MBA Accreditation Types and Benefits

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Earning a Master of Business Administration (MBA) can help professionals expand their business expertise and pursue new career opportunities. These advantages help explain why employers and alumni continue to value an MBA.

According to the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) 2026 Corporate Recruiters Survey, 100 percent of employers expressed confidence that graduate management education prepares students to succeed professionally. GMAC's 2022 report, The Value of Graduate Management Education: From the Candidate's Perspective, also found that 85 percent of alumni believed a master's-level business education produced a positive return on investment.

When exploring MBA program options, prospective students often compare factors such as formats, concentrations, program duration, and cost. Accreditation status is another important consideration because it can provide insight into a program's academic quality and may affect future employment opportunities.

Understanding the different types of MBA accreditation can help students evaluate their options and determine whether a program aligns with their career goals. Before enrolling, prospective MBA students should research a program's accreditation status and understand what it represents.

What Is MBA Accreditation?

MBA accreditation is a quality assurance process used to determine whether a business school or an MBA program meets certain educational standards. Accrediting organizations may review factors such as curriculum, faculty qualifications, student achievement, and career outcomes.

Accreditation is not permanent; schools and programs must undergo periodic reviews — with timelines varying by accrediting organization — to demonstrate that they continue to meet established standards.

There are two main levels of MBA accreditation that prospective students may come across. **Institutional accreditation** applies to a college or university as a whole. This type of accreditation evaluates the broader institution and, notably, plays a role in determining whether it is eligible to participate in federal financial aid programs.

Programmatic accreditation, by contrast, applies to a specific school, department, or academic program. In the case of an MBA, a programmatic accreditor evaluates the business school or its programs according to standards specific to business education. A university can therefore hold institutional accreditation while its business school holds separate programmatic accreditation.

Types of MBA Accreditation

Several organizations accredit business schools and MBA programs. Although their standards and review processes differ, each evaluates whether programs meet established requirements for educational quality and outcomes. The most widely recognized types of MBA accreditation include the following:

- **Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business:** AACSB is the oldest accreditation organization for business and accounting programs. Its review process considers areas such as teaching quality, curriculum development, research, and student performance.

- **Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs:** ACBSP is an international nonprofit that accredits business programs worldwide, with more than 1,000 member campuses across the globe. Among its core values, ACBSP emphasizes the importance of equipping students with a global perspective.
- **International Accreditation Council for Business Education:** The IACBE accredits business and accounting programs at multiple degree levels, from the associate to the doctoral level. Its standards emphasize teaching processes and educational outcomes.

Why MBA Accreditation Is Important

Accreditation indicates that an MBA program has undergone a rigorous external review and meets defined standards for educational quality and student success. Accrediting organizations evaluate programs based on criteria such as curriculum, faculty expertise, graduation rates, and career outcomes. Because schools must undergo periodic reviews to maintain accreditation, the designation also reflects an ongoing commitment to excellence.

Below are some of the key benefits of accreditation for prospective students.

Assurance of Quality Education

An accredited MBA program has demonstrated that its curriculum and faculty meet the accrediting organization’s requirements. As a result, accreditation can give students greater confidence that a program offers a high-quality business education designed to prepare them for professional success.

Improves Job Prospects

Accredited business programs often have stronger reputations among employers than nonaccredited programs. Earning an MBA from an accredited school signals that a graduate completed a program that met recognized educational standards. It may also indicate that the graduate is well prepared to perform in real-world business environments, helping them stand out in a competitive job market. Some employers may also require employees to attend an accredited program to qualify for tuition reimbursement.

Educational Advancement and Transferability

Accreditation can also affect a student's future academic options. Credits earned through an accredited program may be more likely to transfer if a student changes schools, although transfer policies vary by institution.

Additionally, graduating from an accredited MBA program can affect a student's ability to pursue further education. Some doctoral-level programs may prefer or require applicants to hold a degree from an accredited institution or program.

Tulane's MBA Accreditation

Among the different kinds of MBA accreditation, AACSB accreditation is one of the most widely recognized and respected in business education. The A. B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University holds AACSB accreditation, which was renewed for another five years in 2024.

During the business school's most recent review, AACSB evaluated areas such as curriculum, faculty research, strategic planning, and experiential learning, with an emphasis on continuous improvement. AACSB's review team, consisting of deans from peer institutions, praised the business school's efforts to provide business students with valuable hands-on learning opportunities. It identified the Aaron Selber Jr. Courses in Alternative Investments (distressed debt and hedge funds), the Lepage Center Student Venture Incubator, and the Schwartz Family Center for Experiential Business Learning as notable best practices.

The business school belongs to a select group of business schools: Only 6 percent of institutions offering business degrees worldwide hold AACSB accreditation. Tulane is also one of AACSB's 17 original founding members.

Separately, Tulane holds institutional accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), which applies to the university as a whole.

Make an Informed Decision on Your MBA

Understanding the different types of MBA accreditation can help prospective students make more informed choices and select a program that supports their personal and professional goals.

The business school offers nine MBA program options, including full- and part-time programs, hybrid and online formats, and an accelerated bachelor's-to-MBA pathway. For students who want to focus on a particular business sector, it also offers multiple joint degree programs, such as our MBA/Master of Healthcare Administration (MHA) and MBA/Master of Management in Energy (MME).

Learn how Tulane's business school can help you take the next step in your career.

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