Getting Into Business School with a Strong Application

By JOHN POLLARD

Business school students face a uniquely difficult challenge, because most programs require a series of essays rather than a single, comprehensive personal statement. This fact alone should indicate the importance that business schools place on your written responses. Part of the reason for this extra required writing is that business schools also place a stronger emphasis on practical experience. Academic ability may still be the number-one factor, but it's not enough to get you into a school; just as it's not enough to guarantee your success in the business world. Business schools pay close attention to personal qualities, including your leadership, communication skills, initiative, vision, and many more. Grades and scores do not explain this side of you, and neither does a resume. Thus your admission will depend largely on your ability to convey your experiences and goals in written form. Self-assessment is a significant part of this process, as is a careful review of your life and what you have done professionally. Many successful professionals have simply never had to articulate their accomplishments before and now for the first time must do so in a manner that is accessible to anyone, even without knowledge of their field. Being able to convey both the substance and significance of one's work life is crucial for all applicants.

This article has been written to help you avoid the most common essay flaws. If you remember nothing else about this article, remember this: Be Interesting, Be Concise.

Nearly all applications will feature a question that asks about your reasons for wanting to obtain an MBA at this stage of your career. Some will explicitly ask you to tie these reasons into your background and your goals. Even for schools that don't offer this specific direction, you should plan on such a discussion of past and future, as it provides essential context for your application.

"Why MBA?" is often the first question asked and without a doubt the most important essay you will write. It includes essential information about whether you're qualified, whether you're prepared, and where you're headed. The other essays fill in details about these fundamental points, but a strong answer about, for example, how you overcame a failure will not revive a candidacy that failed based on a lack of career focus.

Every answer should contain the following elements, unless the application has separate questions addressing them individually:

1. Your long- and short-term goals.
2. Your relevant past experience.
3. An assessment of your strengths and the gaps in your experience/education.
4. How an MBA program will bridge your past and future and fill in these gaps.
5. Why this particular MBA program is a good match for your needs.

There are no groundbreaking reasons for pursuing an MBA. This is not a place to aim for bold originality. Rather, you should focus on articulating detailed reasons that are specific to your situation. Moreover, there is plenty of room to distinguish yourself when discussing past experience and future goals; the reasons themselves, however, come from a more limited set. That said, you should not try to drop buzzwords for their own sake. Make sure you tie your specific objectives to other aspects of your application.

Here are some business school essay writing tips:

1. Don't Use Company Jargon
2. Your relevant past experience.
4. Why an MBA program will bridge your past and future and fill in these gaps.
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Executive Education

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By JOHN POLLARD
Woodbury University: The Benefits of Practice-Based Learning

Located at the heart of Los Angeles’ business and creative economies, Woodbury University offers an innovative MBA program that is taught by some of today’s top working professionals. It delivers a practice-based, advanced degree that is flexible, recognizing that many students are already immersed in the working world. It also provides students with globally challenging subjects, such as ethics, global leadership and sustainability, that are important in today’s national and global environments.

One of the oldest business programs in the West, Woodbury’s School of Business is among the 5 percent of schools globally accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). It also recently earned a Colleges of Distinction – Business badge for 2017-2018, and was named ‘The Best Graduate School’ by readers of the Daily News in the 2017 Readers Choice Awards.

Importantly, the GMAT or GRE are not required to enter the program, which is distinguished by a rotating team of executives-in-residence, world-class faculty and a range of civic engagement experiences, all aimed at preparing students for superb business performance.

Woodbury recognizes that earning an MBA is just one avenue for improving career prospects and it is not a one-size-fits-all proposition. An MBA is not required or appropriate in every field, but it is invaluable and even essential in many. Earning power over a lifetime is one clear, compelling rationale: statistics indicate that those with graduate degrees can expect to make 50 percent more than those without. But there are psychic rewards as well, some of which accrue from building expertise and being exposed to socially-conscious business practices that are embedded into the foundations of the program.

Woodbury’s MBA program offers two concentration options: Leadership-Global Strategy and Accounting-Finance. Students may also select a general degree with a free concentration options: Leadership-Global Strategy and Accounting-Finance. Students may also select a general degree with a free choice of electives. Regardless of their choice, Woodbury’s MBA students gain entrepreneurial, ethical, and change-prepared skills. The flexible program offers an intensive 36-credit curriculum, with one-year and two-year completion options, structured around seven-week sessions, with evening and weekend classes available.

Woodbury’s 15:1 student/faculty ratio creates a highly personalized setting where MBA students receive the mentoring required to achieve career success. From Burbank to Bangalore, commerce is now international, multicultural, and challenging in fascinating ways. Woodbury reflects this diversity and equips students to harness the power of multiple perspectives. Students emerge from the MBA program with a sound knowledge base in accounting, finance, marketing, leadership and strategy, along with the networking skills that are so vital in today’s global economy.

IN SUMMARY, WHY WOODBURY?

