

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE
REQUEST FOR DECISION

PRESENTED BY: Alison Oates, chair, Academic Programs

DATE OF MEETING: Committee October 21, 2021

SUBJECT: **Changes to Admissions Qualifications – Master of Business Administration (MBA) program**

DECISIONS REQUESTED:

It is recommended that the Council approve the change to admissions qualifications to the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program to allow applicants to hold a three-year undergraduate degree, effective the 2022-23 admissions cycle.

PURPOSE:

University Council has the authority to approve changes to admissions requirements degree-level programs. Senate confirmation is required for such changes.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND:

The College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) and the Edwards School of Business proposes a change to the admission requirements for the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program to allow admission to the MBA program for applicants with a 3-year undergraduate degree. This change, along with the addition of a requirement of leadership experience and the replacement of the admission interview with a written statement of intent will allow the selection committee to take a holistic view for admissions.

CONSULTATION:

The academic programs committee reviewed the proposal for this program at its September 22, 2021 meeting. The committee expressed some concerns about allowing admission with only a 3-year degree, but recognized that applicants to the MBA program come from a diverse backgrounds and that allowing students with a variety of academic backgrounds to join will enrich the experience in the program for all.

FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED:

University Senate will be asked to confirm Council's approval of this change at its next meeting

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1. Proposal for change to admission qualifications for the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program**



MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Programs Committee of University Council

Copy: Marjorie Delbaere, Associate Dean of Research and Faculty Relations, Edwards School of Business

From: Office of the Associate Dean, College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Date: September 14, 2021

Re: Proposed Changes to Admission Requirements for the Master of Business Administration

The Edwards School of Business is proposing to allow admission to the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program for applicants with a 3-year undergraduate degree. They are also proposing to require a minimum of 2 years of leadership experience, and to replace the admission interview with a written statement of intent. It was demonstrated that some comparator programs allowed admission to the MBA program with a 3-year undergraduate degree.

The Graduate Programs Committee reviewed the proposal on March 22, 2021, and there was general support for the proposal, though some recommendations were made to strengthen the proposal. At that meeting it was noted that the CGPS did not allow any admissions with a 3-year undergraduate degree, so the proposal was referred to the CGPS Executive Committee. The CGPS Executive subsequently asked the CGPS Faculty to consider whether 3-year undergraduate degrees should be considered in some instances. Feedback was invited by all members of the faculty body. No objective feedback was received, while some faculty members expressed support for an opportunity to consider 3-year undergraduate degrees for admission on a case-by-case basis for individual programs.

It was noted that holistic admission practices was a current discussion topic in graduate education.

On June 7, 2021, the proposal was supported unanimously by the Graduate Programs Committee. The proposal was subsequently supported unanimously by the CGPS Executive Committee on June 17, 2021.

Attached please find support from the review committees along with the proposal.

If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Clement at kelly.clement@usask.ca



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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MEMORANDUM

To: Graduate Programs Committee (GPC)
From: Debby Burshtyn, Chair - Executive Committee
Date: June 17, 2021
Re: Proposed change to admission requirements – Master of Business Administration (MBA)

On June 17, 2021, the Executive Committee (EC) considered the noted proposal.

At the graduate faculty meeting on May 7, 2021, this item was proposed for feedback. Associate Dean Walker introduced this item on behalf of the GPC as the committee felt that it potentially conflicted with CGPS policy. The faculty found no issues with allowing an alternate admissions path as indicated within the proposal.

The proponents made one additional change to the proposal as presented at the EC meeting on June 17th which was to include an interview requirement rather than require a written letter of intent.

Overall the EC found no issues with the proposal. **Simonson/Jones – proposal approved unanimously.**

If you have questions or comments, please contact Dean Debby Burshtyn at 306-966-5759.

/II



MEMORANDUM

To: Executive Committee of CGPS

Copy: Noreen Mahoney, Associate Dean, Students and Degree Programs, Edwards School of Business

From: Graduate Programs Committee

Date: June 9, 2021

Re: Proposed change to admission requirements – Master of Business Administration (MBA)

The Edwards School of Business is proposing to allow admission to the MBA program for applicants with a 3-year undergraduate degree. They are also proposing to require a minimum of 2 years of leadership experience, and to replace the admission interview with a written statement of intent.

The Graduate Programs Committee reviewed the proposal on March 22, 2021, and there was general support for the proposal, though some recommendations were made to strengthen the proposal. At that meeting it was noted that the CGPS did not allow any admissions with 3-year undergraduate degree, so the proposal was referred to the CGPS Executive Committee. The CGPS Executive subsequently asked the CGPS Faculty to consider whether 3-year degrees should be considered in some instances. Feedback was invited by all members of the faculty body. No objective feedback was received, while some faculty members expressed support for an opportunity to consider 3-year degrees for admission on a case-by-case basis for individual programs.

It was noted that holistic admission practices was a current discussion topic in graduate education.

On June 7, 2021, the Graduate Programs Committee reviewed an updated proposal passing the following motion:

Motion: To recommend approval of the changes to admission requirements and selection criteria for the MBA program to allow admission with a 3-year or 4-year degree, to require 2-years of leadership experience, and to replace the interview with a statement of intent.

Da Silva/Morrison CARRIED unanimous

Attached please find the proposal.

If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Clement at kelly.clement@usask.ca

TO: College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
FROM: Noreen Mahoney
Associate Dean, Students & Degree Programs
DATE: April 8, 2021
RE: MBA Changes

The following changes were approved at the March 9 and March 30, 2021 MBA Committee Meetings and are presented to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for approval.

1. **MOTION:** Add a note indicating that applicants with three-year degrees may be considered for admission. By using a holistic admissions approach, extra consideration will be given to GMAT scores and leadership experience for applicants with three-year degrees.

