

SUMMARY REPORT:

# THE GRADUATE BUSINESS CURRICULUM

Results of the Graduate Business Curriculum Roundtable Benchmark Survey | **MARCH 2025**



Innovation Through Collaboration



## The Graduate Business School Curriculum Benchmark Survey

The Graduate Business Curriculum Roundtable (the Roundtable), a global consortium dedicated to advancing graduate business education through curricular and co-curricular innovation, recently conducted its biennial Curriculum Benchmark Survey. This comprehensive study provides critical insights into the business school curriculum, including areas of instruction, targeted skills, and pedagogical approaches, current program structures, and emerging trends.

Between November 2024 and February 2025, 110 business schools contributed detailed curriculum information for 245 graduate business programs for the study. Collectively, the 110 business schools enroll more than 112,000 students in 913 graduate business degree programs and supported by nearly 8,000 faculty (FTE).

The findings from this study offer the reader a strategic perspective on the evolving needs and opportunities within graduate business education, serving as a valuable resource for program planning and continuous improvement.

The results of the survey are presented in multiple reports to provide participating business schools with both high-level insights and in-depth comparative data, including this **summary report**, which highlights key findings, trends, and overall patterns observed in the survey.

In addition to the summary report, each participating business school receives a **comprehensive data report**, which provides question-by-question analysis and comparisons to help them analyze their own performance and positioning. The comprehensive report is supplemented by an **appendix** of open-ended comments, providing qualitative insights from respondents that offer further context and depth to the survey findings.

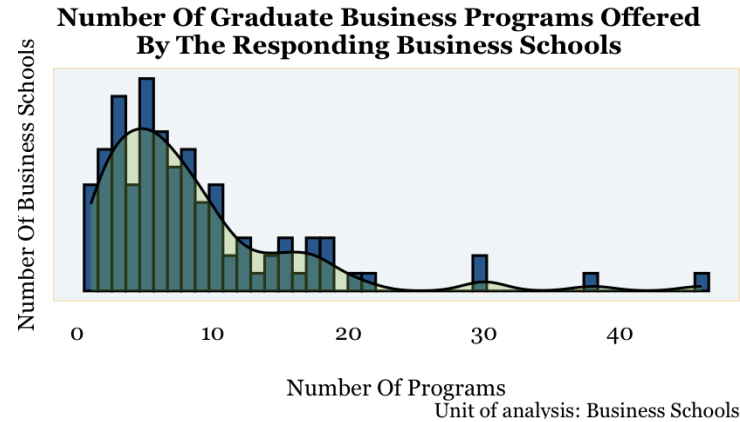
Furthermore, participating business schools have access to a **benchmark report**, a powerful tool that allows them to compare their results with a selected group of five or more peer institutions. This Roundtable offering enables schools to analyze their standing with the aggregate of the selected schools, gaining comparative and competitive intelligence about the business school curricula. By leveraging these reports, institutions can identify strengths, address gaps, and make data-driven decisions to enhance their programs in an evolving academic landscape.

Note: The results of this study do not necessarily reflect a statistically representative sample of graduate business schools or programs. Because of this limitation, the results should not be used to generalize about the global population, but they can be used as a reflection of the sample frame under consideration.

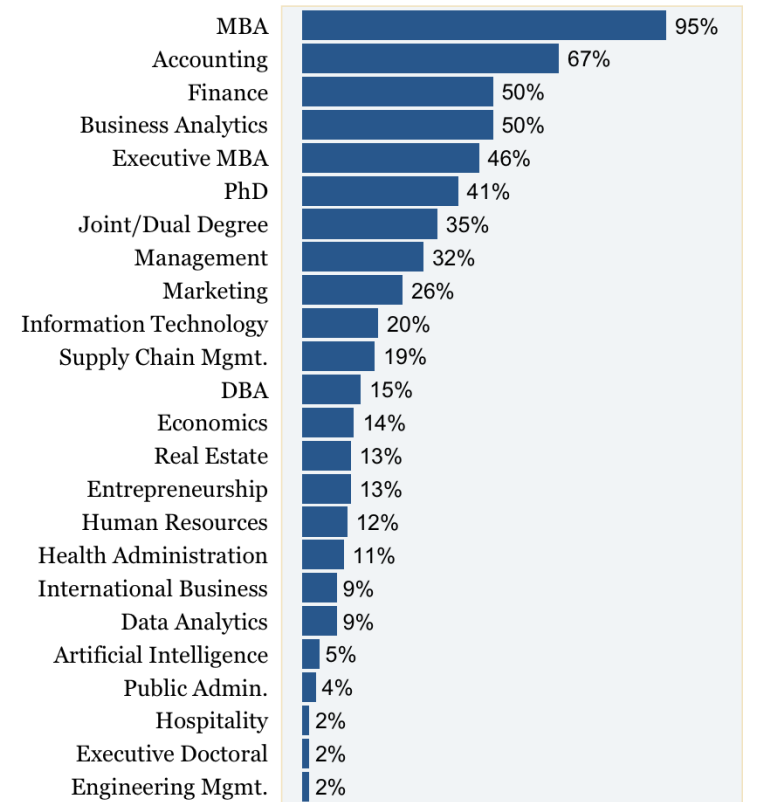
# Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

## Meet The Responding Business Schools

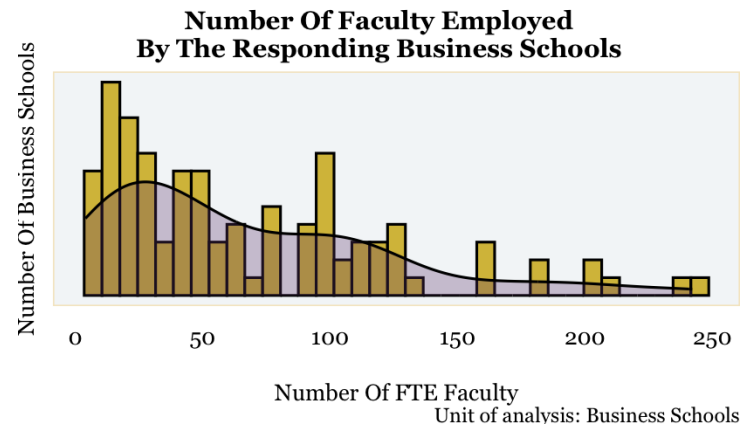
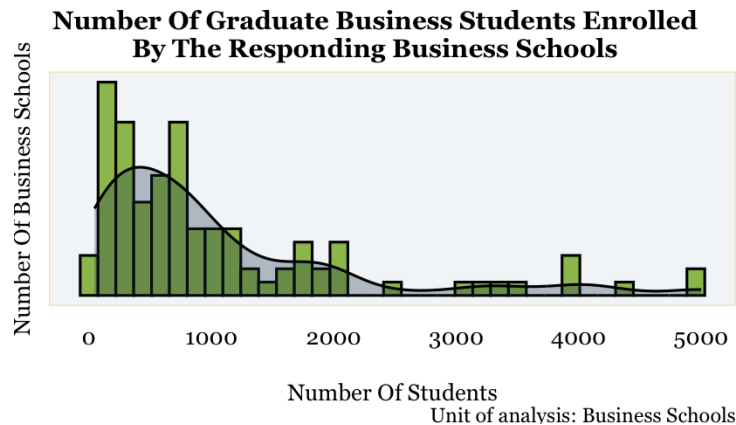
The survey respondents represent a diverse set of business schools, each offering an average of eight programs with a total enrollment of approximately 1,060 students. These programs are supported by an average of 68 faculty members, resulting in a student-to-faculty ratio of 16 to 1. Nearly all responding schools offer an MBA program, reflecting its central role in graduate business education, while at least half provide specialized master’s programs in Accounting, Finance, and Business Analytics.



**Graduate Business Degree-Granting Programs Offered By Responding Business Schools**



Multiple selections allowed.  
Unit of analysis: Business Schools



## Thoughts On The Business School Curriculum

The evolving educational landscape is shaping curriculum development with emerging areas such as artificial intelligence (AI) and automation, sustainability and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles, and entrepreneurship and innovation. These areas reflect the increasing demand for future-ready skills and interdisciplinary learning.

However, institutions face challenges in adapting their curricula. Shifts in student expectations, rapidly evolving industry needs, and faculty resistance to change create barriers to transformation. Aligning academic programs with market demands requires overcoming these hurdles while maintaining educational integrity.

To address these challenges, institutions are leveraging key opportunities to enhance curriculum effectiveness. Strengthening partnerships with business and industry fosters real-world relevance, while data-driven decision-making through learning analytics improves program design and student outcomes. Additionally, faculty training initiatives are essential in ensuring instructors are equipped to deliver modernized content and embrace pedagogical advancements.

By strategically navigating these challenges and opportunities, institutions can build a curriculum that remains competitive, responsive, and impactful in preparing students for the future.

Emerging areas and disciplines that business schools should emphasize in the curriculum were categorized using a principal component analysis, which identified four dimensions that collectively account for 57 percent of the variance.

- **AI Innovation and Sustainable Enterprise** highlights the transformative power of AI alongside sustainable practices, ESG considerations, and entrepreneurial innovation.
- **Digital Resilience and Organizational Dynamics** highlights both the strategic shifts in workplace structure (Remote Work and Organizational Behavior) and the critical areas of protection and management (Cybersecurity and Risk Management).
- **Digital Innovation and Behavioral Economic** reflects a response pattern indicating the digital transformation aspects of Digital Marketing, E-Commerce, and Fintech along with the focus on consumer decision-making from Behavioral Economics.
- **Virtual Realms and Ethics** emphasizes the transformative nature of metaverse and virtual worlds while highlighting the importance of data privacy and ethical considerations in today's digital landscape.

Overall, respondents identified AI Innovation and Sustainable Enterprise as the most important disciplines that should be more prominently featured in the curriculum.



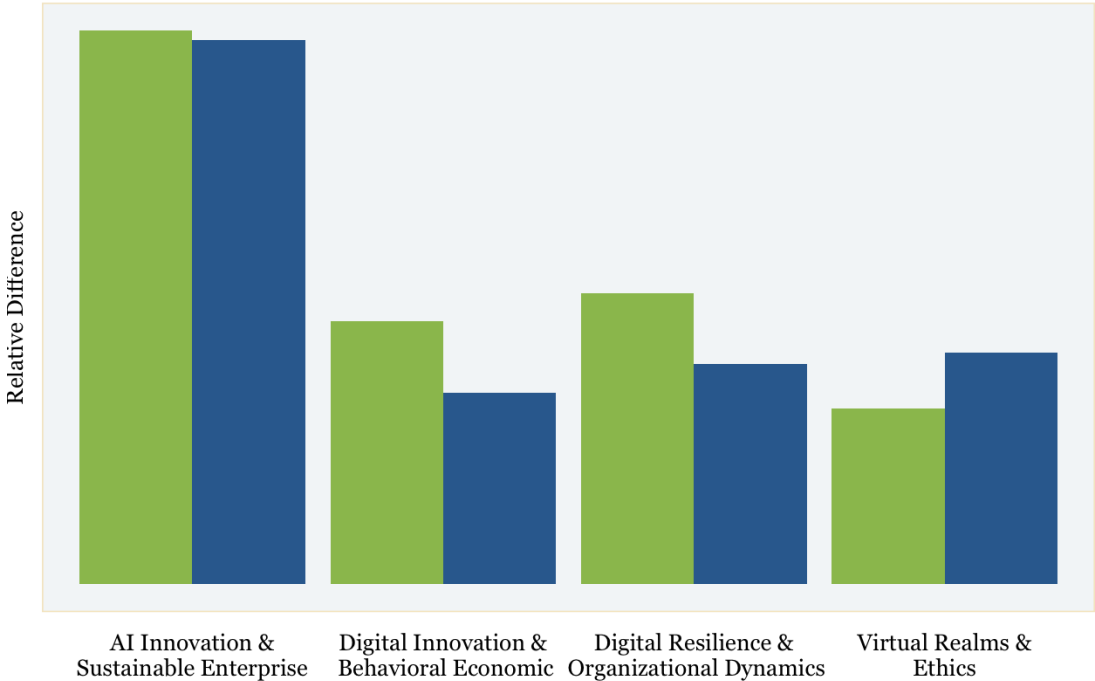
# Emerging Disciplines For The Business School Curriculum

Public institutions are more likely to advocate for an increased emphasis on digital innovation and resilience, whereas private institutions tend to prioritize the inclusion of virtual realms.

Emerging areas recommended for curricular emphasis differ by region as shown below.

**Emerging Areas For The Business School Curriculum, By Locus Of Control**

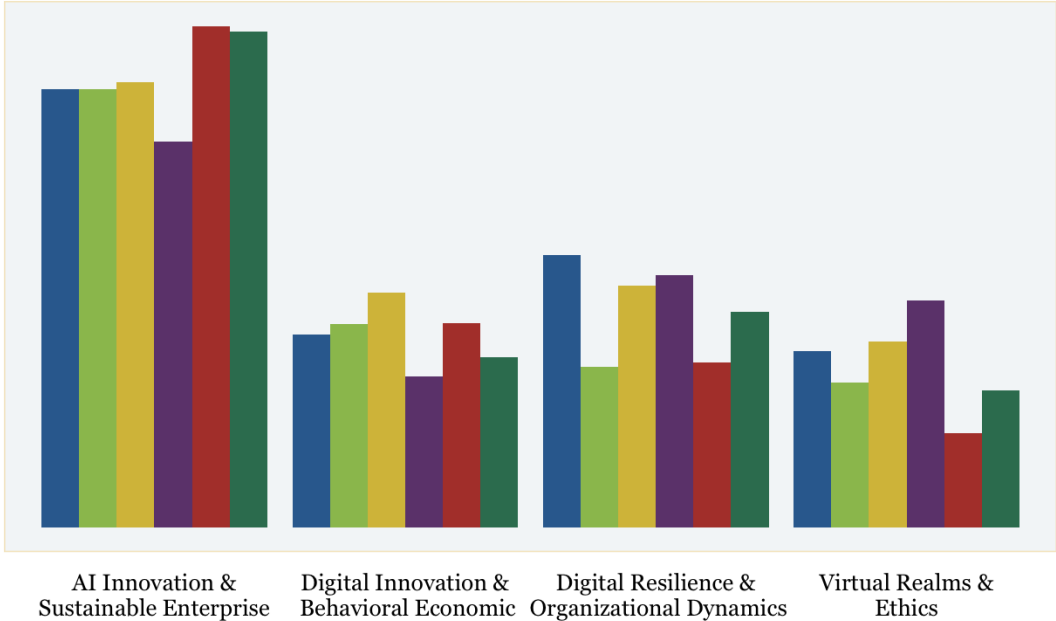
Public Private



Unit of Analysis: Business Schools  
PCA analysis results

**Emerging Areas For The Business School Curriculum, By Region**

US-NE US-MW US-W  
US-SA US-SC Non-US



Unit of Analysis: Business Schools  
PCA analysis results

Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

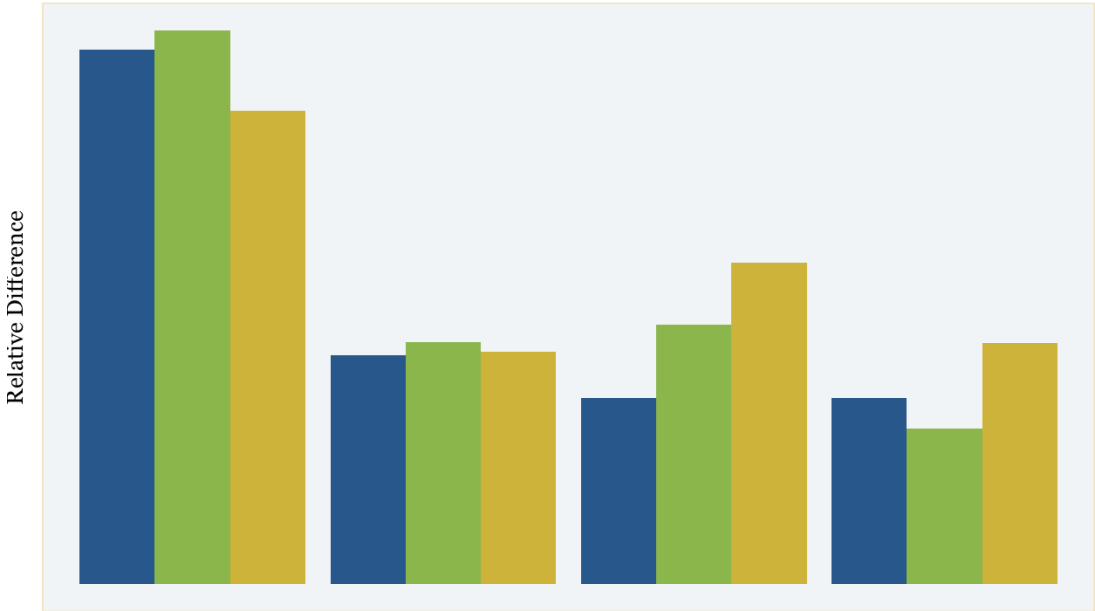
# Emerging Disciplines For The Business School Curriculum (continued)

Emphasis on digital resilience follows a monotonic trend across U.S. locales: non-urban areas prioritize it the most, urban areas show moderate emphasis, and large urban areas the least.

