

The Full-time MBA Program Admissions Chat, August 10, 2016

Chat with Berkeley-Haas

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Lizzy_Moderator: Welcome to the Berkeley MBA Admissions chat. My name is Lizzy Hazard, and I will be moderating the chat today. Joining us will be Cindy Jennings Millette, *Senior Associate Director of Admissions*; Candace Gonzales-Tumey, *Assistant Director of Admissions*; Talin Broosan Abrahamian, *Assistant Director of Admissions*; Sandra Cruz-Lezama, *Admissions Specialist*; and Adrian Ramos, *Assistant Director of Financial Aid*. Please send us your questions

Cindy_Berkeley: Greetings! I'm Cindy Jennings Millette, Senior Associate Director of Admissions. I look forward to answering your questions.

Adrian_finaid: Hello, welcome to our chat. My name is Adrian Ramos and I am the Assistant Director of Financial Aid at Haas. You can visit our site at www.haas.berkeley.edu/finaid

Candace_Berkeley: Good Morning! I look forward to answering your questions today.

Sandra_Berkeley: Morning everyone, welcome to our chat. My name is Sandra Cruz-Lezama and I look forward to chatting with you today.

Talin_Berkeley: Good morning, everyone! I'm Talin Abrahamian and I look forward to answering your questions!

HiboUAE: Regarding applications - **what is the biggest mistake you have seen applicants make?**

Cindy_Berkeley: I think trying too much to please the admissions committee actually. We really value authenticity in the process. I know this can sound cliché but we really want to get to know you better. So try to answer the questions (directly) with the first thing that comes to mind. Then have a friend look over the essays to see if they really do stay true to who you are. Then also have someone who can review more from a professional standpoint, like a colleague. Just don't be afraid to be yourself!

Camille Crenshaw: Hello! Thank you for setting up this chat session. **I'm wondering if there is more financial aid available to students who submit applications and are accepted first round vs. second round?**

Adrian_finaid: Funding is limited when it comes to scholarships. As we get later into the review dates some scholarships may have been paid out. But it varies every year.

Daryl: **I am an international student and do not have a GPA, what should I enter?**

Sandra_Berkeley: Good morning, Daryl. This is a great question, you are able to fill in this area with your academic average i.e. 90%, if this is how your institution ranked you. There are some international schools that ranked their students as First Class.

HiboUAE: Not sure if there are students amongst the panel - but **my question is generally aimed at the older student who has been working for some time. What's the biggest adjustment you have had to make to student life?**

Cindy_Berkeley: I'm afraid that we don't have any students on the chat but you can email the Haas Student Ambassadors at hsa@haas.berkeley.edu to see if they can connect you with a student.

CryanD12017: **What's your favorite song?**

Candace_Berkeley: That is a tough one! I like many genres but this morning I was listening to "Fly me to the moon" by Sinatra so that's what come to mind.

Gordon H.: **On average, what percent of a particular class is made up of students accepted in round 1? What percent of round 2 students?**

Cindy_Berkeley: Hi Gordon - We don't have any quotas for this so it really depends on the year and caliber of the pool. However, I will say that if you are trying to decide whether to apply in Round 1 or 2 I'd say apply when you feel that you are ready and your application is the strongest it can be. Apply as early as you can but if you can't make the Round 1 deadline I wouldn't rush it. You want to feel good hitting the submit button.

jadefeinberg: **Are there scholarships or financial aid offered to international or developing country students specifically ?**

Adrian_finaid: Our scholarships are open to international students and we also have some that are specifically for international students, the Dr. Tahihir Fellowship. You can review the information at <http://haas.berkeley.edu/finaid/MBA/entering-students.html>. We also do have some International Loans for those that do not have a co-signer that is a US Citizen. It is a "Risk Share" Loan. Currently, the maximum loan amount per academic year is \$62,000.
<http://haas.berkeley.edu/finaid/MBA/international-loans.html>

Preethi_Chegu: **What is the weightage given to an applicant's pre-MBA industry and career function? Is there a preference to a particular domain?**

Candace_Berkeley: Hi Preethi! We have a holistic review so there is no weightage given to any particular aspect of the application. Please know we have no preference for any industry. Our goal is to great a class of students with diverse professional backgrounds and interests.