With so many MBA programs to choose from, you need to know that you are making a sound investment in your future when you choose Woodbury. Here are just a few things that set Woodbury’s MBA program apart:

- A flexible program that allows busy professionals to complete an MBA in as little as one year by taking evening and some weekend classes.
- A 15:1 student/faculty ratio which creates a highly personalized setting where you receive the mentoring you need to achieve success in your career.
- The location in Burbank, the media capital of world, gives you access to a network of opportunities in a cutting-edge, creative environment.
- The quality of the MBA program, verified by its recent accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, says your degree will mean something to your current or future employers.
- Woodbury’s focus on embracing sustainability, social responsibility and ethical leadership as core principles for both business education and business behavior, with the goal of cultivating creative, conscience-based and transformational leaders.
- An emphasis on fostering partnerships with leading businesses to introduce students to professional contacts and networking opportunities during and after their education at Woodbury.
- A focus on practice-based learning to prepare students for the next stage of their careers, shaping leaders who possess a distinctive, highly informed view of the business world.

You can be confident that our innovative MBA program will not only get you to the next stage in your career, but will give you a distinctive view of the world that propels you to a new level of personal success.

For more information, please visit www.woodbury.edu or call (818) 252-5231.

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The California Lutheran MBA: Shape the Future of Business, Starting with Your Career

What do you do? In the world of business, it's often the first question asked following a handshake and exchange of names. A career is a large part of what shapes and defines our lives. An MBA can help shape your career as a business leader. California Lutheran University’s MBA programs are designed to provide the environment, flexibility and support you need to succeed. With a Cal Lutheran MBA, you can accelerate your career progression, change careers, boost earning potential, unleash your inner entrepreneur, or any combination that meets your individual goals.

MBA
Cal Lutheran’s MBA is focused on helping you build your career through experiential learning, with outcomes that are immediately applicable in the workplace. You’ll also have the opportunity to build a powerful network among your peers and leaders in the business community. Cal Lutheran’s School of Management sponsors and engages in many unique events that create opportunities to learn about new ideas, network, and forge relationships. Graduates of the MBA program work with some of the leading employers in the region.

From enrollment to graduation, you’ll have the individualized support from faculty and staff that Cal Lutheran is known for. Beyond the supportive environment, you’ll find flexibility. With four terms throughout the year, you can start when it is most convenient for you. Choose from full-time, part-time, or online schedule options and specialization tracks in entrepreneurship, finance, human capital management, information technology, international business and marketing. Learn more about the MBA at CalLutheran.edu/MBA.

THE MBA FOR EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONALS
The MBA for Experienced Professionals delivers an 18-month program for working professionals with at least five years of relevant experience, who have already achieved some success, and want to reach their next big goal. Designed with busy lifestyles in mind, the program features 15 courses delivered in a hybrid model (8 on-campus courses, 7 online courses). The on-campus courses are offered in a compressed weekend format. The curriculum is interdisciplinary, experience-driven, and organized around five key areas – leading operations, managing process, leading strategy, leading people, and professional advancement. Each key area features relevant course topics including: innovation and organizational entrepreneurship, global economics for executives, strategic decision making for high performance, organizational design, and leadership and change management.

The Cal Lutheran MBA for Experienced Professionals provides the tools to reach your peak potential. Learn more about the MBA for Experienced Professionals at CalLutheran.edu/EP.

THE MBA FOR FINANCIAL PLANNERS
The MBA in Financial Planning from Cal Lutheran is one of the country’s most comprehensive master-level programs, providing financial planning professionals with the acumen needed to excel. The program is offered entirely online with small classes taught by world-class faculty with an emphasis on ethics, character and client needs.

The MBA in Financial Planning is available in two tracks – for those who seek their CFP and for those who already have it. In Track 1, upon completion of the program, you will earn an MBA in Financial Planning and gain eligibility to sit for the prestigious CFP Certification Exam. Track 2 is identical to the first track except for the fact that five of the introductory-level financial planning courses are replaced with advanced financial planning courses and interdisciplinary-study courses. Upon completion of the program, you will earn an MBA in Financial Planning. Learn more about the MBA in Financial planning at CalLutheran.edu/FP.

Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ which it awards to individuals who successfully complete initial and ongoing certification requirements. California Lutheran University does not certify individuals to use the CFP® or CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ marks. CFP certification is granted solely by Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. to individuals who, in addition to completing an educational requirement such as this CFP Board-Registered Program, have met ethical, experience and examination requirements.
Woodbury's practice-based MBA program is designed to prepare the working professional for the next stage in their career. One of the oldest business programs in the West, Woodbury is located at the heart of Los Angeles' business and creative economies, giving students access to a network of opportunities in a cutting-edge environment. Our focus on sustainability, social responsibility and ethical leadership in business education and behavior results in cultivating conscience-based and transformational leaders.

Woodbury’s focus on critical thinking and emerging business trends as well as global and ethical approaches added significant value to my educational experience and provided valuable insight.

— JACK MCALPIN, Alumnus

For more information, visit woodbury.edu/program/school-of-business/mba
818 252 5231 | woodbury.edu
University of La Verne Enactus Students Extend Helping Hand

Bosnian Alickovic’s family came to the United States from Bosnia in 1996 when he was one year old, bringing little money with them. His father taught English to fellow Bosnians and his mother took care of their children. Despite having few resources, they scraped by and even found ways to help others.