Emphasis on digital innovation follows a monotonic trend across business school sizes with very large schools prioritizing it the most.

**Emerging Areas For The Business School Curriculum, By US Locale**

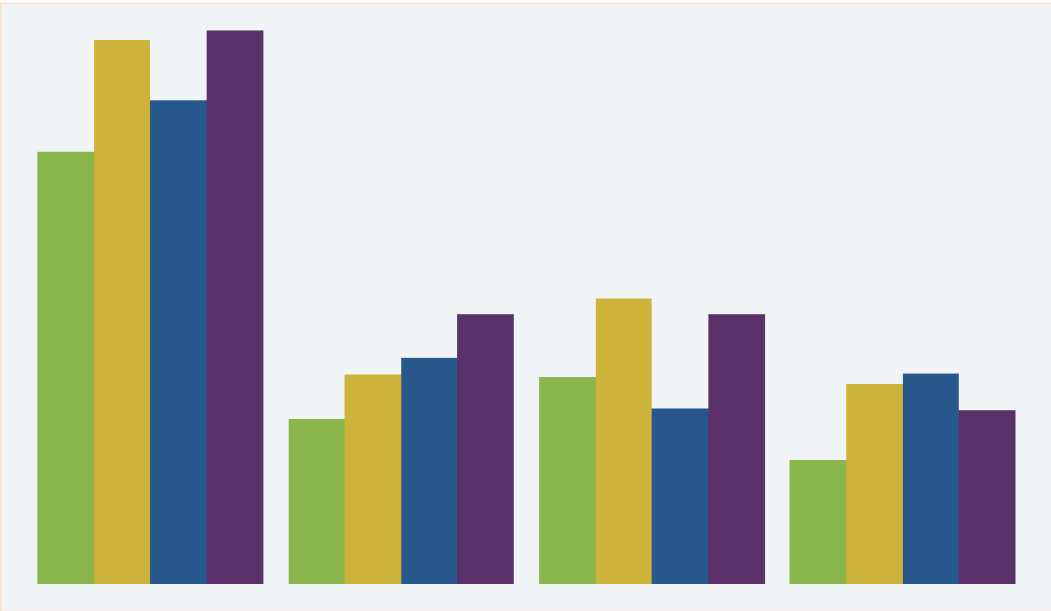
Large Urban Other Urban Non-Urban



Unit of Analysis: Business Schools  
PCA analysis results

**Emerging Areas For The Business School Curriculum, By Business School Size**

Small Medium Large Very large



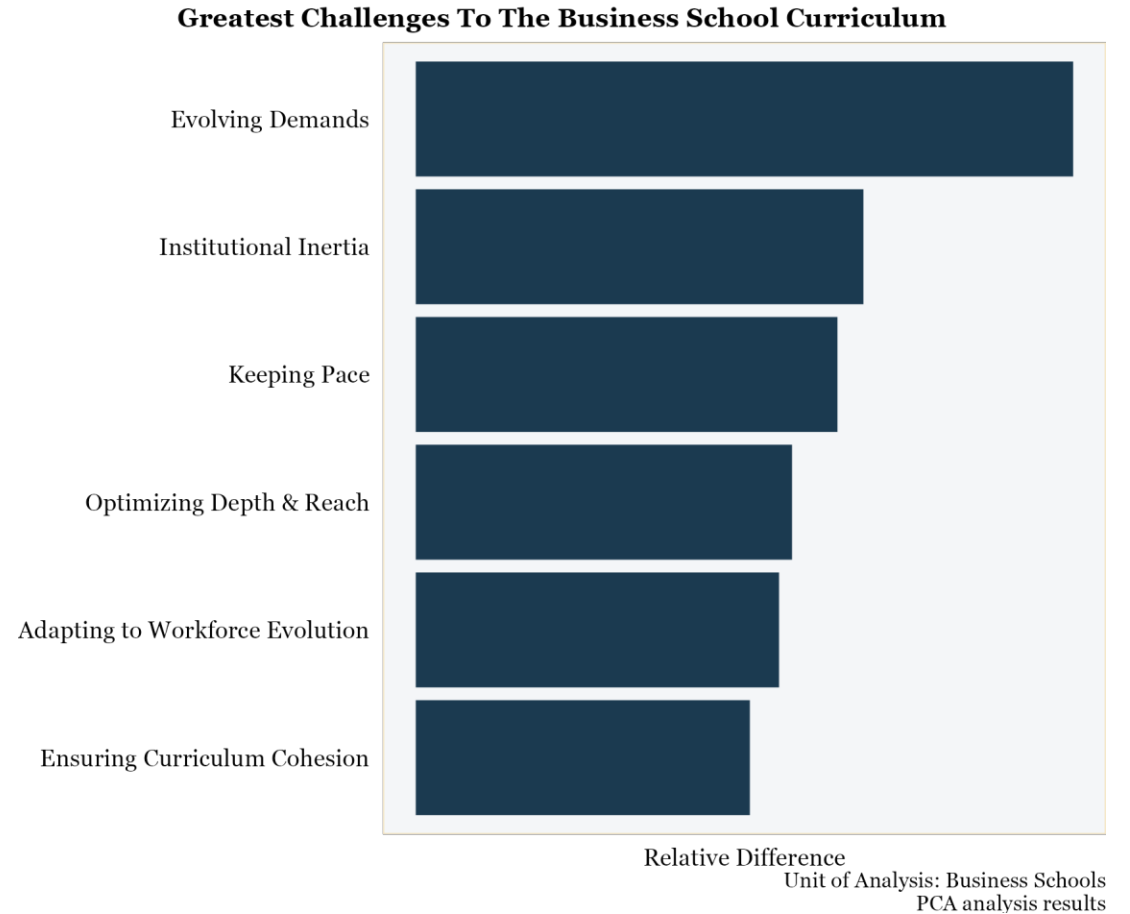
Unit of Analysis: Business Schools  
PCA analysis results

## Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

# Challenges To The Business School Curriculum

The challenges that business schools face were categorized using a principal component analysis, which identified six dimensions that collectively account for 55 percent of the variance.

- **Evolving Demands** captures the challenge business schools face in responding to shifting expectations from students and employers while competing with alternative education providers.
- **Institutional Inertia** encapsulates the challenge of faculty and staff resistance to change, which can slow curriculum innovation and adaptation.
- **Keeping Pace** captures the challenge business schools face in integrating technology, responding to rapidly evolving industry demands, and adapting to new learning models
- **Optimizing Depth & Reach** captures the challenge of balancing specialization with a broad, generalist approach while ensuring the curriculum remains scalable.
- **Adapting to Workforce Evolution** encapsulates the need for business schools to adjust their curricula in response to shifting employer expectations, the growing emphasis on soft skills, and the integration of interdisciplinary approaches.
- **Ensuring Curriculum Cohesion** reflects the challenge of maintaining consistency across programs and course sections while effectively balancing theory and practice. It also emphasizes the need for reliable methods to measure curriculum outcomes, ensuring alignment across all aspects of business education.

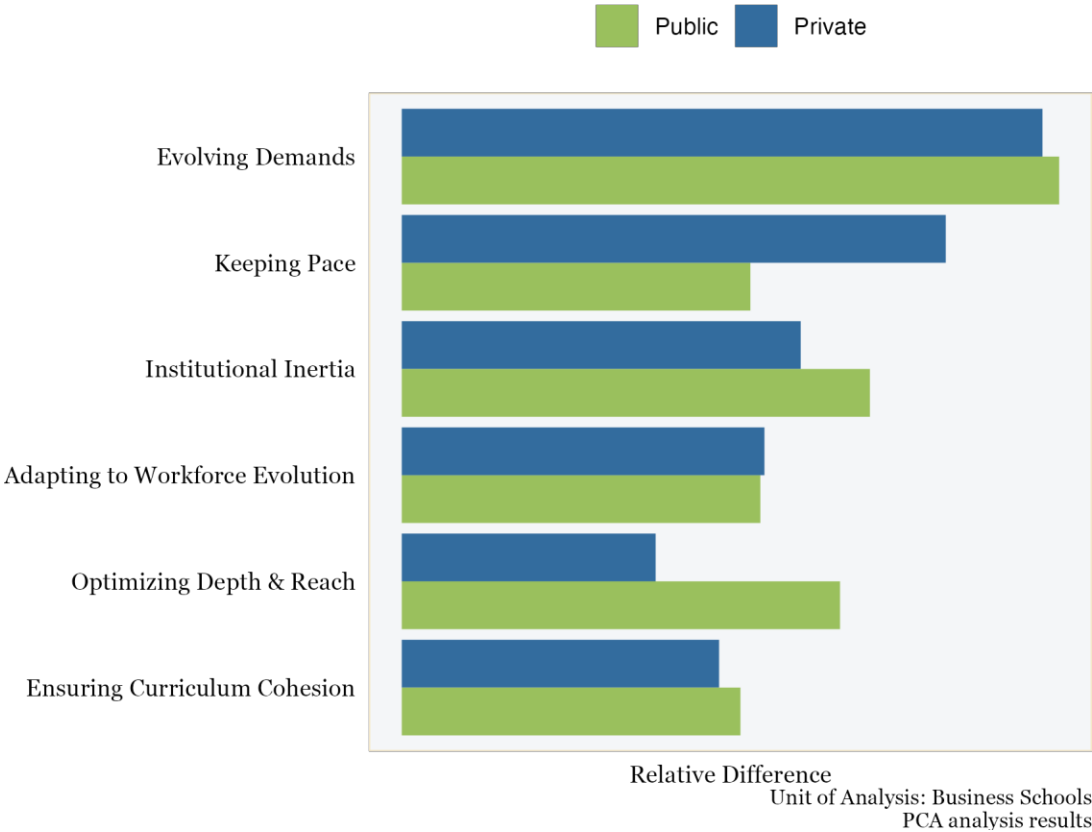


# Challenges To The Business School Curriculum (continued)

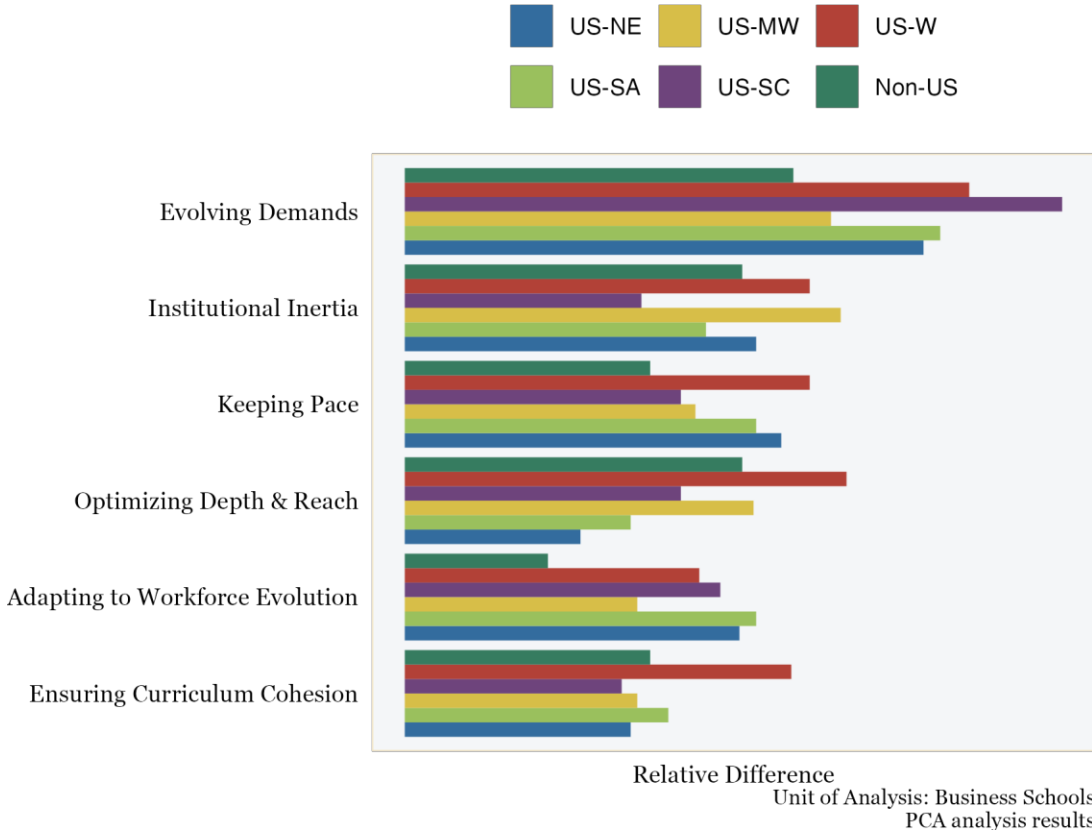
Private schools are more likely to be concerned with keeping pace, while public schools are more concerned with institutional inertia and optimizing depth and reach.

Challenges faces by business schools differ by region as shown below.

**Greatest Challenges To The Business School Curriculum, By Locus Of Control**



**Greatest Challenges To The Business School Curriculum, By Region**





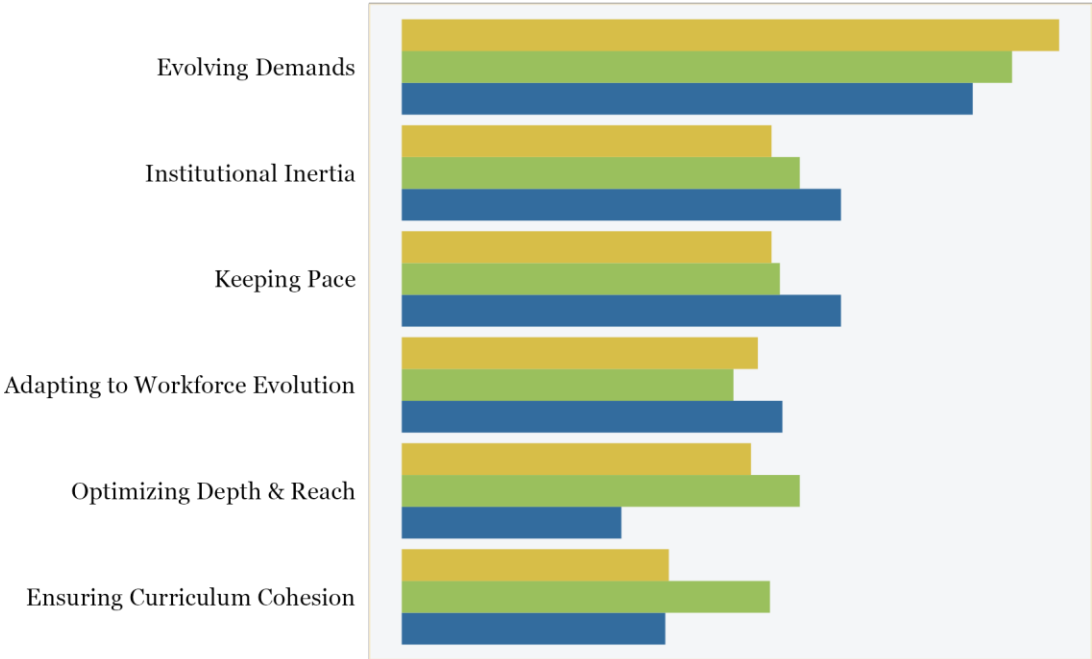
# Challenges To The Business School Curriculum (continued)

Evolving demands pose a greater challenge for less urban schools, while institutional inertia and keeping pace with change are more pressing challenges for schools in highly urban areas.

Challenges faces by business schools differ by school size as shown below.

