

EUMBA

European MBA Survey

2017

CONTENTS

03	ABOUT
04	METHODOLOGY
05	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
06	SECTION 1: THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MBA STUDENTS
13	SECTION 2: OVERVIEW OF DEMOGRAPHICS
22	SECTION 3: RESEARCH AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR
29	SECTION 4: PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND
36	SECTION 5: MBA COURSE TYPE
43	SECTION 6: PERCEPTIONS, ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS
55	CONCLUSION
58	TAKE PART IN OUR NEXT RESEARCH PROJECT

ABOUT THE EUROPEAN MBA SURVEY

The European MBA Survey was launched to better understand one of the most popular postgraduate courses in the world, from the point of view of the students that are either currently studying, have studied or are intending to study for an MBA. The European MBA Survey is a new initiative that analyses perceptions, decision, making processes, motivations, barriers, influencing factors and media habits.

There are mixed messages about whether the MBA qualification is going through a period of boom, or a time of bust. We are seeing a growth in MBA applications across Europe* (but not necessarily in the UK) where it appears that shorter MBA programmes are incentivising enrolment. Where it has been reported that MBA applications have declined, a variety of reasons have been cited in the media; from a strengthening job market making it difficult for providers to attract prospective students back to full-time study, hefty undergraduate debts impacting the market, through to employers no longer valuing the qualification as highly as they once did.

However, while there has been an uptick in European MBA enrolment, the United Kingdom has not seen a similar trend. The number of students studying for a face to face MBA in the UK - part-time or full-time - declined from 2013/14 to 2015/16 by 23%. The largest decline was seen in the full-time MBA market, which declined by 28% from 2013/14 to 2015/16. This is, in part, driven by the steep decline in Indian student enrolment which has disproportionately impacted the United Kingdom after the abolishment of the Post-work Study Visa in 2012*.

When combined with other geopolitical factors affecting student recruitment, this paints an increasingly challenging and competitive environment for MBA providers to operate within.

The European MBA Survey exists to look at the domestic UK and European picture to enable decision makers, marketers, research analysts and senior leaders from the sector to gauge a more detailed understanding of student consumer behaviour prior to, and after, their application to an MBA programme through the data insights contained within.

This report offers data-driven insights garnered from over 40,000 pieces of data, highlights new target audiences, behavioural changes over time and new consumer trends so that you are equipped with the information to shape your content and marketing strategy and target the right market, on the right device, at the right time and with the right message.

*Data from HESA Student Record 2013/14-2015/16, all records with MBA marker. Figures rounded in accordance with HESA standard rounding methodology. All figures exclude distance learners unless stated. <http://monitor.icef.com/2017/09/mba-programmes-report-shifting-international-application-volumes/>

METHODOLOGY

The European MBA Survey was open to all students who have studied or are currently studying the MBA qualification, as well as current undergraduates from UK and European Higher Education providers.

Any university or business school which offered an MBA or Executive MBA in 2017 was invited to collaborate on the European MBA Survey by the Insights and Research Division at Net Natives. In total, six providers took part.

Additional surveys were distributed to panels drawn from Crowdology and Student Hut so that a representative sample of undergraduates and MBA alumni were included in the data pool.

In total, 818 respondents completed the study and over 40,000 data points compiled this research project.

Equal weighting was given to each participant's response.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 Based on the responses, we have segmented the respondents into five groups with their own set of consumer behaviours - each representing what stage they are at on the application journey.

2 The MBA remains a global qualification, but some international markets are stronger than others. Spain looks set to cement its position as a major international provider of students.

3 Marital status plays a part in conversion. With conversion rates very low from those who are in a cohabiting relationship, you could maximise your budgets by excluding this group.

4 Prospective MBA students are taking longer to research and apply. The Dynamic Applicant spent 25 months researching before application. Current MBA students spent 17 months.

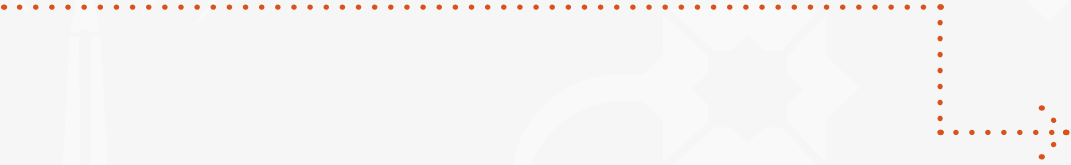
5 Social media consumption is evolving. If you are targeting The Uninterested Student it would be best advised to not include LinkedIn lead gen ads in the mix; this group are most active on Facebook. The Tentative Applicant is increasingly accessing YouTube; consider including this platform in your marketing mix.

6 Your MBA alumni are powerful influencers. When asked, students stated that they are likely to recommend the programme to a colleague, rating it 7.7/10.

7 MBA applicants are willing to travel further to their study destination. The Dynamic Student is willing to travel 2.3 hours to their MBA provider, compared with 1.8 hours for current MBA students. Widen your outreach and advertising to include catchment areas within this travel distance.

8 No one knows what the future holds, but according to the EuMBA Survey, providers who are offering part-time and/or online study options will be in a great position. Part-time study is the delivery method of choice for the Dynamic Applicant (38.4%).

SECTION 1: THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MBA STUDENTS



SECTION 1: THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MBA STUDENT

The European MBA Survey explores the motivations and considerations of five key profiles, reflecting varying stages of their engagement with the MBA programme; The Tentative Applicant, The Dynamic Student, The Current MBA Student, The Alumni, The Uninterested Student.

The report has been segmented in this manner to reveal the changes in consumer perceptions, behaviours and media consumption habits, enabling you to optimise your content and marketing strategies for this new generation.

THE ALUMNI



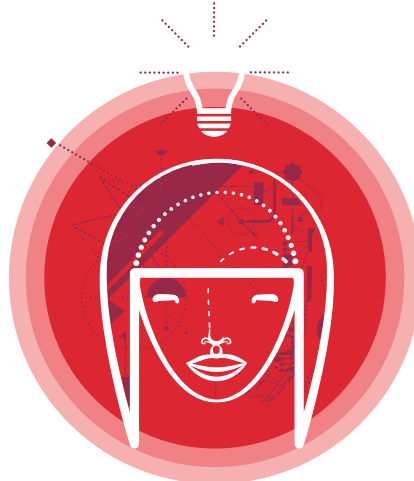
THE CURRENT MBA STUDENT



THE DYNAMIC APPLICANT



THE TENTATIVE APPLICANT



THE UNINTERESTED STUDENT



THE ALUMNI

The Alumni has completed an MBA programme. Their responses to this survey not only highlight the realities of holding the qualification, and how these match against perceptions, but also allows the opportunity to benchmark changes in consumer behaviour over time.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

- 1 ENGINEERING
- 2 INFORMATION SYSTEMS
- 3 BUSINESS CONSULTANCY

GENDER



62% MALE
35% FEMALE
2% PREFER NOT TO SAY
1% NEUTRAL



MARITAL STATUS

60%
MARRIED



DAILY SOCIAL PLATFORM USAGE

f 75% You Tube 44%
in 31% Twitter 31%



AVERAGE TIME WILLING TO TRAVEL

2 HOURS AND 6 MINUTES

THE CURRENT MBA STUDENT

As the name suggests, the Current MBA Student is currently enrolled on an MBA programme. By understanding The Current MBA Student, we can measure how consumer behaviour and trends are evolving between this group and prospective students. By measuring against MBA Alumni, we can identify changes and trends that are occurring over time.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

- 1 ACCOUNTING
- 2 BUSINESS
- 3 ENGINEERING

MARITAL STATUS



54%
MARRIED

GENDER



67% MALE
33% FEMALE

DAILY SOCIAL PLATFORM USAGE



78%



54%



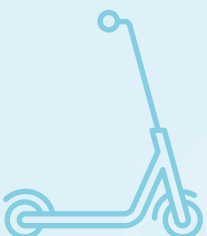
52%



SPENT 17 MONTHS
RESEARCHING BEFORE
APPLYING

AVERAGE TIME WILLING TO TRAVEL

1 HOUR AND 48 MINUTES



THE DYNAMIC APPLICANT

The Dynamic Applicant is further along the application journey having applied for an MBA programme but not yet enrolled. This group allows us to look at an audience that is most likely to convert to study and compare behaviours against those who have, or are currently studying and see how this is changing over a short period of time.

SPENT
25
MONTHS
RESEARCHING
BEFORE
APPLYING




GENDER






52% MALE
48% FEMALE

MARITAL STATUS

47%
 **MARRIED**

DAILY SOCIAL PLATFORM USEAGE

 **79%**
 **60%**  **39%**

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

- 1** BUSINESS CONSULTANCY
- 2** INFORMATION SYSTEMS
- 3** PUBLIC SERVICE

AVERAGE TIME WILLING TO TRAVEL
2 HOURS AND 18 MINUTES



THE TENTATIVE APPLICANT

This group is aware of the MBA brand and has indicated that they are interested in the qualification, but is yet to apply. We are interested in this group as they are potentially more likely to convert and one of the biggest barriers, that of awareness, has been removed already.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

- 1 MARKETING
- 2 IT
- 3 ACCOUNTANCY




GENDER

52% MALE
48% FEMALE

MARITAL STATUS

49%
SINGLE

DAILY SOCIAL PLATFORM USAGE

 79%
 55%  47%

BIGGEST BARRIERS

COSTS

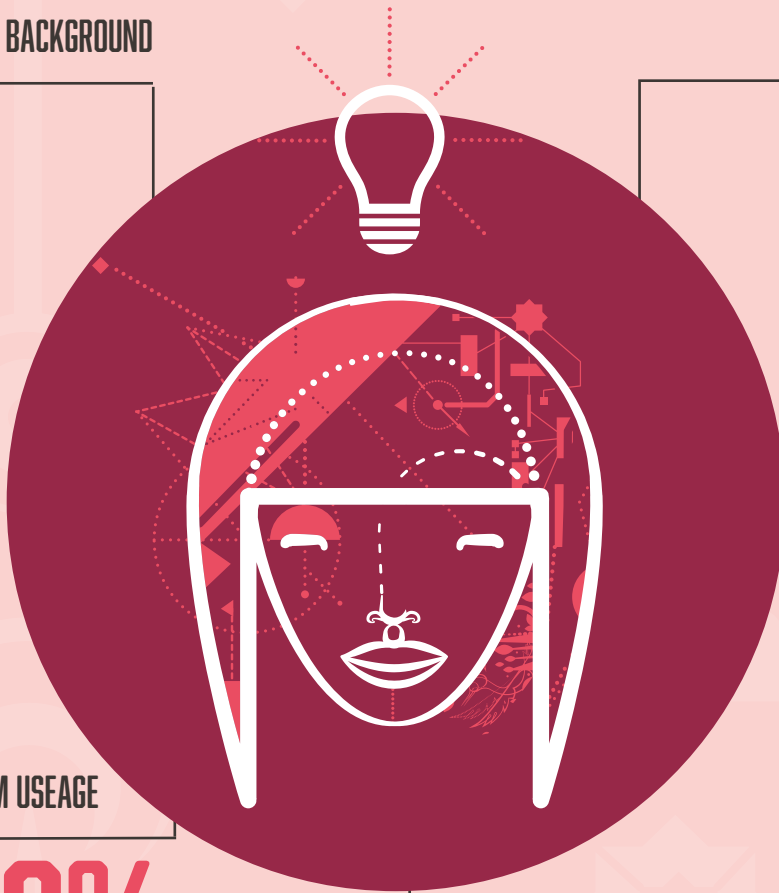
1

WANT TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS

2

UNABLE TO COMMIT TO TIME

3



AVERAGE TIME WILLING TO TRAVEL

1 HOUR AND 48 MINUTES

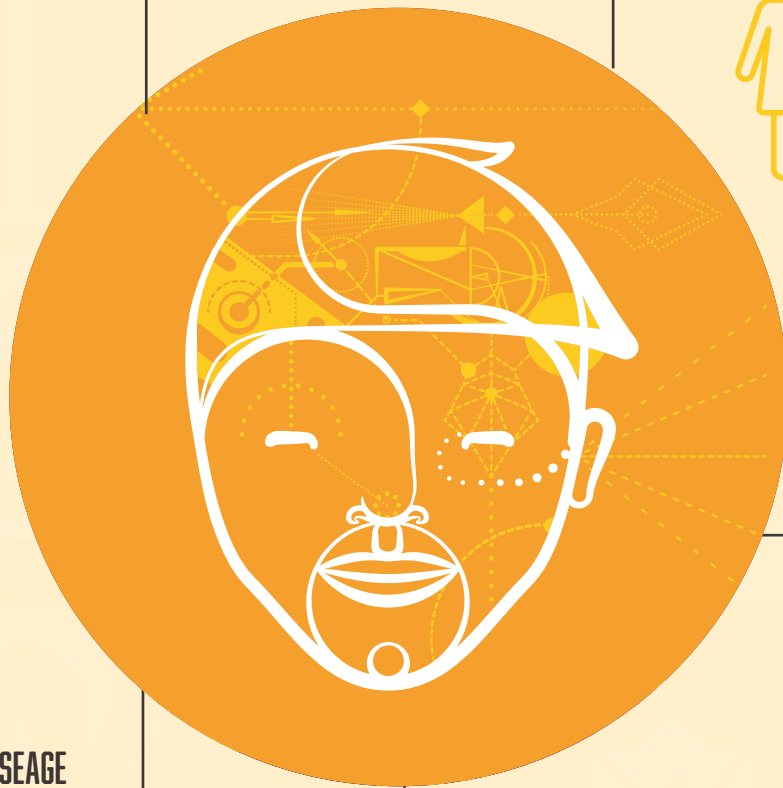
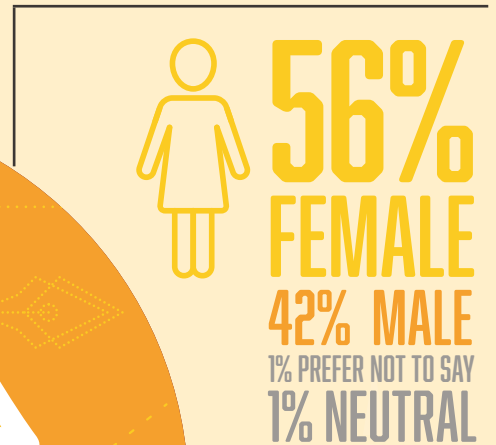
THE UNINTERESTED STUDENT

The Uninterested Student has not considered applying for an MBA; the reasons for which we will explore later in the report. This is an interesting group for marketers to consider; why aren't they interested in the qualification? Can they be influenced to apply? What are the barriers, and can they be removed?

