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U.C. Berkeley's "Campanile"

California Dreaming: A Brief Look at California's Top Graduate Programs

By Marian Dent, Dean of Pericles, (B.A. San Diego State University, J.D. U.C. Berkeley) and Andrew Mendelsohn, Pericles Legal Skills Director (B.A. U.C. Berkeley, J.D. Loyola Marymount).

All the leaves are brown
And the sky is grey
I've been for a walk
On a winter's day

I'd be safe and warm
If I was in L.A
California Dreamin'
On such a winter's day

These are the starting lyrics of a 1965 hit by a group called the Mamas and Papas which caused thousands of young hippies to migrate west toward Berkeley, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Staring out the window of my dark Moscow apartment, watching one of Moscow's spring slush storms, thinking about which of my pairs of boots are least likely to get ruined by walking to work in this mess, well, how can I not be doing a little California Dreaming?

California colleges are often overlooked by Russian students. Of course, California colleges are no longer known for just spawning future hippies. California has some of the top B-schools, Law Schools and Graduate schools of anywhere in the world. California is the home of Berkeley, Stanford, UCLA, and other heavy hitting universities. Plus California hosts numerous well respected specialized schools, such as the Monterey Institute of International Relations, the Claremont Graduate School's

Drucker School of Management, and Hastings Law School, just to name a few.

The diverse economy is an important attraction of California. Companies located in the "Bay Area," the area that encompasses San Francisco and Oakland, are leaders in the area of banking and finance. A couple hours drive to the south of San Francisco and you reach Silicon Valley, the birthplace of the web and the IT industry. Southern California, and the Los Angeles region in particular, is known worldwide for its motion picture and entertainment industry. Further south still, San Diego County is important in the aerospace industry and the biotech fields. Over one third of all U.S. biotechnology jobs are based in California. As America's gateway to the Pacific, the state is a hot location for international trade careers, mainly involving trade with Asia.

If we haven't attracted you yet, then also keep in mind that, if you are going to spend some time studying in the U.S., going to a place with interesting culture, handy beaches, beautiful nature, and almost constant 15-22 degree sunny weather isn't a bad idea either. In researching this article, I noticed that California schools are unique in posting weather reports on the front pages of their websites. Yes, I'm California Dreaming indeed.

The University of California System

The first thing you need to know when exploring California colleges is that California has two separate state college systems: The University of California system and the California State University system.

Insider Tips for MBA Success:

Advice from a B-School Professor

By Patrick K. Thornton, Associate Professor of Business Law Houston Baptist University Business School, visiting Professor, Pericles.

Preparing to be a successful MBA student is much like preparing to be a successful student at any level of education with a few nuances. It is rudimentary to say there is no substitute for preparation and hard work. That formula works at every level of education. The MBA program would not have admitted you had they not thought you would be a successful business student. Every program expects you to work hard and produce quality work. The MBA student, like every other student, must come prepared for class. However, it is even more essential for the graduate business student to come prepared. The experience in graduate business school is totally unlike the undergraduate level. The MBA students will learn almost as much from the other students in the class as they learn from the professor. The professor will set the pace with lectures and discussion but they will provoke the students to discuss and analyze the business problems presented in class in a more in-depth fashion.

Most MBA programs schools require students to have some work experience to

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Images of California

CALIFORNIA, cont from page 1.

The University of California system is the more prestigious of the two systems. The University of California system boasts top programs in the sciences, and is known for outstanding academic caliber and top graduate level programs. The University of California system has nine campuses around California. The most famous and most prestigious is its first location, University of California, Berkeley (most often simply called "Berkeley"). A close runner up in fame and reputation is University of California at Los Angeles (usually just called "UCLA") Other locations include Davis, San Diego, Santa Cruz and more.

The other University of California campuses can be recognized by just the initials "UC" before the name of the California town or city in which it is located (e.g., UC Davis and UC Irvine, which both have top 50 MBA programs).

U.C. Berkeley

U.C. Berkeley, located in the Berkeley hills just across the bay from San Francisco, centers an artsy, funky, multicultural town full of coffee houses, ethnic restaurants and crafts dealers. The university itself has a beautiful old campus, reminiscent of the East Coast Ivy League universities. The Berkeley symbol is the distinctive Campanile, or clock tower, in the middle of campus, around which students congregate for lunches or sit on the grass to study in the almost uniformly mild weather of the San Francisco Bay Area. The campus offers a stunning view of San Francisco Bay and

is within easy driving distance of rocky coastlines and wild forests.

