



## Interview with Darden Admissions

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**Q:** What is special about your MBA program? In addition to its' excellent reputation, what differentiates it from other Top MBA programs?

**A:** The University of Virginia Darden School of Business inspires responsible leaders for uncertain, unprecedented times. Named the best [education experience](#) in the United States by *The Economist* nine years in a row, the [No. 5 MBA program](#) in the U.S. by *Bloomberg Businessweek*, and [Top 5 in salary](#) and job placement by *U.S. News & World Report*, Darden prepares students for a lifetime of meaningful work. At Darden, the case method approach creates a learning experience that is spontaneous yet deliberate within a tight-knit community of students and faculty with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

**Q:** Are there any recent changes in the programs or in the admission process?

**A:** Darden's admission process for the full-time MBA Class of 2023 has been updated to provide an even greater opportunity for applicants to share their best selves. Key changes for the Class of 2023 admissions cycle include an extension of the School's test flexibility pilot which will now accept the Executive Assessment for the first time, a standardized test waiver request, a new Early Action option, and early access to career resources for admitted students.

**Q:** Has the COVID-19 situation have an impact on getting accepted to the programs at your school? Is there any other impact candidates should be aware of?

**A:** In response to COVID-19, in late April the Darden School announced flexibility, options and support to the Class of 2022. The School announced additional time to apply with an extended deadline and standardized test flexibility due to the widespread closures of test centers around the globe. Several of these changes have been continued as a pilot in the Class of 2023 admissions cycle. Additionally, the School announced a normal August Start and January Start option for select students with classes being offered through a mix of hybrid, virtual and in-person learning as the school adheres to public health recommendations and guidelines from the University of Virginia.

**Q:** Can you share some details about the atmosphere in the school? Amongst the students? Between students and faculty? How do students spend their free time?

**A:** The Darden School of Business is a thriving community of MBA students, faculty and alumni from a diverse array of racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, socio-economic and sexual orientations. In this inclusive culture, the community learns important — and sometimes uncomfortable — truths from



one another, which results in more educated global leaders and citizens. Our professors work hard to create the tight-knit community for which Darden is so well-known. They are deeply committed to our students' personal and professional development, both during their time at Darden and throughout their career. Instead of holding specific office hours, the Darden faculty has an open-door policy. Rather than having to schedule an appointment in advance, students can simply stop by a professor's office to ask a question about a case, to seek career advice or simply to chat. Professors frequently hold dinners at their homes for student clubs and affinity groups and often auction off special evenings at their homes for charitable events. Professors attend and participate in student club activities, social occasions and sporting events, such as basketball, cricket and poker. The Darden School's numerous exclusively student-run organizations work together to provide a complete and well-rounded experience to Darden students.

**Q:** Can you share some details about the area the school is located in?

**A:** Recently ranked as the best place to live in the United States by USA Today, [Charlottesville](#) offers the amenities of a large city while maintaining the aesthetic charm of a small town that is comfortable, friendly and easy to navigate. Here, innovative cuisine, a buzzing music scene, the East Coast's premier wine country, and all that the University of Virginia has to offer — including the nation's best public education and national championship sports — have some alumni coming back every year. The city's central East Coast location, at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Central Virginia, makes it easily accessible to other major cities such as Washington, D.C., and New York.

**Q:** Can you share some details regarding job opportunities and summer internships for students in your school?

**A:** Darden's Career Center delivers personalized career searches, support and resources to empower students in their goals to create value as purpose-driven leaders. The Career Center offers one-on-one professional career coaching, career management skill development and exceptional job support that together make Darden home to the best-in-class services needed to convert personal purpose into professional reward. 100% of students in the classes of 2019 and 2020 received a summer internship. The graduates of Darden's full-time MBA Class of 2019 joined a job market that is teeming with opportunity and change. Graduates received the highest compensation in the school's 64 year history and consulting remained the top career choice — while technology and entrepreneurship continues to gain in popularity. Career outcomes represented a strong diversity of talent, recruiters and geographies. Highlights from Darden's Full-Time MBA Classes of 2019 and 2020 can be found in the [Employment Report](#).