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND



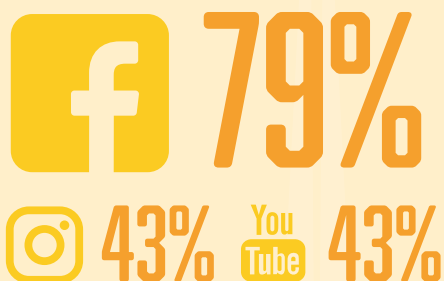
GENDER



MARITAL STATUS



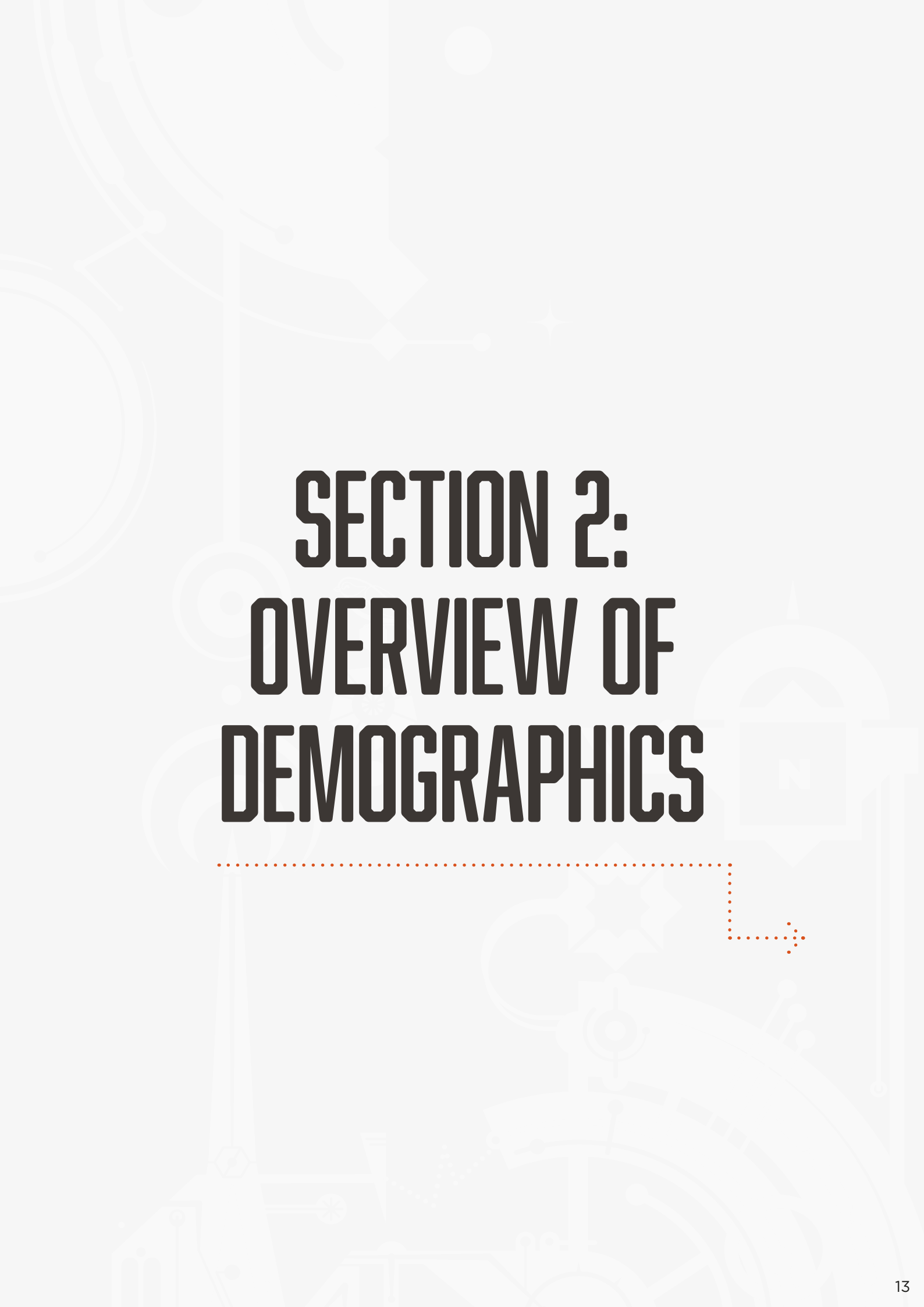
DAILY SOCIAL PLATFORM USAGE



BIGGEST BARRIERS



SECTION 2: OVERVIEW OF DEMOGRAPHICS



KEY FINDINGS

This section of the EuMBA Survey looks at gender, country of domicile and marital status of each of the key profiles. Understanding these factors can help you refine your targeting and messaging and help you understand barriers that may exist as a result of demographics.

1 Whilst traditionally, 60% of a typical MBA cohort will be made up of males, the interest in the qualification is closer to 50/50. This is an opportunity for you to work on messaging and conversion strategies aimed specifically at females to remove barriers to entry.

2 Traditionally, the MBA has been a qualification that attracts enrolments globally. Aside from domestic recruitment, the US, Australia and Asia are strong markets. However, the EuMBA Survey results indicate that, whilst interest in the qualification from these regions remains, applicants from these regions are less likely to apply early. You will need to tweak your strategies in order to convert this interest into applications and enrolments, or risk missing out on the international market.

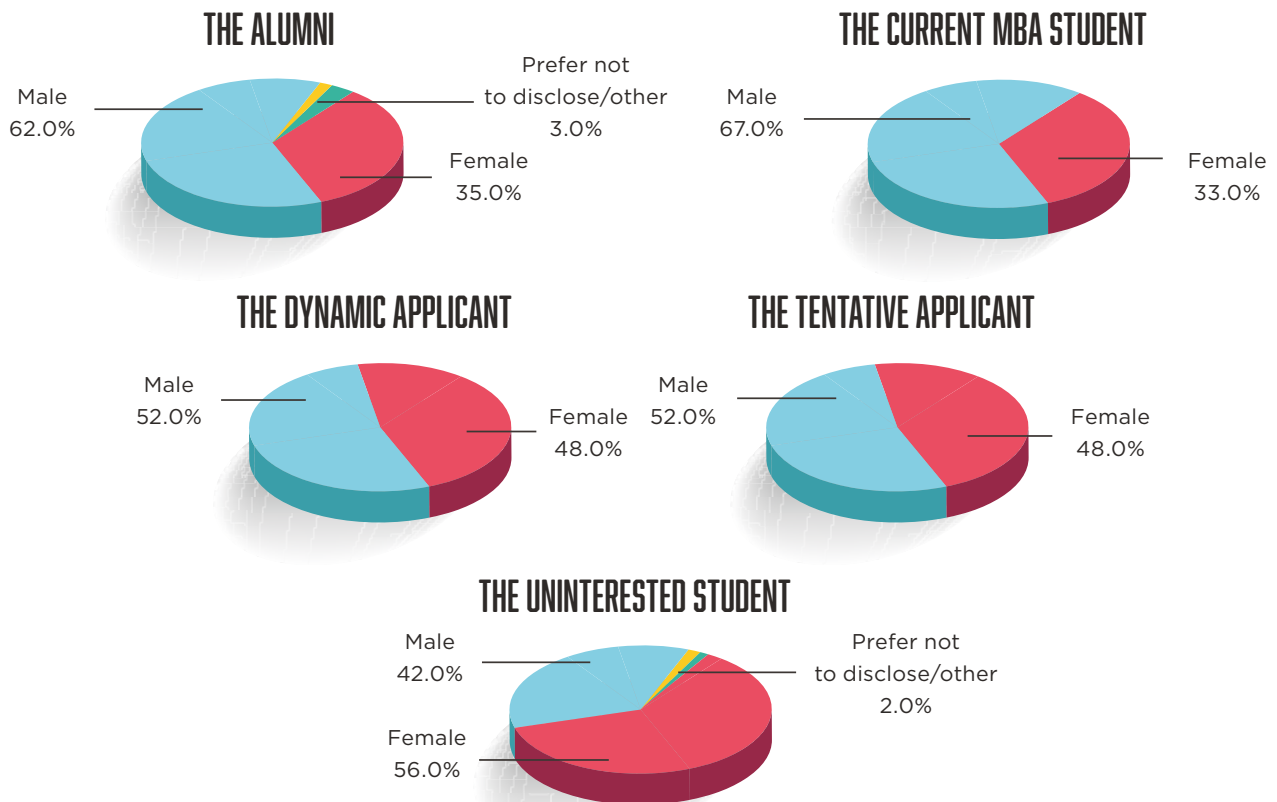
3 One of the biggest international markets, Spain, remains a strong region as results suggest there is even more interest than in previous years, albeit tentative. You could take advantage of this by prioritising advertising and outreach activity in this region.

4 Marital status seemingly plays a huge role in the typical MBA student profile. Whilst enrolments from those who are married or single are strong, enrolments are almost non-existent from those who are cohabiting. Providers could maximise their budgets and efforts by excluding this group from their recruitment strategies.

GENDER

Amongst those who have completed, or are currently studying an MBA, there is a gender divide revealing males are more likely to study and complete the MBA qualification than females.

When we analysed the Tentative Applicant and the Dynamic Applicant, we see that divide narrow.



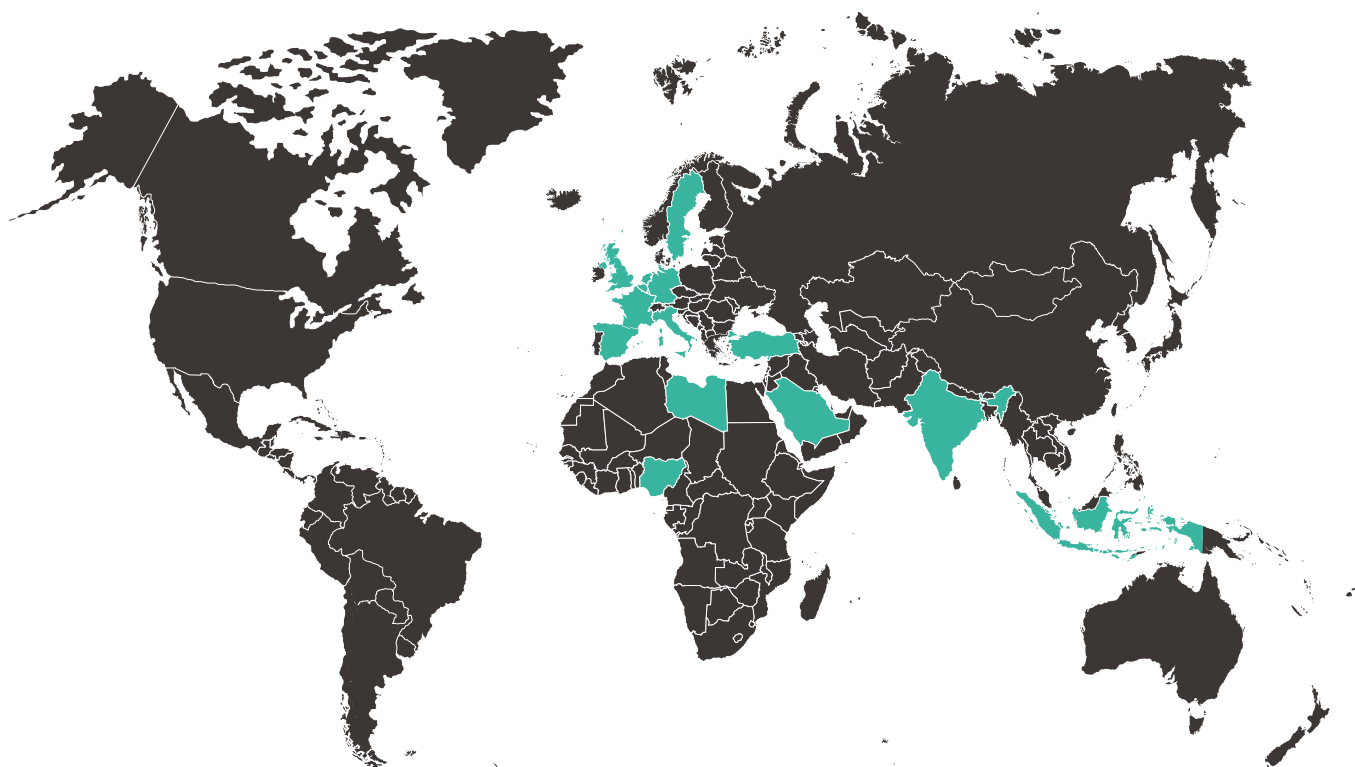
This indicates that traditionally, more males than females study and graduate from, the MBA qualification, but in 2017, based on current and prospective applications, this difference is almost negligible. There are two points for you to consider here; are females encountering barriers to entry, which means that they do not go through with their application and enrol (and if so, how can you change your messaging or course structure to encourage more conversions)? Or, has this traditional divide been removed and a far more equal representation will be present in future years? In which case, gender-targeted messaging and advertising may be more effective in the future.

LOCATION

Exploring the country of domicile can help with smart targeting when considering international markets. Traditionally, the MBA attracts global applications, particularly from Western Europe, Asia and America. However, data from the EuMBA Survey suggests this picture could be changing. The survey found that applications from the US and Asia have dropped significantly (although somewhat mitigated by a growth in applications from Australia and North Africa).

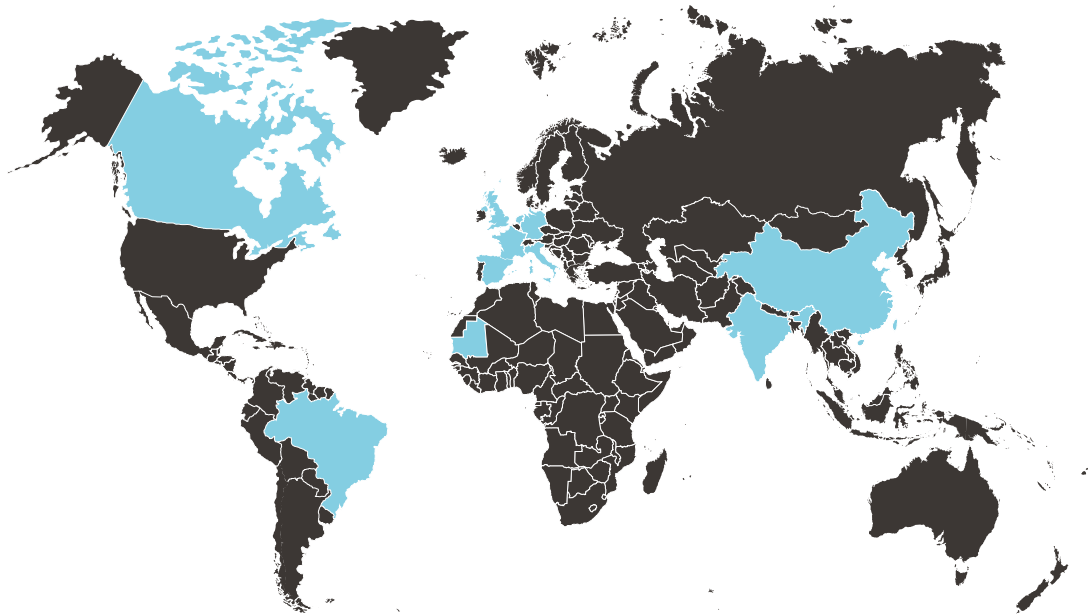
MBA providers will have to work harder over the recruitment period than in previous years in order to convert interest from these regions into applications and enrolments. Particularly in the context of increased competition from decreasing levels of applications generally.