Known as "Berzerkly" to the natives, Berkeley has not completely shaken its radical image as the birthplace of the hippy movement. But now the radical history is more characterized by the determined stance of both faculty and students to allow free speech and freedom of thought, where liberal and conservative ideas are both debated with equal furor. Impromptu debates, speeches and demonstrations for every kind of cause are an habitual sight on the campus commons. And eccentricity is a style more than a stigma.

Inside the classrooms, things are a bit more regimented. U.C. Berkeley is ranked as the top graduate school in the world, with 105 different graduate programs, all of which rank in the top 10 in their respective fields. Among the professors are over 20 Nobel Laureates. The campus houses 8 museums, 3 general libraries, and 24 separate, subject specific libraries. It has enough to keep any hard core academic happy for a lifetime.

U.C. Berkeley is the home of Boalt Hall School of Law, a solidly top ranked law school that has graduated some of the U.S.'s greatest legal minds. Boalt Hall has an LL.M. designed to fit all academic interests. Those who prefer classroom learning over academic writing can take the coursework track. Those who are more interested in deep research can take a thesis track that allows them to take fewer classes but use the extensive library facilities of the entire U.C. system and the expert personal guidance of Boalt professors. Plus, Berkeley has a unique summer LL.M. program, allowing foreign lawyers to take two, ten-week summer sessions, and thus avoid having to leave their jobs or law practices for a year.

Berkeley is also the home of Haas School of Business, which ranked 7th in last year's U.S. News B-School Rankings. It has a large MBA program as well as a Ph.D. program that enrolls 14-16 students a year, and a Masters Degree in Financial Engineering. Haas prides itself on its reputation for creative thinking and of capitalizing on the resources of other departments of U.C. Berkeley. One such program is the Management of Technology program, which combines courses in the business school and the engineering department of Berkeley to qualify executives and entrepreneurs

hoping to bring high tech products to the market.

Berkeley's beautiful Northern California location rubs off on its people, and it isn't surprising that its other graduate mainstay is its environmental programs and research. Most notably Nobel Prize winning physicist Professor Steven Chu led Berkeley's research on clean energy alternatives and directed Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory until recently being appointed President Obama's new secretary of Energy. The Program of Environmental Science, Policy and Management, within Berkeley's Department of Natural Resource, offers M.S. and Ph.D. programs to over 200 students. LL.M. students can take their entire degree in environmental law. Berkeley's Engineering Department offers M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Civil and Environmental Engineering, where students work on subjects such as air quality management, water treatment, environmental microbiology, and restoration of degraded ecosystems.

U.C.L.A.

If Berkeley has a reputation for being a bit hilly, laid back and eccentric, U.C.L.A. is it's antithesis. Located in the Westwood section of Los Angeles, U.C.L.A. has a sprawling, sunny campus 15 minutes from the Southern California beaches, and 10 minutes from Beverly Hills. The students, and the campus itself, take pride in keeping up with the frenetic pace and cosmopolitan nightlife of La La Land. Busy and fashionable are the feelings you get here, just as you do in the entire Los Angeles area. UCLA operates on the quarter system rather than the semester system of most other universities, meaning that courses are taught in intense blocks, with subjects changing frequently. So the pace of academics feels as fast as the pace of life.

Although sometimes academically overshadowed by its more northerly sister, UCLA has no lack of brainiacs either, with 4 Nobel Prize winners and 3 Pulitzer Prize winners among its professors. And the almost 39,000 top level students attending UCLA spend plenty of time on courses and research as well as on the high energy L.A. lifestyle.

On the MBA front, UCLA's Anderson School of Management is ranked 12th by U.S. News. Anderson offers the standard MBA, as well as a Ph.D. and a Masters in

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Royce Hall, U.C.L.A.

Financial Engineering. It also boasts a new Global Executive MBA in conjunction with the National University of Singapore, which focuses on training business leaders for the Pacific Rim. With its large size, Anderson can offer a range of courses and specialties that the smaller Haas at Berkeley can't quite meet. For example, Anderson has a specialized chair in Technology Management, and another in Global Economics.

UCLA Law School is likewise outstanding and very competitive. In addition to the J.D. program, UCLA offers several different concentrations for LL.M. programs including, capitalizing on Hollywood's proximity, a specialty LL.M. in Entertainment and Media Law and Policy. It also offers LL.M. degrees in Business Law and in International & Comparative Law.

