferred to a 4 year institution. Before transferring, I attended 2 community college. Does this fact affect the admission committee's consideration?

Answer: Absolutely not. We will see the grades and transcripts but the fact that they were community colleges has no weight/relevance.

Brittany: I spent my freshman year at a different university from where I graduated, must I send my freshman year transcript in addition to where I graduated from?

Answer: Hello Brittany, yes please provide this transcript as well. We need to see all transcripts for the institutions you attended.

Avaneesh: How does the Career Management Group help facilitate off-site recruitment?

Answer: They have many resources to help you recruit off-campus. Please learn more about them here: http://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/careers/career-management-group.html

Rooh: I have another important question. I have done B.E. in Mechanical Engineering, and I have about little more than 3 years of work experience in Technical Cum Corporate sales and the position that I have worked for was specifically meant for Mechanical Engineers only. And now I want to pursue a Full Time MBA in either Logistics/Supply Chain Management OR in International Marketing OR in Global Sales. So in which of the above mentioned streams that I mentioned, gives me a best chance of getting admitted in for a Full Time MBA at Haas?

Answer: Apologies, but we cannot evaluate any portion of your application here.

Katie: For Essay 2, can I write about a leadership experience from senior year of college or is that viewed as too outdated? (I graduated in 2013.)

Answer: Hi there - it's really up to you. I've seen that question answered successfully more recently or further back based on the relevance to your character.
Sangwon: Question again: Regarding the industry after graduation, I saw the statistics (class profile) that the energy sector accounts for 4% for career after graduation at Haas. I have a working experience in energy business, and wondering what would be my opportunities at Haas, including the community in school, network in the industry, and etc.

Answer: That’s a great question. Thanks for repeating it and apologies we weren’t able to get to it earlier. Because I want you to get a true, real answer, I suggest you reach out to our Haas Student Ambassadors who can put you in touch with a full-time MBA student recruiting in the energy field. Please email them at: HSA@haas.berkeley.edu. Just want to make sure you get the info you deserve.

Francisco: May you please share the email address to submit additional support letters? (Just to make sure I have the right one.)

Answer: mbaadm@haas.berkeley.edu

Attendee: Follow up Question on LOR when working in a family company: Almost all of my work/time is spent with my familial supervisors and my direct reports (employees). I don’t really have a client that would be able to meaningfully write to my aptitude as an applicant. Any other recommendations?

Answer: You might think about a supervisor from an extracurricular activity or a former supervisor if you have ever worked outside of the family business.

Attendee: I did a science internship in high school for college credit at a community college different from where I got my bachelor’s degree. Will it be detrimental to my application if I do not submit the transcript for that college credit?

Answer: Hello Attendee, we will not be able to determine this until we review your application. If any additional information is needed, we will contact you.

Avaneesh: In the career goals essay - I understand clarity and alignment with background are important. Do you also look at how ambitious they are? Does an overly ambitious goal (eg. Entrepreneurship for an international student or Private Equity for non-quant background student) throw a red-flag?

Answer: Good question. If you feel your career aspirations are a stretch for you, you can always include a plan B. We know that a lot of students come to Haas as career switchers, so we ask that you remain honest in your career goals.
Rooh: Does any Volunteer activity like Blood donations or having worked for any noble cause for humanity make any significant difference in our applications?
Answer: We view each application holistically, including various community involvement. The meaningfulness is determined by the time spent with the cause and the impact and leadership you’ve shown in your community involvement. You may include those if you wish. We cannot tell you how much weight they would hold without seeing your whole application.

Attendee: May I submit unofficial score of GMAT before deadline and send the official report after the deadline?
Answer: For the first initial review process, we only review self-reported scores.

Sweta: A question about outside work activities: Do you also consider if some people had very intense work schedules which did not allow for much extracurricular involvement? How do you judge this across different applications - as in what kind of information would help to show this to you?
Answer: Yes, we definitely take into consideration people who have lengthy work weeks and may not have as much time to devote to extracurricular activities as others.

Attendee: I am an investment banking analyst so I don’t get a ton of free time during normal hours to do much extracurricular activities such as girls and boys club or things of that nature that I was previously involved in in undergrad. How can I make my experience more well-rounded?
Answer: We look at the number of hours you work within your employment section so we know how much free time you have to devote to community involvement. We also look at initiatives or groups or impact/leadership you’ve had in your current work experience if you can’t devote time outside of work.

Jaanhvi: Can we include student consulting projects for real companies in the full-time/part-time work experience section?
Answer: Yes - you may include that, but please write in the context within your employment details.

Avaneesh: Across all the essays: address possible/obvious weaknesses or highlight core strengths or both?
Answer: I’d suggest you address your weaknesses in the optional essay and highlight your strengths in the core essays.
Richard: If I have poor grades in quant grades in my degree, is a high quant GMAT score good enough to balance this out?

Answer: We review applications holistically, so we will definitely look to your GMAT Q score as evidence of your ability to succeed in our quantitative classes. You can also call out any quantitative skills you use at work as evidence of your skills.

John: Is it relevant to include other recreational activities in our resume (rec sports, hobbies, etc.) alongside volunteer activities to understand how we balance our lives with our work?

Answer: You may if you have room, however, it’s not required. We’ll read those details in the extracurricular section as well. But if you receive an interview, your interviewer will only see your resume.

Rohit: At what stage am I required to have the official GMAC reports sent to Haas?

Answer: As we review and validate scores, we will contact you if anything is missing.

Attendee: For LOR’s, if I have one immediate supervisor for one. Would you recommend another past supervisor or a client who can speak to a different point of view?

Answer: You can really use either. That’s up to you who knows you the best and would write you the better letter.

Rooh: I have an option of obtaining Letter of Recommendations from 5 places.
1). One from where I have worked for 2 years and 9 months.
2). From my first job which was for only 6 months.
3). One from a Ohio, US Based organization with which I worked for making Global Business Development for about 4-5 months.
4). One from a Senior Manager who works for Shell Lubricants India, and was assigned as my team’s project coordinator during an International Event named Shell Eco Marathon 2012 held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
5). And 5th one from where I have pursued B.E. in mechanical engineering.

Can you recommend me that obtaining an LOR from which of the above mentioned places can work best for me?

Answer: Hi – we cannot tell you which recommenders to choose. That is up to you. We do prefer at least one LOR from a current supervisor.

Talin Moderator: Thank you for joining us today, and thank you for your patience. Feel free to keep in touch with any questions along the way. It’s been a pleasure getting to know you throughout this process, whether on the road or when you write in to us. So feel free to keep the connection going. Thank you.