**Greatest Challenges To The Business School Curriculum, By US Locale**

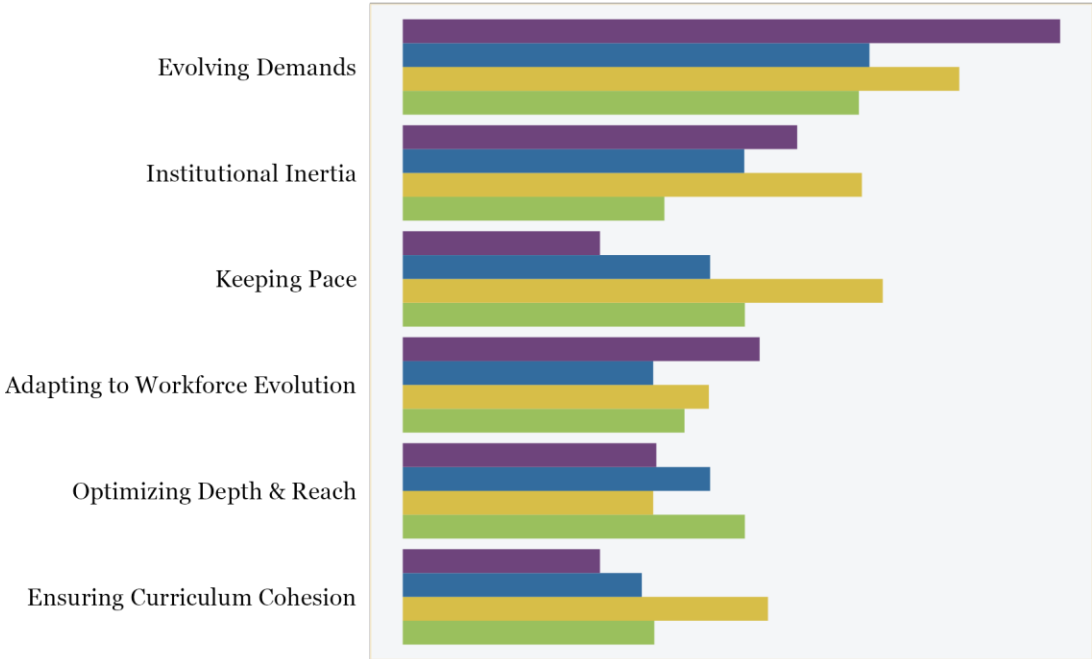
Large Urban (Blue) Other Urban (Green) Non-Urban (Yellow)



Relative Difference  
Unit of Analysis: Business Schools  
PCA analysis results

**Greatest Challenges To The Business School Curriculum, By Business School Size**

Small (Green) Medium (Yellow) Large (Blue) Very large (Purple)



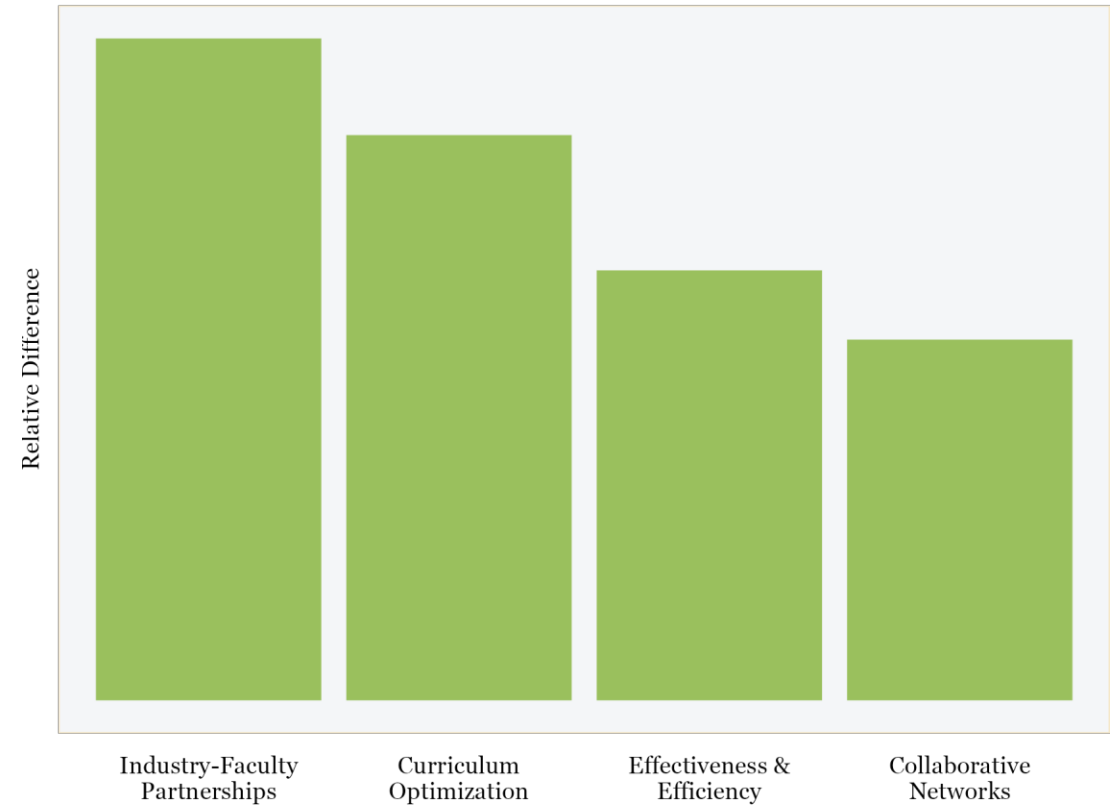
Relative Difference  
Unit of Analysis: Business Schools  
PCA analysis results

## Opportunities Business Schools Pursue To Improve The Curriculum

The opportunities business school pursued to improve the business school curriculum were categorized using a principal component analysis, which identified four dimensions that collectively account for 59 percent of the variance.

- **Industry-Faculty Partnerships** captures the focus on forging strong partnerships with business and enhancing faculty training.
- **Curriculum Optimization** emphasizes the integration of learning analytics with systematic curriculum research to drive evidence-based improvements.
- **Effectiveness & Efficiency** emphasizes improving faculty skills and reducing credit requirements to optimize the degree process, without expanding the number of programs.
- **Collaborative Networks** reflects partnerships across internal university groups, between universities, and with affinity groups, emphasizing a broad, interconnected approach.

**Opportunities Pursued To Improve The Business School Curriculum**



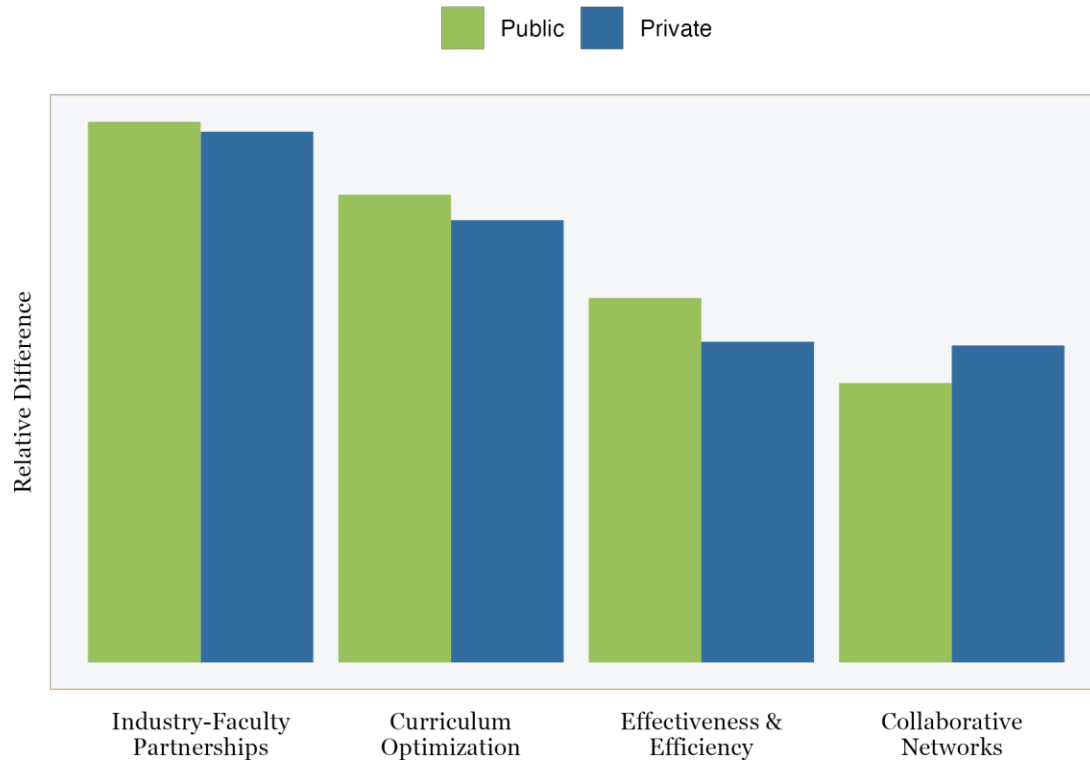
Unit of Analysis: Business Schools  
PCA analysis results

# Opportunities Business Schools Pursue To Improve The Curriculum (continued)

Private schools are slightly more likely to pursue collaborative networks while public schools are more likely to pursue curriculum optimization and effectiveness/efficiency.

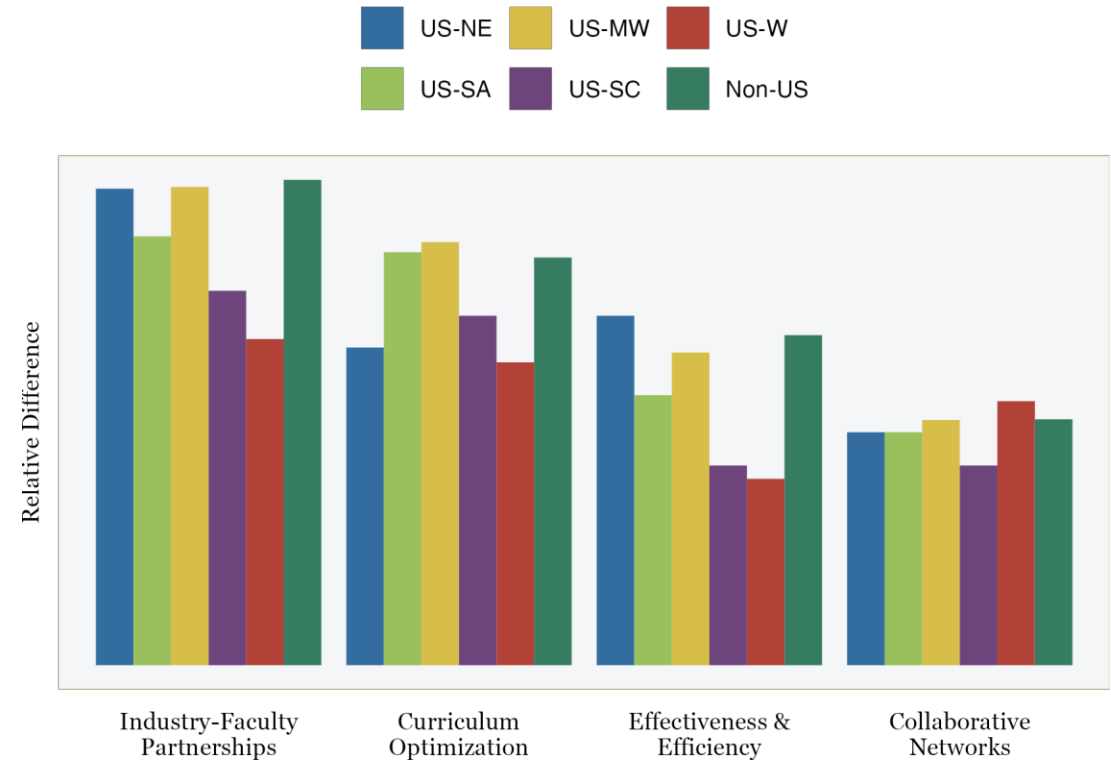
The opportunities pursued by business schools to improve the curriculum differ by region as shown below.

**Opportunities Pursued To Improve The Business School Curriculum, By Locus Of Control**



Unit of Analysis: Business Schools  
PCA analysis results

**Opportunities Pursued To Improve The Business School Curriculum, By Region**



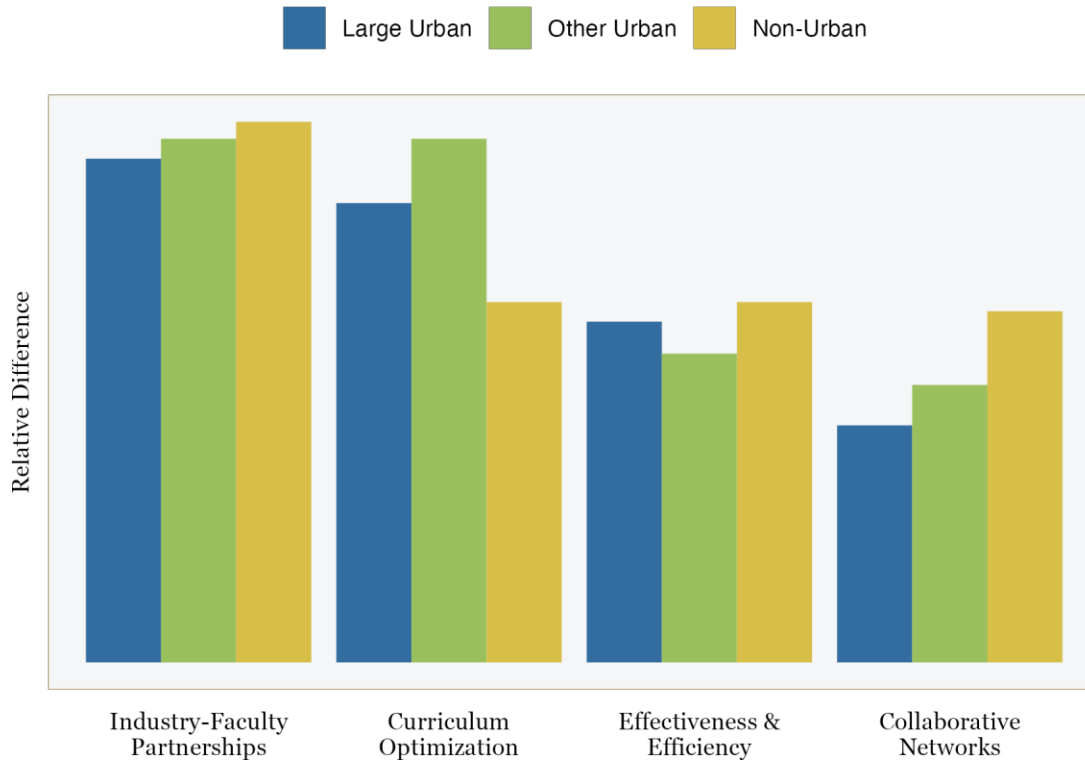
Unit of Analysis: Business Schools  
PCA analysis results

# Opportunities Business Schools Pursue To Improve The Curriculum (continued)

The pursuit of collaborative networks and industry-faculty partnerships follows a monotonic trend across U.S. locales: non-urban areas prioritize it the most, urban areas show moderate emphasis, and large urban areas the least.

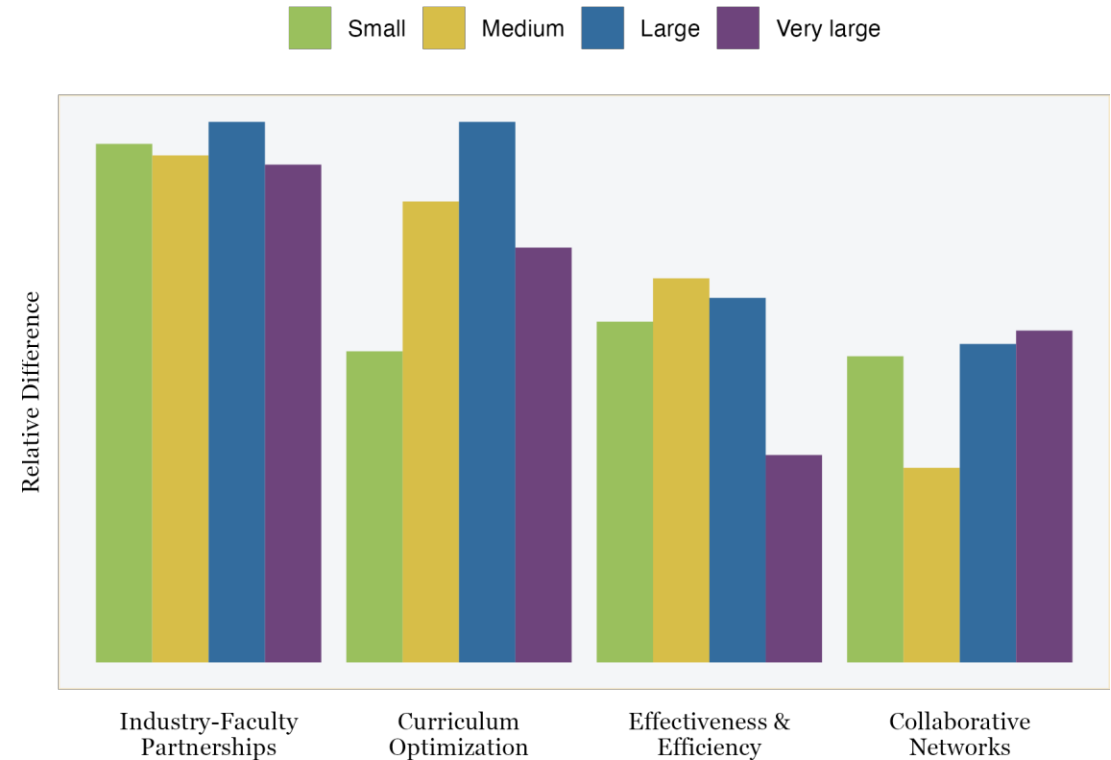
The opportunities pursued by business schools to improve the curriculum differ by size of the business school as shown below.

**Opportunities Pursued To Improve The Business School Curriculum, By US Locale**



Unit of Analysis: Business Schools  
PCA analysis results

**Opportunities Pursued To Improve The Business School Curriculum, By Business School Size**



Unit of Analysis: Business Schools  
PCA analysis results

## Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

# The Future Of The Business School Curriculum

Respondents were asked to discuss the role of the business school curriculum over the next decade in their own words.

Over the next decade, business school curricula will undergo a significant transformation, driven by technology, market demands, and changing student expectations. AI and data analytics will become core components of business education, both as subjects of study and as tools to enhance learning experiences. Traditional degree structures will give way to flexible, modular, and personalized learning paths, with more emphasis on stackable credentials and micro-credentials.