U.C. San Diego

U.C. San Diego (UCSD) is nowhere near as large and prestigious as either Berkeley or UCLA, but I mention it here specifically for its extremely strong graduate life sciences and biotech programs. It is also the number one location in the nation for marine sciences. It sits in the La Jolla area of San Diego, California's southern-most city, on the shore of a rocky cliff area of the Pacific Ocean, which is famous for its good surfing. The campus is near the San Diego biotech corridor, which houses several of America's top biotech employers, and also near the famous Scripps Institute of Oceanography.

For MBA candidates, UCSD has a unique emphasis on technology in its Rady School of Management. Considered a strong, "hard skills" program, a year of college calculus is required for entry and it attracts an above average number of students with backgrounds in medicine, math and engineering. Rady is unique in that it will often consider those who are coming immediately from science and technical

programs at the university, without the 3-4 years of work experience that other MBA programs require.

U.C. San Francisco

U.C. San Francisco, as a whole, never really got off the ground due to the proximity of its larger sister, Berkeley. Two notable exceptions are its graduate programs in medicine, and Hastings College of Law. U.C. San Francisco originated as a medical school and so is well known for its doctoral programs in genetics, cellular biology, developmental biology and embryonics.

Hastings College of Law, not located in the same building as the medical facility, is a top ranked program with a modern building located in the center of San Francisco. Founded in 1878, it was the first law school in the Western United States, and it maintains the high standards that were set so long ago. Hastings' LL.M. program is small, accepting about 20 students each year. But a notable factor of Hastings LL.M. is that the school has a regular policy of allowing successful LL.M. students to credit part of their LL.M. courses towards a Hastings J.D. degree should the students decide that they want to stay in the United States.

Hastings Center for Negotiation and Dispute Resolution is also worth mentioning. It is ranked as one of the best of its kind in the world, and holds regular summer programs designed for international students.

U.C. Davis

Located in the somewhat hot and boring Sacramento area, U.C. Davis does not have quite the sex appeal of the other schools mentioned here, but it nonetheless deserves mention for its business and law schools.

U.C. Davis's Graduate School of Management consistently ranks among the top 50 U.S. business schools. Not far from the famous Northern California vineyards, Davis also has an annual special program for wine executives, and a unique Center for Green Technology Entrepreneurship, where students bring actual science projects that they hope to bring to market and work with their colleagues and professors to move their project from mere idea to a viable business strategy.

U.C. Davis also has a top 50 law school with both a full time LL.M. program, and a part-time summer LL.M. in International Commercial Law, with six week courses taken each summer for 2 to 5 years to complete the degree.

The California State University System

The second state run university system, the California State University system, was originally started as technical training schools for teachers, and later for agricultural and applied sciences. In the 1960s, the state expanded the system's mandate to include the entire spectrum of college education, however the focus remains different from that of the U.C. System. The Cal. State System focuses more on undergraduate education and on career education; it is not known for the theoretical science and research that characterizes the U.C. schools.

As a system, Cal State is one of the biggest universities in the world. The California State University System boasts 23 campuses, with several of its individual campuses being as large as the entire university systems of other U.S. states. According to the system's web site, the enrolled students currently number almost 450,000. There are over 47,000 employees

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Rodin Sculpture Garden, Stanford University

in the Cal State system. To give you something to compare, that is more staff members than the total number of students at Harvard.

You can identify colleges in the California State System as they follow one of two naming patterns. The larger ones use the name of the city, followed by "State University" (San Diego State University for example). The smaller ones are named "Cal State" followed by the city name (Cal State Fullerton for example).

Although the Cal State system is not widely known for its graduate level education, its emphasis on the practical, money earning aspects of life has caused the California State System to spawn some strong, regional business schools. Twenty of its 23 campuses offer MBA programs, so we will mention just a few.

Cal State East Bay (Formerly Cal State Hayward)

Out of all the California State Universities, Cal State East Bay, located near San Francisco, is the best known in Russia because of its Moscow MBA Program, which has been operating for at least a decade. Cal State East Bay is not well known outside of its regional area, since the MBA is a part time program, designed for working professionals. The college of business, however, does offer an Master of Science in Information Technology Management, a Master of Science in Taxation, and a Master of Arts in Economics.

In Moscow, Cal State East Bay's reputation is a different matter completely. One of only a handful of English language MBA's in Moscow, and one of only two to offer the degree of an American business school, Cal State East Bay-Moscow is a well known option for those Muscovites who are unable to study abroad.

San Diego State University

San Diego State University (SDSU) Graduate School of Business has one of the best reputed MBA programs in the Cal State system. The school is especially proud of teaching entrepreneurship in the biotech, telecommunications and software industries. Located in a city of strong sports fans, SDSU also offers a unique Executive MBA in Sports Business Management.