Elizabeth Margarit: Good morning and thank you for being here! **My question is about essays - besides obviously answering the questions, do you have any tips as we prepare to answer?**

Cindy_Berkeley: Hi Elizabeth - My tip is to answer the question with the first thing that comes to mind rather than try to guess what would be impressive to the admissions committee. We want to see the real you. I'd also suggest that you have a friend review the essays and also someone else - like a professional colleague.

NadiaZaman: Good Morning! Thanks for taking time to host this. **I noticed for letters of recommendation a current supervisor is recommended and if we did not have a letter of rec from a supervisor we need to provide an explanation. How big of an impact would it be if we didn't get a current supervisor to write one? In my case, my current supervisor does not know that I am applying to MBA programs.**

Talin_Berkeley: Hi Nadia. You will not be at a disadvantage if you are unable to get a letter from a current supervisor. We ask for the letter to come from a current or former supervisor; however, we do understand that it may not be possible for some candidates. We ask you for an explanation because we don't want to make assumptions about why you didn't provide a current supervisor letter of rec. If you are unable to attain a letter from a current or former supervisor, you can provide a letter from a client you've worked with or a colleague/peer.

- Wei Dai:** Good Morning, thank you for hosting this! **Essay Question 1 is very unique, can you elaborate as to why we are asked about music?**
- Candace_Berkeley:** Dear Wei – We want to know more about you! Culture and fit are very important to us so the song essay helps us to get to know you a little bit better.
- Richard Ryu:** **To all, got a quick question about the cohort system. Within each cohort teams (15 teams of 4 students), how often does the team dynamics change? Do we stay with the same cohort until 2nd year?**
- Cindy_Berkeley:** Richard, 40% of the curriculum is made up of core classes in the first year when you are in the same cohort. 60% of classes are electives when you are not within the same cohort. So you really get to know the 250 or so classmates very well! The dynamics continually are changing - This is one of the amazing things about b-school. You also are placed on study teams for your first semester that really do challenge your team and leadership skills, as the teams are very diverse and complex.
- Jaclyn:** **In terms of applying for financial aid, do you have to wait until you have been admitted to the school to initiate the process?** In other words, is it possible to find out **how much funding is available to an individual student before he or she decides to enroll?**
- Adrian_finaid:** In term of scholarships, you will be able to view our Entering Scholarships page to see the types of scholarships we offer and the amount of the scholarship. Here is our page <http://haas.berkeley.edu/finaid/MBA/entering-students.html> we are currently updating for the upcoming admits. In terms of student loans, we do have our current Cost of Attendance. You can apply for the maximum amount when applying for private loans. For federal loans, after completing the FAFSA and have been accepted, you would be offered federal loans in the amount of our maximum cost of attendance. International loans will be capped at \$62,000 for the academic year. Here is our current cost of attendance page: <http://haas.berkeley.edu/finaid/MBA/cost.html>
- Erica. Swan:** **If we are planning to do any sort of professional development/leadership type of programs in the fall (and are applying round 1) what is the best way for us to denote that this is happening (even though it hasn't begun yet)?**
- Candace_Berkeley:** Hi Erica, If you would like to inform us of this, you may include it in the optional essay. Please do follow up with us upon the completion of said programs.

MA: **Regarding the GMAT, how does the committee evaluate the Integrated Reasoning compared to the Overall Score this year? More specifically, which score would be looked upon more favorably by admissions for a non-underrepresented-minority candidate - 750 IR4 or a 700 IR7?**

Candace_Berkeley: Dear MA - this is a very specific question and unfortunately, I simply cannot answer it because we evaluate applications holistically. Yes, we do look at the IR. It should be consistent/in-line with the rest of your score.