THE ALUMNI

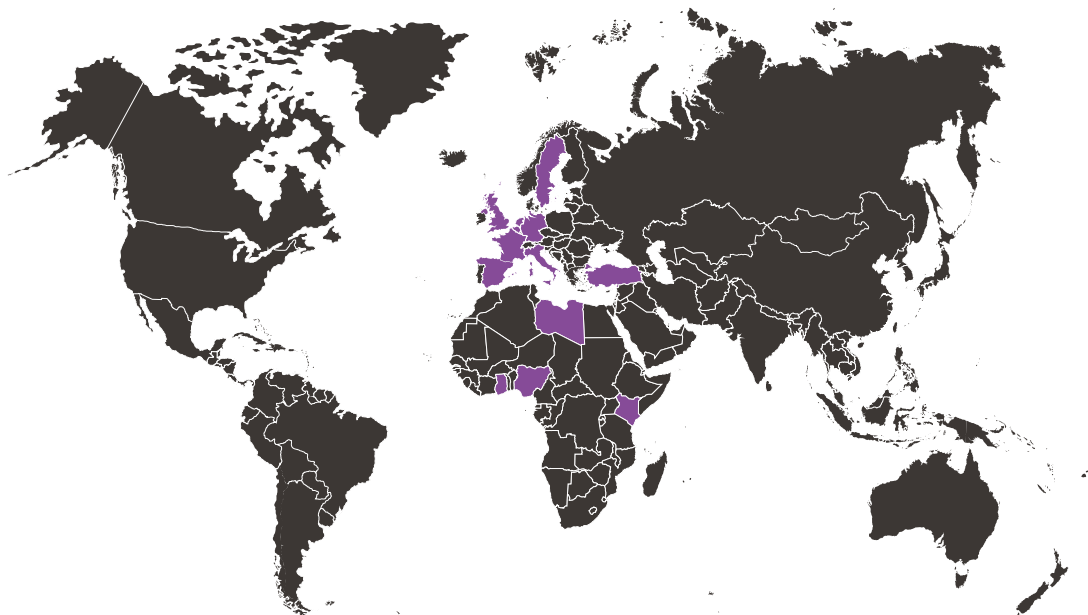


LOCATION

THE CURRENT MBA STUDENT

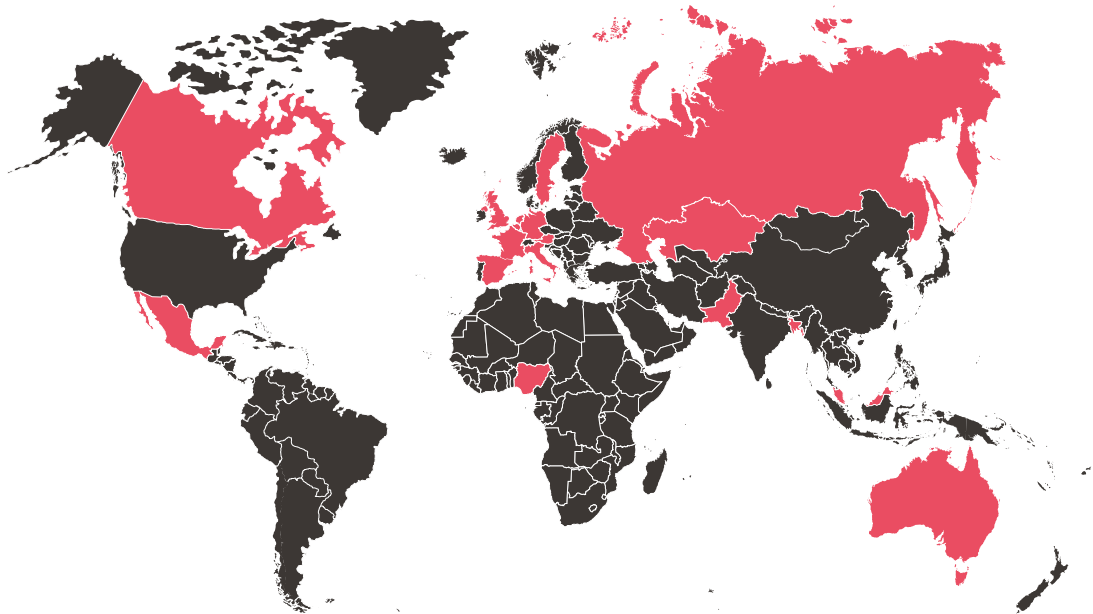


THE DYNAMIC APPLICANT

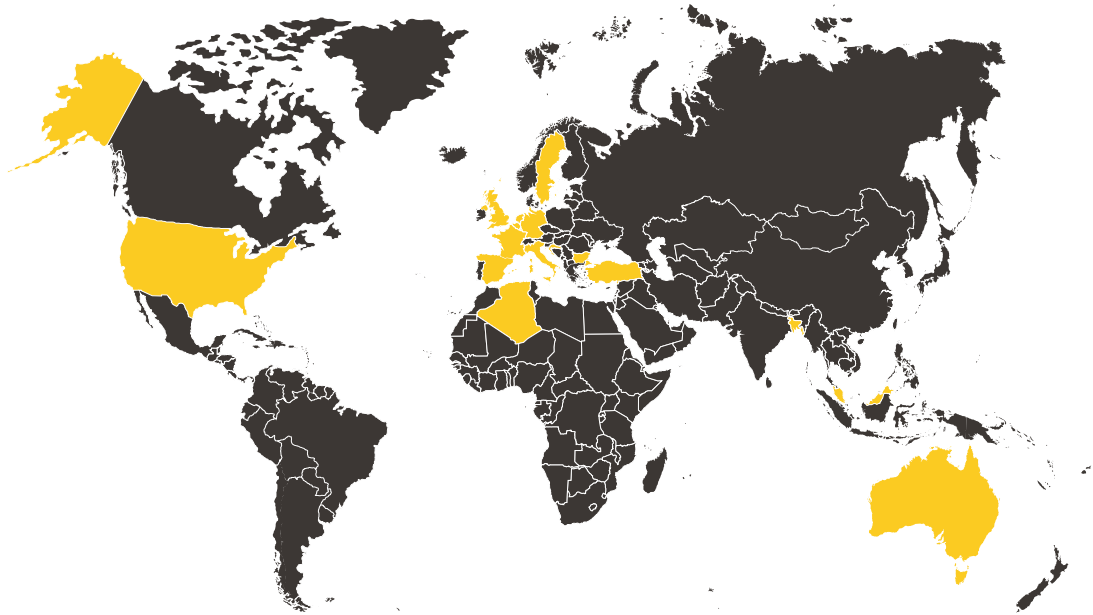


LOCATION

THE TENTATIVE APPLICANT



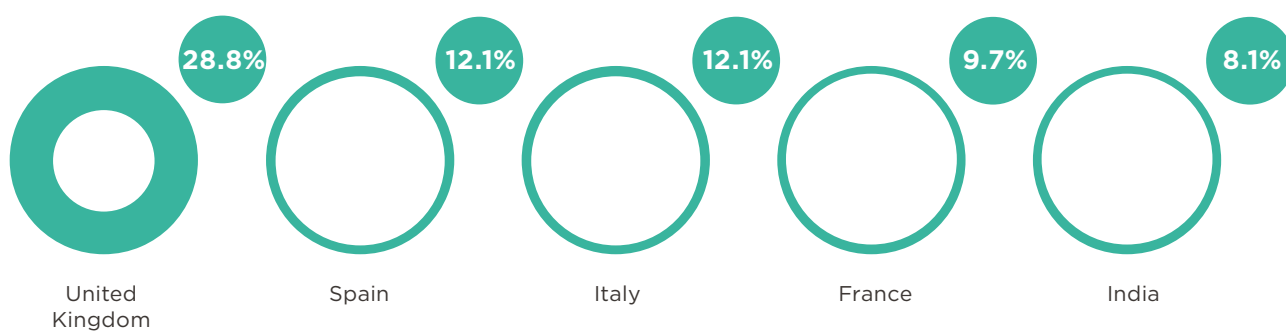
THE UNINTERESTED STUDENT



TRADITIONAL MARKETS

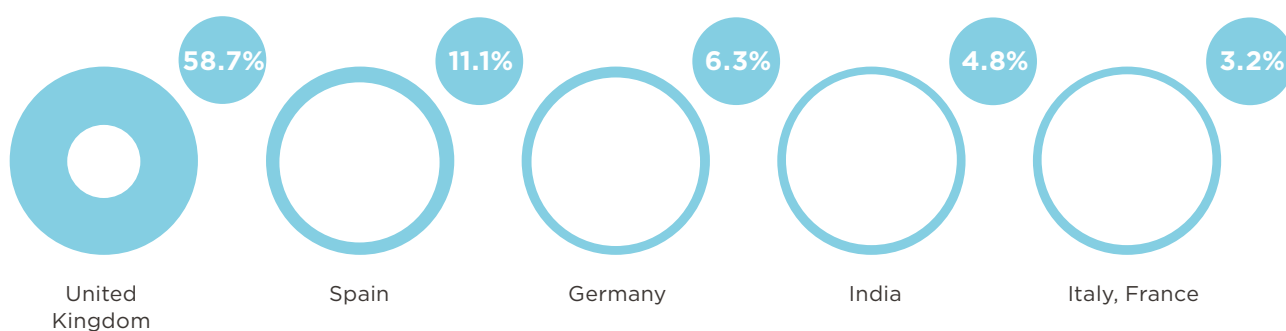
TRADITIONAL MARKETS (ALUMNI)

The MBA has traditionally been an international qualification with students coming from a wide range of international markets to study in the UK. The top five countries that our survey found were responsible for inbound enrolments to the UK include:



CURRENT MBA STUDENTS

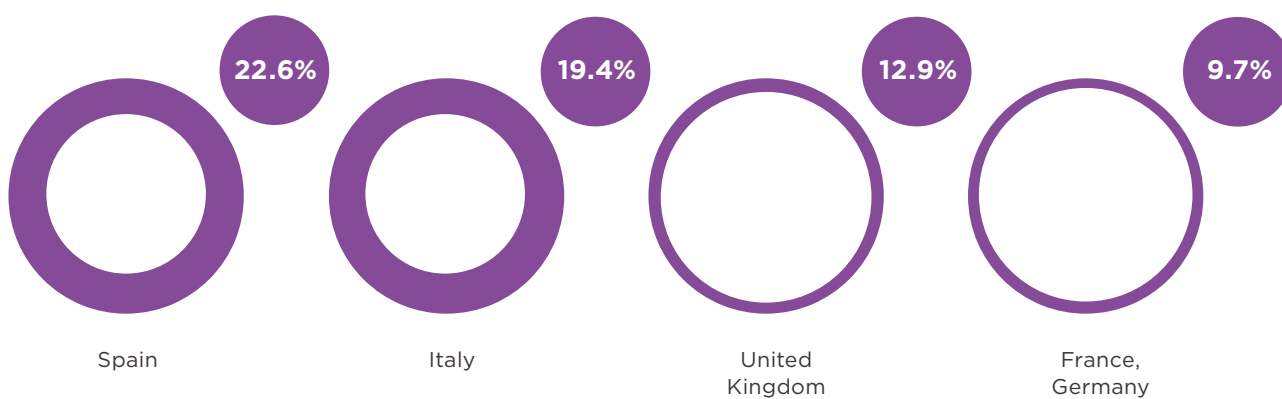
In 2017, the internationalisation of the MBA has dramatically decreased. This puts a lot more emphasis on providers converting from the UK.



TRADITIONAL MARKETS

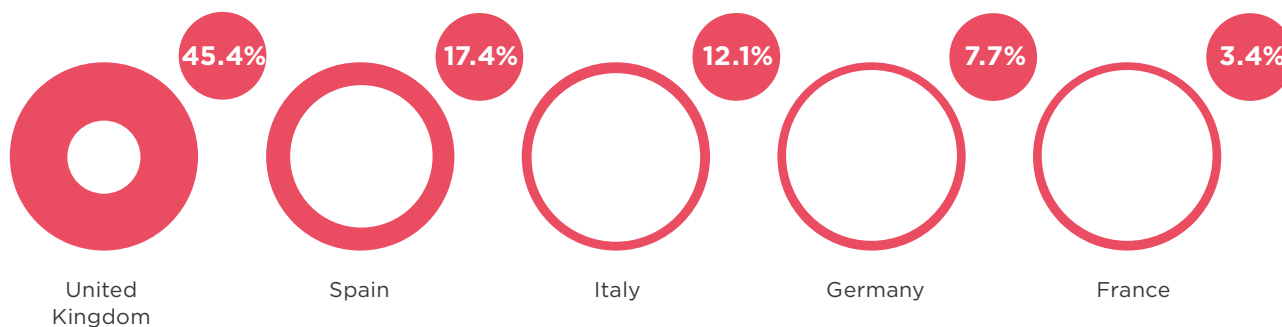
SUPER HOT MARKETS (APPLIED BUT NOT YET STARTED THE MBA)

With such a dependence on the domestic market, the UK comes surprisingly low on the list of nations that have applied but not yet started. You must work hard to ensure that domestic interest turns into applications. Spain and Italy, already very strong markets, are set to become very important to providers.



HOT MARKETS (INTERESTED BUT NOT YET APPLIED)

If you are looking towards the markets with the highest levels of interest in UK MBA study, the below nations represent 'hot markets'.

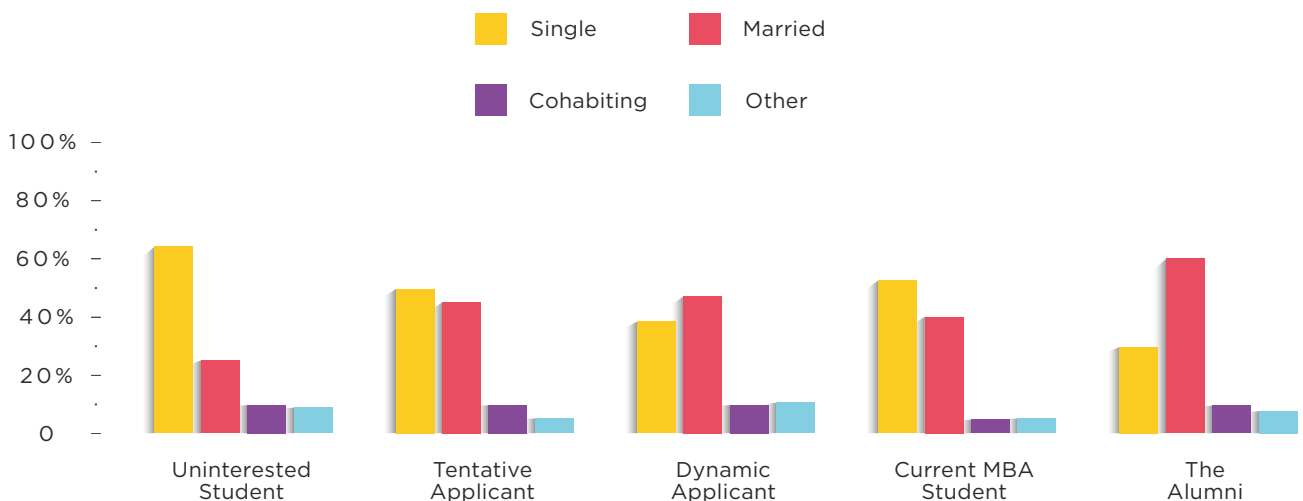


MARITAL STATUS

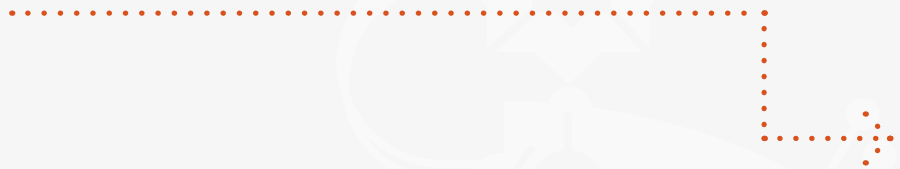
The survey found a correlation between marital status and studying the MBA. A high percentage of MBA students who are currently studying (41%) do so whilst married. The survey findings indicate that this number is increasing; 47% of students who have applied for the course are married. Interestingly, this is in sharp contrast from those who are cohabiting, with very few cohabitators studying or intending to study the qualification.