Cal State Northridge

The College of Business and Economics at California State University, Northridge (CSUN), was one of the first dedicated Business programs in the California State University program. The highlight of CSUN's MBA program is perhaps the MBA Consulting Project. This course prepares and enables students to deliver professional level consulting services to

companies and organizations throughout the Greater Los Angeles area.

Private California Universities

In addition to the two State operated university systems, California has more than 90 privately run universities, ranging from the highest, ranked, Stanford, though small local establishments. The reason for this plethora of colleges is partly due to California's liberal system for accreditation. Thus, California private education is somewhat buyer-beware, and one should carefully check out private California schools before applying. However, there are some excellent private schools in the state.

Obviously, we can't examine 90 schools here, so I will just mention the few jewels with the strongest graduate programs.

Stanford University

An hour south of San Francisco, Stanford is the ying to Berkeley's yang. Stanford has the reputation for being at the pinnacle of American education while simultaneously being everything that Berkeley is not supposed to be. While Berkeley wears its public university counter-culture atmosphere on its sleeve, Stanford holds itself up as a dignified representative of the east coast tradition



San Diego State's, Sports Management MBA Class appropriately graduates in a football stadium.

started by the Ivy League universities. While Berkeley is jeans and T-shirts, Stanford is designer business suits. Just one look at the pristine buildings and manicured lawns of Stanford's campus convinces you that it is an expensive, top ranked school.

Stanford has numerous world class graduate programs, but the Law School and Business School in particular have a number of programs geared towards foreign students.

Stanford Law School was started in 1893, and one of its first two professors was a former U.S. President, Benjamin Harrison. The law school has continued this tradition of excellence through the present, and

counts many former dignitaries among its graduates and faculty. Besides offering standard J.D. and joint degrees, Stanford has three law degrees aimed at foreign students and those not wishing to complete a full MBA: three one-year master's degree programs (including an LL.M.) and a doctoral degree (JSD) for foreign graduate students who have earned a law degree outside the United States.

Stanford Graduate School of Business prides itself on having one of the world's most influential faculties, combined with an 80-year history of innovation and success. Besides a standard 2-year MBA program, the Stanford Graduate School of Business has many other programs, including the 10-month Sloan Master's Program. The Sloan Master's Program is targeted at mid-career executives and puts all graduates in a single class room through one year of intensive work, resulting in a Masters of Science in Management degree. Finally, Stanford Business offers many summer programs for recent graduates or those not wanting to complete a full graduate degree, such as the Summer Institute for General Management.

In addition to law and business, Stanford has outstanding programs in most other areas of academics. It is perhaps most noted for being the feeder school of Silicon Valley. Right on the doorstep of the Valley, every high tech company with any clout is looking to interview, wine, and dine the Stanford grads. Medicine too, is another area of Stanford's fame, with the medical research facilities and programs attracting the best minds in the world. Finally, the famous Hoover Institute for Russian Studies, which claims Condoleezza Rice among it's former professors, is the think tank that spawns most of the conservative Russia experts in the United States.

University of Southern California

University of Southern California (USC), located in Los Angeles, unfortunately sometimes is given the not-so-flattering moniker "University of Spoiled Children." The reason for this shouldn't scare you away though, because USC earned that reputation for attracting the children of the Hollywood film industry. If you are interested in telecommunications and film, this is the top school in the world.

In business and law, it is no slouch either. More entertainment industry executives and attorneys graduated from USC than from any other school.

USC's Marshall School of Business has a unique program that attracts many. Each year the school selects up to 16 second-year MBA students to manage an actual investment fund. The school also took advantage of the telecom-connections of

Continues . . .

the university to install a state of the art Capital Markets Trading Room.

USC's Gould School of Law is geared to international students with a summer "law and English" program designed to ensure that students enter the academic year with sufficient language ability to succeed. USC offers both a general LL.M. and a Master of Comparative Laws degree. There is also a non-degree granting Visiting International Lawyer program for those who want to spend a year on the USC campus and attend classes without the stress of writing a thesis and studying for exams.

University of San Diego

University of San Diego (USD) is an 8000 student, Catholic university located in the center of the city of San Diego. It has a beautiful campus with elaborate Moorish style architecture. USD's law school is well known in Moscow because of the summer scholarships offered to Russian students by the University of San Diego's Institute of International & Comparative Law. Each summer this scholarship, administered by Pericles, sends 15 to 20 Russian students to study alongside visiting American, German and Canadian students in Barcelona, Dublin, Florence, London, Oxford or Paris.

