“What I know now that I wish I would have known then.”

Tips for success as an MBA student, written by current W. P. Carey MBA students and alumni for incoming students.

WELCOME

Greetings students,

Welcome to the W. P. Carey MBA and greetings from the Student Services Department. Use these words of advice from current students and recent alumni to prepare for your MBA experience. They have been in your shoes and offer a wealth of useful information.

The W. P. Carey MBA Student Services staff is also a great source of support. We are dedicated to providing you with top-notch service and support, allowing you to focus on your academic experience.

There are immediate opportunities to engage in your education and in various student programs outside the classroom. Within the first month an entire group of new people – faculty, administrators and your fellow students – will become part of your life. We look forward to working with you over the next two years.
Prepare to be busy! The program demands most of your attention and there are always optional leisure activities to enhance the experience. Organization methods and skills will definitely be valuable. As busy as you are, be proactive in your internship search from the beginning. The year really goes by fast, and there won’t really be a relaxed time to focus just on career search tasks. The W. P. Carey Full-time MBA provides you with a wealth of help and resources. If you put in your fair share of hard work and initiative, you will find more than ample support in the W. P. Carey community.

It is a good idea to get in the habit of staying current with business press and world current events. Class discussions and job interviews are enhanced by having a good handle on what is going on in the global economy.

Any time spent over the summer improving your skills in Excel and PowerPoint will be well spent. From the get-go, you should have at least workable skill in these programs, and anything beyond will be very useful.

It is critical to understand the importance of punctuality in the MBA Program. As a sign of respect to classmates, faculty, staff, and employers, make sure to plan your time accordingly so that you are never late to class, meetings, interviews, or other program events. If you use your Outlook calendar and always plan to arrive early, this will not be an issue.
John Gallagher
Dual MBA/MSIM, MBA Specialization: Supply Chain Management
Class of 2012

I was surprised by how supportive and encouraging the MBA community was. I was expecting the program to be extremely competitive and even though it is competitive, your classmates won't step on your head if you are drowning. Instead, I quickly noticed that everyone realized that it is better for everyone if they help each other out, whether it's studying for a class or preparing for interviews. If you have any questions, ask your fellow students. Everyone is in the same situation; shifting gears back in to student mode, and may have valuable advice.

If you are interviewing for a particular company, collaborate your preparation with the other students that are interviewing with that company, it will benefit each applicant and reflect positively on the school. If you don't get an interview with your dream company, don't worry, there are plenty of other great opportunities that you may not have known about that will open up to you.

Last, don't be afraid to reach out to the second year students, they are extremely friendly and most will be more than willing to go out of their way to help you out or answer any questions. After all, they were in your shoes a year ago.

Russell Janes
Supply Chain Management
Class of 2013

I once heard the advice that you get out of life what you put in to it. I think this absolutely applies to the W.P. Carey MBA. It is important to engage those within the program by asking questions and seeking feedback. There are a lot of talented people at Arizona State including students, faculty, and staff. Each person has an unique background and personality. Accordingly, you may not have previously considered the advice from one of these great resources. This diversity of thought can help you grow both personally and professionally. Make sure you keep an open mind in order to gain the most from the feedback. Also, don’t forget to engage in other ways by participating in clubs, forums, and other activities.
There are a few main pieces of advice that I can give to incoming students just starting out in the Full-time MBA. First is to take advantage of as many outside the classroom opportunities as you can. This includes information sessions and Thought Leadership speakers; as well as social activities with your classmates, including the holiday party, MBA Olympics, and spring training games. These events are really the ones that help you to broaden your education beyond the books, and allows for the building of friendships and relationships that you will take far beyond the two years that you will spend at W. P. Carey. I would also recommend finding a couple of clubs to be active in, and really dedicate some time to those activities. Whether it is volunteer council, or toast masters, or one of the academic clubs, again, this is a great networking opportunity, along with a chance to further develop leadership skills and have a little fun as well.

Second, I would recommend focusing on learning more than just grades. Yes, grades are important, and there are certain required standards. But it is easy to lose sight of why you really came back to school, which is to either learn a new skill, or to expand upon your current knowledge. Rarely has a professor ever been happy about a student haggling over grades, and rarely have I ever remembered what grade I got on a quiz/test/assignment once the class was over. Spending your energy on developing personal skills and knowledge, and learning to not sweat the small stuff is a better use of your time.