Erica. Swan: **Do you find that there is a typical industry that incoming students come from? After Haas, do you know what the breakdown is of what industries graduates go into?**

Talin_Berkeley: Hi Erica. Candidates come from all types of backgrounds. We bring in such a diverse group of students each year from consulting to social sector to IB to those interested in energy...just to name a few. There is no preference for one background over another so please present your best and be clear in your third essay (why MBA, why Haas, career goals). As far as where students end up going post graduation, you can view our career statistics on our website but keep in mind those industries/job functions are based on students' interests. Our campus is committed to helping you find meaningful work (whatever that may be for you). Hope this helps.

Maiara Hofmann: **Hello! I would like to know what differentiates Berkeley's curriculum from the curriculum of other programs. And what about the teaching method?**

Cindy_Berkeley: Hi Maiara, Very good question. There are so many similarities in the top MBA programs and the curriculum is similar. We are all MBAs for sure. I think the difference is the culture in within the classroom. There is a huge diversity in the teaching styles. Some schools are more case based vs lecture based. Most MBA programs are team based. I think for our curriculum classes are a balance of case studies, lecture, group projects and experiential learning. We place a huge emphasis on learning by doing (as I know some other schools do) but also in learning leadership skills - such as dealing with ambiguity or leadership without authority. If you look at our Defining Principles it emphasizes the type of leader we are trying to develop --- and within this ecosystem of our beneficial location & unique culture.

NadiaZaman: **How big is the alumni base in Los Angeles?**

Cindy_Berkeley: Hi Nadia - I don't have exact numbers, but as an MBA alum you have access to connect with all UC Berkeley alumni - which is pretty huge. You might want to check out the alumni website where you can get an idea of the alumni activities and events: <http://www.haas.berkeley.edu/groups/alumni/community/index.html>

Nick: **Can a co-worker provide me with a letter of recommendation?**

Sandra_Berkeley: Hello Nick, we prefer that both letters come from a current or former employer, but we also understand not all applicants have the same options for letters of recommendation. Select individuals with whom you have had considerable professional interaction such as your supervisor or a major client. We suggest to applicants not to obtain letters of recommendations from co-workers. There is an optional essay question in the application, where you can explain to our Admissions Committee to why you are unable to provide us with a letter from a current or former employer.

HiboUAE: **The application requests letters of recommendation. I would like to ask a member of my community with whom I work on inter-faith engagement. He is a chaplain. Or should I just stick to my professional sphere - in which I have many great referees?**

Cindy_Berkeley: Hi HiboUAE, I would suggest that you stick to your professional sphere for your recommenders.

claresimonis: Hi there! **I am wondering if you can touch on the interview format for applicants who are extended an interview.**

Talin_Berkeley: Hello! Your interview may be with a current second year student (if you come to campus) or an alum (if you choose to interview off campus). We do not have a preference...you get to decide where you want to interview. That said, the interviewer will have a copy of your resume (that's it). Please be prepared, dress professionally, be on time, do your research on Haas, and practice beforehand! You should also prepare some questions to ask the interviewer at the end. This is basically a fit interview so you should be weighing your fit with the school/program as much as we're evaluating your fit with us. Good luck! :)

Preethi_Chegu: **Could you please elaborate a bit on the kind of roles offered in the tech domain by companies like Adobe, Microsoft, Google, etc.?**

Cindy_Berkeley: Hi Preethi - There is a variety of roles in tech such as finance, marketing, and product management. More info on jobs are on our Career Management Group website: <http://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/careers/recentrecruiters.html>

DonohueHansen: In my case, I've had my current supervisor for less than 6 months and she is not particularly involved in my work. I've asked an indirect supervisor (at same level as my current supervisor) whom I've actually indirectly reported to for almost 3 years and I work with more directly on my current projects. Is it a sufficient to indicate on the application that my current supervisor I've had for too short a period and I don't believe they can speak truly to my current work?

Talin_Berkeley: Hello! There is no real right answer and people usually have a variety of reasons they are unable to or do not want to provide a letter of rec from a current supervisor (i.e. entrepreneurs, working for the family business, applying in confidence, length of time w/current supervisor, etc.) but your explanation sounds like a valid one. Hope that helps.