USD Law School also has a very strong curriculum in international law and offers international students LL.M. programs in comparative law and in taxation.

USD's Business School also has a program of interest to foreign students: a twelve to sixteen month International MBA where students travel for actual business consulting assignments to locations such as Argentina, Brazil, China, the Czech Republic, France and Spain. The locations vary from year to year, depending on what consulting projects are available.

Monterey Institute of International Studies

Monterey Institute of International Studies is worth mentioning both because of its location and its international orientation. Visiting Monterey, the town that inspired Steinbeck's novels, is like stepping back in time, although its aura of a small fishing village is somewhat misleading as it is home to some important colleges and research institutions. Still, the Monterey Peninsula, with age old redwood forests, the dramatic cliffs of the Pacific Ocean, the art colony of Carmel, and the beach haven of Santa Cruz, is a magical place to spend a few academic years.

Originally started as a military language institute, MIIS itself is a breeding ground for U.S. government and military experts in international affairs. The Monterey Institute is also home to the Fisher School of International Business, which is a definite leader in the field. Fisher's two year MBA

program requires at least three semesters of advanced study in foreign languages. The twelve month MBA, restricted to students with undergraduate degrees in business related areas, is also a good option for students who do not want to spend two years abroad.

Loyola Marymount University

Loyola Marymount University (LMU), in Los Angeles, is a regional school with good business/MBA options and a law school. Students can study full or part time, and the LMU MBA provides students with an opportunity to participate in an outstanding study of global business, Comparative Management Systems. Students who select an international track will eventually earn a Certificate in International Business. As part of the curriculum students can spend a semester abroad at EDHEC in Lille or Nice, France or the BiMBA Program in Beijing, China. LMU also has a dedicated Law School, Loyola Law School, known nationally for its emphasis on Sports and Entertainment law and regionally for its excellent litigation training.

Claremont

Claremont Graduate University (CGU)'s Peter F. Drucker and Masatoshi Ito Graduate School of Management, not far from Los Angeles, is yet another well regarded MBA program. The Drucker School offers both standard MBA's and an EMBA in Executive Management.

Pepperdine

Pepperdine, overlooking the Pacific Ocean near Malibu, California, houses a well respected regional law school and the Graziadio School of Business Management. While relaxing with clear views of the Pacific, students will have a choice of standard MBA and law programs. Pepperdine also offers an International MBA for students who are concentrating in International Business and a joint MBA/JD program. The Graziadio MBA is ranked in the top-50 on many lists, including Forbes and the Financial Times.

Golden Gate University

Golden Gate University is situated in San Francisco. GGU has an MBA and also has a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program, for professionals who wish to take their skill levels to an even higher level of excellence.

Golden Gate, however, is known more for its law programs than for its MBA. GGU Law School has many different programs, including five different LL.M programs. In cooperation with the University of Paris X (Nanterre), Golden Gate University sponsors a new program within its International Law LL.M that will permit students interested in a concentration in European and international law to spend

one semester at Golden Gate University in San Francisco and one semester at the University of Paris. Students will earn a US LL.M degree and a French Masters 1 Degree. Lastly, for those wishing even more depth, GGU offers a Scientiae Juridicae Doctor - Doctor of Juridical Science (SJD) in International Legal Studies.

University of Pacific (McGeorge)

The University of Pacific, with campuses in Stockton, Sacramento and San Francisco, has a number of worthy Business and Legal programs available to potential graduate students. The Eberhardt MBA at University of the Pacific offers the ability to complete a full-time MBA in just 16 months. In addition, UP also a PharmaD/MBA and a joint MBA/JD with the UP McGeorge School of Law. McGeorge, besides the standard US JD program, offers a number of LL.M. degrees and a JSD.

Santa Clara University

Another good Northern California option for prospective international students is Santa Clara University. Founded in 1911, Santa Clara is located in Silicon Valley, and as such is a leader in high tech and innovative education methods. Santa Clara courses are often "bookless" with students using school dedicated websites and programs for their studying. Santa Clara Law School offers graduate degrees in international law and intellectual property law; combined JD/MBA degree; and certificates in intellectual property law, international law, and public interest and social justice law.

Santa Clara University is also home to the Leavey School of Business, which offers a variety of different MBA programs as well as an MS in Information Technology, MSIS degree.

Well by now you could conceivably be exhausted by the possibilities of California graduate schools. We are. Each time we think this article is finished someone says "hey, you forgot about"

The truth is that we would write pages more about the unique programs offered by various California educational institutions. But don't worry. We won't.