At the same time, the importance of soft skills, experiential learning, and interdisciplinary education will grow. Business schools must ensure that graduates not only understand technological advancements but also develop critical thinking, leadership, and ethical decision-making skills.

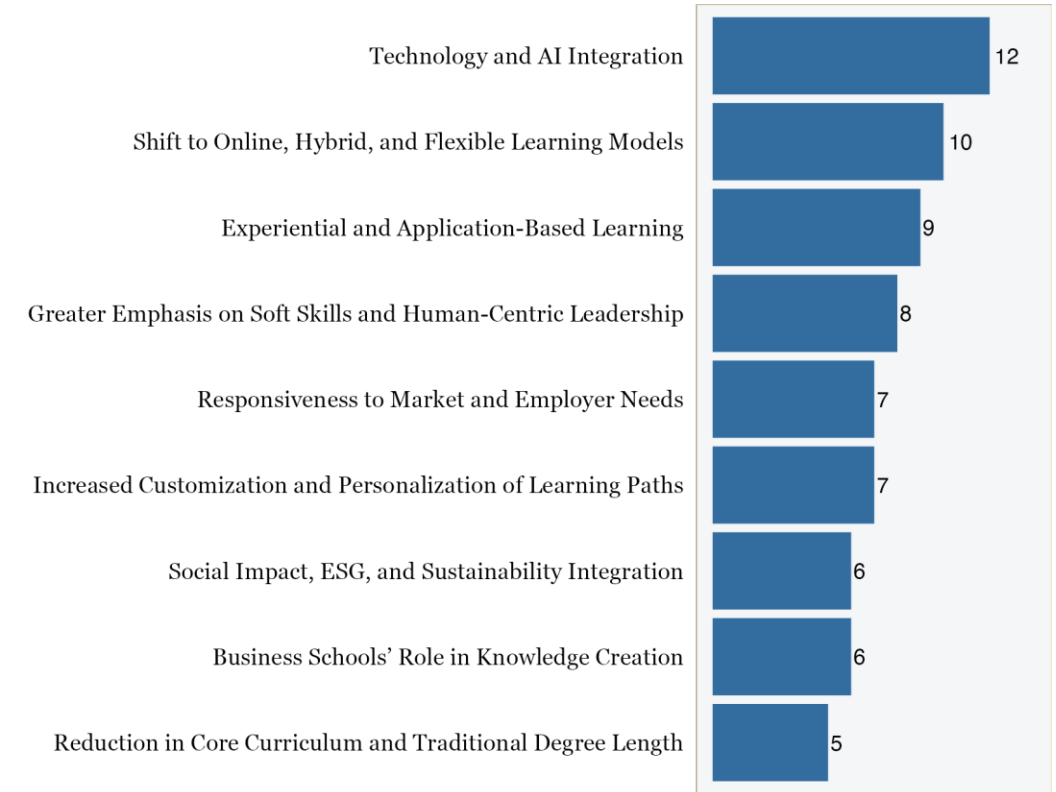
The push toward online and hybrid education will continue, with business schools competing to deliver high-quality digital learning experiences. Sustainability, ESG, and corporate social responsibility will become central themes in business education, reflecting the increasing demand for ethical and socially conscious leaders.

Additionally, to remain relevant, business schools must be agile and

responsive to market changes, continuously adapting their curricula to align with employer needs and industry trends.

The comments are coded and shown below and are as follows.

### A Future Look At The Business School Curriculum



Number of comments  
Unit of Analysis: Business Schools



## The Future Of The Business School Curriculum (continued)

### **AI and Technology Will Redefine Business Education.**

AI is expected to influence both what is taught and how it is taught. AI-driven decision-making, automation of learning, and real-world applications in business decision-making will be central to curricula. Schools must adapt quickly or risk losing relevance.

### **The Move Towards Flexibility and Online Learning**

Hybrid and online-first learning models will dominate, with an emphasis on high-quality online education. More modular learning options, micro-credentials, and corporate partnerships will replace some traditional degree models.

### **Soft Skills Will Become More Important in a Tech-Driven World**

While technology is critical, schools will also need to focus on human skills such as leadership, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and strategic decision-making to complement technical competencies.

### **Experiential Learning Will Be the Norm**

Theoretical knowledge will take a backseat to hands-on, experiential, and application-based learning. Real-world projects, consulting opportunities, and industry collaborations will become core parts of business education.

### **Business Schools Must Continuously Adapt to Market Demands**

The business landscape is changing faster than ever, and business schools must be agile. Schools that fail to align their curricula with industry needs may face declining enrollments and possible closures.

### **Sustainability and ESG Will Be Integrated into Business Education**

Ethical decision-making, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability will be embedded into curricula, preparing future leaders to navigate socially conscious business environments.

### **Customization and Personalization of Education Will Expand**

Students will demand more flexible and personalized learning experiences, choosing specialized programs, stackable credentials, and modular learning paths that align with their career goals.

The complete list of comments can be found in the appendix supplement.

## Curriculum Innovation At The Business School

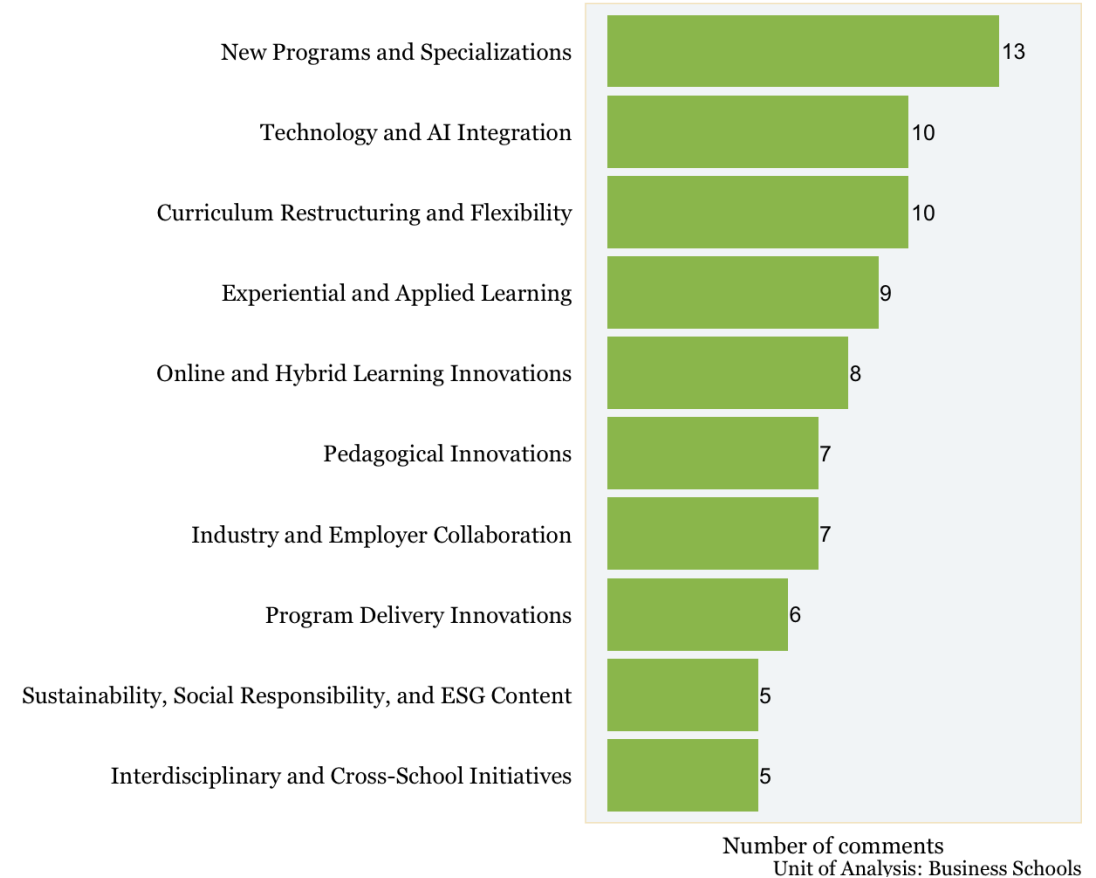
Respondents were asked to describe a curriculum innovation implemented at your business school.

Business schools are innovating their curricula by focusing on AI, analytics, flexibility, and experiential learning to meet evolving industry needs. Many are adopting online-first strategies and hybrid learning formats, making education more accessible. Programs are increasingly interdisciplinary, leveraging business, engineering, and technology expertise to create well-rounded graduates.

There is also a growing emphasis on sustainability, ESG, and ethical AI, reflecting broader global trends in business and governance. Through collaborations with industry, new program offerings, and alternative learning models, business schools aim to stay competitive and prepare students for the dynamic job market.

The comments were coded as shown on the right and are as follows.

**Curriculum Innovation Implemented At Business Schools**



## Curriculum Innovation At The Business School (continued)

### **Technology and AI as a Central Driver**

Many business schools are integrating AI into the curriculum through new courses, certificates, and technology-driven teaching methodologies. Programs focused on AI and analytics are increasingly being designed to address market demand, improve job placement outcomes, and future-proof business education.

### **Flexibility and Accessibility in Learning**

Institutions are prioritizing flexible learning paths, including online-first course designs, hybrid models, shorter semesters, and stackable certificates. The ability to tailor programs to student needs is a key trend.

### **Industry and Real-World Engagement**

Schools are forging stronger connections with businesses and industries to enhance student employability. Applied learning is a major theme, with consulting projects, corporate partnerships, and interdisciplinary collaborations playing a pivotal role.

### **Sustainability and Social Responsibility Integration**

The growing emphasis on ESG, carbon literacy, and sustainability in business curricula highlights a shift towards responsible leadership and ethical decision-making in business education.

### **Pedagogical Advancements and Student-Centered Learning**

Schools are implementing experiential learning, multimedia cases, self-reflection tools, and AI-driven educational tools to enhance learning effectiveness. These innovations cater to diverse learning styles and real-world application.

The complete list of comments can be found in the appendix supplement.

Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

# Priorities For The Business School Curriculum

Respondents were asked to specify top priorities for the business school curriculum over the next 3-5 years?

Business schools' top curriculum priorities for the next 3-5 years focus on AI integration, industry relevance, flexibility, sustainability, soft skills development, and experiential learning.

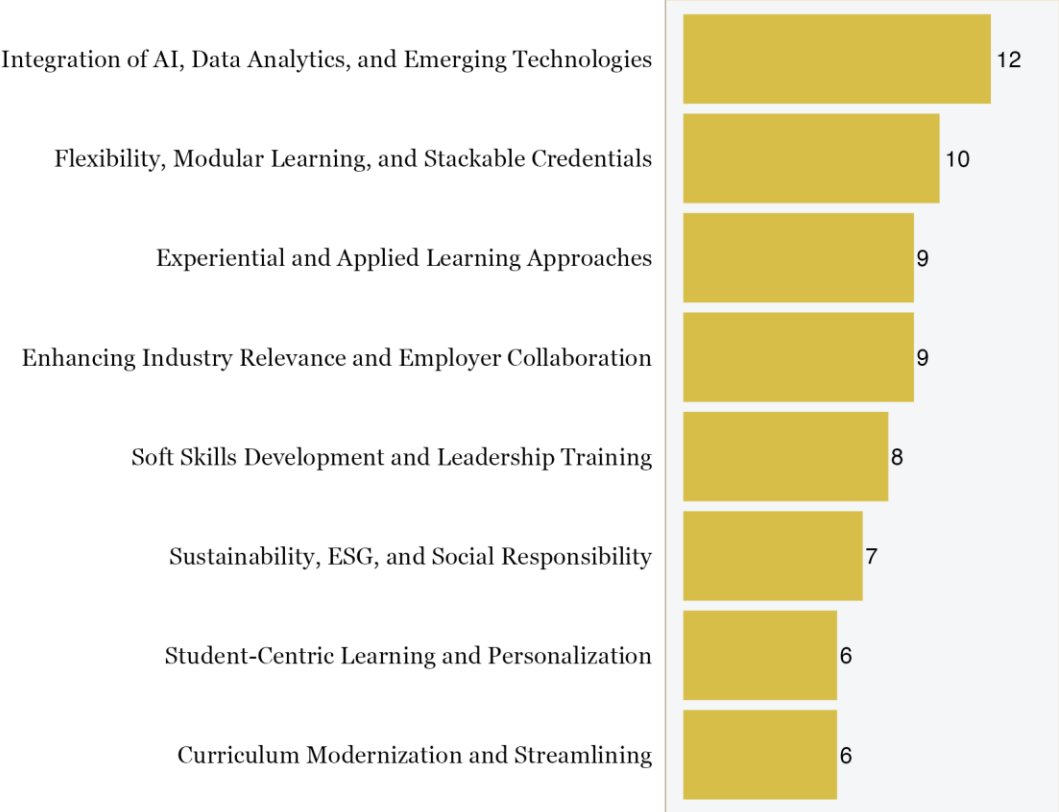
AI and data-driven decision-making will be core competencies, while stackable credentials and flexible learning will replace rigid degree structures. Industry partnerships will shape curricula, ensuring graduates have real-world, applied skills.

Schools will embed ESG and social responsibility principles, while also focusing on leadership, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

To stay competitive, business schools streamline curricula, adapt to market needs, and personalize learning pathways for students.

The comments were coded as shown on the right and are as follows.

**Business School Priorities (3-5 Years)**



Number of comments  
Unit of Analysis: Business Schools

## Priorities For The Business School Curriculum (continued)

### **AI and Digital Transformation Will Be Central**

AI and digital tools will play a crucial role in shaping business education, both as subjects of study and as tools for curriculum delivery. Schools are focused on equipping students with AI competencies, integrating AI into coursework, and preparing faculty to teach AI effectively.

### **Greater Flexibility and Alternative Credentials**

Traditional degree structures are being challenged by the rise of stackable credentials, modular courses, and flexible learning formats. Business schools aim to provide more accessible and career-relevant options to students at different professional stages.

### **Stronger Industry Integration and Employer Partnerships**

Schools recognize the need to stay aligned with industry demands. This means increasing experiential learning opportunities, strengthening corporate partnerships, and designing curricula that reflect real-world business challenges.

### **Sustainability and Social Responsibility Will Be Key Themes**

Business schools are prioritizing ESG, ethical leadership, and sustainability. The curriculum will increasingly incorporate social impact, Indigenous perspectives, and responsible business practices.

### **Soft Skills and Leadership Development Remain Critical**

While technical and digital skills are essential, business schools are doubling down on human-centered leadership, problem-solving, emotional intelligence, and communication to ensure graduates succeed in an AI-driven world.

### **Agility and Modernization of Business Education**

Schools must be nimble in updating curricula, revising outdated programs, and streamlining degree requirements. Adapting to regulatory, technological, and market shifts is a priority.

### **Student-Centered, Personalized Education**

Business schools are focusing on personalizing education through data-driven learning approaches, career-aligned pathways, and flexible course delivery to maximize student outcomes.

The complete list of comments can be found in the appendix supplement.



Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

# The Graduate Business Program Survey Response: MBA Programs

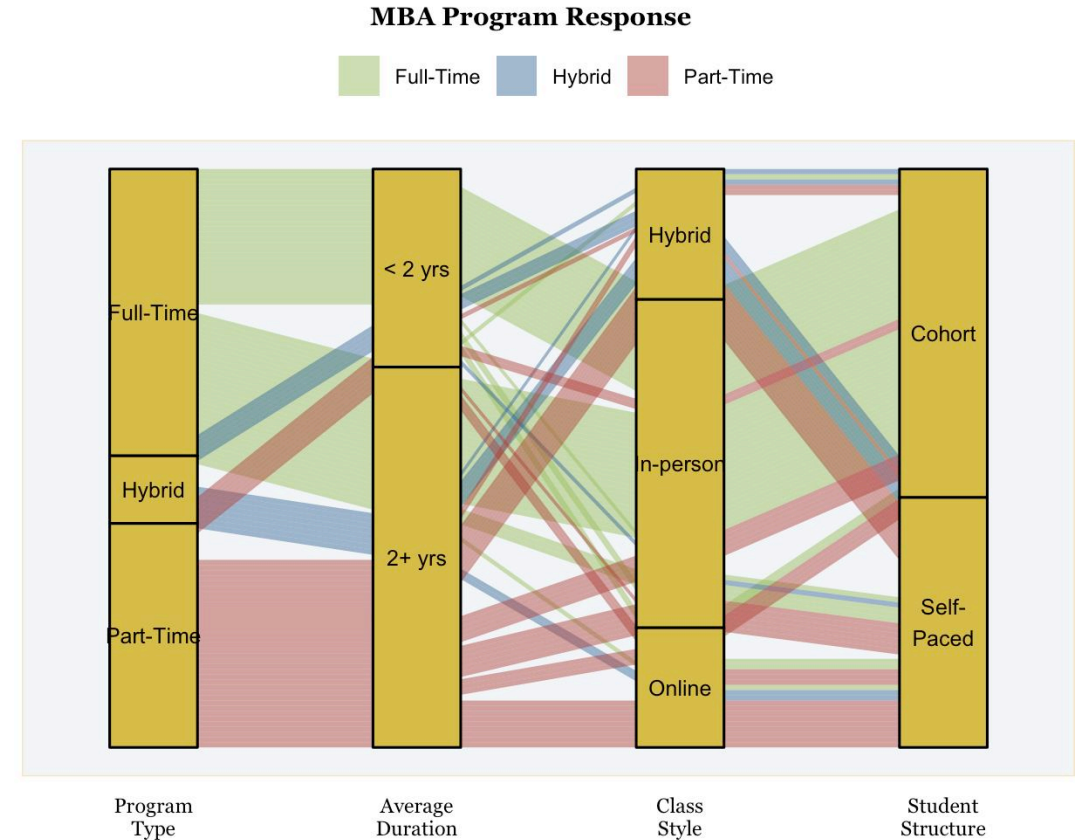
A total of 110 business schools contributed data for 245 graduate business programs, including 111 MBA programs and 106 Business Master’s programs.

