

Students are Looking for the Perfect Program to Meet Their Schedules

When students are choosing a school, some of the top factors in their decision making are related to programs, tuition and financial aid, school location, and particularly class schedules. For example, if a student is employed full-time, but would like to pursue an MBA, they will tend to seek out schools that offer part-time or distance education programs. A student who is able to focus solely on their schooling may want a full-time program to help them obtain their degree more quickly. If a program does not fit their schedule, students will often abandon exploring its full attributes.

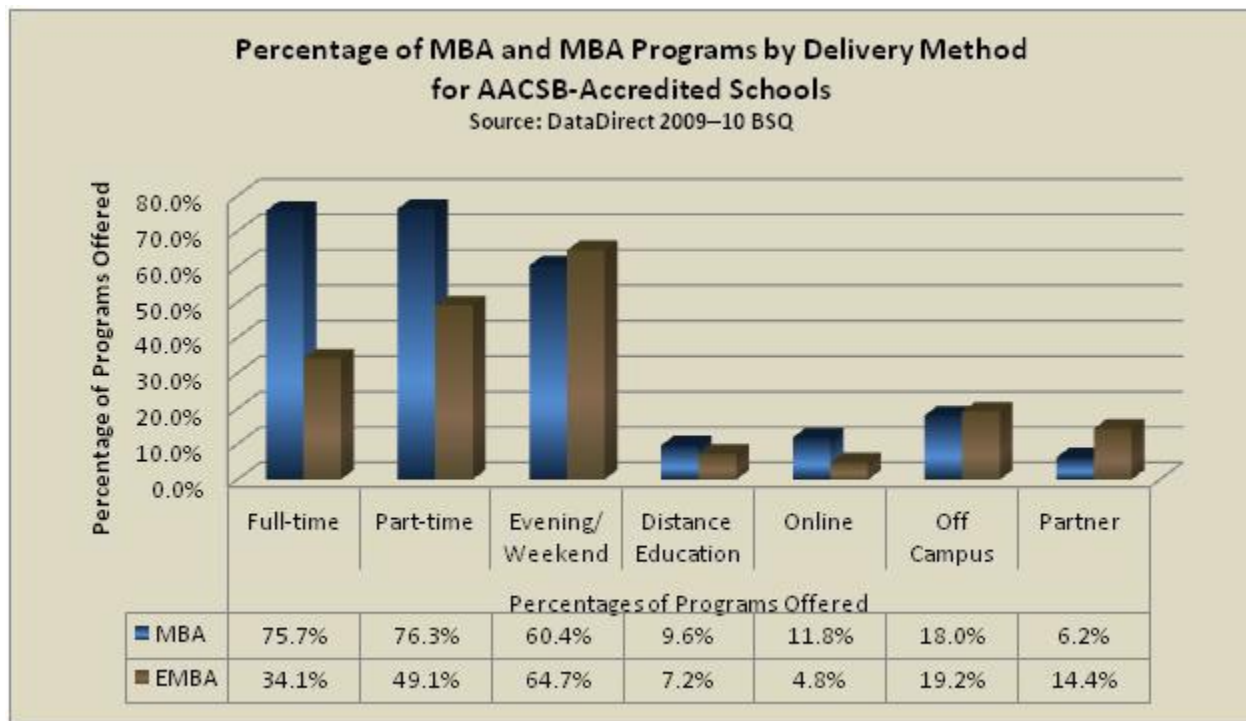
Here are a few of the most common questions regarding program schedules that AACSB International is asked by students and others:

- How are business schools delivering programs to their students?
- Do AACSB-accredited schools offer online programs?
- Can you explain the differences between part-time, online, and distance education?

It can be difficult for schools to find the perfect balance between their faculty and curricula scheduling and the students' requests. However, most business schools work diligently to find ways to offer the best possible education for their students—and typically these types of schools are very successful in attracting and retaining students.

AACSB International collects data annually that asks participating schools to provide all of the programs they have available, as well as which delivery methods are offered for those programs. Of the MBA programs reporting, the most commonly offered delivery methods are full-time (76%) and part-time (76%). This differs from the EMBA programs where the two largest formats are part-time (49%) and evening/weekend (65%). With respects to distance education offerings, 10% and 12% of the schools reported a distance or online MBA program, respectively. EMBA programs offered less of these types with 7% providing distance education and 5% providing online education. As schools continue to diversify their offerings, it is expected that the delivery methods may change based on the needs of students and administrators.

Figure 1.¹



The chart above shows the percentage of MBA and EMBA programs offered by delivery method. Each program can be provided in multiple ways. Therefore, under the MBA full-time the 75.7% would be read as “75.7% of the MBA programs reported by this set of schools were available on a full-time basis.” In order for a school to qualify to report a program as available through a specific delivery method, that program must be offered wholly or substantially in that methodology. For example, programs should only be listed as online if those programs can be completed almost totally online.

In conclusion, the data shows that the majority of business schools are adapting their programs to their students’ needs—something that is necessary for programs to be proactive in the marketplace.

¹ Percent as compared to total number of programs reported in each category (MBA=676, EMBA=167). Percents will not equal 100 due to programs appearing in more than one category. A degree program may be included in more than one category only if it is available through multiple delivery methods. Data includes only programs listed with the degree titles MBA or EMBA and does not include joint programs or other master’s generalist data that might be considered MBA equivalent.