For more information on California graduate programs, we will leave you to try http://www.mba-courses.com/mba_california.htm and http://www.mba-courses.com/mba_california.htm <http://www.gradview.com/collegesearch/state/californiagraduateschools.jsp>.

And in the mean time, surf's up dudes, see ya at the beach.



TIPS

Continued from Page 1.

before being admitted into the program. This prerequisite is to ensure that students in the classroom have some basic knowledge about business and to further establish a quality level of discussion during the classroom period. Unlike at law school, business students arrive at business school with some knowledge about the field they are studying and they are expected to draw upon that knowledge in developing business solutions to the problems presented to them. Whatever your particular discipline you should be ready to evaluate and analyze the material being discussed and make a significant contribution to class discussion.

Time Management will be more essential at the graduate level than at the undergraduate. Most good MBA students treat the MBA degree as a second job. Even if you are studying part time, you will still have class one or two nights a week and the weekend will be used to prepare for class and work on projects. In any MBA program you will spend many hours outside the class room preparing for class. Unlike during your undergraduate education, falling behind in your studies in an MBA program can cause some serious problems for your success in the program. It is essential that you keep current with the material. In an MBA program it is much more difficult, if not impossible, to wait until the end of the semester to study the material. Graduate business education is not structured in that fashion.

There will be many more class projects and much more group work than there was at the undergraduate school. You will most likely be assigned to a group for the term and have to produce assignments that the group will present orally during class. Groups may consist of four to five students and you want to make sure you are making a significant contribution to any group project. Group projects can sometimes be difficult because there may be one or two person that are not contributing to the group, leaving the burden on just a few.

If you studied by yourself in undergraduate school or if you are not used to working in groups on projects, it is essential that you learn and develop this skill. In almost every MBA class, a group project will be required and emphasis is placed on teamwork and producing a good quality product. You want to be able to show to the professor what you produced on behalf of the group for the group project.

Listening is of course key to learning. Listen intently to what other said about a particular subject. Most classes will have bankers, accountants, financial experts, marketers and even some lawyers. Most students will have a specialized area of knowledge that will move the discussion along. Be ready when your particular discipline is discussed. The class will look to you for your input and sometimes to carry the conversation because you are the “expert” in the area being discussed. Use the experience you have gained through your employment to shed further light on the subject being discussed. Be ready to be an active participant in class.

Most business professors will use the Socratic Method or a variation thereof to encourage class discussion. Don’t think you will just come to class and sit there quietly. Participation will be a requirement in every class. Many professors will arrive in class with a problem that is to be solved by the class that class period. Reading the assigned material merely makes you ready to begin discussing business problems. It will then be up to you to use your ingenuity and business acumen to arrive at possible business solutions to the proposed problem. Business professors are much like other professors in that they expect students to come to class ready to discuss the materials but they also expect more from business students because of their business experience.

Students should approach the MBA with the same professionalism they approach their job. Professors expect professionalism during class and this also includes getting to class on time. Most MBA professors have substantial work experience in the business field, so they will understand a busy schedule, however, the simple idea of being on time goes a long

way in establishing credibility with the professor early on in the MBA program.

Good Luck!



Notes from the Underground: Helpful information from Pericles Students.

My 660 Mile Road to the GMAT

By Boris Khodanovich, Pericles former GMAT student

History

Four years ago, in 2005, I read my first article about MBA education and gained my initial interest in this education. In Tyumen, where I graduated from university, there were no B-schools so I decide to relocate to Moscow in 2006 to get this knowledge.


In 2007, I finally decided to wake up and do something in order to make my dream a reality. My first choices were local Russian business schools but soon I discovered another group of schools – top Business schools such as Harvard, Duke, Stanford and Wharton. But to get such an education I had to pass through GMAT. Before starting my GMAT road I thought that GMAT would be a very easy test, and my permanent high scores in university assured me that since I was able to graduate from medical university in the top 10% of my class, definitely, I would be able to crack the GMAT in a short time, despite my lack of English communication and math for the last 10 years. I think I underestimated the test.

Having this sense of confidence, I began my preparation for the GMAT in a Moscow test preparation course that prepared students in the Russian language.

My First Acquaintance with the Test

In my course we began to work with the verbal part: sentence correction (SC), critical reasoning (CR) and reading comprehension (RC). We had a small overview about grammar and certain type of mistakes tested on the GMAT. At this stage I was

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encouraged because we solved easy questions and my hit rate was relatively high – I was able to answer 80% of questions correctly. The only obstacle for me was time – it was very difficult for me to finish in time – to solve each question in 2 minutes. But as each newcomer thinks, I thought that it was not an issue to worry about.