Leo: Hi, I have seen that Haas requires us to provide Supplemental Information, including extracurricular activities and full-time and part-time jobs held during undergraduate or graduate. If my experience isn't that colorful as others, is my chance to get admitted lower than others?

Candace_Berkeley: Hi Leo – We do take all of your experiences inside and outside of the classroom into consideration when looking at applications. I am not sure what you mean by colorful. Are you passionate about something? Held a leadership position? Passion and drive always shine through. Be authentic in your history and your career goals. If there was something preventing you from involvement let us know. Perhaps there were other ways that you contributed to the community that are not reflected in extracurricular activities section.

Brandon Allen: Berkeley seems to be attentive to ensuring a diverse student body through initiatives that involve increasing gender and racial diversity. **How does Berkeley factor economic diversity in its admissions process- i.e. achieving success despite growing up in a financially poor family? I imagine this is valuable to know insofar as this background comes out in a meaningful way in the essays, but is enduring this sort of hardship viewed positively?**

Cindy_Berkeley: Hi Brandon - Good question. We certainly do value diversity in all forms including economic diversity. There are a couple of ways where I think we do this: One way is for embracing resilience and overcoming hardship within our application review process. Another way is through financial aid. We have a needs based scholarship as well as a "Haas Achievement Award" scholarship that specifically asks candidates to submit an essay discussing how they have overcome a significant hardship.

Maiara Hofmann: **In Essay 1, we should only mention the song's name or we should restate a specific part of the song in our essays?** Thank you!

Candace_Berkeley: Hi Maiara – Please reveal enough of the song to illustrate your point. Please do not feel that you need to post all of the lyrics. Save your word count for insight about you.

Camille: **Can alumni provide a supplemental recommendation? How should they do this?**

Sandra_Berkeley: Hello Camille, A current Berkeley-Haas student or Haas Alum is able to provide us with supplemental letter for an applicant. They are more than welcome to send us an email or mail in a letter.

Elizabeth Margarit: **What are some ways that you get to know your classmates outside of the classroom? Does Haas have any fun or unique events that students participate in?**

Cindy_Berkeley: Hi Elizabeth - There are so many! It is impossible to list. You might want to check out this MBA16 recap: <http://haasachieves.haas.berkeley.edu/ha16/by-the-numbers/>

Rohit Ray: Good morning. **My question is regarding weightage given to international experience in candidate's profile? Will he or she be at a disadvantage if there's no work experience outside the native country? How does the admission committee view that?**

Talin_Berkeley: Hi Rohit. Thanks for your question. We bring in about 40% international students each year and many of the candidates (if not most) have work experience outside of the US. We are evaluating the quality of your work experience. What kind of impact have you had at your various jobs, are you collaborative, have you demonstrated leadership qualities in one way or another, etc. Hope that helps.

wzaww: Good morning. **Compared to other top B-schools, how is Berkeley's alumni network in China?**

Talin_Berkeley: Hi there! I'm not familiar with other programs; however, we have a strong alumni network in China. I will actually be in China in about a month and will host an information session in both Beijing and Shanghai. If you are in either of those areas, please register to attend. I would love to meet you! You can view our travel calendar here and register for events:
<https://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/admissions/offcampus.html>