Rationale: Each year, our program receives inquiries from several students who have completed three-year degrees at the University of Saskatchewan or elsewhere. These prospective students would be assets to the program however they are not meeting minimum admission requirements because they have a three-year undergraduate degree. We wish to be able to consider these students for full admission to the program to ensure they are eligible for scholarships and awards.

2. **MOTION:** Replace the admission interview with the Program Manager with a Statement of Intent to be reviewed by an Admissions Committee.

Rationale: The purpose of this change is to minimize the administrative burden of interviewing all applicants and move the responsibility of final admissions decisions to a Committee.

3. **MOTION:** Add in a clearly defined leadership/work-experience requirement of 2 years, with the flexibility to admit "emerging leaders" (at the discretion of the Admissions Committee).

Rationale: Students with experience are an asset to the MBA classroom. Of the 17 Canadian schools reviewed, Cape Breton University is the only institution without a work experience requirement. The median work experience requirement of the 16 institutions requiring work experience is 2 years.

4. **MOTION:** Add a note about probationary admission encouraging students who do not meet the minimum requirements to contact the MBA Office.

Rationale: The MBA Admissions Committee may at times wish to consider students for admission who do not meet the minimum requirements. The Committee can recommend to CGPS that these students be admitted under a probationary admission status. The committee will be viewing these candidates within a holistic framework that seeks to understand all aspects of a candidate's character, qualifications, and experiences. Examples of situations that may warrant probationary admission as a result of insufficient GMAT score, or average requirements may include, but are not limited to:

- Students with several (5+) years' leadership experience
- Students enrolled/previously enrolled in a professional college

MARK-UP OF PROPOSED CHANGES FOR MOTIONS 1 – 4

Master of Business Administration

- Language Proficiency Requirements: Proof of English proficiency may be required for international applicants and for applicants whose first language is not English.
- a cumulative weighted average of at least a 70% (U of S grade system equivalent) in the last two years of study (i.e. 60 credit units)
- a four-year degree, or equivalent, from a recognized college or university
 - Applicants with three-year degrees may be considered for admission. Applicants will be considered using a holistic admissions approach and should demonstrate a strong potential for success in the program through outstanding GMAT scores and/or exceptional leadership experience
- ~~• applicants will participate in an interview with the M.B.A. selection committee~~
- Statement of Intent: Applicants must provide a written Statement of Intent (1000-word maximum) describing why they want to undertake the program and how their expertise, work and/or volunteer experience make them an ideal candidate for the program and their chosen field of study. This statement is a key component in adjudicating each applicant's suitability to the program. An interview may also be required to assess language proficiency.
- Current resume detailing positions held and a description of responsibilities
- Two years of leadership* experience. Emerging leaders who have fewer than two years of leadership experience but who demonstrate exceptional leadership potential through their professional and life experiences, are preparing for further leadership roles, and otherwise meet the standard admissions criteria, are encouraged to apply. Please ensure that you demonstrate your leadership experience in your detailed resume and Statement of Intent.
- minimum score of 500 Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT); or completion of the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) and admission to the U of S College of Medicine
- three confidential letters of recommendation (minimum one academic)

The Edwards MBA **Admissions Committee** assesses applicants on a **holistic** basis for admission purposes. We look at a variety of factors when making admission decisions including undergraduate degree, grade point average, work experience, GMAT score, and reference letters.

Applicants whose qualifications do not meet the minimum requirements are encouraged to contact the Edwards MBA office to discuss potential opportunities for admission. Applicants whose qualifications do not meet the minimum requirements or whose academic qualifications are difficult to assess may be admitted on a probationary status to a program. Applicants in this category will be required to participate in an interview with the Edwards MBA Admissions Committee and may be required to take certain preparatory courses to improve their qualifications. In this case they will be required to pay additional fees. The student's status will be reviewed after a specified amount of academic work is completed. If progress is satisfactory, the Edwards MBA Admissions Committee may recommend to CGPS that the student be considered fully qualified. Students who do not achieve the probationary conditions may withdraw voluntarily or, failing this, will be required to discontinue. In certain exceptional situations, the academic unit may extend the probationary period with a new set of conditions, agreed to by the student and by the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

*Leadership experience could include (but is not limited to) one or more of the following:

- Formal leadership role within an organization or volunteer group
- Extensive, high-level supervisory experience
- Experience in consulting or negotiating change in a complex environment
- Experience leading others to shared outcomes (informal leadership experience)

Sincerely,



Noreen Mahoney, CPA, CA, MBA
Associate Dean, Students & Degree Programs
Edwards School of Business
PotashCorp Centre - 25 Campus Drive
Saskatoon, SK, CA S7N 5A7

Institution	Degree Requirements	GMAT	Work Experience
USask Proposed	3 yr / 70%	500	2 years Leadership exp
U Alberta	4 yr / 3.0 GPA - will consider 3 year degrees for otherwise strong applicants	550	2 years
U Manitoba	3 yr / 2.5	550	2 years
Athabasca	3 yr / 3.0	Not required	3 years
York	3 yr considered with one year work experience beyond minimum	Satisfactory	2 years
McMaster Accepts	3 yr from institutions recognized by the WHED / competitive	600	2 years
McGill	NA?	Satisfactory	2 years
Royal Roads	4 yr (or comparable) / B+ (flexible admission)	Not required	5 years
Cape Breton	4 yr / B+	500	Not required
URegina	4 yr / 70%	500	2 years
U Calgary	4 yr / 3.0	550	2 years
HEC Montreal	4 yr	570	2 years
Brock	4 yr	550	4-7 years
U Ottawa	4 yr / 70%	50th Percentile	3 years
SFU	4 yr / 3.0	550	2 years
UBC	4 yr / B+	550	2 years
UVic	4 yr / B	550	2-6 years