After 6 classes of verbal we moved on to quant. This was an issue for me because medicine was my major and my last classes of math were 10 years ago, as I mentioned above. I had good and excellent marks for math at school but this did not help me. The main difference between Russian and American math study is *the approach*. In my county, Russia (good expression for AWA essays, isn't it?), students use a direct solving approach without mastering and understanding basic math. GMAT, however, tests primarily basic math. Data sufficiency (DS) is a new type of question for each Russian student. (We always had questions that had sufficient information to answer them.)

Further Studies

At the Connect 1-2-1 Event in Moscow in Spring 2008, I met one student who scored 750 on the GMAT. We got acquainted and he shared his prep experience. He emphasized that I should go to Pericles, especially if I had problems with verbal section.

In May 2008, I began to visit Pericles GMAT classes. Pericles classes were something new to me. Classes were taught in English by foreign professors. So, I was able to get knowledge “from the first hands.” Before starting my studies at Pericles I'd already acquainted myself with the test at another school, as mentioned above, and felt comfortable in classes. But the main thing I got was *the understanding* of the GMAT. I want to stress this – you need to know how the test makers think. Pericles gave this knowledge. After Pericles course I knew fundamentals – how correct and incorrect answers can look and how to distinguish them fast.

Despite 2 good full GMAT courses I still felt like a dummy in probability and combinatorics. I have not encountered these type of problems, neither in school nor in university. I was not able to understand what they were speaking about and how to solve them.

But, as a persevering person, I worked hard – I spent nearly 1 hour every day and each weekend working with GMAT. One day I said to myself: “Hey, enough studies!

Go and pass through the test!” and scheduled the test in July.

My First Attempt

510 with 38 in quant, 23 in verbal and 4.0 in AWA. Ugh!

Bad score but anyway good experience! Now I knew my mistakes! So, I shelved the idea of 1st round intake for 2009 and tried to prepare for the second round. I understood that I used the wrong strategy. Strategy is one of the key success factors in GMAT. Now I spent more time working with my mistakes. It was easier to say what was my strength. I was good only in geometry, that was all. So, I bought the Official Guide 11, the Official Guide Verbal and the Official Guide Quant. These books use official questions and if you want to work with official, real questions you definitely need to buy these books – *these are the GMAT Bibles!* I solved all the problems in these books. After that part of my prep, I installed GMATPowerPrep – a free official CAT test from GMAC, the makers of GMAT. This means that you can get correct experience about GMAT test – type of questions and the level of difficulty. You can find this test on the CD distributed by Pericles among Pericles students for free. But you also can download it free of charge from www.mba.com.

I tried to work more with GMAT simulators to make myself more comfortable under time pressure. I used GMATPowerPrep and Cambridge ARCO (also Pericles students can get this test from Pericles' library). I also repeated Pericles' course (another free option) just to make sure I had learned all I could from the Professors' minds.

In November, I scheduled my 2nd attempt for December in order to be sure that I have enough time for application.

Second Attempt

620 (Q47, V28), 4.0 AWA. For me it was a significant improvement - I gained 110 points! This score proved that my strategy worked and this fact was the main reason to feel happy—happy to increase my quant score and happy to understand that I needed to work mainly with the verbal part. I began to read Scientific American and New York Times. I was excited by Scientific American and read nearly 5 full magazines [from title-page to colophon](#). The NY Times was less interesting for me, but, nevertheless, I read one 2-page article every day.

Also I started something a little crazy—I decided to try to help and interact with others in my position so I started a web forum called www.gmatforum.ru. I figured that this would help me keep my head in “GMAT mode,” while not being as boring and stressful as constant formal studying would be.

Third Attempt

In February, 2009, I scored 660 with 48 in Math and 33 in Verbal. This was less than I expected, but this is not a bad score, is it? I expect at least 4.0 for AWA.

660 is not a perfect score, especially for a person who scored at least 730 each time on each GMAT simulator. Actually, I wanted 700 and this score would have been perfect for me and for each school to which I wanted to apply. I believe the stress conditions and time pressure of the actual test brought me down. However, I know one person from Harvard with 690, one person from Duke with 640 and one person from Stanford with 640! This means that if your scores falls into 80% range for your school - apply, do not hesitate, especially if you have a good GPA and strong essays!

