

DO I NEED AN INTERNSHIP?



Sharon Irwin-Foulon
Executive Director

Career Management and Corporate Recruiting

Will doing an MBA put your career at risk? Will you end up with something less?

My advice? Re-shape your thinking from the short term to the long term. View the MBA experience as a long-term investment in yourself. I am not minimizing the uncertainty of the economy or other external factors, and I would never make promises about where you might land when you are finished. But, the best

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schools will treat you as a partner in this decision and I recommend that you do likewise. Research information on the career support the school offers, profiles of the most satisfied students and how they managed their experiences, and past performance of

their alumni. All of this information will help you to feel at ease about how to get to where you want to go in your career before, during, and after the program you choose.

It might be surprising for you to learn that the most successful students aren't necessarily those with the best academic performance. The most successful students are those who choose to be the best informed and engaged candidates, and who have approached the school's admissions process with our shared interests in mind. Similarly, the best schools are choosy about who they admit and will not admit you if they don't think they'll be able to help you to achieve your personal goals for the program. This approach just makes sense for our shared reputations and lifelong relationship.

As a one-year MBA option, the most frequently asked question we get is whether an internship is necessary for career progression. We consider

ourselves specialists in talent identification and development. If you are successful in being admitted to Ivey, it is our view that you do not need an internship. We also have a commitment to letting candidates know if we do feel that an internship would be beneficial for them, and we do not admit them if we don't think they'll be successful and thrive in our program. In some cases, we suggest they look at other programs or re-apply once their work experience has more depth. Again, this approach just makes sense for our shared reputations.

Ivey is a school that after seventy years moved from a traditional format, with time for a summer internship, to a twelve-month program without it in 2007. Since that time, we have been successful in sustaining the highest MBA placement rate and starting salaries in the market. We have seen both options operate and we made this decision thoughtfully, with deep consultation from the recruitment marketplace. We knew that the best MBA internships were those that stretched students' learning and gave them exposure to the market — and worked best for those candidates who did not have strong work experience before they arrived. By bringing a deeper rigour to the profile of who we admit, we eliminated this requirement for our students' success in the marketplace after graduation.

Know that the best school for you will vary based on where you are at in your career and what your short and long-term goals are. Working with the admissions team as a partner, whose best interests are served by ensuring you are ready for their program, will help you to understand when and if their MBA is the right one for you.

Thinking about an MBA?

How to build your school short list:

So many schools. So much work to submit an application. Here are a few research points to help you figure out which schools you should put on your short list, and which ones you might not bother with.

1. Test for the rigour and consistency of the school's admissions criteria:

Admissions standards at MBA schools and employment results are tied together. When looking at schools to consider, look carefully at their year-over-year track record of full-time placement results, and compare across schools. These are readily available and will help you to assess if there is alignment between who they admit, the calibre of their curriculum, and if the school is in tune with what recruiters in the marketplace need and want from their newest hires.

2. Define if you want a one or two-year program. After over seventy years of offering an MBA, Ivey moved from a traditional format, with time for a summer internship, to a twelve-month program without it. Since that

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3. Ask the admissions team if you are ready for an MBA. At Ivey, we take our role as specialists in talent identification and development seriously. If we think you need more experience and/or an internship, we will direct you that way, and look for your application at another time. This kind of transparency and working closely with our applicants is a serious part of the work we do to help ensure that our shared interests are being met. We want to get to know you so you can make a decision you feel confident in and committed to. Once that work is behind you, you can come to your MBA program focused and ready to work hard to succeed.

4. Talk to alumni. This isn't a sales pitch. These are real people who lived the decision making and the experience of an MBA program. If they are being generous with their time and opinions, make the most of it with your most honest questions and ideas. You will be glad you did!

5. Shape your approach to the relationship with the school. It might be surprising for you to learn that the most successful students aren't necessarily those with the best academic performance. The most successful students are those that choose to be the best informed and engaged candidates, and who have approached the school's admissions team and process with our shared and long-term interests in mind. Similarly, the best schools are choosy about who they admit and will not admit you if they don't think they'll be able to help you to achieve your personal goals for the program. This approach just makes sense for our shared reputations and lifelong relationship.

All of these dimensions will help you to make a decision you feel good about. You only ever have one MBA on your resumé. Make sure it is a decision and association you will be proud of.

