Business Education Options: What Graduate Degree Should I Get?

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Business is one of the most popular fields of study among graduate students. In

2021-2022, for example, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that nearly one in four — 23 percent — of master's degree graduates received degrees in business.

However, business is a broad field of study with various graduate degree options. At the A. B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University, graduate offerings range from master's and doctoral degrees in business administration to specialized master degrees in areas such as accounting or finance. Students also can choose joint graduate degree programs that pair business with subjects such as law and medicine.

The business school students also might choose to pursue a master's degree in areas such as management or finance while studying abroad.

With all these options in advanced business education, a student considering this academic path may be wondering: What graduate degree should I get?

Why Pursue a Graduate Degree?

Pursuing further education beyond a bachelor's degree can offer various benefits. Earning a graduate degree in business, in particular, can yield positive outcomes.

While the motivations for pursuing a graduate degree in business range from gaining networking opportunities to making a community impact, below are some of the top reasons why pursuing this education make sense.

Job Opportunities

In a 2022 survey from the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), 74 percent of students with advanced degrees in business noted that the prospect of increased professional opportunities motivated them to pursue additional education in that field.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that people with master's or doctoral degrees were among the groups with the lowest unemployment rates in 2023. Both had unemployment that was below the national average of 3 percent, with master's degree and doctoral degree holders unemployed at rates of 2 and 1.6 percent, respectively.

As for business and financial occupations in general, the bureau projects faster-than-average job growth, or about 963,500 openings, between 2023 and 2033.
Salary Potential

The bureau’s data from 2023 showed that graduate-level degrees typically led to greater pay. The median weekly pay for master’s and doctoral degree recipients overall was $1,737 ($90,324 annually) and $2,109 ($109,668 annually), respectively. In comparison, the median weekly pay for all jobs was $1,170 ($60,840 annually).

Among graduates of advanced business degree programs, according to the council’s survey, 72 percent sought the training because of increased salary potential. Furthermore, Payscale reports that MBA graduates, for example, had a median annual salary of about $98,000 in October 2024. Those with doctoral degrees in business administration had a median annual pay of $101,000 in July 2023.

Professional Development

The opportunity to gain more business knowledge and skills was an important factor in choosing graduate business school for 71 percent of respondents in the council’s survey. Graduate business degrees can provide students with knowledge in areas such as marketing and operations and skills such as analysis and problem-solving.

The survey results show that employers value those skills. Recruiters across various business sectors noted that the prevalence of remote and hybrid work arrangements made the aptitudes associated with graduate business degrees more important than in the past.

Types of Graduate Degrees

If graduate degrees in general — and business graduate degrees in particular — can provide a host of benefits, which graduate degree should you get? Tulane’s business school offers a range of options that can set the stage for pursuing or advancing in various fields.

MBA

The MBA degree program provides advanced business education that emphasizes experiential learning about ethical practices in business and management. Depending on the format of instruction they select, students can pursue their MBA full-time, part-time, or online and choose from different areas of specialization within the MBA program. The degree can provide a foundation for careers in areas such as management, marketing, and finance.

MBA Program Focus

Students learn information and skills and gain real-world experience that can prepare them for the workplace of today — and tomorrow. The MBA program emphasizes subjects such as analytics, negotiations, and statistics while also allowing students to choose from the following areas of specialization:

- **Business Analytics**: Transforming large data sets into insights that guide decision-making
- **Finance**: Focusing on tools and processes, such as derivatives, fixed income analytics, and risk valuation
- **Marketing**: Leveraging data analytics, developing innovative products, and mastering digital marketing strategies and brand management to drive business growth
- **Strategy and Innovation**: Developing decision-making frameworks, implementing innovative technologies, and mastering talent management through hands-on experiences with local companies
- **Energy and Sustainability**: Crafting strategies that help businesses manage the effects of climate change, social inequities, and energy use

Specialized Programs

Tulane also offers master’s degrees in specialized areas of business. Its business school master’s programs focus on the subjects below.

Accounting

The accounting graduate program can prepare students to take the CPA exam. Students gain the knowledge and skills that can help them begin careers as CPAs or financial analysts. Among 2025 graduates of this Tulane degree program, 100 percent had full-time employment within four months.

Business Analytics and AI

Careers in business analytics focus on skills in utilizing data to gain insights that drive corporate strategies, and 100 percent of 2025 graduates from the business analytics program were employed full-time within three months. Through classroom and on-the-job experiences, students learn about strategic analysis and planning, risk management, and problem-solving.

Energy Management

A master's degree focused on energy management can equip students for a career in the energy industry, including the renewable energy sources sector and the skills needed to succeed today and into the future of energy. The energy management program emphasizes subjects and skills such as structure, valuation, financial modeling, and risk management. A total of 93 percent of 2025 graduates were employed full-time within six months.

Finance

The Master of Finance program can provide graduates with career opportunities, such as predicting market performance and educating clients about ethical investing. The finance program provides in-class and real-world experience that can prepare students to take the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) exam and gain Bloomberg certification, a valuable credential in the financial industry. Of the 2025 class, 100 percent of students were employed full-time within six months.

Joint Degrees

For students interested in multiple fields and wondering which graduate degree they should get, a joint degree program could be the right fit.

The Freeman School of Business at Tulane has master's programs that allow students to earn degrees in both business administration and another subject area. By combining these areas of concentration, students can add valuable business insights to their expertise in areas ranging from law to medicine. The following joint degree programs are available:

- **MBA/JD**: Focuses on business, legal, and ethical issues to help students hone their skills in leadership and negotiation
- **MBA/Master of Health Administration**: Blends finance and management education with coursework in analytics and quality improvement to prepare graduates for careers in healthcare administration
- **MBA/Doctor of Medicine**: Aims to help students learn about navigating the healthcare industry as they prepare for a career in medicine

PhD in Business Administration

A PhD in Business Administration can prepare students for research and teaching roles. This program provides instruction as well as mentorship experiences.

International Programs

The council's survey reported that 38 percent of those who earned graduate business degrees did so to increase international employment opportunities. Tulane's students can pursue the following business graduate degrees at partner schools outside the United States:

- Master of Management
- Master of Finance
- Master of Management in Energy
- Executive MBA, which features a global strategy concentration

Benefits of Getting a Graduate Degree at Tulane

Getting a graduate degree in business from Tulane can be a smart choice. After all, in 2024 Forbes named New Orleans, Louisiana, where the school is based, as the best place for college students and graduates. Publications have praised the city for its:

- Work-life balance
- Food options
- Walkability
- Transit

Tulane is a top performer in rankings from publications and organizations including the Association of American Universities, The Princeton Review, and U.S. News & World Report.

Tulane's business school also has received various honors. For example, in U.S. News & World Report's list of best business schools for 2024-2025, the school jumped 19 spots from its previous ranking. Fortune Education ranked the business school's MBA program among the 57 best for 2025.

Find the Best Graduate Degree for You: Explore Tulane

If you are interested in learning more about graduate business degrees, discover the graduate business programs at Tulane's business school. With offerings in various business specializations and class formats — such as full-time, in-person, part-time, and online— the program has options to fit nearly any career focus or scheduling needs.

Whether you conduct research about the programs online or visit an upcoming admissions event, explore how the Freeman School of Business can help you reach your professional goals.

Sources:

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