This exploratory research indicates that you could shape messaging and advertising to demonstrate more support towards married and single applicants, whilst also exploring the potential barriers or priorities seemingly faced by those who are cohabiting.

MARITAL STATUS



SECTION 3: RESEARCH AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR



KEY FINDINGS

This section of the EuMBA Survey looks at research and consumer behaviour, including the amount of time respondents spent researching MBAs, the social media platforms respondents use and where respondents first heard about the MBA.

1 Prospective MBA students are taking longer to research and apply. Current MBA students spent 17 months researching their course before applying. The EuMBA Survey indicates that the Dynamic Applicant spent 25 months.

2 Current MBA students are most likely to be active on Facebook (78% use it daily) and Instagram (54% use it daily). And whilst this is broadly the same for applicants and those with an interest in the qualification, YouTube begins to rise in popularity (used daily by 60% of the Tentative Applicant profile) and should be a platform considered.

3 Despite its leading position with undergraduates, Snapchat is rarely used on a daily basis by MBA students or prospective students.

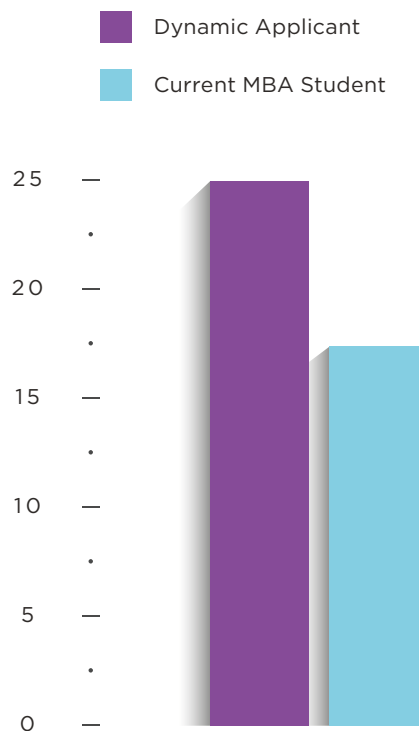
4 Overall, institution websites were the most utilised research tool for MBA students, with print newspapers reported as the least. For the Dynamic Applicant, social media is a growing platform, with 42% using it as their primary research platform - equal to that of institutions website. You therefore need to ensure that their messaging, information, and calls to action are on point across all social platforms.

5 While traditionally MBA students have preferred full-time delivery of the qualification, the EuMBA Survey reveals that the Tentative Applicant and the Dynamic Applicant would prefer online or part-time delivery methods.

RESEARCH TIME

The EuMBA Survey showed that on average, applicants spent 25 months researching MBA programs before applying. But, when this was broken down between those who are currently studying and those who have applied; the Dynamic Applicant spends, on average, 25 months researching, whereas the Current MBA Student spent only 17 months researching.

HOW LONG DID YOU SPEND RESEARCHING MBA PROGRAMMES? (AVERAGE NUMBER OF MONTHS)



THE ALUMNI

CURRENT MBA STUDENT

DYNAMIC APPLICANT

TENTATIVE APPLICANT

UNINTERESTED STUDENT



31%



75%



31%



44%



27%



6%



46%



78%



24%



52%



54%



19%



27%



79%



39%



60%



29%



18%



33%



79%



35%



47%



55%



30%



15%



79%



27%



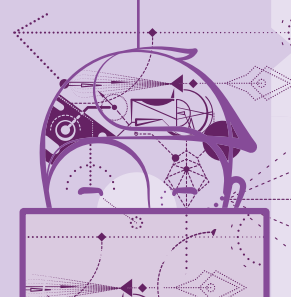
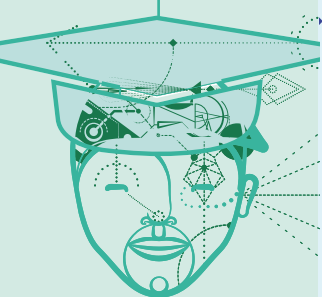
43%



43%



32%



DAILY SOCIAL MEDIA USEAGE

Those who have not considered an MBA are most active on Facebook and least active on LinkedIn.

The Tentative Applicant, on a daily basis, is most active on Instagram and Facebook. But, they're least likely to use Snapchat and Twitter.

The Dynamic Applicant is more likely to use Facebook and YouTube on a daily basis, but rarely use Snapchat.

The Current MBA Student is most active on Facebook and Instagram and least likely to use Snapchat and Twitter on a daily basis. The Current MBA Student also uses LinkedIn more than any other of the key profile in the EuMBA Survey.

The MBA Alumni is the least active across all social media platforms, but are most likely to use Facebook.

RESEARCH SOURCES

Overall, institution websites were by far the most utilised source for respondents researching MBA programs followed by search engines. Print newspapers were the least used source.

The Tentative Applicant is most likely to use a search engine (51%) and least likely to use a print newspaper (2%) when researching MBAs. They are the group least likely to visit an institution's website (42%).

The Dynamic Applicant is most likely to research MBAs using social media (42%) and institutions' websites (42%) and least likely to research using print newspapers (9%).

The Current MBA Student is most likely to have researched using institutions' websites (76%) and least likely to research using a print newspaper (2%). They are also the group most likely to use a search engine (56%).

The MBA Alumni were least likely to have researched using social media, which is perhaps indicative of the generational shift in media consumption. But once again, this highlights that the next generation of MBA students, despite their professional backgrounds, are active and influenced by social media platforms.

	Social Media	Search Engine	Institution's Website	Education Websites	Blogs	Forums	Business Website	Newspaper - Print	Newspaper - Online
The Alumni	22%	50%	62%	37%	11%	20%	28%	9%	12%
Current MBA Student	36%	56%	76%	42%	27%	24%	42%	2%	27%
Dynamic Applicant	42%	35%	42%	21%	23%	30%	23%	9%	11%
Tentative Applicant	33%	51%	42%	24%	14%	17%	16%	2%	12%

AWARENESS

MBA Alumni have cited that they first heard of the MBA through an employer (24%) or lecturer (20%). Current students have also stated they first heard about the qualification through work, with 29% citing through a colleague and 25% citing through their employer.

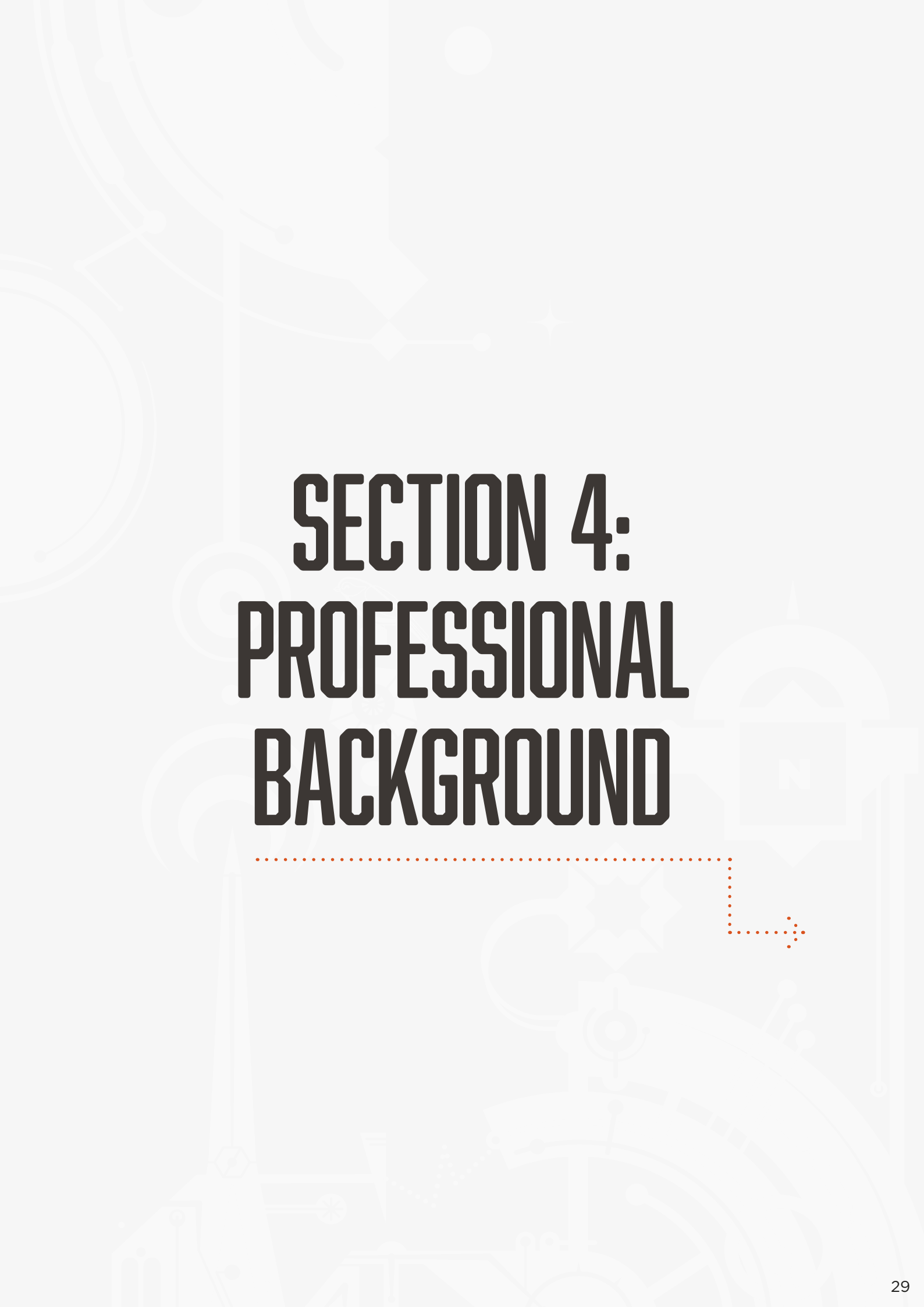
Those who have not considered an MBA are first hearing about it through their lecturers (28%) or a colleague (19%).

The Tentative Applicant, are first hearing about MBAs through a website (27%) and then a teacher or lecturer (25%).

The Dynamic Applicant first heard about MBAs through a website (39%) and from a colleague (20%).

	Website	Teacher/ Lecturer	Employer	Advertising	Social Media	Colleague	Other	Peers/ Family
The Alumni	17%	20%	24%	10%	7%	19%	3%	4%
Current MBA Student	15%	11%	25%	2%	9%	29%	9%	15%
Dynamic Applicant	39%	11%	11%	5%	10%	20%	3%	2%
Tentative Applicant	27%	25%	16%	6%	6%	17%	3%	6%
Uninterested Student	18%	28%	9%	6%	7%	19%	13%	0

SECTION 4: PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND



KEY FINDINGS

This section of the EuMBA Survey looks at professional background, including length of service, salary and industry. Understanding these factors can help you refine your targeting and messaging and help understand perceptions of the qualification, the impact the qualification can have on a career and any barriers that may exist as a result of a particular profession.

1 The EuMBA Survey finds that, increasingly, the qualification is being considered by those with two to ten years professional experience. If you haven't already, could shape their messaging and advertising towards those with less professional experience.

2 Generally, there is a broad spread of salaries of those studying for the MBA; the largest average salary band is between £40-75k per annum, which accounts for 34% of respondents. However, there is an emerging trend that the MBA is being considered and applied for by applicants who are earning less; 62% of those who are considering applying for the MBA earn up to £30k per annum.

3 The EuMBA Survey confirms that the typical MBA student will come from traditional industry backgrounds; namely business, accountancy, and engineering. There is great interest from those who work in marketing and advertising, yet relatively few go on to study the MBA. You could maximise their budgets by excluding this group. Alternatively, you could look at this as an opportunity to shape your messaging and course delivery towards this sector and look to remove barriers to entry and improve conversion.

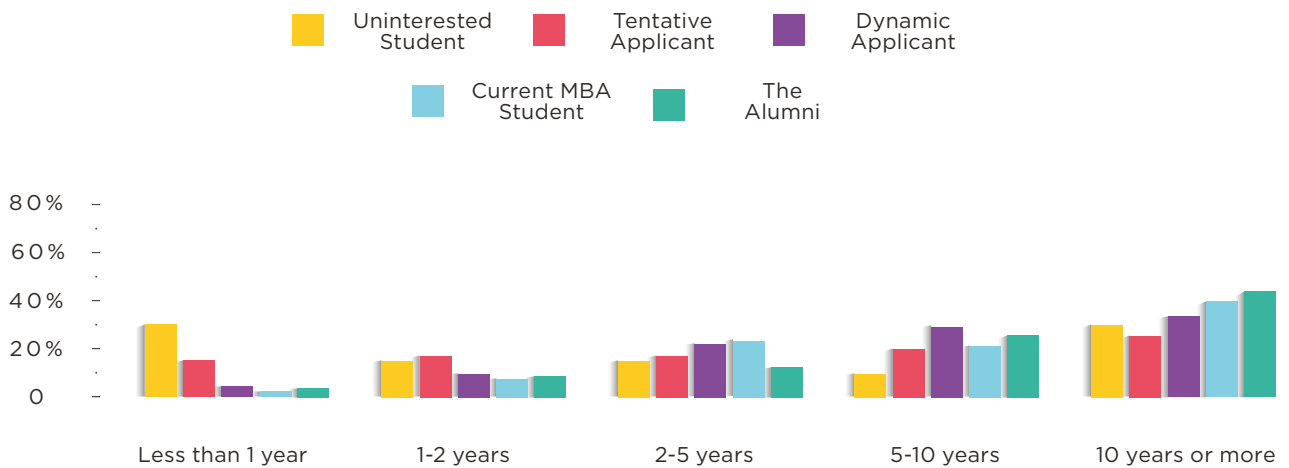
4 Your MBA alumni are powerful influencers. When asked, students stated that they are likely to recommend the programme to a colleague, rating it 7.7/10.

LENGTH OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Traditionally, the MBA is undertaken and completed by those who have 10+ years of work experience, and results indicate that this is still the case for those currently studying and those intending to apply.

There is a developing trend that those with two to ten years work experience are now applying for the course in greater numbers, which over time could change the profile of the MBA Alumni. This could be an opportunity for you to segment this profile and create targeted messaging towards a group with less professional experience.

