Online MBA Question

Posted by chrismcdowell - 2011/06/10 14:34

I am currently considering an MBA from one of the following schools: Argosy, Ashford, Jones International, and Northcentral. If money was not a consideration, which of these schools would be rated as the best(academically, public perception, support for students, etc)? Any info/advice you can share would be appreciated, as I'm having difficulty deciding.

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Re:Online MBA Question

Posted by MissShona - 2011/06/11 09:26

Hello Chris!

Well none of these particular MBA programs are AACSB accredited; although Ashford's MBA program is accredited by the IACBE; which also accredits the MBA programs at schools like Florida Institute of Technology and Seton Hill University.

I noticed that all of the schools that you listed follow the proprietary (for-profit) educational model. Personally, I do not consider for-profit colleges inferior by default. However the opinions of these degrees have a wide variance; with the majority seeming to lean to the 'negative' side. Also I find it difficult to get an unbiased assessment of these programs because they do give so much attention to slick marketing efforts.

Getting back to your situation, is there a particular reason why you are looking at this particular pool of schools (i.e., you've already been accepted into the programs)? The reasons for pursuing an MBA are endless. I it good to consider these programs for convenience and specializations; especially if you are looking to add an MBA to your current professional portfolio instead of trying to make a career change or reposition yourself for new opportunities. I say this because of the issue of public perception first and foremost (and it was a point that you mentioned).

If you want to share more information regarding your school selection and your long-term professional goals, that would be helpful. For example, are you looking for programs that don't require the GMAT? Or programs where you can specialize in Human Resources? Etc., etc.

But based on what you shared so far, I would narrow the choices to Ashford and Argosy. Ashford, because of the IACBE accreditation; and Argosy because I know of professors at my university (Florida Gulf Coast University) who earned their PhD degrees from Argosy (although not in business). Since they have been hired by a public state university as full-time professors, Argosy probably has a pretty good reputation among the academic community at least.

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Re:Online MBA Question

Posted by VickyPhillips - 2011/06/12 11:29

Which online mba?

Great question -- also very popular question because there are so many choices today for a distance learning MBA.

You present a short-list of 4 distance MBA schools:

Argosy Online MBA

Jones International University Distance MBA

Northcentral University Online MBA

Ashford University Online MBA

For-Profit Online University?

All 4 of your choices operate as for-profit schools. One of the things about attending a for profit online university is that some are currently embroiled in scandals and whistle blower law suits. Many are being held to task for poor grad rates and high student cost and indebtedness.

I think it will take another decade for some of these suits to be resolved and the truth to emerge. Until the dust settles you can't be sure how the public -- and therefore employers -- will look at these online business schools in the long run.

Like Ms Shona, I am not against for profit online education on principle but the issue I would weigh today if I were looking at a newer for-profit virtual colleges is if their reputations will hold up, and then what those reputations ultimately will be 10 or 20 years from now.

Newer Internet only schools risk , as a class, lower public perception ratings and employer acceptance than older established residential colleges that offer online degrees. Employers just don't know enough about these new schools.

SEE: Do Employers Accept Online Degrees

Online MBA Accreditation?

All 4 of your chosen online universities hold regional accreditation, so there is no difference when we compare online MBAs on the issue of class of accreditation and issues related to degree acceptance and transfer.

SEE: Distance Learning and college accreditation for background.

Ms. Shona points out that none of these schools have AACSB accreditation, a dimension which often comes into play when people compare online MBAs, so they are all 4 equal on this dimension

SEE: Online MBA: Do I Need AACSB Accreditation?

I am going to assume you are settled that AACSB or other b-school accreditation is not essential either bcs of the greater cost or the need to take admission exams like the GRE GMAT.

Ms. Shona also mentions that only 1 of these schools has business school accreditation. You will want

to consider how important that issue is to you related to your career and employment plans.

Time Online and Reputation

All these schools are for-profit universities, none of which have a legacy residential campus. (Ashford is somewhat different but we'll discuss this soon!)

The two online MBAs which have operated the longest are Argosy U and Jones IU.
People in academia know these names more readily becaus of this but I am not sure that employers or the public know these names as well.
The two who are new comers are Ashford and Northcentral University

Get Educated has very few student reviews of any of these 4 online business schools so there is not enough data on the Get Educated site to argue that one is better than another among the 4 based on current verified online students reviews or public perception reviews from employers and others.

(Please, other readers and online students chime in if you attended these MBA programs are have opinions on these 4 online business schools!)

There are, however, some very public debates going on about the use of student financial aid, graduation rates, and admission practices at 3 of these 4 schools. I'd check these debates for clues on public perception issue at this time for each school.