The chart on the right shows the MBA programs responding to the study by program type, average duration, class style, and student structure.

Half of the responding MBA programs are full-time (50%), 39 percent are part-time, and 12 percent are hybrid. Overall, two-thirds (66%) of the MBA programs are 2 or more years in duration. Full-time program (47%) are more likely to be less than two years compared with part-time programs (16%) and hybrid programs (39%). Most of the full-time MBA programs (53%) are two or more years, however.

More than half (57%) of MBA programs are delivered in-person, 23 percent are hybrid, and 21 percent are primarily online. Nearly nine in ten (89%) full-time MBA programs are delivered in-person compared with 30 percent of part-time MBA and 7 percent of hybrid programs. Overall, only 9 percent of full-time MBA programs are online, with most of these programs being less than two-years. Nearly 2 in 5 (37%) part-time MBA programs are delivered online.

Most of the MBA programs structure their students into cohorts (57%). Full-time MBA (87%) are more likely than part-time (30%) and hybrid (15%) MBA programs to structure their students into cohorts.



Unit of Analysis: Graduate Business Programs

Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

# The Graduate Business Program Survey Response: Business Master’s Programs

A majority of the Business Master’s programs are full-time (59%), 28 percent are part-time, and 13 percent are hybrid.

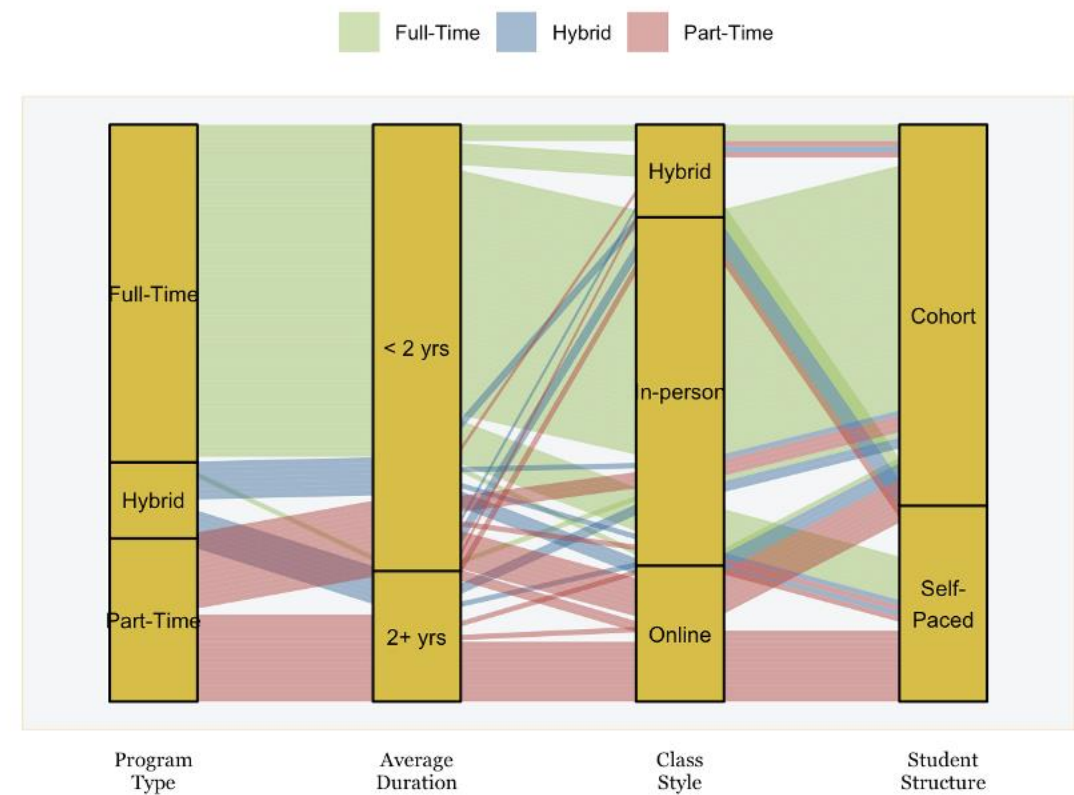
More than three-quarters (77%) of Business Master’s are delivered in less than 2 years. Nearly all the full-time Business Master’s (98%) are delivered less than 2 years compared with 47 percent of part-time and half (50%) of hybrid programs.

Three out of five (60%) of Business Master’s programs are delivered in-person, 24 percent are delivered online and 16% are hybrid delivery modes. Business Master’s that are 2 or more years are more likely to be online (50%) and hybrid (29%); 72 percent of program that are less than 2 years are delivered in-person.

Two-thirds (66%) of the Business Master’s programs have student cohorts and a third (33%) are self-paced. Full-time programs (81%) are more likely than part-time (43%) and hybrid (50%) programs to have student cohorts. Shorter programs (75%) are more likely than longer programs (22%) to be self-paced.

In summary, the data provided by 110 business schools highlights the diverse structures, durations, and delivery modes of MBA and Business Master’s programs. Full-time MBA programs dominate the traditional, in-person, and cohort-based formats, whereas part-time and hybrid programs exhibit greater flexibility in duration and online delivery. Similarly, Business Master’s programs tend to be shorter, with full-time formats favoring in-person instruction and structured cohorts, while longer programs are more likely to incorporate online and hybrid options. These insights reflect the evolving landscape of graduate business education, catering to a wide range of student needs and professional goals.

**Business Master's Program Response**



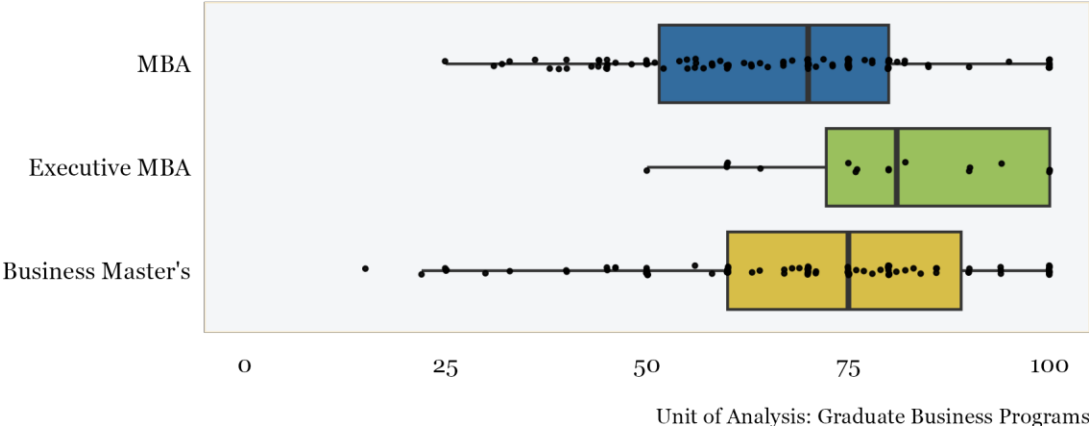
Unit of Analysis: Graduate Business Programs

# Curriculum Requirements Of A Graduate Business Program

Graduate business curriculum requirements vary between degree and program type, and within each degree and program type.

- On average, MBA programs dedicate 67% of their curriculum to required courses and 33% to electives. In comparison, Executive MBA programs allocate 82% to core requirements, while Business Master’s programs devote 72% to required coursework.
- Among MBA programs, full-time two-year MBA programs (F2MBA) offer the highest proportion of electives (44%), whereas Executive MBA programs (EMBA) have the most required coursework (82%). Other MBA formats, including online (74%, OMBA), hybrid (71%, HMBA), and one-year, full-time (F1MBA), or part-time programs (69%, PMBA), require a majority of the curriculum.
- Business Master’s programs typically allocate the majority of their curriculum to required coursework, ranging from 66% in Master’s in Finance programs to 75% in Management and Analytics programs.

**Percentage Of The Curriculum Required (Core Curriculum), By Degree Type**



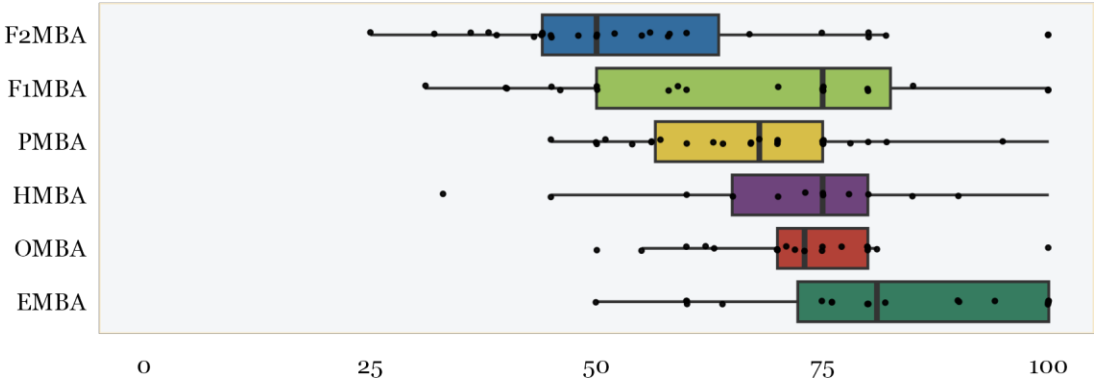
Percentage Of The Curriculum Required By Degree Type						
Degree	Number Of Programs	Mean	Standard Error	1st Quantile	Median	3rd Quantile
MBA	111	67%	1.78%	52%	70%	80%
Executive MBA	20	82%	3.68%	72%	81%	100%
Business Master's	106	72%	2.08%	60%	75%	89%

Unit of Analysis: Graduate Business Programs

Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

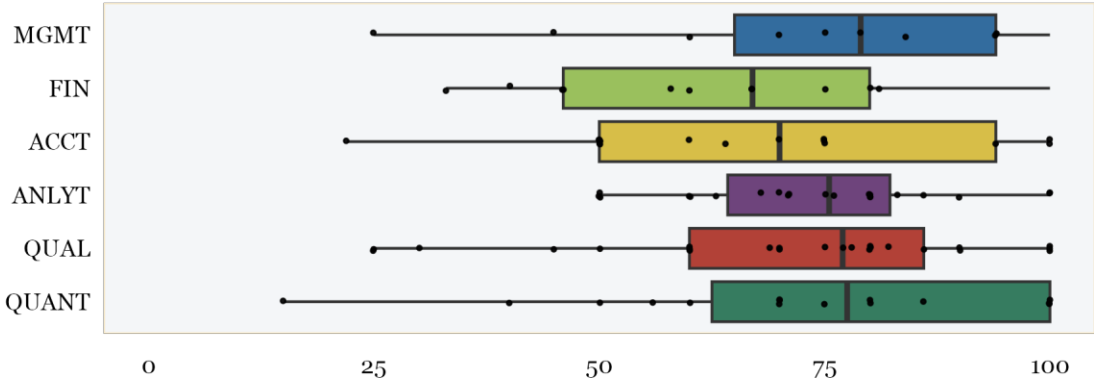
# Curriculum Requirements Of A Graduate Business Program (continued)

Percentage Of The Curriculum Required, By Type Of MBA Program



Unit of Analysis: Graduate Business Programs

Percentage Of The Curriculum Required, By Type Of Business Master's Program



Unit of Analysis: Graduate Business Programs

Percentage Of The Curriculum Required, By Type Of MBA Program

Program	Number Of Programs	Mean	Standard Error	1st Quartile	Median	3rd Quartile
F2MBA	27	56%	3.73%	44%	50%	64%
F1MBA	23	69%	4.6%	50%	75%	82%
PMBA	27	69%	2.82%	56%	68%	75%
HMBA	13	71%	4.96%	65%	75%	80%
OMBA	21	74%	2.95%	70%	73%	80%
EMBA	20	82%	3.68%	72%	81%	100%

Unit of Analysis: Graduate Business Programs

Percentage Of The Curriculum Required, By Type Of Business Master's Program

Program	Number Of Programs	Mean	Standard Error	1st Quartile	Median	3rd Quartile
MGMT	11	75%	7.21%	65%	79%	94%
FIN	13	66%	5.93%	46%	67%	80%
ACCT	17	70%	5.65%	50%	70%	94%
ANLYT	22	75%	3.28%	64%	76%	82%
QUAL	25	71%	4.5%	60%	77%	86%
QUANT	18	75%	5.73%	62%	78%	100%

Unit of Analysis: Graduate Business Programs

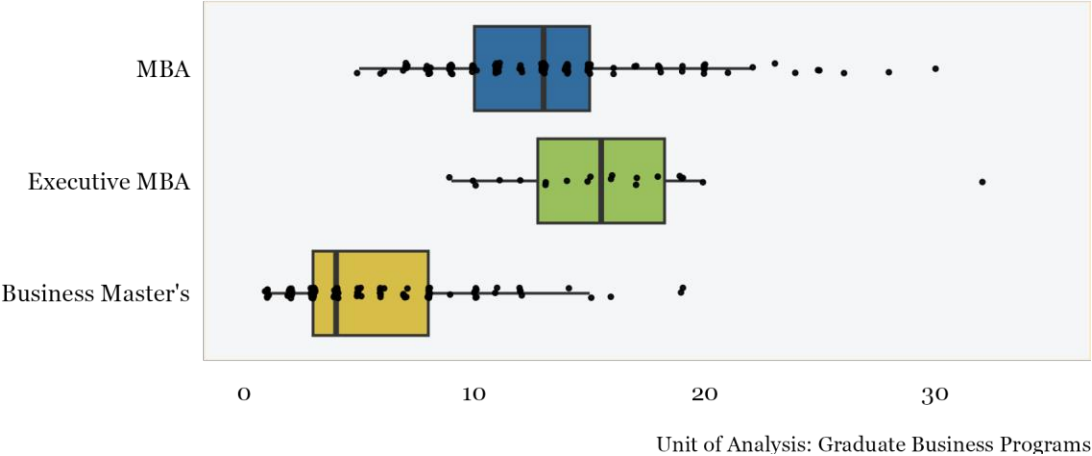
Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

# Breadth Of The Graduate Business Core Curriculum

The breadth of the graduate business curriculum is measured by the number of study areas included in the core curriculum from a list of 48 areas of study.

- Executive MBA programs have the broadest core, requiring 16 areas on average, compared to 13 for MBA programs and 6 for Business Master’s programs.
- Full-time two-year and one-year MBA programs require 15 areas, while part-time, hybrid, and online MBA programs require 12 or 13, on average.
- Among Business Master’s programs, Master in Management programs have the broadest core (10 areas), while Master’s in Finance (4), Master of Accounting (5), and Master in Analytics (5) have fewer required study areas from the list, on average.

