Academics

Flexible scheduling, an affordable degree, and a “focus on leadership and soft-skill development” earn the praises of MBA students at Elon, a premier regional university in North Carolina’s Triad region. Nearly all the part-timers here work full-time in addition to fulfilling their academic responsibilities, so students understandably demand convenience in their program. Elon delivers, scheduling all classes once a week in the evenings (6 p.m. to 8:50 p.m., Monday through Thursday) during the spring and fall semesters, classes during the accelerated January and summer terms meet twice a week. Since the school doesn’t have lock-step sequencing, “students can choose the courses they feel fit with their current schedules and time tables.” As a result, many finish the program in as brief a period as 21 months—on average, students take approximately two years to complete the program.

Elon MBAs can also earn their degrees without putting a significant dent in their bank accounts. One student explains, “What binds most students is the desire to have a strong, valued-added education at a reasonable expense.” Many here feel that “the marginal benefits received at schools with higher tuitions aren’t worth the extra costs.” For the 2004–2005 academic year, courses cost $1,113 each, and students were able to complete their degrees for just under $15,000.

MBAs here praise the “alternative teaching styles and small class sizes.” The curriculum “stresses community and teamwork. We do many projects together. The school does not curve the grades in a way such that a portion of the class makes an F; therefore, we all try to work together and not fight for the top position.” True to its historic connection to the United Church of Christ, “Elon is as much concerned with producing ethical, trustworthy, and successful leaders as it is with developing students’ academic performance.” Professors here “are very accessible and actively engage students to improve both the learning experience and the program overall. There is a tremendous opportunity to tailor class projects to individual interests, which enhances the level of enthusiasm and discussion.”

Career and Placement

Career placement services are provided by Elon’s Career Development Office, which serves all students in the university. Services offered specifically for MBAs include a battery of self-assessment tools, faculty advising, and seminars with area business leaders. (Through the Legends of Business program, students have met with and learned from Knight Kiplinger, editor-in-chief of the Kiplinger Letter; J. Richard Munro, Former Chairman and CEO of Time Warner; and Edward N. Ney, former ambassador to Canada and former Chairman, President and CEO of Young and Rubicam, Inc.) The Love School Board of Advisors meets regularly to work with the administration and faculty to ensure that the program is relevant to the needs of organizations.

Elon MBAs work for some of the area’s top employers, including AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of North Carolina, Cisco Systems, Duke Energy, GE Capital, GlaxoSmithKline, IBM, LabCorp, Lucent Technologies, Procter & Gamble, UNC Hospitals, Wachovia, and Wake Med.
Student Life and Environment

While students do “study together and occasionally socialize outside of class, most of [them] are older, working, and have active lives apart from the school.” Because “the school draws from a large geographic area, it’s somewhat hard to mingle with classmates outside of class.” Despite the lack of a “life at school,” Elon students sing the praises of their classmates, whom they regard as “an extended family. Students accept each other for who they are and are more than willing to help each other grow and develop in the program.” One MBA notes, “I've worked in groups with many strong opinions stemming from a depth of experience and awareness of current events and trends. Many personalities lean towards leadership, and there is a good diversity in both culture and professional background.” The student body spans “a wide range of ages, with experienced students helping to educate the less experienced, and the less experienced often assisting the older ones with new perspectives.”

Facilities at Elon are undergoing a major upgrade with construction on the Ernest A. Koury Sr. Business Center. The facility, which will house both the undergraduate and graduate business programs, will include the Reed Finance Center, computer and research labs, a digital theater, and a variety of classroom designs to suit Elon’s nationally recognized style of engaged learning.

Elon’s central North Carolina location makes it well situated to serve the Triad region, which includes the Greensboro, High Point, and the Winston–Salem metropolitan areas. As a destination, Elon is notable mostly for its proximity to fine dining in Durham, Chapel Hill, and Greensboro; great barbecue in Lexington; the state’s best zoo in Asheboro; and some of the finest golf courses in the nation.

Admissions

The Elon MBA requires a minimum of two years professional experience for all applicants. A completed application must include three letters of recommendation (two from work supervisors), official transcripts from all post-secondary schools attended, and GMAT scores. Students whose native language is not English must also submit TOEFL scores (minimum 550 written, 213 computer). Applicants must exceed a score of 1000 under the formula [(undergraduate GPA × 200) + GMAT score], and must also have a minimum GMAT score of 470. Undergraduate classes in financial accounting, management, microeconomics, and statistics are required foundational courses in the MBA program. Students may begin in August or January; applications are assessed on a rolling basis.

Employment Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Rating</th>
<th>60*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of companies recruiting on-campus</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% grads employed immediately</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grads employed by field:
- Accounting: 8
- Finance: 10
- Human Resources: 5
- Marketing: 17
- MIS: 12
- Operations: 22
- Consulting: 3
- Entrepreneurship: 3
- General Management: 5
- Other: 7
- Non-profit: 8