



Interview with McCombs Admissions

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

A:

Breadth and Depth of Academic Strength

The breadth and depth of our program is a unique complement to our close-knit class of ~260 students. Based on the holistic strength of the McCombs School of Business and the University of Texas at Austin, students have access to a broad range of courses, opportunities and experts. McCombs is ranked in the top-20 in 10 of the 13 U.S. News business specialties (Accounting #1, Information Systems #4, Business Analytics #5, Entrepreneurship #9, Real Estate #10, Marketing #11, Management #12, Finance #14, Production/Operations #14, Supply Chain/Logistics #15). Taking advantage of excellence across campus, including 48 Top 10 ranked graduate programs, we partner on 15 Dual Degree programs and course collaborations where MBAs have the option to take electives outside of McCombs. Beyond UT, we have over 30 exchange partnerships with top peer programs around the world.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Austin is home to a booming tech and startup scene, and innovation is at the heart of the city's culture. As a top research institution, the University of Texas at Austin fosters the entrepreneurial spirit of our students by encouraging local startup community engagement, supporting tech commercialization, and serving as an intellectual hub for pioneering research. McCombs Graduate Programs are ranked #6 in the U.S. for Entrepreneurship by Entrepreneur Magazine/Princeton Review, and Texas McCombs MBA students have access to centers and programs like the [Herb Kelleher Center for Entrepreneurship](#), the [John Brumley Texas Venture Labs](#), and the [McCombs Blockchain Initiative](#).

MBA+ Program

MBA+ at Texas McCombs is an experiential leadership and professional development program with five components:

- MBA+ Projects – co-curricular, short-term, micro-consulting with client companies
- Seminar & Special Events – community events and workshops designed to build leadership, communication and industry skills



- Individualized Coaching – 8 hours of access yearly to a roster of approximately 40 leadership and communication coaches
- McCombs Global Connections – short-term academic study tours designed to increase cultural awareness and international business knowledge
- McCombs Adventure Program – pre-orientation adventure and service learning trip to support the needs of microbusinesses in rural communities in Latin America

MBA+ is available to all Texas McCombs MBA students. There is no application process, and students can opt into any offering. It is designed to be customizable to help students design their own path and get the most out of their MBA experience. Many MBA programs have similar offerings, but none group them together as we do for a focus on experiential learning. By grouping the five components together, we leverage elements of each to bring new and innovative programming to students. For example, students may first participate in a McCombs Adventure Program doing hands-on building projects in Oaxaca, Mexico, and continue their work in the community with an MBA+ Project with a microbusiness in the region. The MBA+ Project team might then work with an MBA+ communication coach on developing their final presentation.

Another difference is student access to MBA+ Projects. We allow students to participate in these co-curricular projects at any time in their program, including their first semester. This has proven to be a game changer for Full-Time MBA students who are often career switchers. Students appreciate the ability to signal interest in a different career to recruiters early in their program. They also appreciate early access to the type of work they would be doing to make sure they really like it before making a longer-term commitment to an internship.

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

A:

New Dean

The biggest announcement from Texas McCombs, after a highly competitive national search, is the selection of our permanent dean, Lillian Mills. She'll be the first woman to serve in this role in the school's nearly 100-year history. Mills joined Texas McCombs in 2006, and during the past 15 years, she became a top-ranked researcher, a champion for education in multiple, diverse settings, a nationally renowned and award-winning classroom educator, and a scholar with consistent dedication to instructional innovation at the university, college and department levels. She also has an infectious energy and great sense of optimism that was incredibly valued over the last year when she served as interim dean. We're excited about what the future holds at Texas McCombs and can't wait for you to meet her, so stay tuned.



STEM Certification

In 2020, the Texas McCombs Full-Time MBA program received STEM certification for 14 of its 22 concentrations, demonstrating a high level of quantitative rigor across the program. STEM eligible concentrations include Information Management, Supply Chain & Operations Management, Business Analytics, Brand & Product Management, High Tech Marketing, Marketing Analytics & Consulting, General Finance, Corporate Accounting, Investment Management, Corporate Finance, Energy Finance, Clean Tech, Private Equity, and Real Estate Finance.

Q: Has the COVID-19 situation impacted the program's admission process at your school? Is there any other impact candidates should be aware of?

A: While it's not clear how COVID-19 will impact admission processes within the next cycle, all signs are pointing towards a near normal experience. The biggest takeaway from last year is the incredible opportunity to utilize virtual MBA events in a way that expands access, information sharing, and community. We're creating intentional events that enable applicants to craft an application while also providing a sense of the Texas McCombs MBA and Austin, Texas learning, leadership, and team-focused experience.

