



The most definitive guide to prepare for

MBA Admissions Interview Questions



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Introducing the most definitive guide to prepare for MBA Admission Interview Questions

Congratulations, on receiving that much desired interview call. The selection rate in top business schools is anywhere between 1 in 10 to 1 in 15. Most applicants do not get the interview call. Now that you have received a call your chances have increased anywhere between 1 in 2 to 1 in 5 depending on the school. But so has competition.

An interview is where it gets real for the b-school. They get to know the real person behind the application. They get to validate if the tiger on paper is really a tiger.

If you read the interviews of admission directors of b-schools you will find that two recommendations on 'how to prepare' are common across all interviews:

1. Preparation
2. Practice

There is no shortcut. We are providing you a great resource to prepare your best. To practice feel free to avail our [interview preparation services](#).

The 30 interview questions covered here are among the most common questions asked in the top 50 b-schools globally. Detailed guidelines will help you to prepare each of them in the most comprehensive manner.

In addition we have also provided a reference list of school specific questions for 20 leading b-schools. These are the most recent questions which are typically asked in the admission interviews of each of those schools.

We hope that you will make use of this guide to shine in your interview and get yourself an admit. Our best wishes.

1. Why do you want to do an MBA and Why now?

What do they want to find out?

They want to make sure that the real reason for you wanting to do an MBA is not that nothing else is working and you believe that an MBA is your key to success, your panacea to all problems in life.

They want to know if your decision is well thought out. If you know how an MBA will help in your career aspirations. If you don't have this clarity, you will not make the best of your MBA experience. No one wants a confused, frustrated alumnus who believes that their MBA investment was not worth their time and money.

Preparing your response:

This is an important question and would invariably be part of most MBA admission interviews. Ideally, it should be an easy preparation as you would have written your career goals essay in the application describing your short term and long term goals.

Here is how we suggest you answer this question:

- Talk about your current professional situation
- Your aspiration, your short & long term career goals. Importantly, add the part about why these goals matter to you, in other words, why do you want to do pursue these goals. Your career goals must be personalized to you, ideally would have got shaped out of your experiences. They should not come across as wishful thinking. For more details on this refer to the question "What are your long term and short term career goals? Why".
- Then explain how MBA is necessary to bridge the skill gap to transition into your aspired career path
- Include the 'Why now' answer in your response. Typically, a plausible response is on the following lines...at this point doing more of the same in my current job will not help me get in the direction that I aspire to move into.

2. Why our MBA program?

What do they want to find out?

A couple of things:

- The sincerity with which you are applying to their program
- Are you a good fit

We all know that 'Why do you want to join us' is always asked in a "job" interview. The employer wants to find out if you have done enough research about their company, have spoken to people who are in the similar role, have a good idea about what will do and what will you learn. It's the same thing here.

Preparing your response:

The extent of your research tells the interviewer about your interest in the program. And while they will make their own judgment about the fit - an important criteria - if you can explain why there is a good fit between you and the school - it just makes their job easier. That's the way to crack this question. Make their job easier.

As you would imagine, your response needs to go beyond the obvious- the school's rankings, the placement record and the location. We would suggest focusing on:

- Courses which are relevant to your career goals
- faculty whom you are excited to learn from
- Specific clubs which you would like to engage in based on your professional or personal interests. Show your passion
- Don't miss out on the community aspect. Highlight the cultural fit. Some schools care a lot more about this and it reflects in their positioning and communication. Emphasize accordingly.
- Mention something which is unique to the program. As an example, if you applying to LBS and interested in entrepreneurship, you could talk about the fact that as a department they write their own cases and bring these entrepreneurs in the class. You may also be excited about the opportunity to build your idea in the entrepreneurship summer school at LBS.
- Mention about your conversations with alumni or current students which gave you these insights

3. Walk me through your profile/resume

What do they want to find out?

This is quite often the first question in the interview. They have already read your resume, so they know what you have done in your career. Here they are wanting to know why you have made your choices. Who is the person behind this resume? What is her thought process? Why she does what she does.

Preparing your response:

Firstly, even though it may come across that way, make no mistake. It is not an ice breaker question. There is a definite intent behind this question as mentioned above. Also, this being the first question, and we know, first impressions matter, it is extremely important that you respond well, keeping it short and sweet, 2 to 2.5 minutes, at the most. You should have rehearsed this question as many times as possible. Responding this well will make you feel confident to get into into the interview whereas fumbling on the one will start you on a slippery slope.

With that let's dive into the details.

- Don't repeat things which are already on your resume
- Focus on the transitions. Explain the choices you made when you changed jobs or took a new responsibility or changed your role within the same organization. What were your motivations? For example, while working on the various projects during my rotational program I really enjoyed working on short duration projects which provided a steep learning curve, a new situation to deal with and an opportunity to work with new people. This shaped my desire to pursue a career in consulting....
- Highlight your learning and key accomplishments from any role.
- Leave hooks: This is the art of being smart. In between your response, subtly emphasize on aspects which are your strong points, where you would like the interviewer to ask a counter question and dig deeper. For instance, if you say something like. "...it's interesting how what started as a water cooler conversation developed into a revenue generating product for the company." Essentially you are planting the seeds of curiosity and creating an opportunity for yourself to talk about your accomplishments.

- It's good to follow a chronological order in responding to this question. Depending on your comfort, you can start with your education through to your current job. Alternatively, you can start with your current role and go back right to your education in the reverse chronological order.
- Last point. This question is different from "Tell me something about yourself". In answering that you have the liberty to get into your personal aspects: your family background, your interests and so on. Here, it's strictly business.

4. Tell me about your weaknesses

What do they want to find out?

Firstly, that you are humble enough in your nature that you will get along well with others, MBA being a highly collaborative experience. Secondly, they want to see if you have an ability to reflect and know yourself, have some understanding of your own capabilities, your strong and weak points.

Preparing your response:

No one is perfect. We all have our weaknesses and nothing wrong in accepting it. This doesn't mean that you tell them you have an issue managing your temper. So here are our guidelines:

- Avoid clichés: I am sure you have read that you should highlight a weakness that can be portrayed as a strength. Well, your interviewer has read this too. So, please avoid such clichéd responses like I am too detailed oriented because of which I miss a few deadlines at times. Please stay away from these. Your interviewer will sense the whole charade from a mile.
- So what to talk about? Well, be honest. Reflect a little, think of the feedback you would have received from your peers or your supervisor, or your partner. You will figure something out...something real. Unless something very drastic, I would suggest going with what's real. Honesty shows through and shines through. If you are able to build a relationship of trust with your interviewer.... that's half the battle won.
- That said, do not forget to add the part about what you have done after you became aware of your weakness. Have you worked upon it? How? And has there been any improvement.
- Try to prepare at least two to three of your weaknesses. Sometimes you may be asked about another and you don't want to be at the receiver's end of this question: Oh, so you have only one weakness? My list never seems to end...
- Please remember that a situation or a condition is not a weakness. If you were not able to learn data modeling because you did not have access to learning resources, this is not your weakness. It is a situation.

5. Tell me about your strengths

What do they want to find out?

Quite similar to the question on weaknesses, they want to understand if you are self aware. In addition they are presenting you an opportunity to highlight your strong points as an applicant, so it helps them to evaluate you in comparison to other applicants.

Preparing your response: