

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**COVID-19's Impact on the MBA/Masters Job Market**

Recruiting flat or down overall; virtual components expected to remain in some format

March 22, 2021 – The latest research released today by the MBA Career Services & Employer Alliance provides preliminary insight into the impact of the pandemic on the 2020-2021 job market for MBA and master's in business students. While the overall market expectedly showed a downward trend, some industries fared well, with schools discovering many silver linings from the virtual recruiting environment.

The *MBA CSEA Fall 2020 Recruiting Trends Survey*, published by the MBA Career Services & Employer Alliance, presents key information about the recruiting trends for full-time and part-time MBA students, as well as for specialty master's program students. The report is based on confidential surveys completed in January 2021 by 94 [MBA Career Services & Employer Alliance](#) (MBA CSEA) member schools.

While the overall survey findings were not surprising, declines in some industries were not as significant as many expected. That, combined with the relative stability going into 2020 that was demonstrated in the MBA CSEA Fall 2019 survey, provides hope that the economy will return to a sense of normalcy once the pandemic subsides.

Overview of the Survey Results**Full-Time MBA Students**

- 22% of schools reported an increase in full-time job postings (off-campus opportunities) in Fall 2020 versus the previous year, when 49% indicated an increase. 32% indicated recruiting was flat in 2020, compared with 26% in 2019. The difference in on-campus recruiting (school scheduled interviews) was less drastic, with 21% reporting an increase in 2020 compared with 23% that reported an increase in 2019.
- The Technology industry saw the largest increase, with 57% of schools reporting an increase. This is similar to 56% that reported an increase the previous year. Not surprisingly, Healthcare also saw an increase by 50% of schools, which is 10% higher than in 2019. Hospitality saw the largest decrease (61% of schools saw a decrease, compared with 6% in 2019).
- Firms not headquartered in the school's geographic location and large-size companies fared the best by company type, with 32% and 27% seeing an increase, respectively. Start-ups lead the way for increases for several years in pre-COVID surveys.

Recruiting Trends for International Full-Time MBA Students

- Opportunities for full-time international MBA students decreased for 65% of responding schools, compared with 55% of schools that experienced a decrease in the 2019 survey.
- By industry, Technology continued to experience the largest increase in recruiting for International students, with 31% of schools experiencing an increase. Last year's survey yielded similar results, with 35% experiencing an increase.

Part-Time MBA Students

- Full-time job postings (off-campus opportunities) for Part-time MBAs were mostly flat (for 41% of schools). 30% indicated recruiting was flat in the 2019 survey. On-campus opportunities (school-scheduled interviews) were flat for 48% of schools, compared with 44% indicating the same the previous year.
- Technology was once again the industry that experienced the largest increase in recruiting, with 31% of schools reporting an increase (52% reported an increase in 2019).

Specialty Masters Students (Master's in Finance, Data Analytics, Accounting, Marketing, etc.)

- 28% of schools reported an increase in full-time job postings (off-campus recruiting), compared with 15% last year. 40% indicated recruiting was flat, compared with 23% the previous year. For on-campus recruiting (school-scheduled interviews), 8% experienced an increase, compared with 39% the previous year.
- Similar to MBA programs, the Technology industry experienced the largest increase in recruiting, with 53% of schools reporting an increase (compared with 72% seeing an increase last year).

Observations from the Field

In the midst of the uncertainty and disruption, there were some silver linings. Schools noted that career services became more accessible to students in a virtual environment, with many seeing higher attendance at events. Geographic boundaries have been expanded, leading to additional opportunities for employer engagement and student career paths. Alumni engagement increased as well, with more alums assisting with networking and programming.

Schools adjusted in many ways, with a majority expanding new technology systems to adapt. Many noted that the virtual recruiting and career services environment kept the hiring landscape from becoming worse. A strong majority of schools indicated that summer 2020 internships were virtual.

Some drawbacks to the virtual environment were noted, including video meeting fatigue, recruiting delays, fewer Visa sponsorships from U.S. companies, and less personal relationships with companies.

Overall, schools and companies have adapted and pivoted to make the best of the next normal. A majority of companies indicated that they are satisfied with the virtual recruiting environment. With these lessons learned, it's likely that a continued, better form of virtual recruiting will continue well into the post-pandemic world.

MBA CSEA has also continued to adapt to the environment with timely and relevant webinars as well as community support for both school and employer members. In addition, the organization will be hosting its virtual Recruiter and Career Services Bootcamps in May with a focus on both traditional competencies as well as skills needed to adapt to the future of work in our industry.

"The pandemic has revealed that the skills graduate business education provides are still very much in demand - not just the hard functional business skills, but skills that allow companies to deal with ambiguity, such as problem solving, new product development, resiliency planning, and strategy," says John Helmers, Associate Director of Graduate Career Management at the University of Colorado Boulder, Leeds School of Business and MBA CSEA President. "As the global market continues to reopen, I suspect the next normal will include many efficiencies gained in recruiting and work that were realized out of necessity from going remote, but that other essential aspects of in-person work and recruiting will return."

About the MBA Career Services & Employer Alliance

Founded in 1994, the MBA Career Services & Employer Alliance is a global association for individuals in the fields of graduate business career services and employers. There are more than 880 members representing a diverse group of more than 230 business schools and corporations. MBA CSEA provides a direct link between business school career services offices, graduate business recruiting professionals and the media. MBA CSEA sets employment data reporting standards for business schools and monitors media rankings surveys for survey interpretation and alignment. www.mbacsea.org

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