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: There are three things that come to mind that capture our MBA program, students and faculty: collaboration, communication, and community. Collaboration is built into many aspects of the MBA experience, from core courses, capstone projects, and even the design of our building, [Rowling Hall](#). Open communication is essential in the classroom, among peers, and in your careers. You'll find that faculty are highly accessible and provide memorable learning experiences. Peers truly want the best and invest in each other. Lastly, it's about the people and the community created as part of a shared MBA experience. We think you'll get a sense of our collaborative spirit, importance of communication, and our McCombs community whether you're attending a virtual coffee chat, webinar, or mock class.

In fact, McCombs has been ranked #1 Best MBA Campus Environment by Princeton Review three years in a row! This ranking is based on MBA student ratings of the campus community, the city where the school is located, the availability of school clubs and activities, and the level of participation from fellow students.

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



A: The McCombs School of Business is located in the heart of Austin, Texas--a city that is consistently named one of the best cities in the country for business, education, socializing, fitness, arts, music, film, etc. Austin is equal parts cosmopolitan city and green Texas Hill Country.

Whether you're itching to explore cutting-edge technological innovations, network in one of the country's friendliest start-up scenes, or get your degree in a city that embraces great food and offers a wealth of outdoor activities, you'll find what you're looking for in central Texas.

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

A: Texas McCombs is a magnet for top employers seeking top talent. Our [2020 Full-Time MBA Employment Report](#) captures information about our full-time offers and summer internships, which is a required component of the program. A quick review of the class of 2020 employment data shows that the top three industries represent over 70% of placement: 31.8% in Technology; 22% in Consulting; 17.8% in Financial Services. The employers that hire 10 or more Texas McCombs MBA students include Amazon, Boston Consulting Group, Dell Technologies, Deloitte Consulting, PwC and Strategy&. I invite you to review the employment report and to join a virtual event to learn more.

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: While the [Texas McCombs Full-Time MBA Class Profile](#) provides information about successful applicants from a test score, gpa, and work experience perspective, I think you're really asking about what makes a candidate stand out. I'd say a strong applicant is self-aware about their strengths and where they need to improve, leans into challenges and tackles them in collaboration with others, and is a resource and sense of inspiration to their team and organization. Anyone with characteristics aligned with that would be a good fit for the Texas McCombs MBA program and would truly enjoy our community, culture, and city.

Q: What is the most important piece of advice for an applicant based on your experience?

A: Don't hesitate to connect with us. Researching the Texas McCombs MBA program is going to go a long way. We offer a lot of opportunities to connect with students, the admissions team, and engage with different elements of the program. Each interaction and connection will help you assemble a clear picture of the program and prepare you to submit your application.

Q: What should an applicant NOT to do in the admissions process?



A: The biggest mistake I see from applicants stems from not connecting with us before submitting an application. An essay that is off prompt or includes details from other MBA applications is a big NOT to do. Our [Texas McCombs MBA Insider Blog](#) provides a lot of helpful tips as applicants navigate the application process. Be sure to bookmark it!

Q: Are later rounds worth considering?

A: You'll want to submit your application when it's ready and at its strongest. For some that may be a round 1 submission. For others that may be round 3. It all depends on your unique situation, timeline, and experiences. At the end of the day, an application that demonstrates clear research, work experience impact, solid academic background, and why an MBA stands out.

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

A: This is a common question. Like most programs, we use a holistic review. For the class of 2023, the middle 80% GMAT score range was 740 - 650, while the GRE range was 165 - 153 in Quant and 165 - 153 in Verbal. We don't have a minimum score requirement. However, the score taken in consultation with your GPA help us think about your preparedness for the rigors of an MBA.

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

A: Two things that we haven't yet touched upon is Letter of Recommendation and our optional essay. The Letter of Recommendation is an important component and we only require one. Ideally, the person writing it is a current supervisor and has ample examples of your impact at work to share with us. We realize that not every applicant is sharing with their supervisor that they're anticipating a departure, so a previous supervisor also satisfies our requirements. You may want to use the optional essay to clearly articulate who you choose and why. The optional essay is also a great place to share information related to your score, GPA, a gap in employment, or other possible details of concern in your application.

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

A: All admitted international Full-Time MBA students are automatically considered for the merit-based opportunities including recruiting scholarships that range from \$2,000 to full tuition.

- The MBA Admissions Committee selects Sylff Global Fellows annually to promote diverse global perspectives at McCombs. Selected individuals receive a Sylff scholarship in addition to their Fellows benefits.



- McCombs is a proud partner of Forte Foundation and Reaching OUT MBA and identifies successful applicants to their programs and opportunities.

Tuition for the 2021-2022 academic year is \$58,270 USD (out of state & international). Additional tuition information is available [here](#).