**Number Of Areas Of Study In The Core Curriculum, By Degree Type**



Number Of Areas Of Study In The Core Curriculum, By Degree Type						
Degree	Number Of Programs	Mean	Standard Error	1st Quantile	Median	3rd Quantile
MBA	108	13.4	0.48	10.0	13.0	15.0
Executive MBA	20	15.8	1.14	12.8	15.5	18.2
Business Master's	101	5.5	0.39	3.0	4.0	8.0

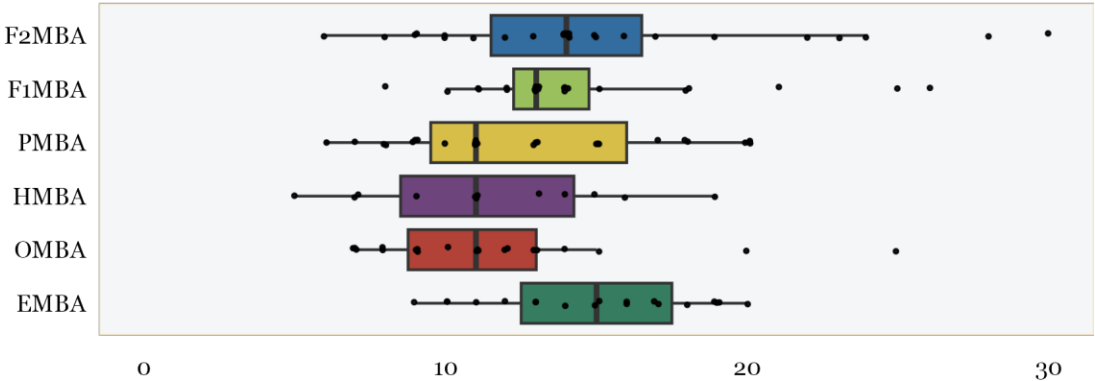
Unit of Analysis: Graduate Business Programs



Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

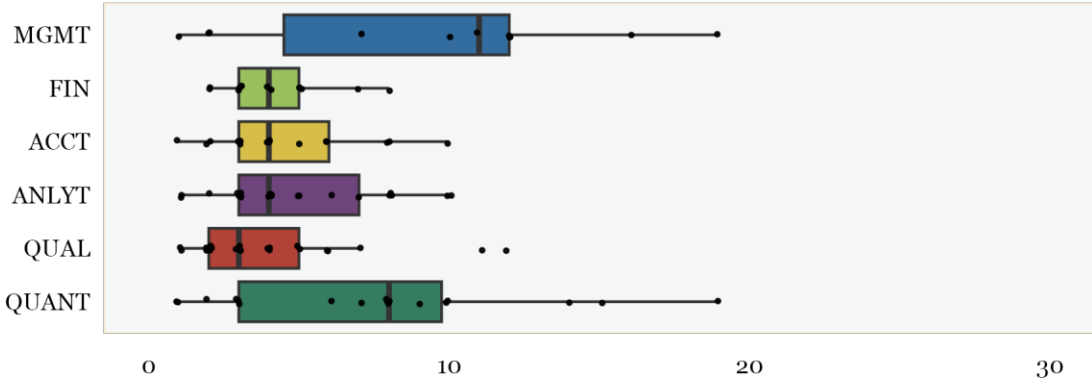
**Breadth Of The Graduate Business Core Curriculum (continued)**

**Number Of Required Areas Of Study, By MBA Programs**



Unit of Analysis: Graduate Business Programs

**Number Of Required Areas Of Study, By Business Master's Programs**



Unit of Analysis: Graduate Business Programs

Number Of Required Areas Of Study, By MBA Programs						
MBA Type	Number Of Programs	Mean	Standard Error	1st Quantile	Median	3rd Quantile
F2MBA	27	15.1	1.13	11.5	14.0	16.5
F1MBA	22	14.6	0.96	12.2	13.0	14.8
PMBA	27	12.9	0.84	9.5	11.0	16.0
HMBA	12	11.5	1.19	8.5	11.0	14.2
OMBA	20	11.6	1.01	8.8	11.0	13.0
EMBA	20	15.8	1.14	12.8	15.5	18.2

Unit of Analysis: Graduate Business Programs

Number Of Required Areas Of Study, By Business Master's Programs						
Business Master	Number Of Programs	Mean	Standard Error	1st Quantile	Median	3rd Quantile
MGMT	11	9.5	1.77	4.5	11	12.0
FIN	13	4.2	0.50	3.0	4	5.0
ACCT	17	4.5	0.59	3.0	4	6.0
ANLYT	21	4.9	0.59	3.0	4	7.0
QUAL	21	4.2	0.64	2.0	3	5.0
QUANT	18	7.5	1.18	3.0	8	9.8

Unit of Analysis: Graduate Business Programs

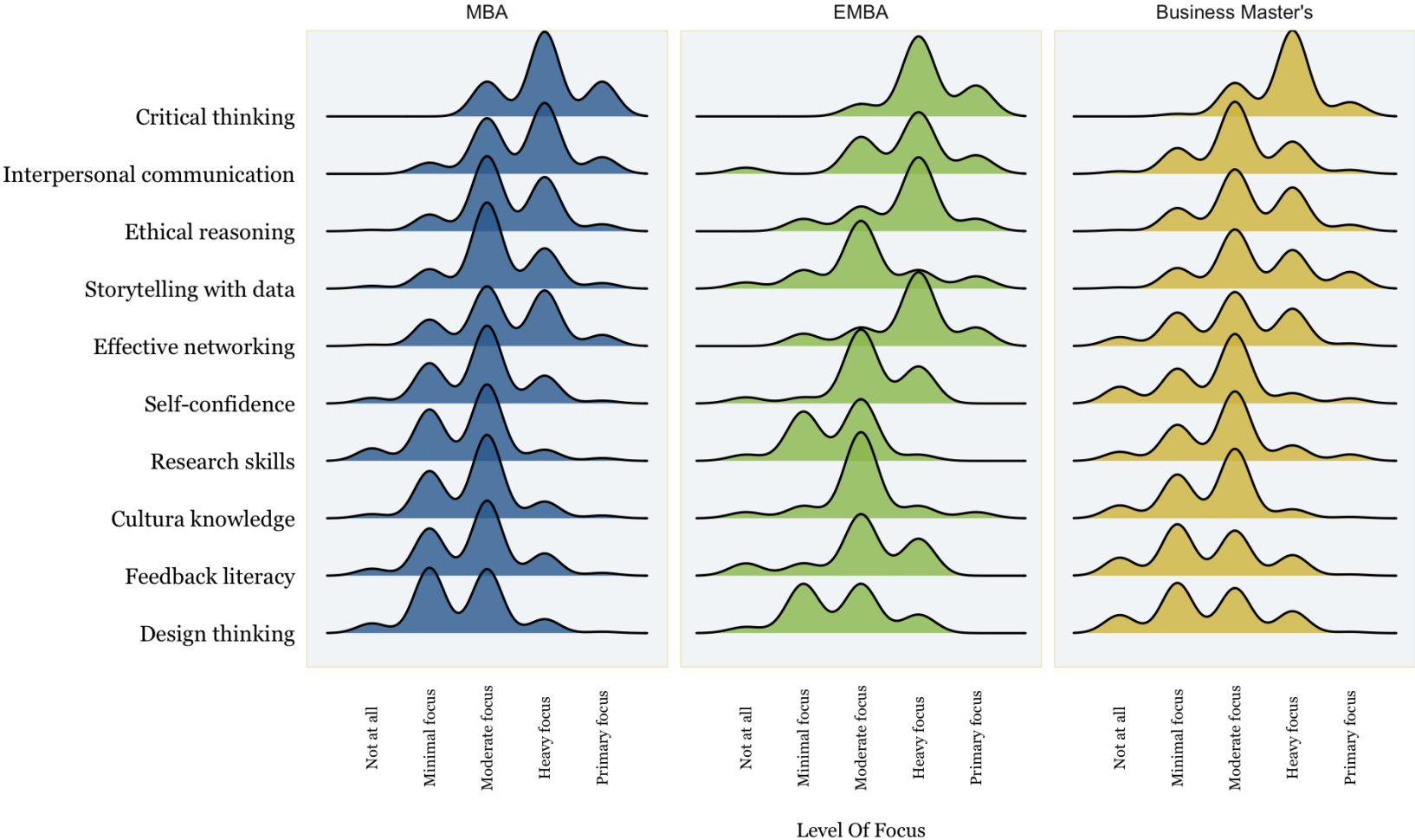
Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

# Focus Of The Business School Curriculum

The business school curriculum focus varies by institution characteristics, with larger, public, and non-urban institutions emphasizing research and critical thinking, while smaller, private, and urban institutions prioritize networking, communication, and applied business skills.

- MBA & Business Master's programs generally emphasize Critical Thinking, Interpersonal Communication, and Ethical Reasoning more consistently.
- EMBA programs place a relatively higher focus on Effective Networking and Interpersonal Communication, which aligns with their executive-level audience.
- Design Thinking and Feedback Literacy appear to receive relatively lower emphasis across all programs.

**Areas Of Focus In The Business School Curriculum, By Program Type**

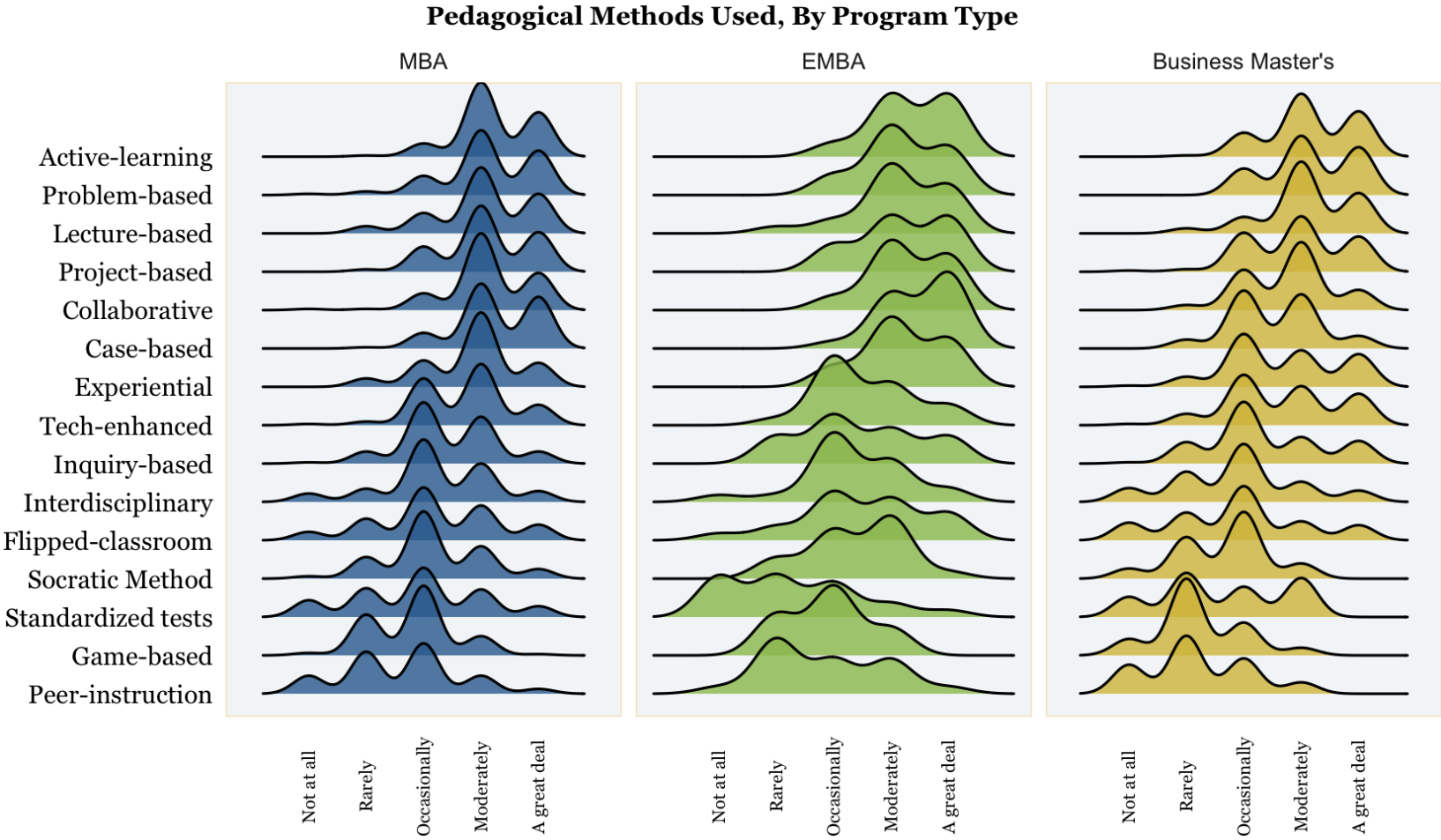


Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

# Pedagogical Methods Used To Deliver The Business School Curriculum

The chart on the right examines the prevalence of various teaching methodologies across different business education programs.

- Lecture-based learning and Active learning consistently appear on the higher end of the scale, suggesting they are widely used across all program types.
- Problem-based learning, Case-based learning, and Collaborative learning also exhibit strong utilization, particularly in MBA and Business Master's programs.
- Less commonly used methods, such as Game-based learning and Peer instruction/teaching, tend to cluster in the lower range, indicating they are not as widely implemented.
- The MBA and EMBA programs tend to emphasize more experiential and case-based approaches, while Business Master's programs exhibit a more balanced spread.



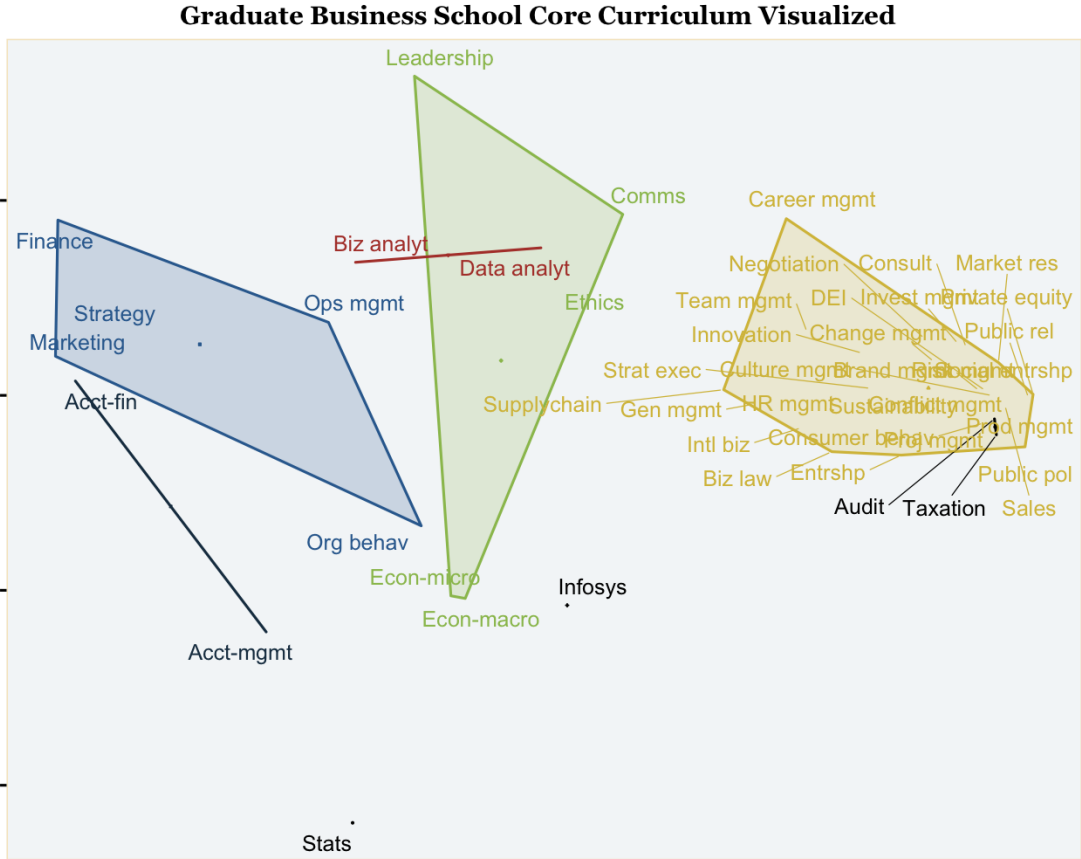
Extent Of Use In Program

Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

# The Area Of Instruction In The Core Graduate Business Curriculum

Business schools emphasize a mix of technical, strategic, and leadership skills for holistic management education, ensuring that graduates are well-equipped for diverse business challenges. This analysis (shown on right) includes all types of business programs, ranging from MBA programs to specialized Master’s degrees in Finance, Business Analytics, Marketing, and more. By clustering core curriculum topics, we can see how different disciplines intersect, providing a broad foundation for business professionals. Some of the identified clusters in the graduate business program core curriculum are as follow.

- Integrated Business Management** (blue cluster) emphasizes the interconnected nature of these core disciplines. Finance, Strategy, and Marketing drive growth and competitive positioning, while Operations Management focuses on efficiency and execution. Organizational Behavior connects these areas by shaping workplace dynamics and corporate culture. Note the Financial and Managerial Accounting cluster (black) positioned close by, reflecting its role as a core function essential to business strategy and decision-making.
- Leadership in Economic Systems** (green cluster) highlights the interplay between leadership, communication, ethics, and economic principles. Leadership shapes decision-making and organizational direction, while communication ensures clarity and influence. Ethics provides a guiding framework, and Microeconomics and Macroeconomics offer insights into market forces and economic structures that impact leadership strategies.



Unit Of Analysis: Graduate Business Programs  
k-means cluster analysis, 50.1%, n = 234.

## The Area Of Instruction In The Core Graduate Business Curriculum (continued)

**Enterprise Analytics** (red) connects data-driven decision-making to leadership, ethics, communication, and operations. Business Analytics, aligned with Operations Management in Integrated Business Management, focuses on performance optimization and strategic insights. Data Analytics, positioned closer to Leadership, supports ethical decision-making and strategic communication through data-driven insights.

**Specialized Management and Business Functions** (yellow) encompasses a diverse range of disciplines that reflect the breadth of study areas found in business programs. Covering fields such as brand management, supply chain, risk management, entrepreneurship, and DEI, it highlights the specialized expertise required across industries. Note the Tax and Audit cluster behind key specialties such as risk management, regulatory compliance, and financial oversight, highlighting their interconnected roles in business operations.

**Information Systems** and **Statistics** stand alone as individual points among the areas of study in the core graduate business program curriculum. Information Systems, positioned near Leadership in Economic Systems, bridges technology and decision-making, while Statistics serves as a foundational analytical tool across multiple disciplines.