LENGTH OF PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

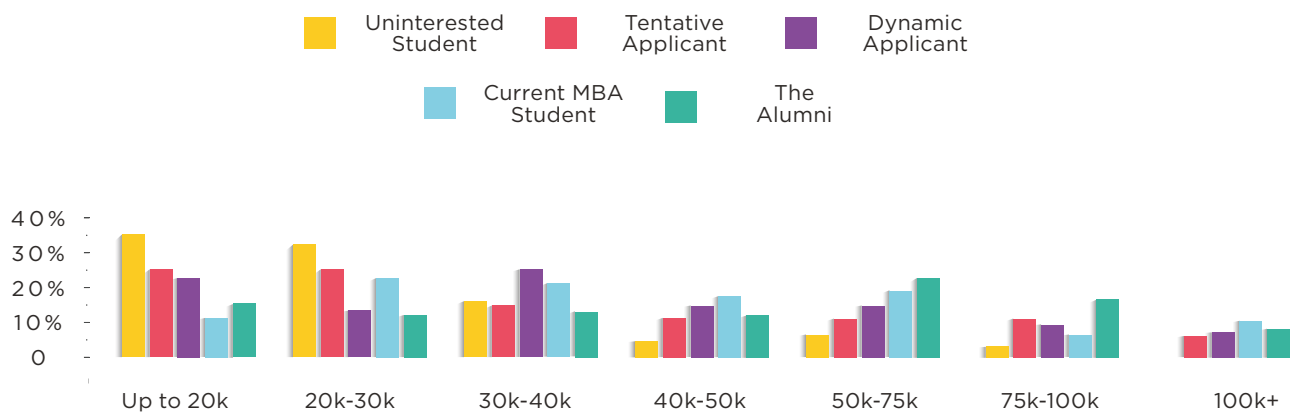


SALARY

The report has found, in line with expectations, that a high proportion, 42%, of MBA alumni are earning £50,000+ per annum.

Amongst current MBA students there is a broad spread of average salaries, with a significant proportion (34%) earning between £40-75k. Although, there is an emerging trend that the Tentative Applicant, and the Dynamic Applicant, are earning less than in previous years.

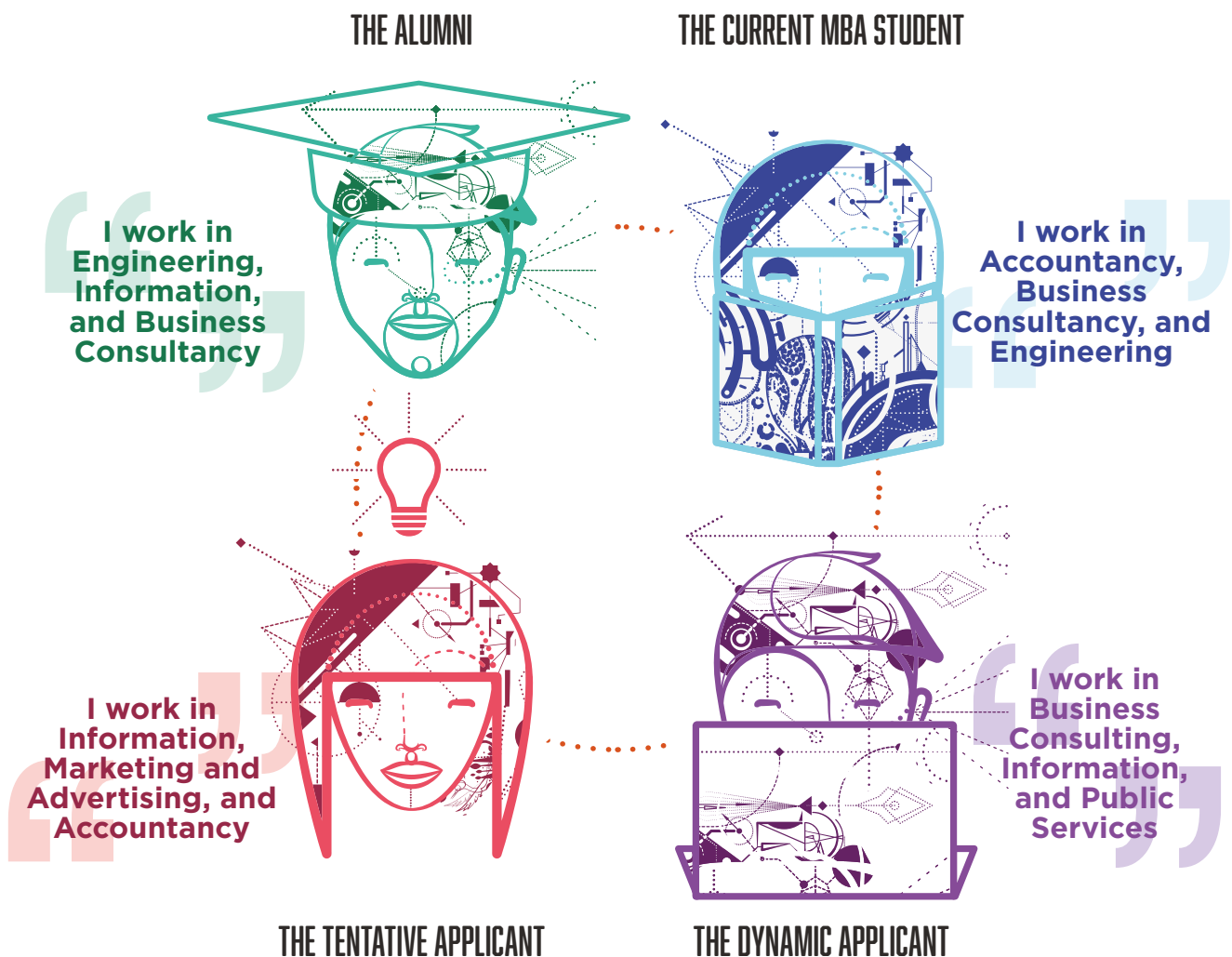
ANNUAL SALARY



INDUSTRY

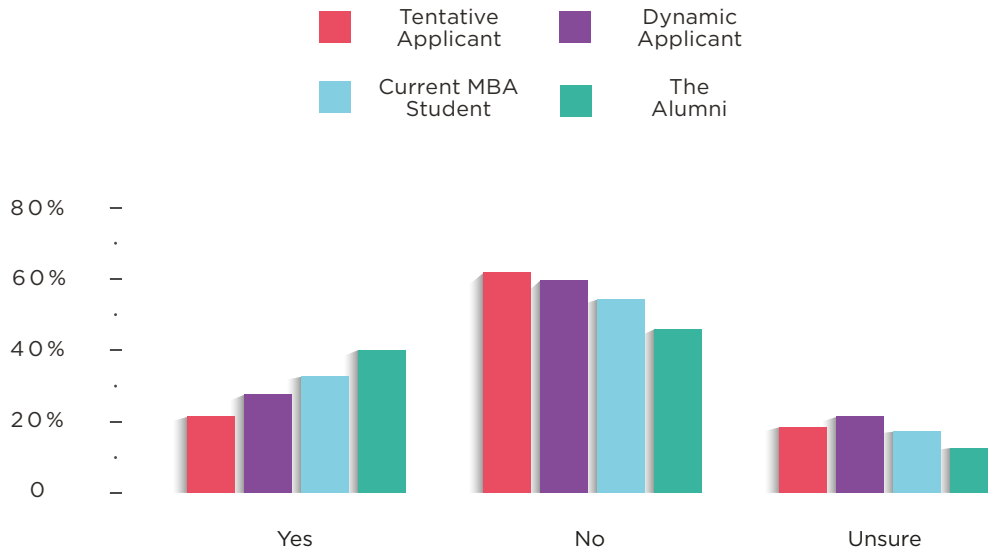
The EuMBA Survey found that the Current MBA Student and the MBA Alumni, come from broadly similar industries, with any campaign or messaging targeted at professionals from engineering or business industries likely to hit the mark. In 2017, accountancy has become an increasingly popular sector for the Tentative Applicant.

Although professionals from marketing and advertising industries are very interested in the qualification, results suggest that they are one of the least likely to undertake the MBA in 2017.



PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL INFLUENCERS

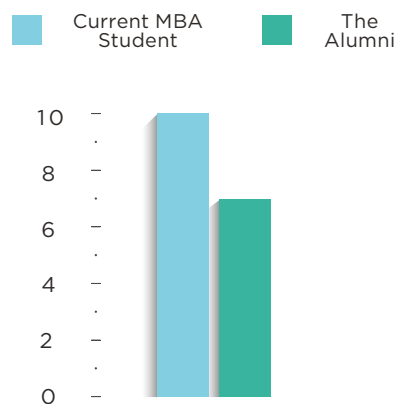
DO YOUR COLLEAGUES HAVE MBAS?



When the Current MBA Student and Alumni were asked whether they would recommend their MBA to colleagues or friends, results indicated that those currently studying and those who have completed an MBA were mostly advocates of their programme, scoring on average 7.7 out of 10.

The MBA Alumni therefore could be a powerful influencer on colleagues who are considering the qualification.

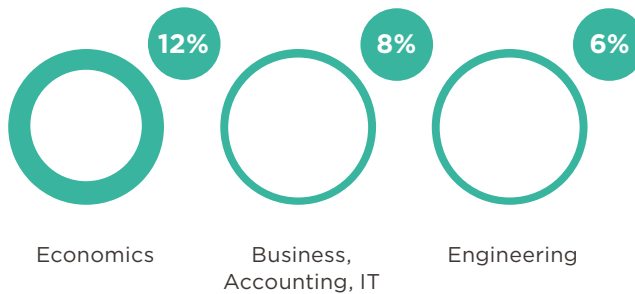
ON A SCALE OF 0-10, 10 BEING THE MOST, HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO RECOMMEND YOUR MBA PROGRAMME TO COLLEAGUES OR FRIENDS?



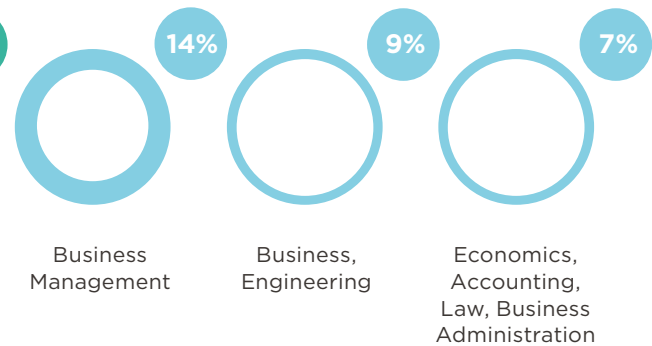
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND INSIGHTS

The vast majority of current and graduate MBA students have taken the same group of undergraduate courses. This trend continues for those who are considering, or have made an application. This information can help you target undergraduates from these backgrounds.

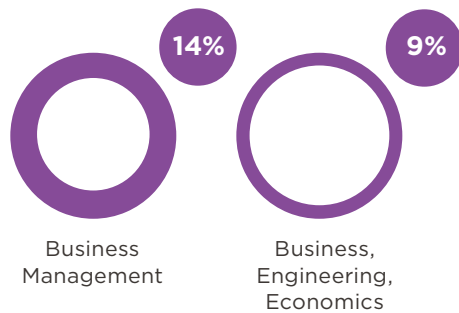
THE ALUMNI



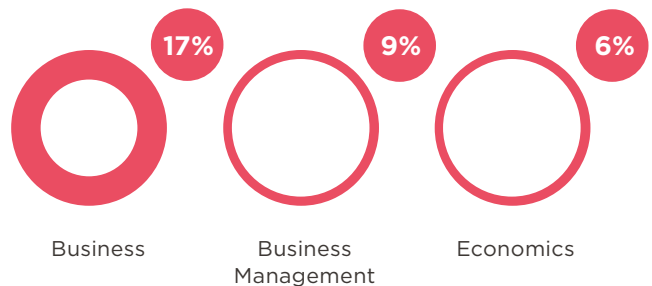
THE CURRENT MBA STUDENT



THE DYNAMIC APPLICANT



THE TENTATIVE APPLICANT



Psychology and English related subjects were high amongst respondents who have not considered an MBA.

SECTION 5: MBA COURSE TYPE



KEY FINDINGS

This section of the EuMBA Survey looks at the MBA itself, including mode of study, recognition of the qualification, reasons for applying and potential barriers to application.

1 While traditionally MBA students have preferred full-time delivery of the qualification, the EuMBA Survey reveals that the Tentative Applicant and the Dynamic Applicant would prefer online or part-time delivery methods. If you haven't already done so, consider and highlight the different delivery methods they offer for MBA study.

2 The above key finding is enforced by why MBA students choose their preferred method of delivery. Traditionally, Current MBA students and MBA Alumni predominantly desired the 'shortest programme' (26.7%). For those who cited that they preferred part-time delivery, 'flexibility' (61.4%) was the key reason. For those that cited that they preferred online delivery, 'flexibility' (77.9%) was again the key reason.

3 Over half of respondents had not heard of the MBA qualification. You could increase your future applications by running long-term, brand driven campaigns to raise awareness and build a pipeline.

4 Professional mobility is a growing motivation for the Current MBA Student to have started, or to have applied, for the course. You could include the benefits of the qualification in the forefront of your messaging.

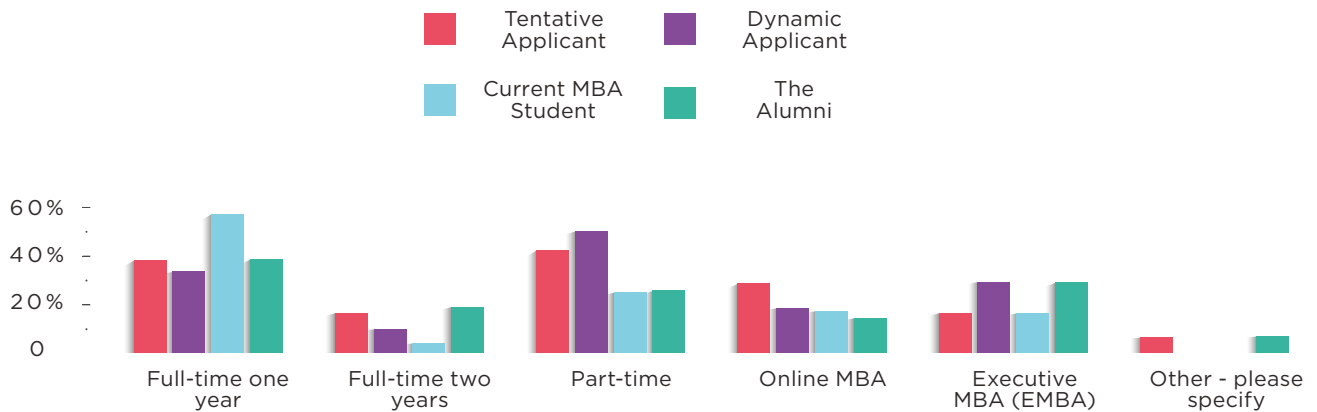
5 'Cost' (30.6%) and 'time commitment (14.9%)' are, perhaps predictably, the biggest barriers to entry for those who are interested, but not yet applied. Interestingly, 'wanting to better understand the benefits' is the joint second (14.9%) barrier to entry and providers should address this in their communications and messaging.

MODE OF STUDY

Whilst full-time study is the preferred mode for the Current MBA Student and the MBA Alumni, there is a growing trend for potential applicants to prefer part-time and online MBA delivery.

You may want to consider promoting these flexible options in an increasingly competitive market.