Since you are concerned about the reputation of your MBA school -- as you should be since this reputation will follow you when you apply for jobs and so on -- then I think these public debates should be considered in choosing among these 4 online MBA programs.

I would weigh the current public debates on business practices at each of these 4 university systems if this were my personal choice.

Here is some background on these debates:

1) Ashford University Online, owned by Bridgepoint Education -- This is an example of an established failing residential college -- The Franciscan University of the Prairie -- which was bought by investors and turned into an online degree college with a new name. The regional accreditation of the old residential campus followed the school online but the vast majority of the students are online and in career areas such as the MBA. This online college has been at the center of a great deal of debate in Congress on for-profit education and the need for tighter regulations on student aid, student indebtedness and accreditation. I encourage you to read some of the public debate on this school as others have been looking at this college closely. Read the chain of articles on the Post below and Google this school to see what you think.

SEE Huffington Post - Senate Panel Probes Massive Growth At Tiny Iowa College

2) Argosy University: Is owned by EDMC, a publicly traded company, and this company has made the news several times for consumer complaints and lawsuits related to deceptive student enrollment and marketing. EDMC operates a lot of different trade and technical schools, some with campuses, and some online. You'll have to wade through the public press and keep in mind that this company owns a lot of schools and many of their issues are isolated to one or another of their many colleges and training institutes.

Argosy University was one of the colleges named in the US Government secret shopper investigation in Aug, 2010 on unscrupulous business practices. This investigation set off a national chain of debates and law suits about for profit colleges in general and online colleges in particular.

SEE:
For-Profit Online Colleges Named in Government Fraud

The findings were not, however, about the business school so you'll need to weigh this.

3) Northcentral University Online -- Northcentral is another Internet-only college operated by private capital. They, like many for profits, have had issues with student financial aid. You can search Google for more on this school and its public reputation right now.

3) Jones International University MBA
JIU was actually the first Internet only college in the USA to win regional accreditation. I do not know of any law suits or federal financial aid scandals involving this college. The news on JIU has been very quiet and this school's origins go back to pre-Internet days when an educational visionary named Glenn Jones took out a loan on his Volkswagon and started an educational cable TV company named Mind Extension University. The school was a non-profit in the beginning and originally used cable TV as the distance learning delivery mechanism. Maybe no news is good news these days when it comes to the public reputation of online colleges ...

I hope more people will chime in with their experiences on these 4 distance MBA degree programs. They may be able to give you insider data I don't have and thus help in your decisions.

Right now there are more similarities than differences among these 4 schools. My opinion -- and it is just that, the opinion of one person -- is that of the 4 schools Jones International University seems to have the cleanest public perception and reputation.

But you have to decide if that factor matters to you, and then how much that factor matters to you.

I might consider JIU a contender if long term public perception were foremost in my mind and I was working your short-list for the best online MBA program. On the other hand, JIU costs considerably more than the other 3 schools -- but you did say "cost aside."

One more issue -- did you want a particular major or emphasis in your online MBA?
These 4 schools have different majors and you did not mention if you wanted to enter or advance in a particular career area. If so, look at the available majors to see who best "fits" your career intentions.

I hope this helped give you some ideas on comparing these online business schools. Please help others by leaving a review of these online business schools yourself and passing onto to others what your final opinion was of each school.

If you enroll in one of these online business schools let us know!

Go, Get Educated!
Vicky Phillips
Founder GetEducated.com

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Re:Online MBA Question
Posted by chrismcdowell - 2011/06/12 12:49

Just to clarify, one of the reasons I selected these schools is the fact they do not require the GMAT or GRE. Also, with the exception of Northcentral, the length of the classes was attractive (6 weeks to 8 weeks). Also, none of these schools will charge any application fee for me (active duty military). I plan to earn the MBA for personal satisfaction, and the fact that it never hurts to have this on a resume'. I would probably prefer a not for profit institution, but with the factors listed above, I found very few that seemed like a good fit for me. Any suggestions or advice would be appreciated. I have spent countless hours researching this, and am hoping to make a decision soon. Thanks!

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Re:Online MBA Question
Posted by MissShona - 2011/06/13 13:34

Oh ok; did you see this article on GetEducated.com? It does list some options. Perhaps they would be willing to waive the application fee as well.

My biggest issue with the GMAT was the cost. It was required to take it in order to get into my program. I don't really have any dislike towards standardized tests; but $250 for a 4-hour test is very off-putting. But I encourage people to not fear the test. I personally did very little to prepare, and I was actually feeling quite under the weather when I took the exam...and my score was a 560. With some study and preparation, I could have easily earned something in the 600-640 range. I tell everyone that the GMAT is simply an admissions tool...keep it in perspective. The way to look at it properly is a tool to help you get admitted to a program; not THE key to getting in. But I apologize...I digress. Discussion about the GMAT should really be in it's own thread!