- Owen Yang:** Good morning! **Coming from a healthcare background, I am wondering if there are any core/elective courses that have a focus on healthcare administration? If so, do these curriculums break down into more specific sectors within the industry?** For example, Pharma vs. Biotech vs. Life science.
- Cindy_Berkeley:** Good morning Owen. Yes, there are specific courses focused in healthcare admin. There is some diversity in this year to year. Many students interested in healthcare take elective classes in our School of Public Health. Learn more about our health management focus and MBA/Masters in Public Health degree here: <http://www.haas.berkeley.edu/advantage/health/index.html>
- gautam:** Hi, **what's the recommended way to get in touch with local alumni and are you planning any admissions event in Singapore?**
- Talin_Berkeley:** Hi Guatam. We post our travel calendar here: <https://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/admissions/offcampus.html> so you can see if we are going to visit a city near you. We also have alumni chapter heads all over the world, so please feel free to view the list here: <https://haas.berkeley.edu/groups/alumni/community/chapters.html>
- Michelle Moon:** Good morning. I have spoken with some Haas alumni on their recommendations for must-take courses at the school. **How does course selection work, and how likely is it that I would be able to take some of the more popular courses taught by "celebrity professors"?**
- Candace_Berkeley:** Hi Michelle! Course selection is done in a manner that is as egalitarian as possible. Please know if you wish to take a course from a celebrity professor you have a great deal of control over the process. I can't promise you that you will get all of the celebrity professors. We have quite a few.
- Ajor:** **Why do we have to scan the front and back pages of our transcripts?**
- Sandra_Berkeley:** Dear Ajor, each academic institution is different; therefore, we ask applicants to scan both front and back pages of the transcripts in order for us to see the transcript key.
- Gautam:** Hi, **what are some key and recommended engagement activities for spouses of students?**
- Candace_Berkeley:** Hi Gautam! We have a vibrant partner community here at Haas. Please see the Haas Partners Club website for specific opportunities for engagement. <http://haas.campusgroups.com/partners/about/>

Brad Crist: **Could you speak to which industries you placed the last graduating class of students (e.g. 10% go into consulting after graduating, 15% finance, etc.)?**

Cindy_Berkeley: Hi Brad - I'd check out our employment reports. All business schools report on their Class of 2016 data in October - so we should have numbers posted for the most recent class after that time.
<http://www.haas.berkeley.edu/groups/careercenter/hireanmba/employment-reports.html>

IgorBorges: Hello and thank you for chatting with us! **My question is regarding employment and visas. Do you have any statistics on how many international graduates are able to secure a job and visa upon graduation? Should it be a concern for international students who wish to secure employment post-MBA?**

Cindy_Berkeley: Hi Igor: I do not have specific data for international students - but I would not be concerned. Our graduating students are successful regardless. The one question I often get is what if you want to work in the US (as an international student) post MBA? This does pose somewhat of a challenge as not all employers will sponsor a visa. As I've heard from international students, however, companies are pretty clear going into the process if they are open to sponsoring a visa. And many international students secure opportunities in the US post-MBA. Definitely takes a bit more time and initiative.

Jposner: Hi everyone. Thank you for hosting this chat. **Would you shed some light on the third essay that asks about career plans? How specific do I need to be?**

Talin_Berkeley: Hello! You don't have to have the exact company or function in mind; however, we do want a clear career goals essay that is also realistic. If you have short-term career goals and long term career goals, feel free to include those. We want to make sure you have done some self-reflection, understand why you want your MBA (and why now) and how Haas is going to help you achieve your future career goals. Hope that answers your question.

Gordon H.: **Regarding letters of recommendations, do you have any advice on how to approach the recommender? I've asked my direct supervisor, COO at my company and he suggested that I should write it and he can review it. I know this is not the best way and I am planning to ask him again for him to write it and not me. How should I approach this?**

Candace_Berkeley: Hi Gordon - We can't condone writing a letter for your recommender to review. Unfortunately, not knowing your recommender I can't tell you how to approach him or her.

Alexis MOULIN: Good morning everyone. **I am an international applicant who has not worked nor studied in an English country so far. Does it weaken my application?**

Talin_Berkeley: Hi Alexis. We do require a proficiency test and I am providing the information from our website below. If you have any follow-up questions, feel free to ask! Best of luck to you!

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is administered in three formats, internet-based, paper and pencil, and computer-based. If you take the internet-based version, you must earn a score of at least 90. If you take the paper and pencil version, your score must be at least 570 out of 677. And if you take the computer-based test, you must earn a score of at least 230 out of 300. For detailed information about the TOEFL please visit the TOEFL website at <http://www.toefl.org/> While TOEFL is preferred, you can submit scores from the Academic Modules of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) designed by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate and administered by the British Council worldwide. To register for the IELTS, consult the IELTS website at <http://www.ielts.org/>, or contact the office of the test center where you plan to take the test. You may also write the British Council, Bridgewater House, 58 Whitworth Street, Manchester, M1 6BB, U.K. or email the Council. You are responsible for providing us with an official Test Report Form (TRF) of your IELTS. Remember to order the TRF when you register to take the test. Your most recent overall BAND score must be at least 7 on a 9-point scale.

