



Q&A: Darden School of Business

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. Darden takes an unusually broad view of business so that leaders with an MBA from Darden are prepared to listen to, understand and guide teams from multiple perspectives that connect to a cohesive strategy. Darden MBAs dive headfirst into a rigorous core curriculum, matched only in its intensity by its career rewards. Ethics is embedded in the core curriculum and drives Darden grads to make a lasting positive social impact. Through the case method, students learn by doing day in and day out — a Darden-specific approach that's earned plenty of decoration along the way, including being named the best business education experience in the U.S. by The Economist for ten years. Dialogue and collaboration within the tight-knit community is a big part of our experience and how our grads are so successful in their careers.

Q: Given the ongoing conflict in Israel and the pro-Palestinian demonstrations on campuses worldwide, how will these factors impact admissions for prospective Israeli students? Additionally, how can you reassure Israeli students who may be worried about studying in your university in the current unstable and challenging situation?

A: UVA permits – and strongly encourages – speech in a wide variety of venues, facilities, times, and formats. In fact, making space for speech and expression is an essential part of what it means to live and learn at a university like ours. The [UVA Statement on Free Expression and Free Inquiry](#) makes our commitment to expressive activity clear; freedom of speech is not only protected by the Constitution, it is a bedrock University value. This entire year, in particular, we have given a wide berth to free expression, including protests, because this is at the heart of what universities do. That said, public universities like ours rely on time, place, and manner policies, which are a way of ensuring that speech is free but does not interfere with the rights of others. These policies must be applied consistently without regard to the content of expression, whether the protest is peaceful, or whether we agree or disagree with the cause. The neutral and even-handed enforcement of these rules is the only way to ensure that all members of this community have an equal opportunity to participate in the life of the University. We also have a duty to ensure the physical safety of our community. In addition to UVA's focus on ensuring the rights and safety of students, UVA has also created a task force on religious diversity and belonging to ensure that students of various faith traditions feel welcome.

Israeli students, who may be worried about studying abroad in the US, should know that the University of Virginia provides comprehensive physical, legal, and emotional protection for students. At Darden, we hold the physical and psychological well-being of our students in the highest regard. While the complexities of the modern world present challenges that may not always allow for absolute assurances of safety, we at Darden are committed to fostering a supportive and secure environment. We are proud to offer our students an extensive array of resources dedicated to their well-being. Within our community, students will find easily accessible licensed clinicians whose offices are



conveniently located near academic spaces. Our trained professionals are not only deeply invested in the welfare of our students but also actively facilitate forums for open dialogue and mutual understanding. Our student organizations play a vital role in providing a network of support, whether it's through shared experiences or the spirit of allyship. In addition, our world-class faculty members are genuinely committed to their students, extending invitations to their offices and homes to nurture meaningful mentorship relationships. Furthermore, Darden is supported by a robust Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights (EOCR) office, alongside our Policy, Accountability, and Critical Events (PACE) division. These entities are instrumental in ensuring that our students have a clear and supported pathway to report any incidents that impact their lives, particularly those related to their identity. We acknowledge the concerns that arise in navigating today's world, and we want our students to be assured that Darden has implemented comprehensive measures to offer protection and support to the best of our ability.

Darden greatly values international students including our students from Israel. The pro-Palestinian demonstrations have no impact on the admissions evaluation process, and we encourage strong Israeli students to consider Darden. To offer maximum flexibility, choice, and support for all applicants, Darden offers four application rounds, including an enhanced Early Action round, which is intended for students who know Darden is one of their top choices. As part of an ongoing commitment to accessibility through its holistic admissions process and flexibility for applicants, the Darden School offers test flexibility to candidates. As applicants have many ways to demonstrate academic accomplishment and ability to succeed in the classroom, the School will accept a range of standardized tests (GMAT/GRE/EA/MCAT/LSAT) and allows applicants to request a test waiver. We aim to offer maximum flexibility, compassion, and accommodation in a time of global uncertainty. For applicants needing additional support, our Admissions Committee will review individual requests and help as best we can.

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 provides personalized support to deliver successful outcomes for students pursuing traditional and nontraditional MBA career paths. Our team of career coaches spans every major industry, function, and geography. These experts bring decades of industry experience and MBA coaching experience to help Darden students learn and excel in the internship and job search process.

Starting the summer before their First Year, Darden students can meet one-on-one with Career Center experts. Coaching ranges from providing holistic assistance such as helping students create their individual career plans, to more tactical preparation such as resume and cover letter reviews, technical mock interviews and more. Every year, Darden students make connections with hundreds of companies, recruiters, and Darden alumni and friends. [Darden's Career Center](#) works to identify, cultivate and strengthen engagement with top companies from around the world. Through a variety of on-Grounds events, global career conferences and job treks, and a dedicated network of alumni located in a variety of industries and locations, Darden students enter highly sought-after internships and full-time roles. Last year, Darden students achieved outstanding career outcomes and personal successes. Highlights from Darden's Full-Time MBA Class of 2023 can be found in the [Employment Report](#). Additionally, 100% of the [Class of 2024](#) who sought an internship, received an offer.

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 standardized testing 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 for admission and scholarship in the earlier rounds, we do reserve both spots and merit scholarships for the later rounds to provide the most flexibility for our candidates. However, primarily given the visa timeline, international students are not encouraged to apply in Round 3.

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

A: Standardized tests are just one piece of information in a much broader, holistic evaluation.

Darden accepts 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. We also acknowledge that for some candidates, a standardized test may not be necessary, and we also offer a standardized test waiver application. However, before submitting a waiver request, we encourage candidates to reflect upon their overall applicant profile as well as the relevant criteria outlined in the test waiver application. Applicants will also want to consider career goals as they make their test plans. In business school, some employers may request a GMAT or GRE score as part of their screening process, particularly in industries like finance and consulting.

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.

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.