I remember a huge part of the questions. Math had average/mean, powers, remainders, rate/work, profit/cost/revenue, geometry, coordinate plane, variables, inequalities, very easy combinatorics, roots and simplify the equation questions. Sentence correction tested modifiers (I have a dangling modifier problem), parallelism and idiomatic expressions. CR asked weakening, strengthening, support the conclusion, inference and assumption questions. RC had weird passages – an economic passage about stocks, a social passage about women rights, a science passage about the prehistoric era and one passage I do not remember because I ran out of time and guessed the last seven questions.

General Suggestions and Tips

Preparation

- Visit Pericles courses twice. I did so. Despite the fact that I was retaking this course, each time I found something new and remembered what I'd already forgotten.
- Follow all Pericles advice. I was more or less good in math and bad in verbal. I used all advice from Pericles and improved the verbal from 23 to 33.
- Study each day.
- Work on your weaknesses.



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- Try not to solve directly each question but try to understand each question and what concepts/topics each question tests.
- Make flashcards with formulas and new words.
- Time yourself. Try to spend not more than 2 minutes for each question.
- Try not just to find the correct answer but to understand what the correct answer looks like. Use this habit in all verbal questions.
- Before solving PS question take a look at the answers. If you see there are fractions – find a fraction, not a decimal. If you see integers – find an integer, not a fraction or a decimal.
- Before solving a DS problem write down the formula that the DS question tests. You will have some variables and then test whether each statement alone or both combined give you sufficient information about the values of these variables.
- When you study RC do NOT spell the words while reading. This consumes a lot of time. Just look through the line and try to imagine the pictures that the text describes. After reading each paragraph, make a small pause to rephrase the paragraph and to understand the main idea. Understand the structure of the passage as a whole, and its main idea. Do not try to remember all facts from the passage – you will only burn out your memory, it will be better to check the answer choices. Because you already know where each specific detail is situated you will save a lot of time while finding it. In inference RC questions about some fact, find the sentence which has the information about this fact and read 1 sentence before this sentence, this sentence and the following sentence, and then make an inference.

Study materials

- Official guide series. Do all of them. These are the GMAT Bibles.
- For CR and RC use LSAT tests. (I got

some LSAT books from Pericles' library and used them.) This test is not the same as the GMAT but is worthwhile to study. LSAT's RC passages are more difficult than those in GMAT. You will be able to read and understand faster after LSAT.

- Manhattan GMAT series. I love their Sentence Correction Guide. Others I did not use. If you buy any Manhattan GMAT book you will have a password for 6 CAT tests. Math is little harder than that in real test, but for studies it is perfect.
- GMATPowerPrep Software. This software has 2 test but do these 2 tests at least 6 times each because you will encounter more than 80% new questions.
- GMAT Cambridge, ARCO CAT test. Skip Math – it is very easy but the Verbal part is good.
- GMAT Club tests. Math is good and tough. I hate GMAT Club's verbal because I did not agree with a lot of official answers.
- GMATForum.ru – actually this site consists of my mistakes. I spend a lot of time to resolve them and to remember where I made a mistake. You can find the most difficult questions there.

Test taking

- Schedule your test when you are really sure of yourself.
- DO NOT do anything on the last two days! Free your mind and this will increase your sense on the test.
- Take water and something to eat (chocolate or bananas). This will help you in breaks.
- In AWA use Pericles' templates. I do not like to write a lot but if you use their structured drafts you will get a good score.
- Each question matters. The fact that the first 10 questions are the most necessary is a half truth-half false fact in my opinion. Try to solve correctly the first 10 and the last 10 questions

on GMATPowerPrep – you will receive bad score. Oppositely, each question matters.

- Although GMAT has a computer adaptive format and you expect more difficult questions when you answer correctly, sometimes GMAT gives you 200-level questions. I had such question in the middle of my test – I solved it 4 times and did not find the trap. Sometimes you can encounter very easy question.
- The issues of experimental question is not an issue in my opinion. I had one clearly experimental question on my first attempt (the graph was inconsistent with the question) but in further attempts I did not notice any experimental question. Thus, I conclude that experimental questions really can't easily be spotted and shouldn't be worried about.
- Work fast! I finished math 7 minutes before the end of the section, and this saved me some time to relax before verbal section.
- Do not focus only on Math, do not forget the Verbal part.
- Stay positive. You should love the test and it will pay you back.
- GMAT is not the most necessary thing in your life, there are a lot of good things beyond your GMAT.
- Do not lose your drive if you got low score. A result can be bad, but the experience is always positive and will help you for the next attempt. Instead of losing heart, try to understand your mistakes.

Work hard and you will get your result. If you do not know how to get correct answer – post your question on my forum: www.GMATForum.ru



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