



Evaluating MBA Program Foundation Courses



MBA PROGRAM

Dr. Elizabeth Reger

Dr. Jeff Jones

May 15, 2025



Assessment Question

- To what extent are the content and delivery methods of the MSU MBA Foundation Courses competitive in comparison to those offered by other institutions?
- **Workshop Objective:** To collect and evaluate data regarding MBA Foundation Courses for Peer/Competitive/Aspirant programs, compare to MSU MBA program, and offer recommendations to the faculty for possible curricular revisions.



Some Background

- MBA Program Overview
- Current MSU MBA Foundation Courses
- MSU MBA Historical Enrollment
- General MBA Market Trends



MBA Program Overview

- Program is 34 hours (excluding any needed Foundation Courses)
 - Core Requirements (22 hours)
 - International Requirement (3 hours)
 - Seminar Requirement (3 hours)
 - Electives (6 hours)
 - Graduate certificates can often be completed inclusively within the program
- Regular and STEM options

Current MSU MBA Foundation Courses

Foundation Courses (3 Credit hours each)		Description	Prerequisite for:
ACC 600	Accounting Concepts for Managers	Comprehensive study of the fundamentals of financial and managerial accounting	ACC 711 (C or better); FIN 600
ECO 600	Fundamentals of Economics	An accelerated course dealing with the fundamentals of micro- and macroeconomic theory	FIN 600
FIN 600	Managerial Finance	Comprehensive study of the finance function in the business enterprise, including financial analysis-planning-forecasting, capital budgeting, leasing, working capital management, capital structure, dividend policy, and multinational finance	FIN 780 (B- or better)
MGT 600	Administrative, Organizational and Operations Concepts for Managers	Comprehensive study of the fundamentals of the management function, organizational behavior and design, and production and operations management	MGT 764
QBA 600	Statistical Methods in Business Research	Comprehensive study of the fundamentals of statistics	QBA 775
LAW 600	Legal Environment for Business Managers	This course explores key legal and ethical issues in business, including liability, contracts, employment laws, regulatory compliance, and environmental responsibility. It also examines agency and fiduciary duties, property rights, and dispute resolution within the legal system	N/A



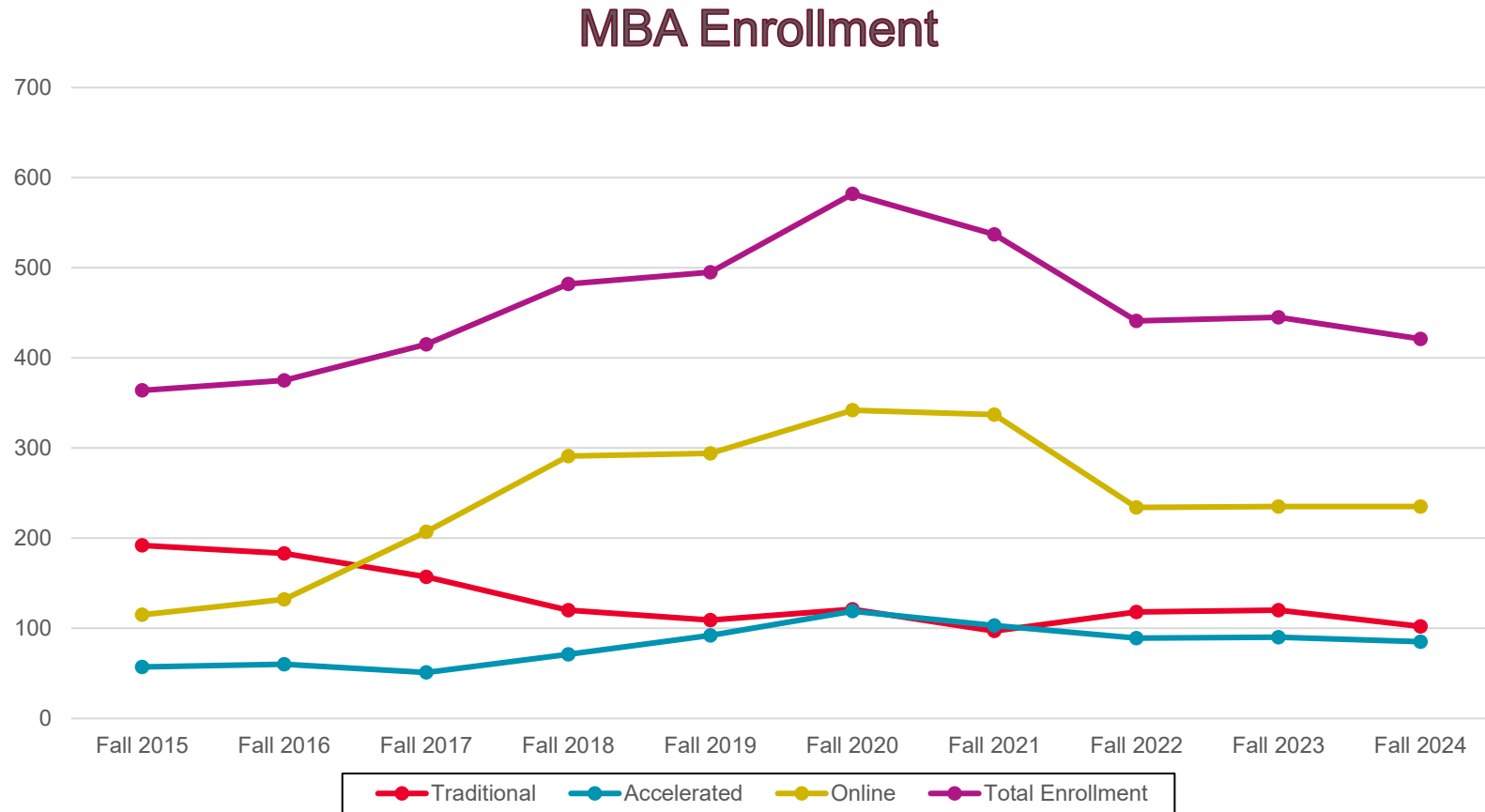
Current MSU MBA Foundation Courses

ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF SATISFYING

- Student has a **business-related undergraduate degree or completed a course (undergraduate or graduate) in a similar subject matter** that covers foundational topics
- Student has relevant **professional experience** that qualifies them to be waived