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Re:Online MBA Question
Posted by VickyPhillips - 2011/06/15 20:19

Hi Chris,

Thanks for the clarifications.

I am not sure that you know that you can use the Get Educated online MBA directory to see only those online MBA programs that come from non-profit schools.

To do this, go to the home page and search for BY LEVEL> online MBA
You will see 383 MBA degrees returned.

Now, use the FILTERS on the LEFT of your search results and under SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS select NON-profit.

You will now see a list of only non-profit colleges that offer online MBAs.

You will see 304 options. There are actually many more non-profit colleges that offer MBAS than for-profits.

Many of non-profit schools do REQUIRE a GRE or GMAT bcs as a rule most state schools or public univeersities use these entrance exams.

HOWEVER, as we go down this list we begin to hit non-profits that are reasonable in cost that do NOT require the GRE or GMAT. The first such graduate business school is Baker College Online Graduate School of Business

Baker also has accelerated classes, which you like.

Going down the list you might also consider:

Amberton University
Bellevue University
Upper Iowa University
and so on .....

FYI we have some special lists of MBAs that don't require the GRE or GMAT on our site:

SEE These Lists:

Regionally Accredited Distance MBA NO GRE GMAT List

AACSB Distance MBA List NO GRE GMAT

Nationally Accredited MBA List No GRE GMAT

Now, I can't say which may or may not charge you an app fee as military; but the good news is that some offer tuition discounts for military. Just check the tuition and fees section of each degree profile as there is a special field for military tuition on some. In wouldn't consider the app fee a deal breaker as that is usually not very expensive.

Maybe you already have used the MBA directory to see only non-profit colleges but if not you may want to see how many choices you have and cross check this with the NO GRE lists to see if you've considered all the possibilities.

Also, you can use the MBA directory FILTERS to see only those MBAs that offer short courses or accelerated 6-8 weeks, which you like. Use the DEGREE CHARACTERISTICS filter and set it to "Accelerated Degree" to see those options.

Be Well!
Vicky

chrismcdowell wrote:
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Re:Online MBA Question

Posted by VickyPhillips - 2011/06/15 20:22

Good point. Miss Shona, about Argosy. I agree -- Argosy was one of the first regionally accredited universities to offer distance learning doctorates in education so academics, in my experience, are aware of this college at the PhD level.

Vicky

MissShona wrote:
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Re:Online MBA Question

Posted by katesolomon - 2011/11/04 03:25

Hello,

Can somebody please tell me how to identify a diploma mill?

Thanks,

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Re:Online MBA Question

Posted by dhandlos - 2011/11/05 15:10

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Kate,

Are you looking at a specific school, or are you interested in learning how to identify diploma mills in general?

If you have a specific school in mind, The "Diploma Mill Police" here at GetEducated.com (http://www.geteducated.com/diploma-mill-police) can be a big help in getting to the bottom of things.

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Re:Online MBA Question

Posted by katesolomon - 2011/11/07 01:19

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Hi,

Thanks for your help. Actually I am planning to take admission into mba programs but i am unable to decide what to choose an online course or a regular course. These diploma mill ideas may help me to choose a college wisely.

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Re:Online MBA Question

Posted by preetisoft2 - 2012/08/06 05:22

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Good Question-
there are lot of universities which are offering distance education.
some of good universities are-
1. SCDL
2. SMU
3. PTU
4. CSU

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Re:Online MBA Question
Posted by VickyPhillips - 2012/08/06 20:31

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Hi Preetisoft,

Can you tell us what the names of the colleges are that you gave abbreviations for and why you think these are good schools for a MBA?

Vicky

preetisoft2 wrote:
Good Question-
there are lot of universities which are offering distance education.
some of good universities are-
1. SCDL
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Re:Online MBA Question
Posted by jbrynsvold - 2012/11/14 12:29

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It might be too late for the original poster to get any benefit from what I am about to say, but if anyone is searching this forum with the same question, I hope I can help.

For-profit schools are the ones that are usually seen as "diploma mills." They will accept anyone and aren't backed by a traditional college, but instead were created just for online students. I would look more towards colleges with good reputations and a lot of history that offer online programs.

As for your concern of not wanting to take the GMAT, there are traditional, accredited colleges with online MBA's that don't require a GMAT for admission. (SEE MBA Online with no GRE http://www.geteducated.com/expert-advice/online-mbas/91-are-there-good-online-mba-programs-that-dont-require-gmat-or-gre/)

I don't want to scare you, but degrees received from the University of Phoenix or similar for-profit colleges aren't as highly esteemed as those earned from accredited universities. If your main goal is to advance in the business world or enter at a high position, you should really strive for the best education you can get and the degree that will produce respect for you within the industry.

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