gautam: Hi! **Does the program incorporate new practices in business, new business models, latest trends and developments beyond the core curriculum and how?**

Cindy_Berkeley: Hi gautam, I can say most certainly. I think the how is a more detailed question for a chat! You may also want to ask current students are experiencing it. One way to do this is to contact our Haas Student Ambassador team at <mailto:hsa@haas.berkeley.edu>. Or we encourage everyone to come visit and experience a class for yourself!
<http://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/admissions/visit.html>

Shrishti: **Could you throw some more light on what exactly Haas believes in, when it says "Question the Status Quo" - Should I say, the opportunity to think out of the box?**

Talin_Berkeley: Hi Shrishti. This will help answer your question:
<http://haas.berkeley.edu/mission/principles.html>. If you want to hear a student's perspective, feel free to reach out to our Haas Student Ambassadors (<mailto:hsa@haas.berkeley.edu>) and inquire.

Jaclyn: **How are interviews set up?**

Sandra_Berkeley: Hello Jaclyn, interviews are offered both with current students on campus and with alumni in cities around the world. They are conducted solely at the invitation of the admissions committee, and only after the initial review of your application. If you are extended this invite, you will be able to select either on-campus or an off-campus interview.

Marjan Soleimanieh: Good Morning Haas Staff! **I was wondering if Haas accepts classes taken after college as proof of your analytical ability, especially to offset a lower quant score on the GMAT?**

Talin_Berkeley: Hi Marjan. Yes, you can submit transcripts from classes you've taken as a part of your application and to illustrate your ability to perform well in quant-heavy courses. Best of luck to you!

Anant: **Is it better to apply in the earlier rounds?**

Sandra_Berkeley: Hello Anant, applicants are encouraged to apply as early as possible, provided that you do not sacrifice the quality of your application to do so. If you find that you need more time to revise your essays or retake the GMAT, for example, you should definitely take the extra time to do so.

Anthony: **Do current students have the opportunity to work with a startup or other organization during the school year? Also, in summers, do most students stay in the area to take advantage of internships?**

Candace_Berkeley: Hi Anthony, Yes! This is a broad question so I would like to refer you to our applied innovation courses. <http://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/academics/applied-innovation.html>. There are numerous opportunities to work with startups – Please see The Startup Lab in particular. Students stay in the area or travel across the nation for internships.

IgorBorges: Sorry, I forgot to put a "not" in my question. **I know there are plenty of international graduates that secure jobs. I would like to know if there are any that do not.**

Cindy_Berkeley: Hi Igor: Thanks for clarifying. I do not know any international students who have not been able to secure a job if they are actively searching. Some take longer than others. We have generally 40% international students graduating each year. If you are referring to securing jobs in the US - not all international students are able to find the right opportunity to remain in the states, but many do.

Ankush Bagwale: **How strictly does the word count matter? I mean would an additional 4-5 words beyond the prescribed limit make a huge impact in the decision?**

Sandra_Berkeley: Hello Ankush, the word count limits for the essays are established so we can see how well you can express your thoughts, points, and ideas concisely and effectively. Please try to stay within the word limits as much as possible. It is acceptable for an essay to be a few words over the limit. However, if an essay goes substantially over the word limit it could be detrimental to your application.