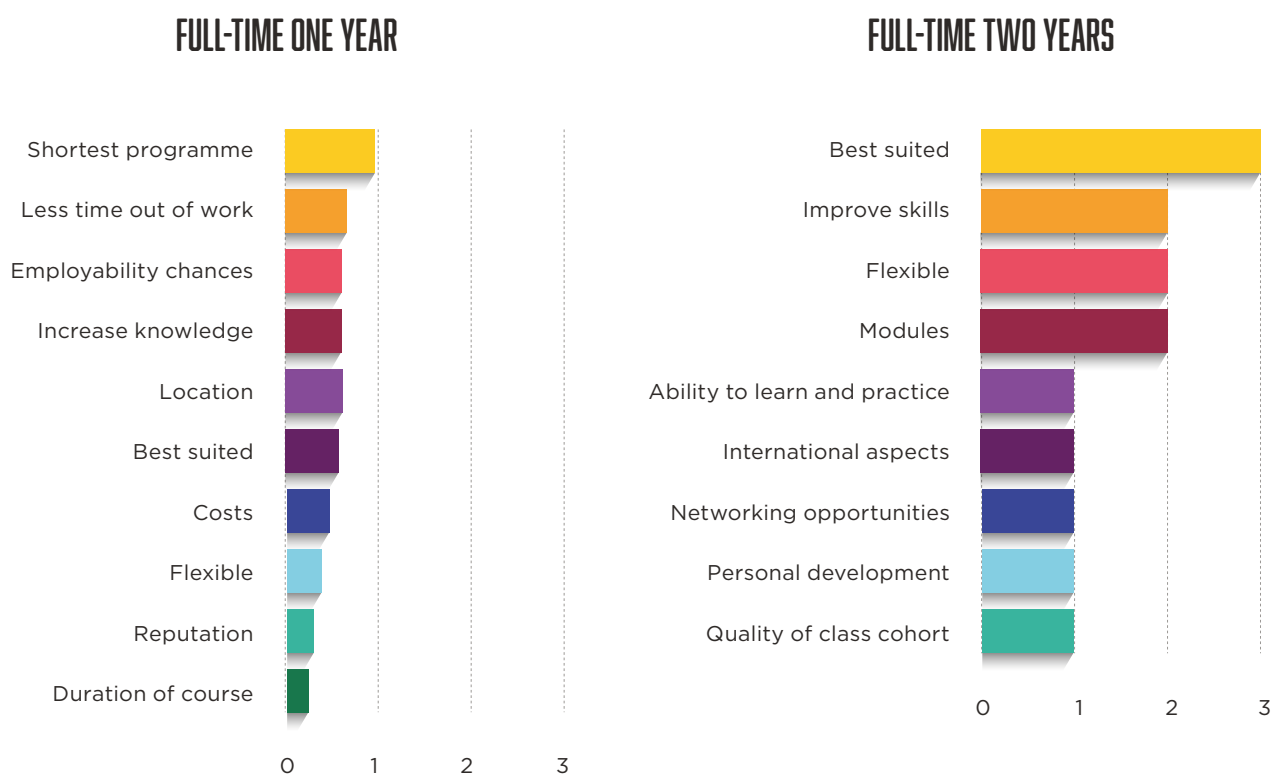
WHAT TYPE OF MBA ARE YOU CURRENTLY STUDYING?



REASONS FOR PICKING MODE OF STUDY

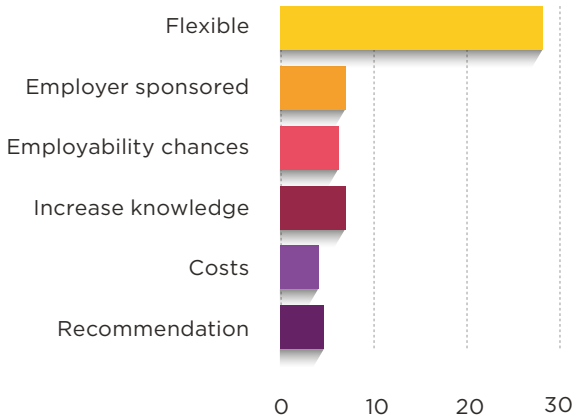
The Current MBA Student and the MBA Alumni were asked to state their reasons for picking the type of programme that they enrolled on. Results indicated a shift in priorities, with “flexible” becoming a popular reason to study a part-time or online MBA, where previously “speed of completion” was a common factor when choosing an appropriate MBA programme.

WHY DID YOU PICK THIS TYPE OF PROGRAMME?

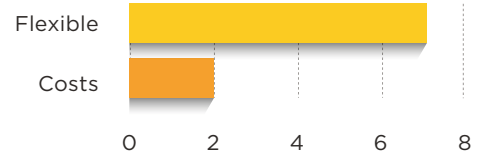


BRAND AWARENESS

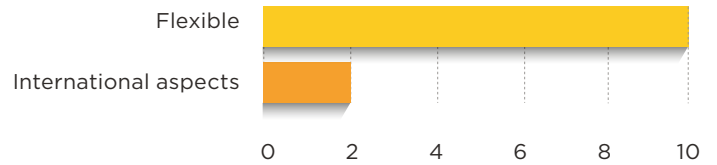
PART-TIME



ONLINE MBA

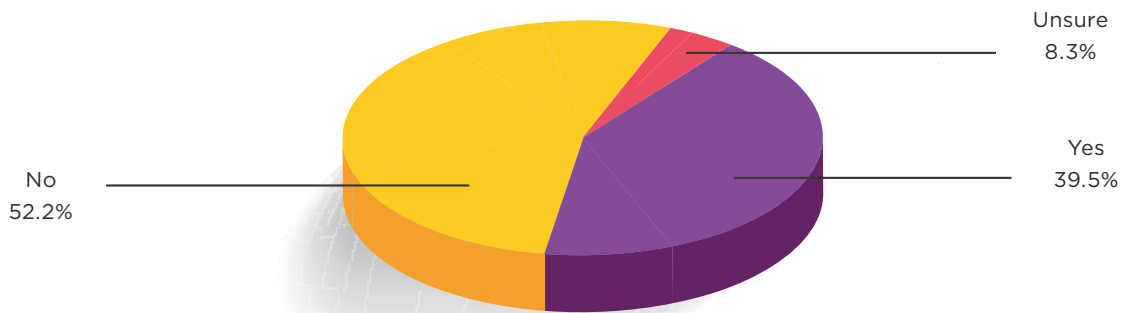


EXECUTIVE MBA (EMBA)



Over half of the EuMBA survey respondents, when asked, stated they had not heard of the MBA qualification. This is the Uninterested group and it is really important that marketers know that the awareness of the MBA is not strong enough.

HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY HEARD OF THE MBA QUALIFICATION?

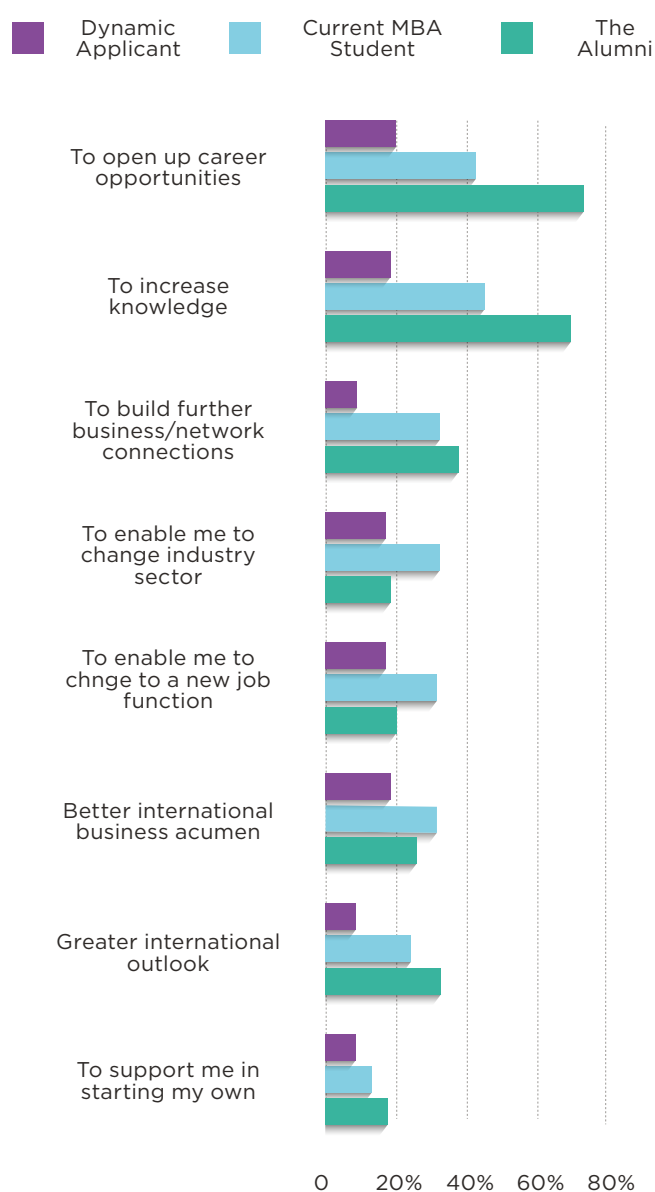


REASONS FOR APPLYING

When asked to state their reasons for applying for an MBA, the results of the survey reflected that opening up career opportunities and increasing knowledge were the biggest motivators for studying an MBA.

Professional mobility is a growing motivation for study for the Current MBA Student

WHY DID YOU APPLY FOR AN MBA?

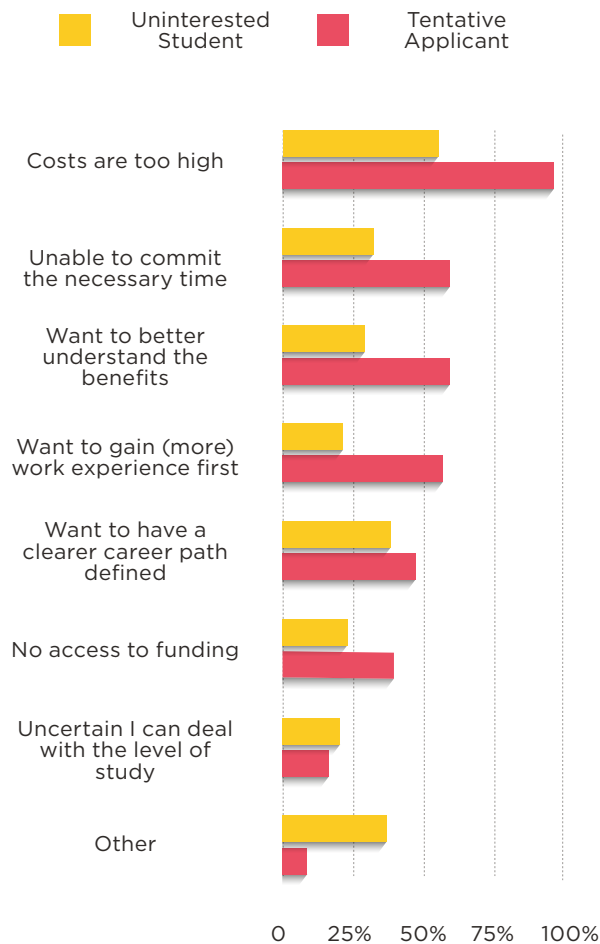


BARRIERS TO ENTRY


Cost and time were stated by the Uninterested Student and the Tentative Applicant as the main barriers for studying the MBA.

Providers should be aware that a need to 'better understand the benefits' was also expressed as a deterrent by 59% of respondents. There is a huge opportunity for providers to address this barrier.

PLEASE STATE ANY POTENTIAL BARRIERS WHICH ARE STOPPING YOU FROM AN MBA PROGRAMME?



SECTION 6: PERCEPTIONS, ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS OF THE MBA QUALIFICATION

A decorative orange dotted line that starts horizontally from the left, then turns 90 degrees downward and ends with a small square of dots at the bottom right.

KEY FINDINGS

This section of the EuMBA Survey looks at the perceptions of the MBA, including perceived benefits, value, travel and cost.

1 48% of Tentative Applicants would consider studying for an MBA abroad. This is quite a shift from the Current MBA Student (32.2%) and the MBA Alumni (29.7%).

2 The US (36%), the UK (16%), Canada (12%) and Germany (12%) are the most popular study destinations being considered by those who are interested in the MBA, but have not yet applied.

3 The Dynamic Applicant is willing to travel 2.3 hours to their provider, compared with the Current MBA Student who stated they'd only travel 1.8 hours. Widen your outreach and advertising to include catchment areas within this travel distance.

4 Location of provider is the most important factor for applicants. Total cost of the programme was stated as the least important. Shape your messaging accordingly.

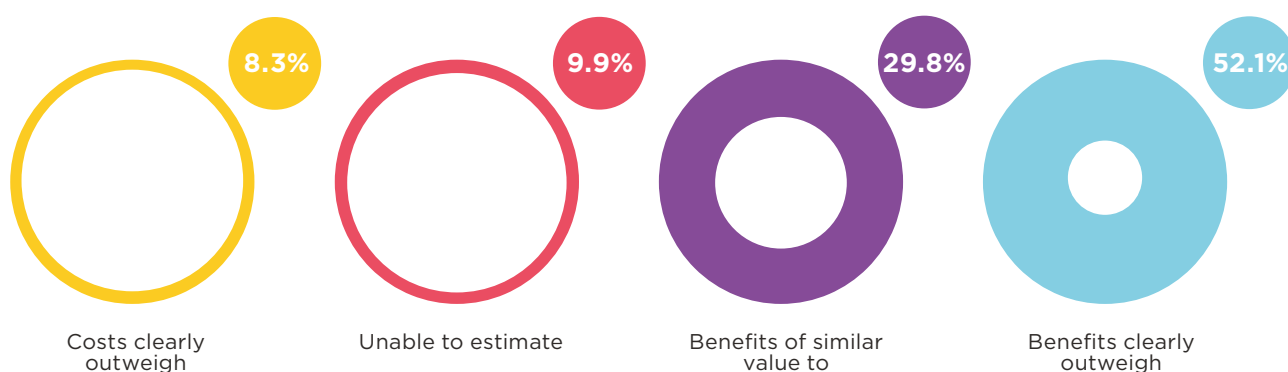
5 The majority of Tentative Applicants and Dynamic Applicants intend to pay for their studies through student loans or grants. You may need to manage expectations or provide further financial support in order to increase the likelihood of conversion, should loans and grants not be a realistic funding source.