MSU MBA Historical Enrollment

10-YEAR REVIEW





MBA Market Trends

- **Demand for Flexibility:** Preference for hybrid learning has increased globally over the past five years (with the exception of Central and South Asia).
 - The ***one-year MBA*** overtakes the *two-year MBA* as being the most preferred program type
- Demand for MBA programs is rebounding strongly due to economic uncertainty
 - Growth in seated programs was concentrated among a smaller share of programs
- MBA programs with ***flexible formats*** reported a rise in applications



MBA Market Trends

DIFFERENTIATION & COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

- Differentiating between middle-tier MBA programs is difficult
 - *Ongoing price war*
 - *Crowded market*
 - *Increased the number of competitors*
 - **The number of accredited U.S. schools with fully online MBA programs increased from 284 to 526 between the 2016–17 and 2020–21 academic years (+85%)**
 - **Between 2019 and 2024, the number of one-year M.B.A. programs in the United States, Canada and Latin America accredited by AACSB increased from 131 to 210 (+60%)**



MBA Market Trends

- General strategies for MBA programs like MSU:
 - Go online
 - *Increase flexibility*
 - *Reduce admission requirements*
 - *Reduce time-to-credential*
 - Increase tuition discounts
 - *Reduce the number of required credits*



Why Examine Foundation Courses?

- From the perspective of MBA Market Trends, the following are increasingly important:
 - Reducing time to completion
 - Reduce cost/number of credits
 - Increasing flexibility of completion options
- Currently, MSU MBA Foundation Courses are offered as “regular” courses in both seated and online modalities
- **Assessment Question:** *To what extent are the content and delivery methods of the MSU MBA Foundation Courses competitive in comparison to those offered by other institutions?*

Foundation Courses

DISCIPLINES/CONTENT

Disciplines				Peers								Competitive							Aspirant										
		●																					Total						
		Missouri State University	Kennesaw State University	Georgia Southern University	Middle Tennessee State University	University of Northern Iowa	George Mason University	Illinois State University	Indiana State University	Wichita State University	University of Arkansas	University of Missouri	University of Missouri-Kansas City	St. Louis University	University of Missouri - St. Louis	Drury University	Pittsburg State University	Rockhurst University	Auburn University	Kent State University	Miami Univeristy	Iowa State University	James Madison University	University of Nevada, Las Vegas	Kansas State University				
Accounting		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	No Foundation	X	X		X	X	X	No Foundation	X	No Foundation	X	X	No Foundation		18			
Economics		X		X					X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X			14
Finance		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X			X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X		16
Statistics		X	X	X	X		X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X				X			X	X	X	X	15
Management		X						X					X	X	X	X	X	X								X		X	8
Business Law		X						X							X														3
IT/Spreadsheets				X							X					X						X	X			X	X	X	6
Marketing								X	X				X			X		X		X						X			6

- Most prevalent disciplines are quantitative in nature and related to Accounting, Finance, Statistics, and Economics.



Foundation Courses

DELIVERY METHODS

1. Traditional Courses (Institution Provided)

- **Foundation Courses tied into curriculum**
 - 3 Credit Hours
 - 8 or 16 weeks

2. Self-paced Online Modules (Institution Provided)

- Self-paced
- Smaller credit hours (0.5 to 1.0)

3. Bootcamps (Institution Provided)

- Typically offered during **summer semesters** before term starts
- Usually accounting, finance, and statistics courses covered

4. Third-Party Courses/Modules

- Student pays up front for courses and can be completed in 1-2 days
- **100% online**
- Courses must be taken after being admitted and before term starts
- **MBA Math**
 - Courses specifically associated with MBA prerequisites
- **Coursera**
 - More generalized business concepts

Foundation Courses

DELIVERY METHODS

Method			●	Missouri State University	Peers					Competitive						Aspirant					Total					
					Kennesaw State University	Georgia Southern University	Middle Tennessee State University	University of Northern Iowa	George Mason University	Illinois State University	Indiana State University	Wichita State University	University of Arkansas	University of Missouri	University of Missouri-Kansas City	St. Louis University	University of Missouri - St. Louis	Drury University	Pittsburg State University	Rockhurst University		Auburn University	Kent State University	Miami University	Iowa State University	James Madison University
Traditional		X	X	X			X	X	X	X		No Foundation	X	X			X		No Foundation						X	10
	Self-Paced Modules							X									X		X		X				4	
	Bootcamps									X				X	X										3	
	Third-Party Modules		X	X	X														No Foundation		No Foundation	X	No Foundation		4	

- Institutions most commonly offer foundation courses through their own curriculum



Conclusions

FOUNDATION COURSE ANALYSIS

1. **Discipline/Content:** Foundation Courses are most prevalently offered in disciplines that are more quantitative in nature.
2. **Delivery Method:** A majority of universities still provide Foundation Courses as “regular” courses, but some are utilizing self-paced and 3rd party options.
3. Aspirant schools are most likely to not require Foundation Courses, but entry requirements (test scores, work experience) may be much higher.



Follow-up Plans and Next Steps

- Discuss findings of this analysis with the MBA Policy and Curriculum Committee in Fall 2025.
- From that discussion, determine if curricular changes should be pursued.