In addition, the comprehensive data report provides visualizations for the core curriculum for each of the types of programs in the study.

This initial overview provides a high-level look at the graduate business education curriculum, while the following pages offer a deeper analysis of the data. The study examines various graduate business program types, including MBA and Executive MBA programs, as well as specialized master's programs in Management, Finance, Accounting, and Analytics, with business and data analytics programs combined.

The tables/heatmaps illustrate the 48 areas of instruction within MBA and Executive MBA programs, showing the percentage of programs that exclude an area from the curriculum, include it as a course topic, offer it as an elective, or require it as a core course. Additional pages provide insights into master's programs through charts that distinguish core areas of study and elective areas of study. These insights highlight the key topics and disciplines emphasized in graduate business education, reflecting curriculum priorities and instructional focus.

For an even more detailed analysis, the comprehensive data report includes insights across six MBA program types, covering full-time (two-year and one-year), part-time, hybrid, online, and executive MBA programs.



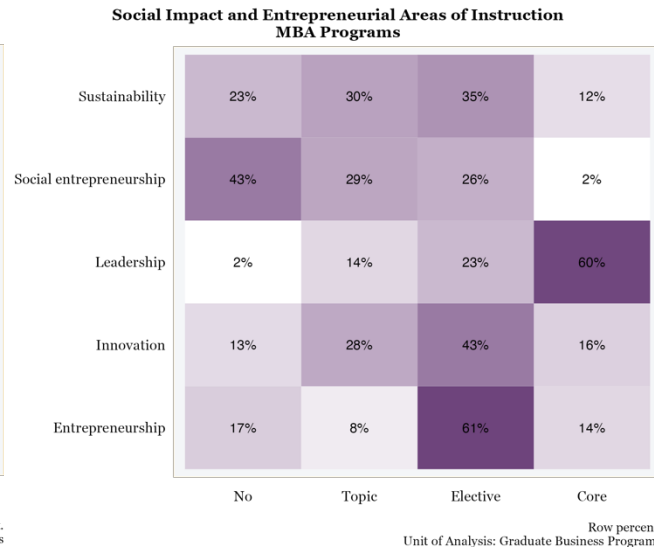
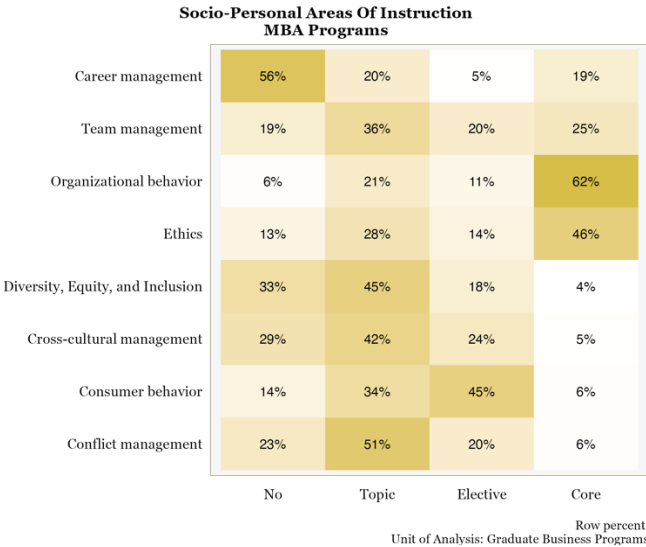
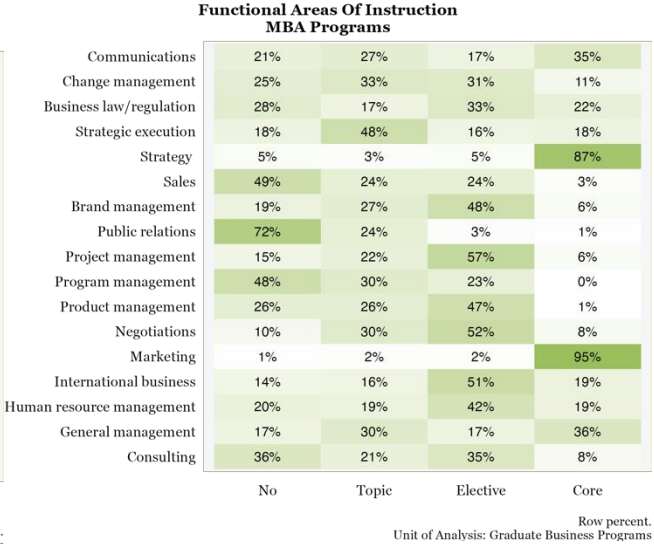
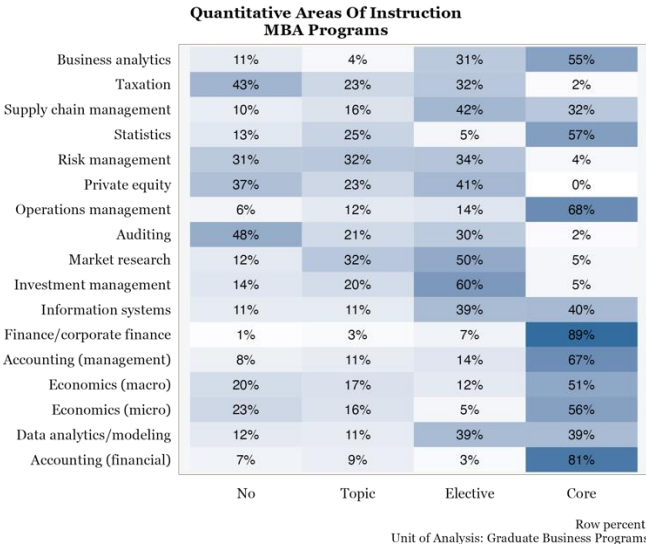
Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

# The Areas Of Instruction In The MBA Curriculum

The following presents MBA program responses to the areas of instruction included in the curriculum.

Marketing, Finance, and Strategy are the most frequently included core courses, with the highest number of MBA programs incorporating them into their core curriculum. Accounting and Operations Management are also widely represented, reinforcing their importance in MBA education

The most frequently offered electives include Entrepreneurship, Investment Management, Project Management, Negotiations, and International Business.





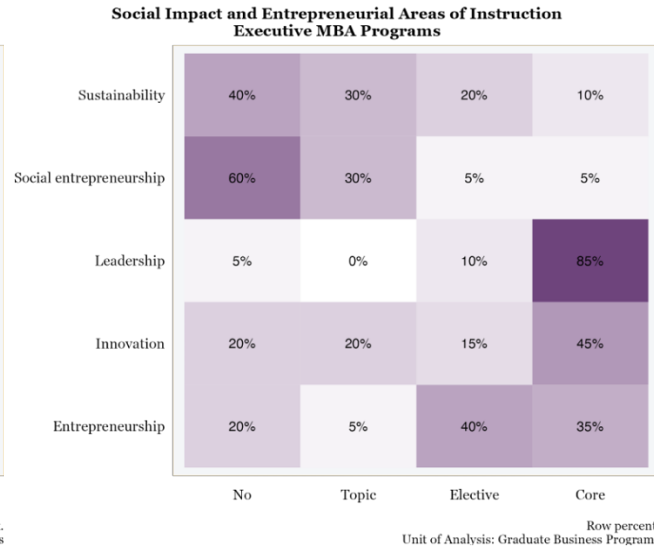
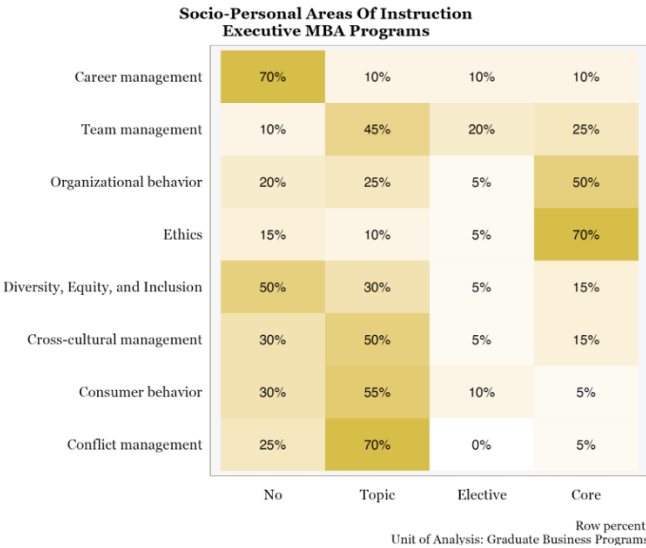
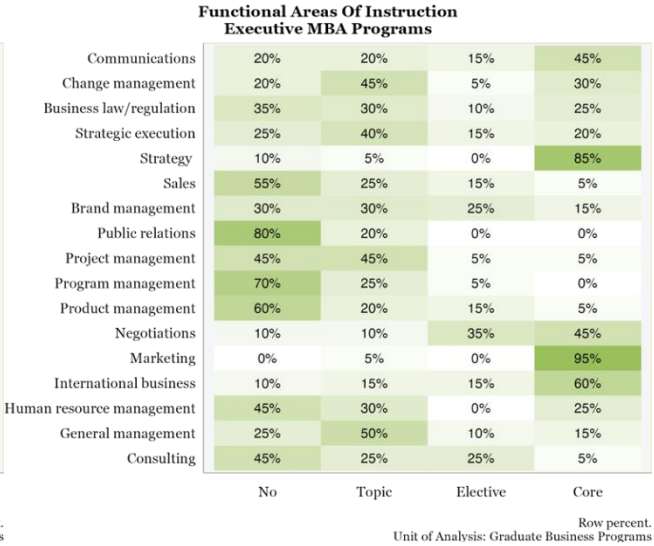
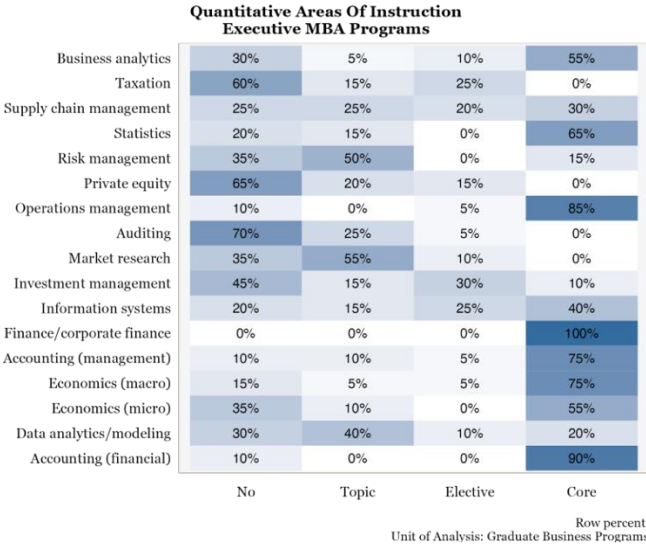
Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

# The Areas Of Instruction In The Executive MBA Curriculum

The following presents executive MBA program responses to the areas of instruction included in the curriculum.

Finance, Marketing, Strategy, Operations Management, and Leadership are commonly included core courses in Executive MBA programs. These areas have the highest representation, with a majority of programs incorporating them into their core curriculum.

The most common electives offered are Entrepreneurship, Negotiations, and Investment Management.



Summary Report: The Graduate Business Curriculum 2025

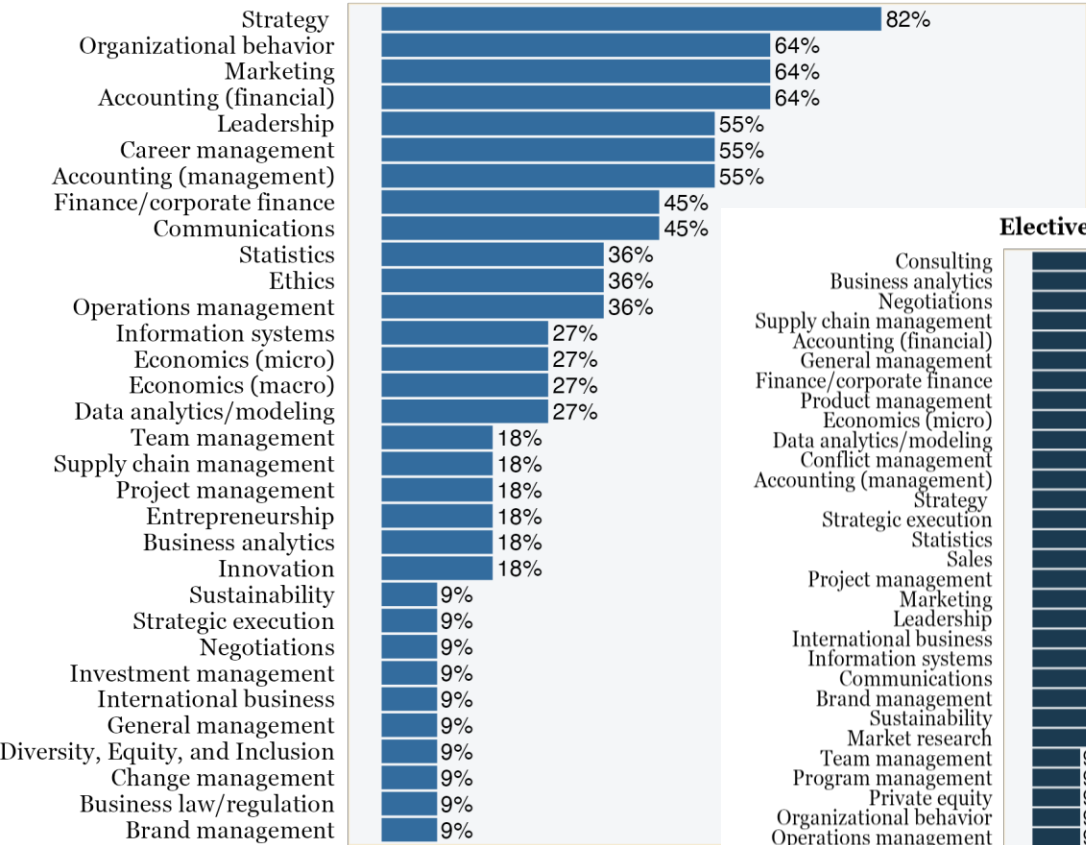
# The Areas Of Instruction In The Master’s In Management Curriculum

The following presents Master’s in Management program responses to the areas of instruction included in the curriculum.

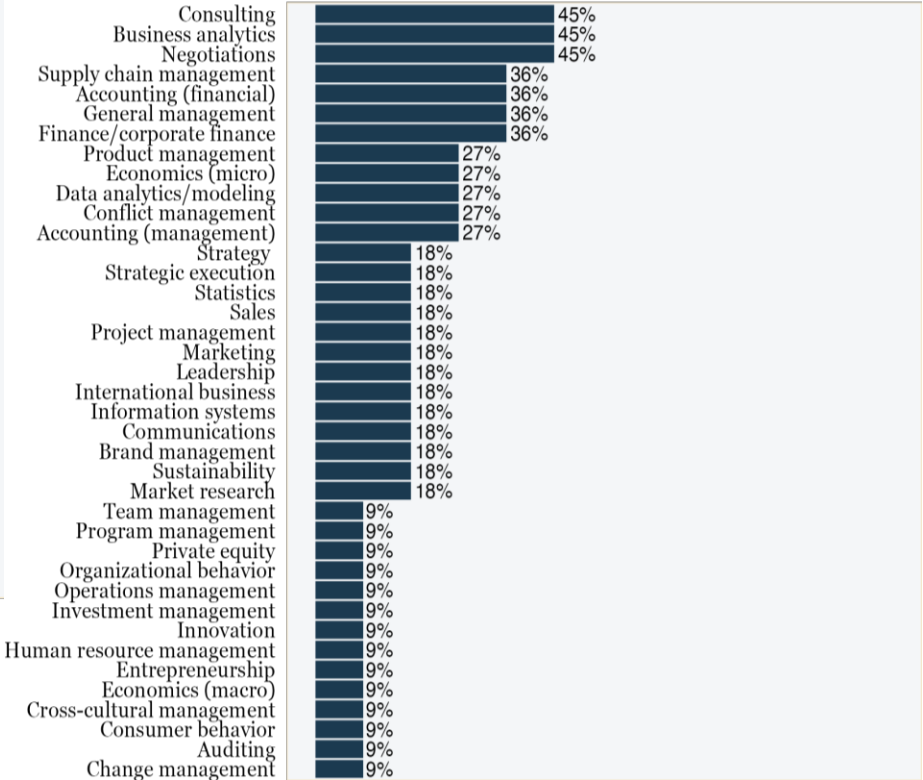
Strategy, Organizational Behavior, Marketing Financial Accounting, Leadership, Career Management, and Managerial Accounting offered as core courses by most Master’s in Management programs. These areas have the highest representation, with a majority of programs incorporating them into their core curriculum.

The most common electives offered are consulting, business analytics, and negotiations.

