How to Choose an MBA Concentration

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For those seeking to launch a successful business career or advance in their existing one, earning an MBA can represent a powerful step forward. The value of an MBA is reflected in data collected by the Graduate Management Admission Council in 2022 that revealed the following:

- A total of 90 percent of graduates rated the value of their graduate management education favorably.
- A total of 85 percent reported a positive return on investment.
- A total of 75 percent said their degree helped them achieve their personal, professional, and financial goals.

One of the most important considerations for MBA students is whether to pursue a specialization and, if so, which area of business to focus on. Many MBA programs

feature multiple tracks that allow students to tailor their education to their professional goals. Common MBA concentrations include analytics, finance, management, marketing, and entrepreneurship.

For prospective students, choosing the right MBA concentration can seem daunting. In addition to weighing their personal interests and career aspirations, students need to consider the type of MBA program, format, curriculum, and time commitment involved in earning the degree.

Types of MBA Programs

One of the first decisions prospective students have to make — before even choosing the MBA concentration they want to pursue — is what type of MBA program they want to enroll in. MBA programs come in various formats: full time vs. part time, online vs. in person, weekend vs. evening classes. Choosing the right one depends on a student's goals and personal preferences, and in some cases, the level of professional experience they have.

The A. B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University offers multiple MBA formats to accommodate students with diverse interests and lifestyles.

Full-Time MBA

While today's educational landscape provides a range of pathways to an MBA degree, enrolling in a full-time program is still one of the most popular options. Tulane's Full-Time MBA program, which spans two years, gives students a strong foundation in various business concepts — economics, finance, business law — and helps them develop vital analytical and decision-making skills.

Upon completing their first year in the program, students can pursue a specialization in their second year. Students can declare up to two specializations, which include the following:

- Business Analytics
- Finance
- Marketing
- Strategy and Innovation
- Energy and Sustainability

Professional MBA

Tulane's Professional MBA is designed for early-to-mid-career professionals seeking to enhance their business expertise without pausing their careers. Structured as a part-time program, with classes being held on campus after working hours, students can complete the program in less than three years.

Similar to the Full-Time MBA, the Professional MBA allows students to choose from the following specializations:

- Business Analytics
- Energy and Sustainability
- Finance
- Marketing
- Strategy and Innovation

Executive MBA

Geared toward those with several years of professional experience, Tulane's Executive MBA aims to equip students with advanced management knowledge, leadership skills, and strategic decision-making capabilities. All Executive MBA students earn a specialization in global strategy and have the option to pursue additional concentrations in finance or management.

Taking weekend classes twice a month on campus, students can earn their Executive MBA in just 17 months.

Online MBA

Tulane's Online MBA blends asynchronous coursework with weekly, one-hour live sessions that allow students to meaningfully engage with faculty and their peers. On a full-time schedule, students can complete the program in just two years. Similar to the Full-Time MBA program, the Online MBA covers key business concepts and allows students to specialize in the following areas to align with their career goals:

- Business Analytics
- Finance
- Marketing
- Strategic Leadership

Which MBA Concentration Should You Choose?

Specializing in an MBA allows students to develop in-depth expertise in a particular area of business, helping them stand out to employers and increasing the likelihood of landing a job in their desired field.

Deciding what kind of MBA concentration to pursue ultimately depends on a student's interests and professional goals. Tulane offers several concentration options across its MBA programs, targeting high-demand fields, such as marketing, finance, and analytics.

Business Analytics

In today's data-driven business landscape, employers covet professionals with the ability to analyze information and extract strategic insights. Tulane's Business Analytics concentration equips students with the technical expertise and analytical mindset to turn complex data into smart business decisions. Through hands-on coursework using the latest tools and technologies, students can develop practical skills to prepare themselves for a wide range of in-demand careers.

Analytics-driven professions are projected to see robust employment growth between 2023 and 2033, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, including the following:

- Management Analyst: 11 percent growth (107,900 new jobs)
- Operations Research Analyst: 23 percent growth (28,300 new jobs)
- Financial Analyst: 9 percent growth (37,900 new jobs)

Finance

Skilled money managers are crucial to the success of any business. The Finance curricula in Tulane's MBA programs balance theoretical knowledge and practical application, exploring areas such as investments, valuations, fixed-income analytics, derivatives, and risk management. In the Finance concentration, students gain the expertise to excel in various roles.

In addition to financial analysts, demand for a range of financial management roles — controllers, treasurers, chief financial officers — is projected to be high. According

to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, overall employment of financial managers will grow by approximately 17 percent (138,300 new jobs) in the coming years.

Marketing

Effective marketing is essential to business growth, driving brand awareness and helping companies attract new customers. Students pursuing an MBA specialization in Marketing at Tulane explore concepts related to brand strategy, digital marketing, and data-driven decision-making. The in-depth curriculum helps students understand how to develop and implement marketing campaigns and measure their impact.

Employment of both market research analysts and marketing managers is projected to rise by 8 percent between 2023 and 2033, the BLS reports, creating more than 100,00 new jobs in this field.

Energy/Sustainability

The effects of climate change and the nation’s continuing shift to alternative energy will have a significant impact on the future of business. Students specializing in these concentrations — offered in the Full-Time MBA and Professional MBA programs — explore the business of energy through coursework in finance, asset valuation and analysis, risk management, trading, and environmental economics. They can further their professional development and expand their industry networks by tapping into the Tulane Energy Institute’s many resources.

Grand View Research projects that the global green technology and sustainability market will grow by about 23 percent each year, on average, from 2025 to 2030, climbing from about $28 billion in revenue to about $80 billion. Market growth will likely translate to plentiful job opportunities for those with expertise in this field.

Management

The development of management and leadership skills is a core part of any MBA program. The Management concentrations in Tulane’s Executive MBA and Professional MBA programs delve deeper into these competencies, helping students hone their leadership potential and decision-making abilities. Coursework covers topics such as change management, performance management, innovation, and

corporate strategy.

Professionals with these skills will be well positioned in the job market, as overall demand for management professionals across a wide range of industries and business sectors is expected to grow. Between 2023 and 2033, the BLS projects more than 1 million job openings each year, on average, for managers.

Specialize Your MBA, Maximize Your Impact

Specializing within an MBA program allows students to align their education with their professional ambitions, gaining focused expertise to stand out in a competitive job market. Whether you're drawn to analytics, finance, marketing, or the idea of launching your own business, an MBA concentration can help you sharpen your skill set and take the next step in your career.

With flexible formats and high-demand areas of study, Tulane's MBA programs are designed for diverse learners who want to deepen their expertise and accelerate their career growth. More than 90 percent of our Full-Time MBA alumni are employed within six months of graduation, with many earning over six figures.

Discover why a Tulane education represents a wise investment in your future.

Sources:

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- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Management Occupations
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Market Research Analysts

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Operations Research Analysts
- U.S. Small Business Administration, New Business Applications Reach Record 16 Million Under Biden-Harris Administration