6 Greater career prospects, greater earning potential and increased knowledge are the top perceived benefits of the MBA.

PERCEIVED COSTS BENEFITS ANALYSIS

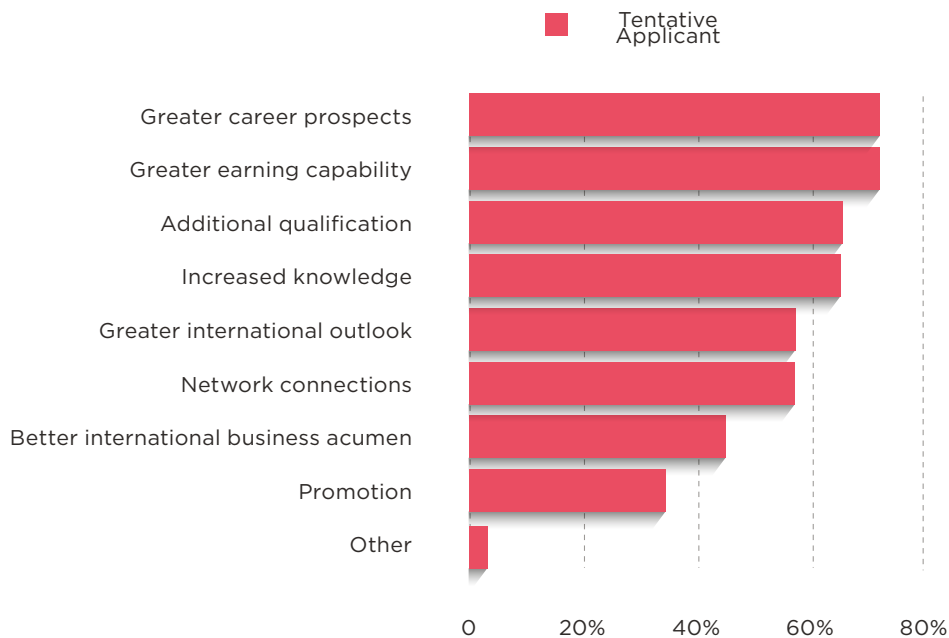
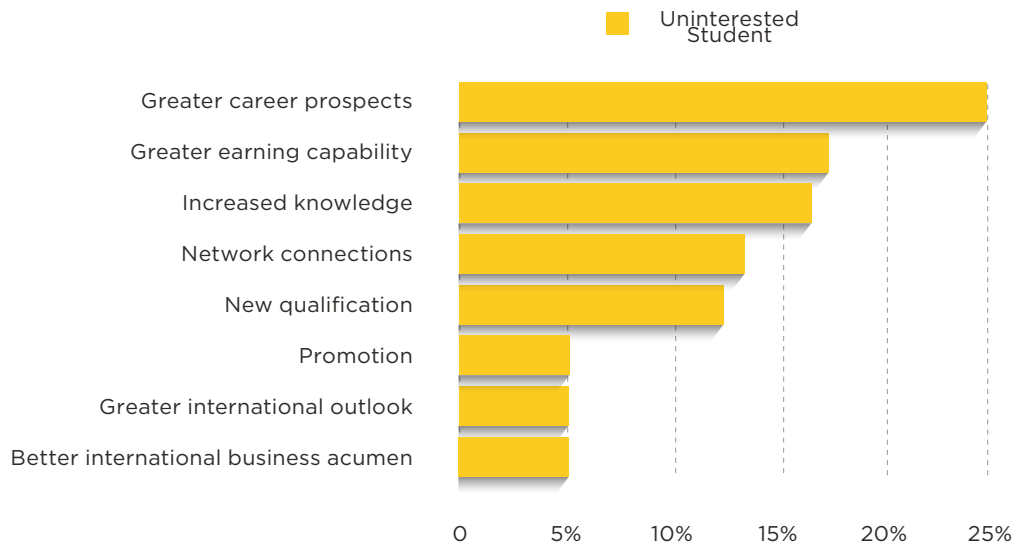
The perceptions of completing an MBA are favourable. Only 8.3% feel that the costs clearly outweigh the benefits, whilst over half feel the benefits outweigh the costs.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU BELIEVE THE BENEFITS OF THE MBA PROGRAMME
OUTWEIGH THE FINANCIAL AND TIME COSTS OF ATTENDING?



PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF COMPLETING AN MBA

Greater career prospects, greater earning potential and increased knowledge are the top perceived benefits of the MBA qualification.

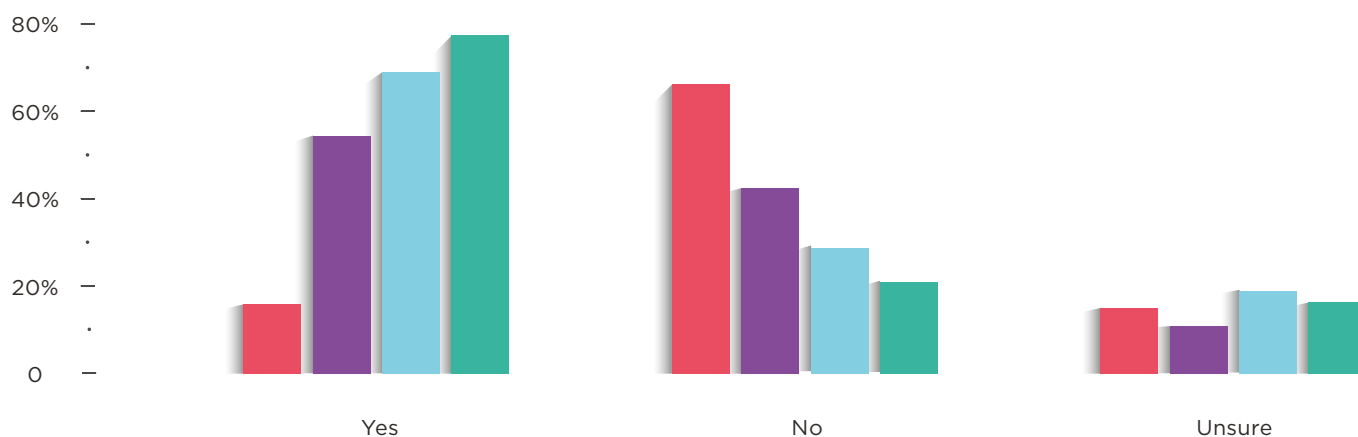
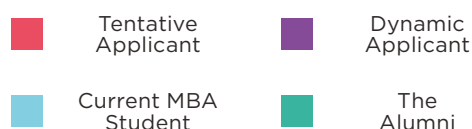


PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF COMPLETING AN MBA

But, what about the perceived benefits of an MBA from those who have completed one, or are currently studying?

All respondents of the EuMBA Survey were asked: “Do you think the MBA qualification is essential for you to achieve your career goals?”. On the whole, the Current MBA Student and the MBA Alumni were more likely to agree that the MBA was essential for their career goals.

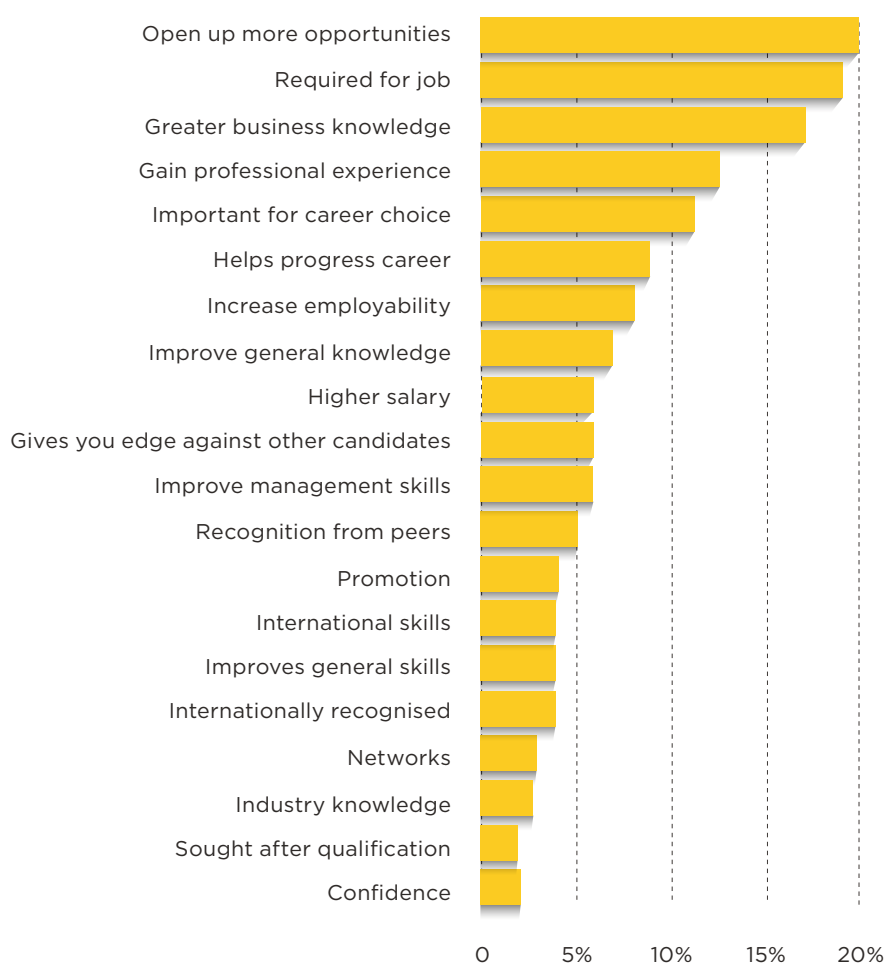
DO YOU THINK THE MBA QUALIFICATION IS ESSENTIAL FOR YOU TO ACHIEVE YOUR CAREER GOALS?



PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF COMPLETING AN MBA

When asked their reasons why they believe an MBA is desirable, 'increasing opportunities', 'job requirement', and 'providing a greater business knowledge' were the three most common responses from all respondents.

TOP REASONS WHY PEOPLE THINK IT IS ESSENTIAL

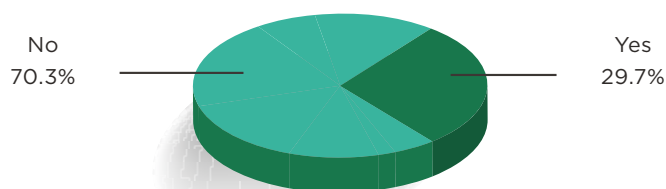


Only four respondents cited 'higher salary' as a reason for thinking the MBA is essential.

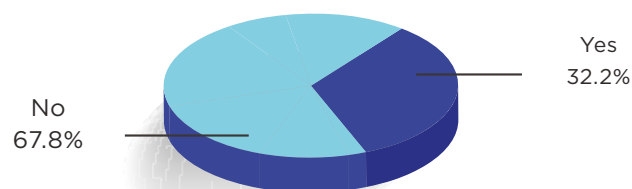
MBA IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

Although the majority of respondents have not considered studying the MBA abroad, the Tentative Applicant showed the most interest when asked whether they would consider completing their MBA in another country, with 48% answering 'yes'. This is quite a shift from the Current MBA Student (32.2%) and the MBA Alumni (29.7%).

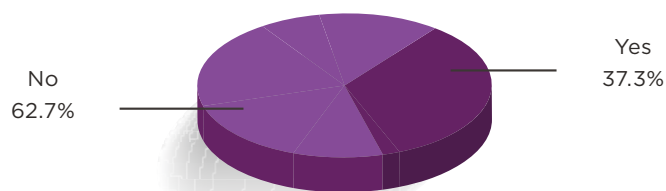
THE ALUMNI



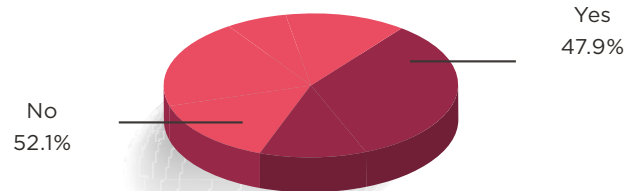
THE CURRENT MBA STUDENT



THE DYNAMIC APPLICANT

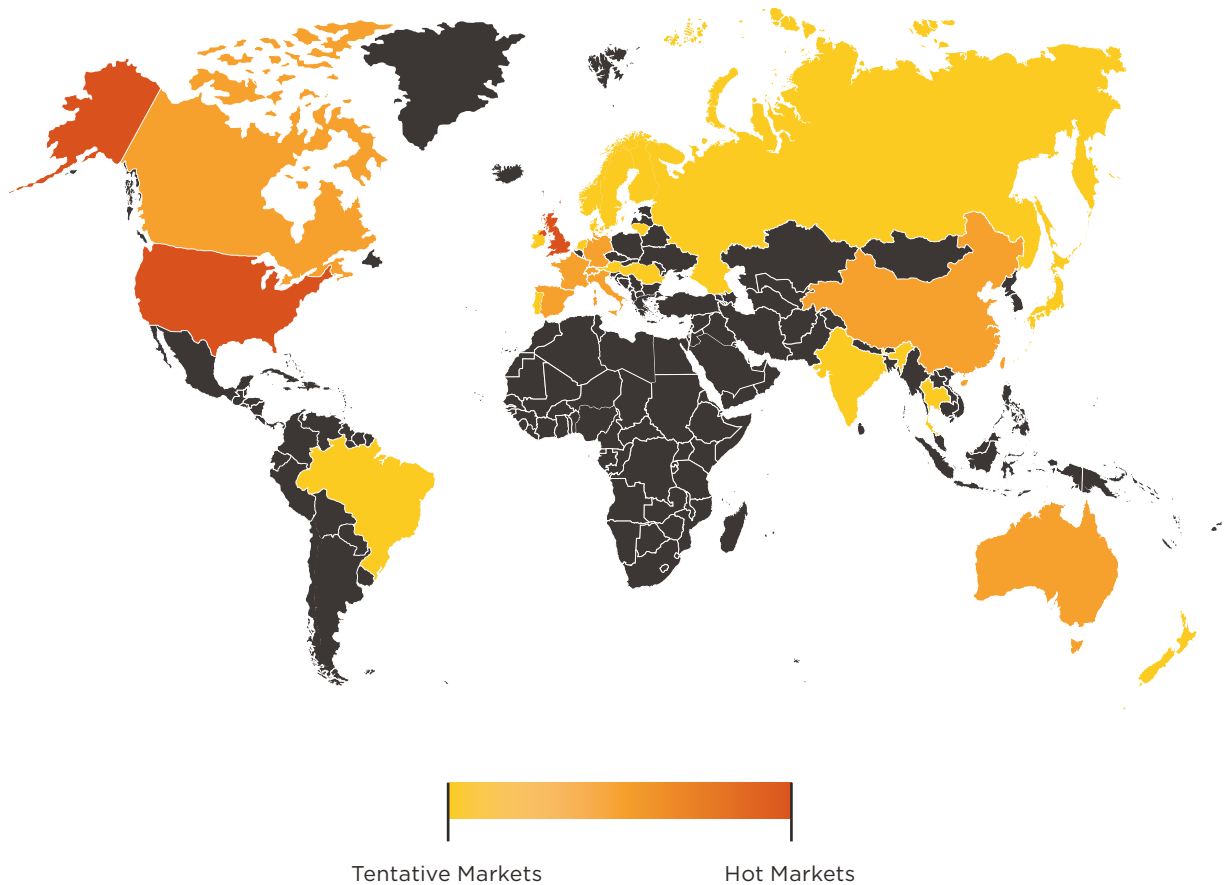


THE TENTATIVE APPLICANT



MBA IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

The majority of respondents highlighted the US, the UK, Germany and Canada as the countries that they were most likely to consider studying their MBA in.