**Q:** What is it that you are looking for in a candidate? Who will especially enjoy this school? who will be a good fit to the school?

**A:** Darden is looking for candidates who want to make a positive impact on the world through their careers. That's why, in addition to strong academic performance (demonstrated through the GMAT/GRE and university grades), Darden seeks candidates who influence classmates to become better people, cheer on others to achieve success, and genuinely care about others.

**Q:** One most important piece of advice for an applicant based on your experience?

**A:** The most important thing is to be genuine and thoughtful when telling your story. It's also important that you research the program offerings – both academic and social – and be prepared to talk about why you are interested in the program, what you hope to learn from it, and what you hope to contribute to the academic and social community.

**Q:** What NOT to do in the admissions process?

**A:** This goes without saying, but don't be arrogant. We are looking for students who are going to be team players and leaders, so be mindful of the way you present yourself.

**Q:** Are later rounds worth considering?

**A:** Yes! While there are more opportunities in the earlier rounds, we do reserve both spots and merit-scholarships for the later rounds in order to provide the most flexibility for our candidates.

**Q:** GMAT and importance as a % of the candidacy? What is the minimum GMAT you are looking for?

**A:** We accept a number of standardized tests – GMAT, GRE, Executive Assessment (EA), MCAT and LSAT. We encourage candidates to choose the test that best aligns with their strengths, application plans and career goals. Standardized test scores are viewed equivalently by the admissions committee as part of the application process. For select candidates, a standardized test may not be necessary. As a pilot for the 2020-21 application cycle (for the Class of 2023), we are pleased to announce a standardized test waiver request. Standardized tests are just one piece of information in a much broader, holistic evaluation.

**Q:** Is there anything you'd like our candidates to know regarding the admissions process?

**A:** Darden maintains a fair and holistic admissions process. A minimum of three members of the Admissions Committee will review and evaluate your application based on three broad areas: academics, professional experience and personal qualities and characteristics. A balance in the three areas is valued, but there is no formula that ensures admission. At Darden we do not tolerate conflicts of interest, and all UVA Darden personnel are prohibited from engaging in any outside employment or consulting which presents a conflict of interest with their duties.



**Q:** Any tips for Israeli applicants considering applying to your school?

**A:** Leadership and teamwork skills obtained through your military roles are just as important as leadership opportunities during our work experiences, so be sure to highlight them!

**Q:** Can you tell us more about funding – scholarship/fellowship options in your school?

**A:** Darden recognizes academic and professional excellence through scholarship awards. Competitive scholarships are intended to reward demonstrated exemplary ability and are one tool we use to help attract top students. Through these awards, the Darden School seeks to recognize a recipient's experience while investing in their future. Most of Darden's merit-based scholarships do not require an additional application. If admitted, students will be evaluated for available scholarships, which are competitively awarded based on a variety of metrics and considerations. Some scholarships, such as the [Jefferson Fellowships](#) and [Batten Scholars](#) programs, require a supplemental application.

In addition, third-party scholarships and fellowships are independently offered and awarded by the University of Virginia Darden School Foundation (and other third-party scholarship providers).

**Q:** Can you share some information about partners who are joining the student- Employment options for him/her? What are the visa requirements?

**A:** The partners and families of the Darden School students are an integral part of the Darden community. Not only do the partners provide support to their students while at Darden, but they are also very active in supporting Darden and the Charlottesville community. The [Darden Partners Association](#) (DPA) is an organization run by Darden student partners who organize volunteer efforts and social activities, and also provide job and child care resources. Job listings for the Charlottesville area are compiled and posted on the [DPA](#) website for both current and incoming partners. Current partners are a great resource for questions about different job industries, the application and interview process and career options while living in Charlottesville. The international committee of the DPA serves as a resource for incoming international partners by answering questions about relocating to Charlottesville and adjusting to Darden. The international committee is available for advice, but it also plans activities to introduce cultures and traditions to the other Darden partners. Another excellent resource for international student partners is UVA's Lorna [Sundberg International Center](#). The center offers a variety of intercultural experiences, classes and resources on getting acclimated to Charlottesville and sharing one's own culture.