Mwenya: **I completed a liberal arts degree, but studied sciences to an advanced level at high school and have a quantitative element to my job. Would I be expected to answer the question about my quantitative ability because I did not study a STEM subject during undergrad and do not have a purely quantitative job?**

Talin_Berkeley: Hi Mwenya. You do not need to come from a STEM subject to illustrate quant skills. If you do well on the GMAT/GRE, that can also illustrate your ability to succeed in our program. We offer candidates an opportunity to explain their quant abilities if they are coming from a non-quant background if they feel their application doesn't adequately show us their quant abilities. Here is some info from our website that goes into a bit more detail: Quantitative proficiency is assessed by looking at whether applicants have taken calculus, statistics, and/or any upper-level math courses during their undergraduate education. The Admissions Committee will also look at your GMAT or GRE score, and the quantitative nature of your work (if any) to determine your level of quantitative proficiency. The curriculum at Haas includes courses that have a qualitative focus and others that are more analytical and quantitative. All applicants should have completed, at a minimum, a college-level mathematics or statistics course. Haas faculty who teach quantitative courses will assume you have mastered the basic material. Therefore, although there are no official course requirements, the Admissions Committee looks carefully at quantitative proficiency when making its admissions decisions.

NadiaZaman: **What are the first few words that come to mind when describing a typical Haas MBA student?**

Candace_Berkeley: A humble rock star who wants to change the world.

Chinedu Nwosu: Hello again! Thank you all for making out time for this. I have some 11 years experience in the oil and gas energy industry on a heavy technical role, so I pretty understand the science. Over this time I have lived in the UK, US and Nigeria. I am looking to apply to Berkeley because I see you have some great energy initiatives and centers. At this stage in my career I wish to understand better the financial aspects and strategies behind a successful business. **What's your experience with MBA students that have such a long career and what's your advice on the application?**

Cindy_Berkeley: Dear Chinedu: We have huge diversity in our students and appreciate this! As someone who has more work experience than the average my only advice to you is to continue to elaborate on what you have said about your reason for pursuing an MBA now, and how this relates to your future career ambitions. Also expand on how you will contribute to the Berkeley-Haas community based on your extensive expertise and experience. Hope this helps!

Lizzy_Moderator: Hi all! Thank you for joining us. The chat will be wrapping up in a few minutes. We greatly appreciate your questions. We apologize if we didn't get to all of them. Please check back on our website for transcripts of today's chat and for future chat dates. The speakers will continue to address some questions already in their queue, but we will not be forwarding additional questions.

KathleenG: Hello! Thanks so much for setting up this chat. **Do you have any advice for choosing the "right" people (and avoiding the "wrong" people) to write letters of recommendation?**

Talin_Berkeley: We highly discourage academic letters of rec. We want to see recommendations from those who have worked closely with you in a professional setting. Also, who signs your letter (CEO of company, etc.) is not as important as what the letter contains. Use your best judgment. You know who knows you best and who would probably go to bat for you...pick that person!

hamzakb: **Cal-Berkley is known for its focus on Tech. Does that mean admission of applicants who mention Tech as their career goal is going to be more competitive as compared to applicants who want to go to other/traditional fields?**

Candace_Berkeley: Dear hazakb - no.

adi: **I have questions specific to Real estate opportunities at HAAS. How is it different from others?**

Cindy_Berkeley: Hi Adi, I don't know as much about the other real estate options but I know that Haas' location and curriculum is top notch. I think the advantage is having the opportunity to take classes outside of the business school to add to your expertise. (i.e. School of Urban Planning, School of Architecture, School of Engineering). Also the Lester Center is well known - There are a lot of opportunities to network with the real estate community and take part in various real estate competitions. More here: <http://mba.haas.berkeley.edu/academics/realestate.html>

Michelle: **Since finishing my undergrad education, I have worked at two companies. I have been with my current company for four years. I am leaning towards picking both recommenders from my superiors at the current company, but would you see any merit in reading a recommendation from my supervisor at the previous employer that I left four years ago?**

Talin_Berkeley: You can submit both letters from your current company if you'd like. Since you've been at the current company for a good length of time, that information might be more relevant than what your former supervisors might say; however, it is completely up to you! You are more than welcome to submit a letter from a former supervisor if you feel that it would be a great letter that illustrates something different than what your two current superiors might say.

wzaww: **What is the biggest difference between Berkeley and Stanford, since two schools are located closely?**

Candace_Berkeley: Dear wzaww - The two schools are vastly different. However, you must determine which school would best serve your future goals.

amfox: Expanding on Preethi's question about recruitment, **would the student ambassador email address you shared earlier in the chat be an appropriate channel to use to reach current students about their recruitment and career guidance experiences?**

Talin_Berkeley: Yes, absolutely!