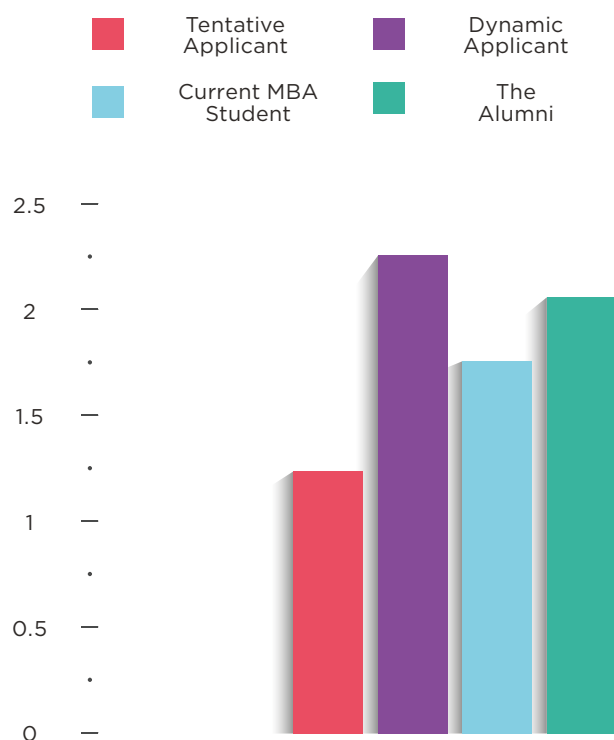


DISTANCE WILLING TO TRAVEL FOR STUDY

The majority of respondents stated that they would be happy to travel between one and two hours to study the MBA.

The Dynamic Applicant is more willing to spend longer travelling when studying for the MBA, on average 2.3 hours. This is half an hour longer than those who are currently completing the MBA. Should this developing trend continue through to enrolment, this may be an opportunity for you to expand your target catchment areas.

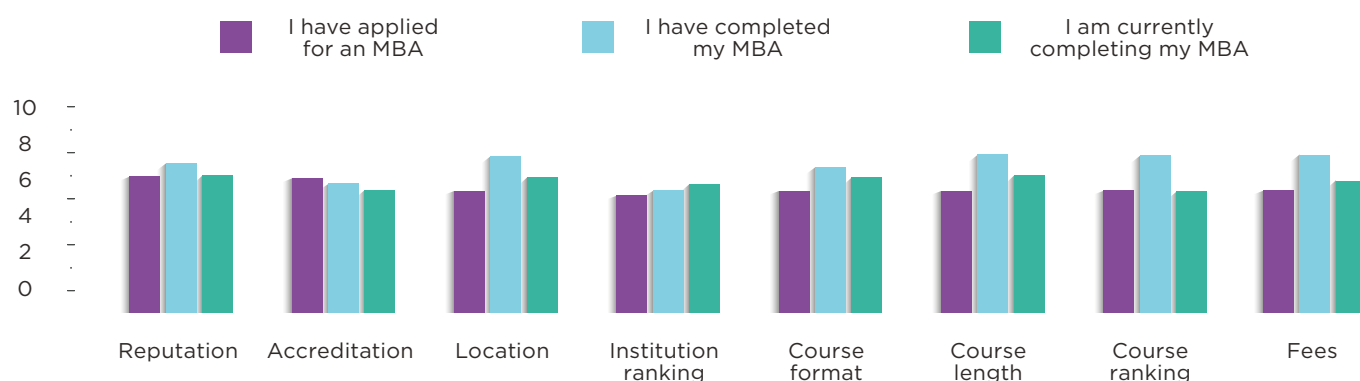
HOW MUCH TIME WERE YOU WILLING TO SPEND TO TRAVEL FROM YOUR HOME TO YOUR MBA LOCATION? (HOURS)



On average, location was the most important factor for the Tentative Applicant, the Dynamic Student, the Current MBA Student and the MBA Alumni when deciding on the institution to study their MBA.

INFLUENCING FACTORS

PLEASE RATE HOW EACH OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCED YOUR CHOICE OF MBA PROGRAMME?
(0 = NO INFLUENCE, 10 = HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL)

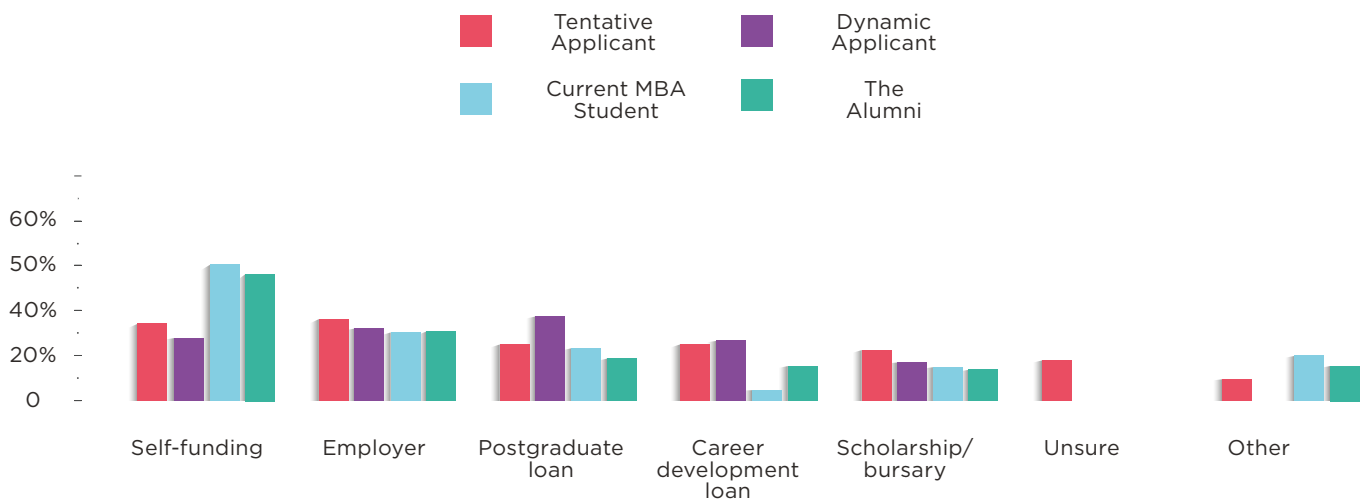


The total cost of the programme is not the most important factor for all four of the key profiles asked, although it appears to be more important to the Current MBA Student. This may challenge preconceptions that you have about the biggest barrier to entry.

FUNDING STUDY

It's interesting to highlight there was a defined difference in perceptions between those who have already completed an MBA and those in the application process when asked about funding their MBA study.

HOW WOULD/DID YOU FUND YOUR MBA? OR HOW ARE YOU PLANNING ON FUNDING YOUR MBA?



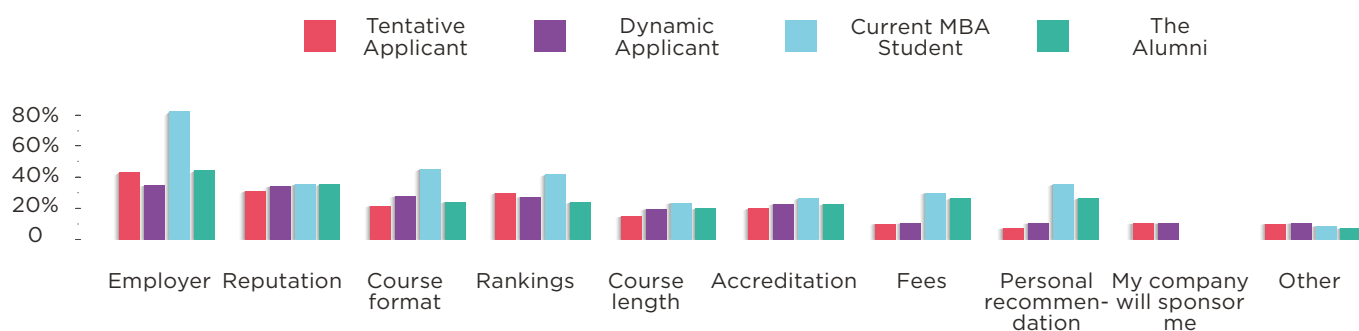
The majority of those who have applied, but not yet started the MBA, do so with the intention of paying through a postgraduate loan, employer sponsor, or another form of funding. Only 25% plan to self-fund (compared to 61% of current MBA students and 56% of MBA Alumni who self-funded), displaying a very different set of consumer behaviours to any other group.

Providers need to work on how they manage these expectations and perceptions through their communication channels and ensure that they provide potential students with the right information, at the right time, to increase the chances of conversion.

FACTORS FOR CHOOSING YOUR COURSE

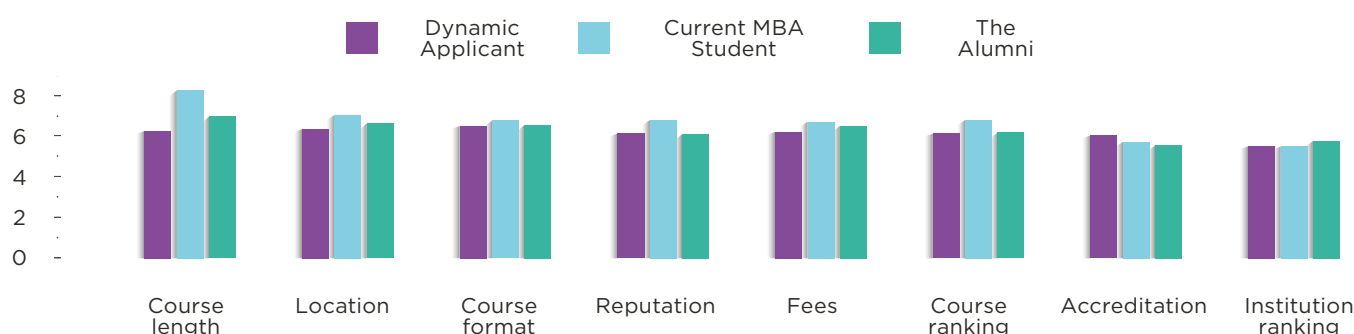
The EuMBA Survey found that traditionally, the MBA Alumni and the Current MBA Student stated location as the primary reason for choosing the course that they did.

PLEASE TELL US WHY YOU PICKED THESE INSTITUTIONS



When asked to rate the factors that most influenced their choice of MBA an institution's course ranking appears to be the least important factor. For the Current MBA Student, course length was the most important factor, however, for the Dynamic Applicant, it is the least - which is another indicator that the next generation of MBA students may prefer flexible or remote learning.

FROM THE LIST BELOW, PLEASE RATE HOW EACH OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCED YOUR CHOICE OF MBA PROGRAMME? (0 = NO INFLUENCE, 10 = HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL)



CONCLUSION

The background features a complex, light-colored pattern of technical and architectural elements. On the left, there are circular and semi-circular shapes resembling gears or orbits. In the center and right, there are more intricate designs, including a prominent dome-like structure with a square base and a small 'N' inside, and various geometric shapes like stars and lines. A horizontal dotted line in a reddish-brown color extends from the left side of the word 'CONCLUSION' towards the right, ending near the dome structure.

CONCLUSION

With the amount of course and provider choice available to students and the increase of education policy beyond the control of institutional stakeholders, it is more important than ever before to truly know who your prospective MBA student is, what is important to them, and what messaging will resonate.

Understanding the factors contributing to decision-making for prospective students (and how this is changing over a short period of time), is of the utmost importance.

SHORTER PROGRAMMES HAVE A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

There has been a sector-wide increase in MBA providers, along with an uplift in global unemployment, which has led to increased enrolment in MBA programmes across Europe. Consumer responses from our survey indicate an increase in selection and competitiveness in the sector. For example, students are seeking out programmes that are shorter in length and less costly. This is important to note due to the increase of MBA programmes in Europe, where the qualification is less expensive. The US, which structures its postgraduate degrees along a two-year length (as opposed to a year-long European qualification) has also seen a decrease in MBA enrolment. All of these factors, along with visa regulations and political climate, are changing the profile of the 'traditional' MBA student.

AN EVOLUTION (BUT NOT A REVOLUTION) IS UNDERWAY

On first impressions, the EuMBA Survey reinforces a troubling picture that the traditional MBA student is taking longer to make an application, is hesitant to leave their own country to study and that domestically, interest in the qualification is waning. However, the 'traditional' MBA student is simply evolving. Although they're taking longer to apply, they're using social media far more in their research phase than ever before, have less professional experience and are earning less, but they're willing to travel further to their chosen provider.

While some markets are stagnating or being slow to apply; others have reportedly higher levels of interest in the qualification. Spain, for example, which is always a strong market, has a much higher level of interest than in previous years, according to the survey. This is representative of a sector where European enrolment has increased and a number of Spanish Institutions (IESE Business School and IE Business school most notably) have made it to the ranks of UK and US-based institutions.

CONCLUSION

UNDERSTANDING THE AUDIENCE

Did you know that as many women as men are interested in applying, but a third of these females don't go on to apply? That 'not understanding the benefits' is considered as much of a barrier as 'cost'? Clever messaging and targeting can address these factors and help providers improve conversion.

FLEXIBILITY OF PROGRAMS IS IMPORTANT

For MBA providers who want to grow in 2018 and beyond, the respondents of the survey have helped reveal a developing trend that may shape the sector for the next generation. Increasingly, potential MBA applicants favour 'flexibility' for the delivery of their MBA course.

Highlighting the unique qualities of an institution is important. However, there is a higher likelihood of returns for programmes that advertise their flexibility rather than their ranking. The similarity in responses between those who have not considered an MBA and those who have indicated that perceptions of benefits are widespread.

INTERNATIONAL STUDY MAY SHIFT ONLINE

More than ever before, potential applicants would prefer part-time study and online study. Although there has been a decline in face-to-face programmes among international students*, there is interest in online study for international students as it allows them to bypass visa considerations. Strategic targeting for countries that have been strongly impacted by the abolishment of the work/study visa may see high returns. Canny providers should include mode of delivery as a key message and look at innovative online delivery models.

Research from the EuMBA Survey will help the higher education sector - and business schools in particular - in the UK and Europe to understand how the MBA qualification is perceived, and how marketing, messaging and recruitment activity can be shaped to answer these perceptions, motivations and concerns of the marketplace.

*Data from HESA Student Record 2013/14-2015/16, all records with MBA marker. Figures rounded in accordance with HESA standard rounding methodology. All figures exclude distance learners unless stated.

SIGN UP

The Insights and Research Division at Net Natives are registering institutions who wish to take part in the next EuMBA Survey and report. There are a number of benefits to your institution if you choose to participate:

BENEFITS:

- Your raw data delivered to you so that you can benchmark against the national picture and run your own analysis.
- A copy of the report before non-participating institutions.
- Your students who take part will automatically be entered into a draw to win a high-value prize to help them with their ongoing studies.
- You get to contribute to a wider research piece that supports the postgraduate sector.

REGISTER TO TAKE PART IN THE NEXT EUMBA SURVEY

Speak to a Native:
insights@netnatives.com

ABOUT NET NATIVES

Net Natives is the leading student marketing agency, with global experience in audience attraction and conversion. We get students and make lives better through effective, powerful digital thinking and execution.

Since 2008 we've blended strategic understanding, data science and digital expertise with our proprietary marketing SaaS technologies to create engaging experiences that deliver clear, measurable outcomes for our clients across the UK, Europe, Asia-Pacific and North America.

The Analytics, Insights and Research team, the people who carried out the EuMBA Survey are the brains behind the National Clearing Survey and EduRank (the UK's only digital benchmarking tool for the education sector). The team also work on a number of national research projects with partners in the HE sector, as well as client specific projects.

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