**Required Areas Of Study: MGMT**



**Elective Areas Of Study: MGMT**

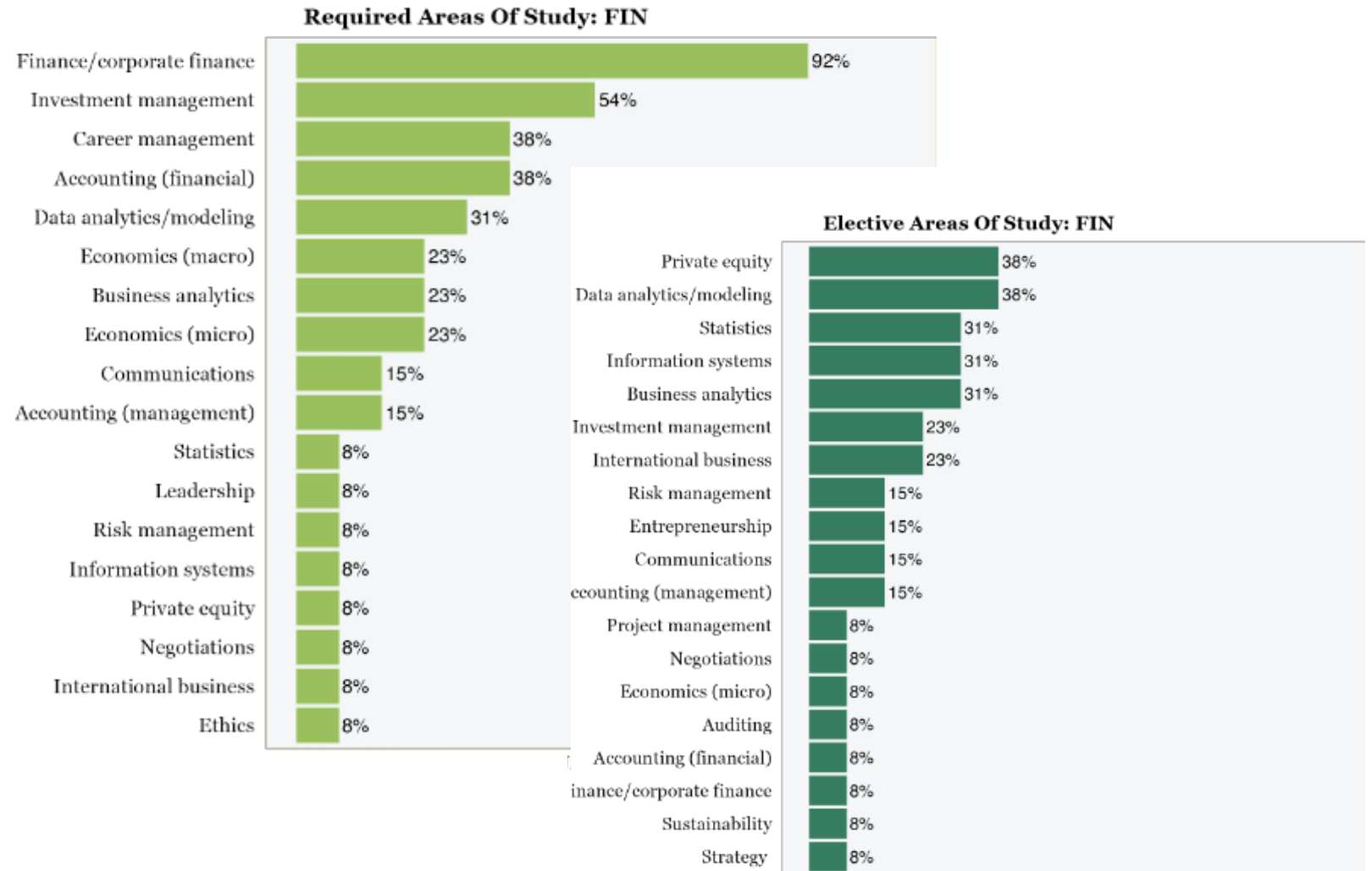


## The Areas Of Instruction In The Master’s In Finance Curriculum

The following presents Master’s in Finance program responses to the areas of instruction included in the curriculum.

Finance, and investment management are offered as core courses by most Master’s in Finance programs. These areas have the highest representation, with a majority of programs incorporating them into their core curriculum.

The most common electives offered are private equity and data analytics..



# The Areas Of Instruction In The Master’s Of Accounting Curriculum

The following presents Master’s of Accounting program responses to the areas of instruction included in the curriculum.

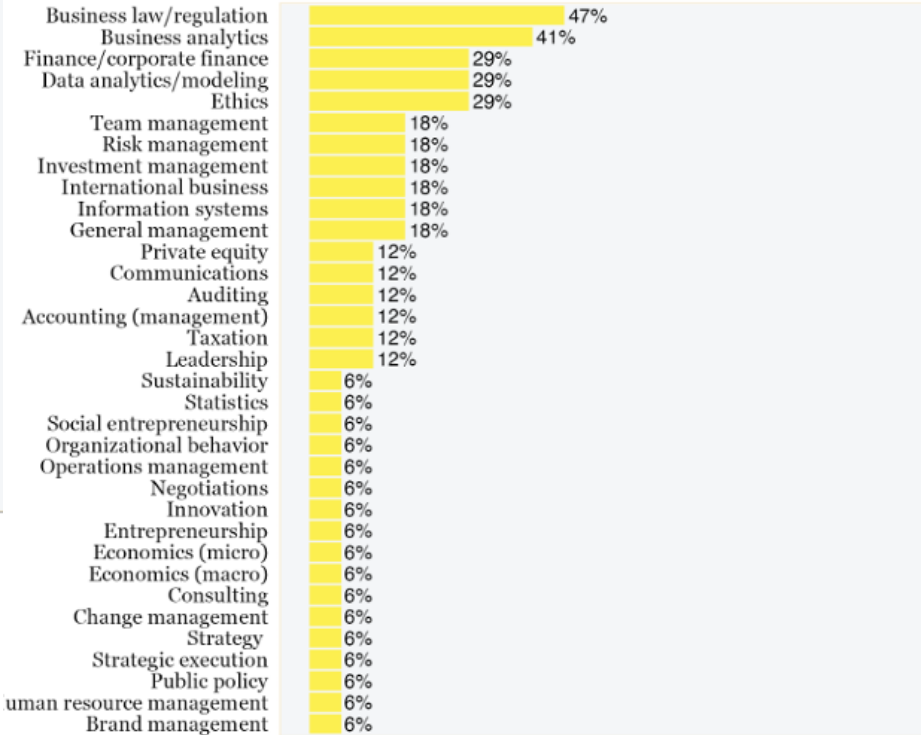
Accounting, both finance and managerial, auditing, and taxation are offered by by most Master’s in Finance programs. These areas have the highest representation, with a majority of programs incorporating them into their core curriculum.

The most common electives offered are business law and business analytics.

**Required Areas Of Study: ACCT**



**Elective Areas Of Study: ACCT**



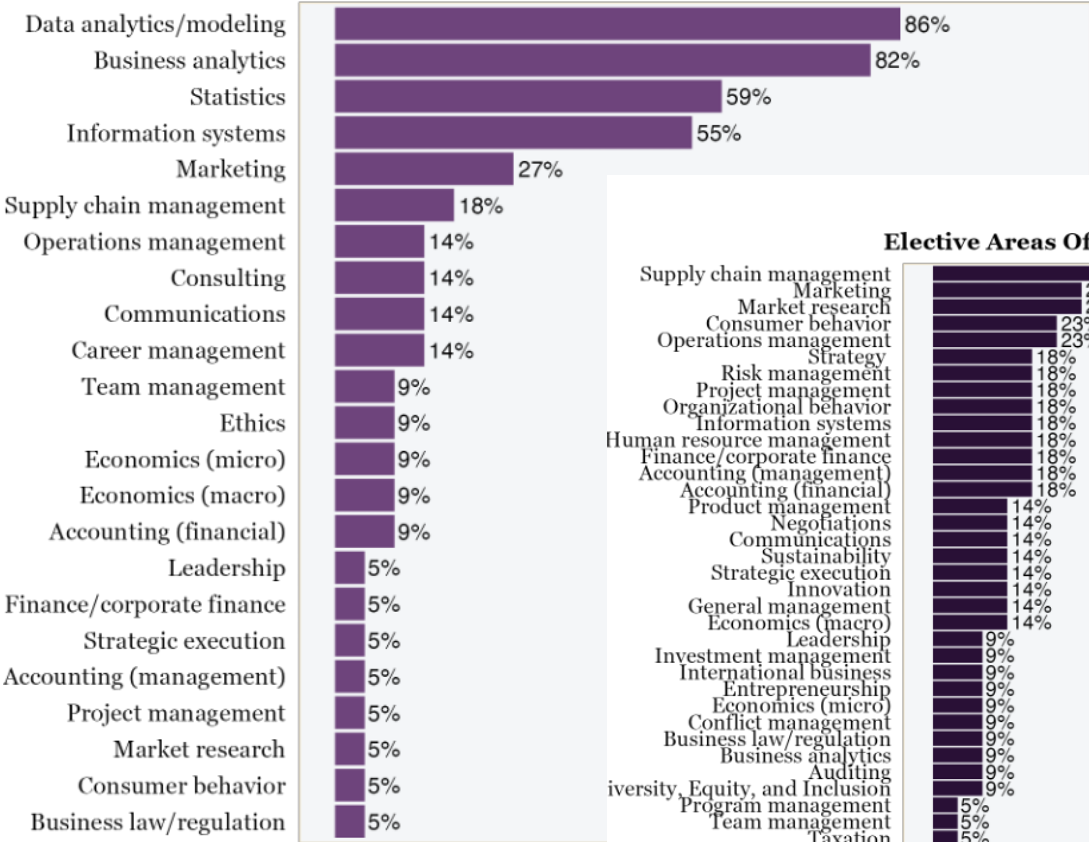
# The Areas Of Instruction In The Master's In Analytics Curriculum

The following presents Master's in Analytics program responses to the areas of instruction included in the curriculum.

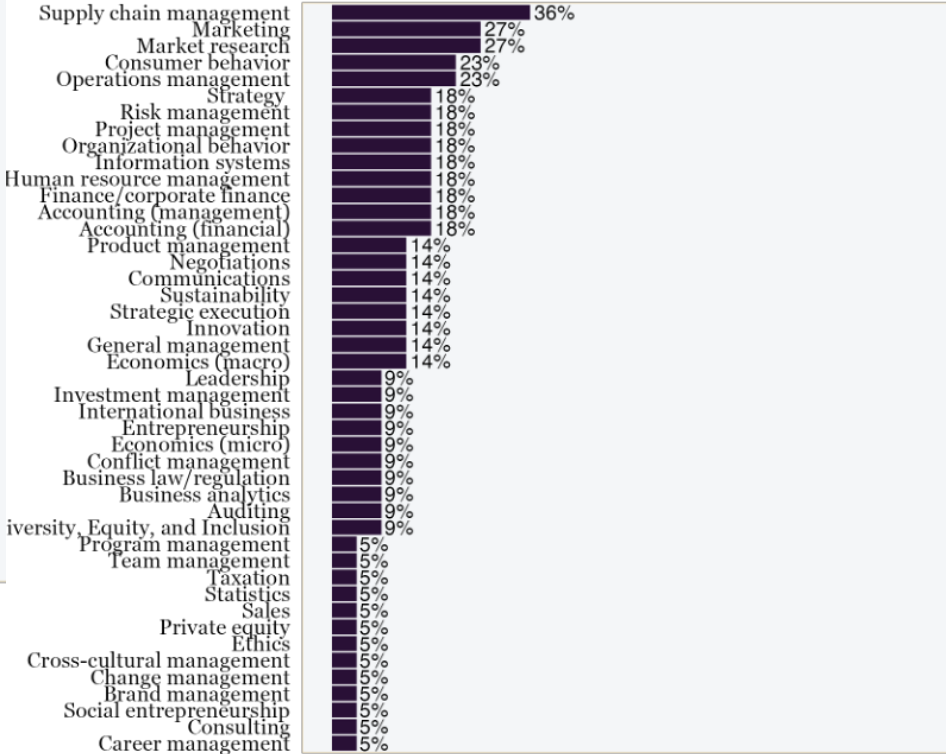
Data analytics, business analytics, statistics, and information systems are offered by most Master's in Analytics programs. These areas have the highest representation, with a majority of programs incorporating them into their core curriculum.

The most common electives offered are supply chain management, marketing, and market research.

**Required Areas Of Study: ANLYT**



**Elective Areas Of Study: ANLYT**





## Conclusion: Shaping the Future of Business Education

The insights gathered from the Curriculum Benchmark Survey highlight both the opportunities and challenges that business schools face in preparing students for an increasingly complex and dynamic world. The evolution of technology, industry demands, and student expectations necessitates a proactive and strategic approach to curriculum development. To remain competitive and relevant, institutions must embrace innovation while preserving the foundational principles of academic excellence.

The integration of artificial intelligence, digital transformation, and sustainability into the curriculum no longer seems optional. Business leaders of the future will need to navigate a world where data-driven decision-making, automation, and ethical leadership intersect. By embedding these emerging disciplines into the programs, we not only future-proof our institutions but also ensure that our graduates enter the workforce with the skills and mindset necessary to lead in an era of disruption and change. Institutions that fail to evolve risk losing relevance in an increasingly competitive and alternative learning landscape.

At the same time, we must recognize that transformation is not without its obstacles. Faculty resistance, institutional inertia, and the challenge of balancing tradition with innovation require thoughtful leadership. Strengthening partnerships with industry, leveraging data-driven

decision-making, and investing in faculty development will be key to overcoming these barriers. By fostering a culture of agility and continuous improvement, deans can lead their institutions toward a future that embraces both academic integrity and real-world applicability.

The business school of the future will be defined by flexibility, accessibility, and experiential learning. The rise of hybrid and online models, stackable credentials, and interdisciplinary collaboration underscores the need for adaptable program structures. Business schools must not only provide students with technical expertise but also cultivate critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and ethical decision-making skills. By prioritizing these elements, we equip graduates to navigate an evolving workforce with confidence and resilience.

Now is the time for leadership. By embracing change, fostering collaboration, and committing to curricular excellence, you can drive meaningful advancements that will benefit students, faculty, and the broader business community. The responsibility is great, but so too is the potential to transform business education for generations to come.



## Thank You To The 110 Business Schools For Their Contribution To This Study;

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Boston College, Carroll School of Management

Boston University, Questrom School of Business

Bowling Green State University, Schmidthorst College of Business

Butler University, Lacy School of Business

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California State University, Long Beach

Cape Breton University, Shannon School of Business

Claremont Graduate University, Drucker School

College of William & Mary, Raymond A Mason School of Business

Dublin City University

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Fairleigh Dickinson University, Silberman College of Business

Fordham University, Gabelli School of Business

Fundacao Dom Cabral

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Georgia Institute of Technology, Scheller College of Business

HEC Paris

Harvard University, Harvard Business School

Holy Family University

Indian Institute of Management Calutta

Iowa State University, Ivy College of Business

Johns Hopkins University, Carey Business School

Koç University, Graduate School of Business

Lipscomb University

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Mahidol University, College of Management

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Mercer University, Stetson-Hatcher School of Business

Michigan Technological University, College of Business

Mississippi State University, Mississippi State University

Monmouth University

New Jersey Institute of Technology, Martin Tuchman School of Management

North Dakota State University

Northeastern University, D'Amore-McKim School of Business

Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Management

Nottingham Trent University

Ohio University, College of Business

Old Dominion University, Strome College of Business

Penn State University, Smeal College of Business

Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile, Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile

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Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, John L. Grove College of Business

Siena College, School of Business

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St. John Fisher University, School of Business

Stetson University

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Suffolk University, Sawyer

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University of Alberta, Alberta School of Business

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University of California, Berkeley, Haas School of Business

University of California, Davis, Graduate School of Management

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University of Connecticut

University of Florida, Warrington College of Business

University of Glasgow, Adam Smith Business School

University of Hartford, Barney School of Business

University of Illinois Chicago, Liautaud Graduate School

University of Iowa, Tippie College of Business

University of Kentucky, Gatton

University of Lausanne, HEC

University of Maryland Global Campus, School of Business

University of Maryland, Robert H. Smith School of Business

University of Miami, Miami Herbert Business School

University of Michigan-Dearborn, College of Business

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, College of Business

University of New Hampshire, Paul College of Business and Economics

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Kenan-Flagler Business School

University of Northern British Columbia, School of Business

University of Notre Dame, Mendoza College of Business

University of Richmond, Robins School of Business

University of Saskatchewan

University of South Florida, Muma College of Business

University of Southern California

University of St. Thomas, Opus College of Business

University of Texas at Austin

University of Texas at Dallas, Jindal School of Management

University of Utah, David Eccles School of Business

University of Virginia, Darden School of Business

University of Western Ontario, Ivey Business School

University of Wisconsin - Madison, Wisconsin School of Business

University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, Sentry School of Business and Economics

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Université Laval, FSA ULaval

University of Tennessee Knoxville, Haslam College of Business

Utah State University, Jon M. Huntsman School of Business

Vanderbilt University, Owen Graduate School of Management

Villanova University

Wake Forest University, Wake Forest

West Virginia Wesleyan College, Albinson School of Business

Yale University, Yale SOM

**The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Graduate Business Curriculum Roundtable.**

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