That experience drove the University of La Verne alumni when he and his classmates traveled across the U.S.-Mexico border this year to help a woman start a catering business so she could provide for her family. Alickovic, who received a bachelor’s degree in business administration in May, was part of the university’s Enactus program, an international nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring students to change the world through entrepreneurial action.

“Many people see business as a very earthy corporate world, but I see it as the best chance to extend my helping hand,” Alickovic said.

At University La Verne, students in both undergraduate and graduate programs are immersed in the fundamentals of business and entrepreneurship, but they also learn about the importance of giving back to community. Those lessons are introduced in the classroom and then brought to life through co-curricular programs such as the Enactus team. This past academic year, the university’s 40 Enactus students – primarily business majors – tackled problems such as childhood obesity, unemployment, and poverty.

Those efforts earned members of the University of La Verne’s 2016-17 Enactus team their ninth consecutive win at the regional competition this spring and a second place finish within their league at the nationals in Missouri. The university was one of 96 colleges competing nationally.

“I am very proud of them. They worked hard and we competed hard,” said Dr. Isam Ghezawi, professor of management and Enactus adviser. “I am very happy with the impact that we’ve created with our community.”

Led by the Enactus team, university of La Verne students donated clothing to help college graduates in the Philippines get jobs. Students planted vegetables at an elementary school and taught nearly 600 children there how to make healthier eating choices. And the team’s work yielded a cleaner Orange County coastline, with students collecting used fishing line and converting it into nets for fishermen in the Philippines.

Jessica Faber, a senior business administration major, applied her classroom knowledge of management, leadership, and teamwork to the Clothing for Dignity and Success project, which generated 9,200 pieces of clothing, 700 books, and 300 success manuals for Filipino college graduates. She led a team of about 15 students, placing collection bins around the city and campus, gathering the clothing once the drive was complete, and then sorting the clothing for shipping.

Faber said the project’s community engagement component – working with partners such as the Rotary Club, Hillcrest Homes, and La Verne Waste Management – was one of the most rewarding aspects of Enactus.

“It was amazing to see the La Verne community come together for this and it feels great that I really helped out,” Faber said.

Alickovic and Faber are among the eight students who received job and internship offers at the Enactus national championships.

Alickovic accepted a job in client services for the human resources software company ADP and Faber worked a 10-week paid summer internship at Orchard Supply Hardware. Students also received offers for management, business development, and sales positions at Sam’s Club, PepsiCo, and Walmart.

University of La Verne’s Burbank Campus is located at 4521 W. Alameda Ave, Suite 305. To request information or RSVP for the next information session, call (818) 295-6500.
AACSB Anticipates a New Era in Business Education

The past April, AACSB International (AACSB), the world’s largest global business education network, launched a new face for the future of business education through the roll-out of a new brand identity.

The effort concludes a more than two-year transformational journey that was driven by the organization’s new mission and vision as well as market input from key stakeholders—students, the business community, employers, and a global membership network—and accelerated by major organizational milestones, including the appointment of a new CEO, the celebration of AACSB’s centennial, and the announcement of an industry-wide vision for business education.

“The world is changing at a tremendous rate, and it is our job as educators to lead and shape that change,” said Thomas R. Robinson, president and CEO of AACSB. “The industry identified this imperative through the launch of the Collective Vision, and since then, momentum has been building. AACSB knew more was needed to unify the industry and demonstrate the value, relevancy, and impact of business education—and to have a voice globally and locally in the regions we serve.”

Over its 100-year history, AACSB has consistently evolved to champion high-quality business education. Through a new strategy and identity, AACSB is expanding on its legacy in accreditation to assume the role of an industry-wide global “connector,” uniting the best minds in business education—and business—to prepare the next generation of business leaders.

“AACSB’s centennial was a moment of pride and reflection,” said Santiago Iñiguez, chair of the AACSB Board of Directors and president of IE University. “This turning point was spurred by a desire to do more to meet the changing needs of society and business, to reach out to new stakeholders, and to tap the limitless potential of the next generation of students. Our new brand is the embodiment of this new trajectory, and the first of many steps the organization will take to fulfill our deep-rooted commitment to connecting the industry around a common goal: transforming business education for global prosperity.”

Inspired by a new mission focused on engagement, innovation, and impact, and a bold new vision, AACSB will continue to refine its global portfolio of services while inviting leading educators and business innovators to become part of the movement through its Business Education Alliance. Examples include:

- Fostering engagement with educators and business leadership through the roll-out of a new brand identity.
- Asphalt Arms of the ACCS’s centennial, and the announcement of an industry-wide vision for business education.
- The industry identified this imperative through the launch of the Collective Vision, and since then, momentum has been building. AACSB knew more was needed to unify the industry and demonstrate the value, relevancy, and impact of business education—and to have a voice globally and locally in the regions we serve.
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As long as we as an industry are committed to transforming ourselves, together we can prepare the leaders of today and tomorrow for whatever lies ahead.”

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