Elizabeth Margarit: **I read that a vast majority of Haas alumni settle on the West Coast - are there recruiting efforts that target companies based on elsewhere in the country?**

Candace_Berkeley: Hi Elizabeth! Yes.

Gordon H.: **If I have taken academic credit classes after my undergrad at a community college, do I report/will Haas calculate my GPA from both transcripts?**

Sandra_Berkeley: Dear Gordon, if you have taken classes post-undergrad please report this on your application. On your application you will note each institution that you have attend, and the GPA for each. If it is not on a 4.0 scale, you will be able to note that as well. We will review each transcript(s) from the institution(s) you have indicated.

Richard Ryu: **Hi Cindy, I enjoyed reading your response in the previous chat about the strategic plan 6 years ago and all the changes that came out of it. Are there any other major changes in plan for Haas in terms of curriculum? Also, can you tell us more about the expansion of Haas: (Are you happy with the current number of students?) Thanks!**

Cindy_Berkeley: Hi Richard: We are currently looking at the curriculum and how to further define specific behaviors to create an innovative leader. (Not an easy task!) The construction of our new building is going well and should be done in the spring tentatively. We most likely are looking to expand our class size a bit this year - but nothing is confirmed. Even with the new building our mission is to retain our small class size, which is so integral to our collaborative and intimate culture.

Michael_Neary: **How do you look at professional certifications, such as a CFA, CPA or Series 7? Where in the application should we be elaborating on these certifications?**

Talin_Berkeley: HI Michael. That information provides another data point and it will be evaluated with the rest of your application holistically. We encourage you to include that info on the application. You can include it in the application itself (we ask about degrees and certificates) and also on your resume. Thanks for your question!

HiboUAE: **The letter of recommendation offers a waiver for examination. Does it make a difference if applicants waive or not waive?**

Talin_Berkeley: No, it does not matter. If your recommender is comfortable with you having access to their letter, that's up to them. Makes no difference for us.

- jposner:** **Do first year students have opportunities to work with professors on research projects?**
- Cindy_Berkeley:** Hi jposner - your first year is pretty focused on core so most likely this would happen in the second year. But you also could pose this question to the students at hsa@haas.berkeley.edu to see if they are aware of any examples.
- Arnav Verma:** **How is the Haas experience influenced by being a part of the UC Berkeley University, specifically in terms of collaboration for projects, events and available courses?**
- Candace_Berkeley:** MBA students take full advantage of being part of a university that are rated top ten in many graduate programs. You are able to take 6 units in another program and apply it to your MBA degree. We also have events where you are able network with other graduate students and, of course, you are able to team up with other graduate students for case competitions.
- Eric Zhao:** Morning, officers! **I'm afraid that I won't have appropriate time for a campus visit. Will it be enough for me to know about Haas through reaching out to alumni and students?** Thanks.
- Cindy_Berkeley:** Eric - Certainly! We definitely understand that visiting campus takes additional time and money - so we do not look at this in the admissions process. Hope this helps!
- Lizzy_Moderator:** Hi all! Thank you for joining us. The chat is wrapping up and shutting down. We appreciate your questions and we apologize if we didn't get to all of them. Please check back on our website within the next couple weeks for a transcript of today's chat and information on future chat dates. Go Bears!
- Adrian_finaid:** Thank you for participating in our chat. I hope I was able to answer your financial aid questions. Please feel free to email our office at finaid@haas.berkeley.edu for more information or if you have follow up questions.
- Talin_Berkeley:** Thank you all for the questions. We apologize if we were unable to get to all of them. Feel free to email us at mbaadm@haas.berkeley.edu for any other questions and best of luck to you during this journey! Go Bears!
- Sandra_Berkeley:** Thank you all for chatting with us, GO BEARS!
- Candace_Berkeley:** Thank you for your time! I hope we were able to provide some insight into our program and the admissions process!
- Cindy_Berkeley:** Thank you so much for your questions! Look forward to reading your applications. Go Bears!