Finally, when it comes to internships and jobs, don’t take “No” for an answer. In my personal experience, a “No” has usually been a “not right now.” During the course of my job search I targeted Cisco as one of my top choices for an employer. I was initially turned down for an interview, as I had no supply chain experience, but I went to meet with the recruiters during their scheduled office hours. While it still didn’t result in an offer at that time, as it was a highly competitive position, it allowed me to build a relationship with them, and let them know my interest. Since I had kept in contact with the recruiters, when a position opened up a few months later I was at the top of their list of possible candidates. I now have accepted a full time position with Cisco, and it is all because I didn’t accept a “No” as a dead end.
Chuck Niskey
Supply Chain Management
Class of 2012

It had been a few years since undergrad, and it took a month or two to get back into a studying routine. I wish I had prepared better over the summer with my reading skills. Being able to read quickly with good comprehension is an important key in your time management skill set. Also, I should have explored what courses are available for each specialization. There are many options to take electives from different platforms. You can ask second year students for their recommendations. They are always willing to help. You can get really creative in your internship search. In addition to the CMC, use your contacts, family's contacts, LinkedIn, and other websites. Also, CMC provides alumni searches. If you have a dream company that does not recruit on campus, you can search to see if any alumni currently work there and contact them.

JJ Perino
Strategic Marketing & Services Leadership, Supply Chain Management
Class of 2013

Don't be shy about talking to 2nd year students, professors, and faculty, you're part of the family now and everyone is happy to help in any way they can.

Talk to your CMC advisor early and often, they know what recruiters want and will be your best resource. Let them get to know you, so they can help!
Nick Quan  
Supply Chain Financial Management  
Class of 2013

I wish I had chosen a specialization earlier. During the first few months of the school year, there were some companies that came to campus that I was really interested in obtaining an internship with. But during info sessions or interviews, I expressed my uncertainty about which specialization I was going to choose and I think I was ultimately eliminated from consideration for those internships because of that. It's perfectly fine if you need time to figure out what you want to do, but just know that it may delay your internship process a bit.

Dave Romney  
Financial Management & Markets  
Class of 2012

I wish I would have been more brave and willing to share my ideas during the first few weeks of class. I had a little less business experience than some of my peers coming into the program, and I felt that initially that put me at a disadvantage and that I should sit back and listen to everyone else instead of chiming in with my ideas as well. However, as the weeks went on and I got up the courage to share more thoughts in class, I found that the things that I had to say were well received and helped to propel the class discussion forward. Even though I didn’t have a much experience as a lot of my classmates, I was still able to draw on the experience that I did have and integrate it with the topics and frameworks we were learning about in class in order to make meaningful contributions. Basically, I learned that if you have something to say, raise your hand and say it. No one will think less of you for making an honest effort to contribute to class discussion.
Matt Strout  
Supply Chain Management  
Class of 2012

I think it is important to balance your time between course and non-course work. Getting all of your school work done can feel really demanding at times but if you aren’t involved in other activities then you have really missed out on an important aspect of being a Full-time MBA. The clubs and organizations really added a lot to my learning experience. I was also surprised at how early in the year companies come to campus to recruit students. Regardless of your specialization you should set aside time each week to work on finding a job or internship. Don’t get so bogged down in your classes that you forget that your final goal is to find a great job. Talk with some of the second years about how to balance your time effectively because that will be one of your biggest challenges during your MBA.

Sophia Tao  
Supply Chain Management  
Class of 2013

Although it might not be easy to fit in the community quickly, you need to open up yourself and be willing to understand different cultures. There is a lot of team work in the MBA program. You really have to learn how to work with people with different cultures and backgrounds. One of the most important things is to find out your own strengths and weaknesses. Then show your strengths and make contributions to the team while working to improve your weaknesses with the help of your teammates and friends. Never hesitate to ask for help. You will find people in the program are willing to help their fellow classmates.
Additional hints for those moving to the U.S. or Arizona for the first time:

**Manmay Gupta**  
Supply Chain Management  
Class of 2013

If you are thinking of getting a new laptop before you start the program, you can either get it from the W. P. Carey laptop program or from another source. It is my suggestion to buy a laptop from U.S. as it’s cheaper and you’ll get the latest models which are unavailable/more expensive in India. You should prefer a laptop that has at least 5-6 hrs. of battery life.

If you are searching for a house, try to find room mates within the program and ensure that the house is within 1-1.5 miles of the school (especially if you know that you won’t have a vehicle to commute).

**Avik Sengupta**  
Dual MBA/MSIM, MBA Specialization: Supply Chain Management  
Class of 2013

We are extremely excited to have an opportunity to interact with you. I guess others would have told you about the weather variations over here. It gets hot in summers and you can bring lots of shorts. You need to have sunglasses to protect your eyes. Also, mind you it gets cold in winter and you need to have good jackets too. You need not wear formal clothes during normal classes but you need to have them during all special events especially related to networking/ recruiting.

You need at least 2 pairs of suits considering the fact that this time many of the companies will be concentrating in a week during the break between first and second quarter.

Other major things you need to do here as soon as you get here are to get a state ID card/driving license so that you don’t have to carry your passports around everywhere. Secondly, as soon as you get a SSN, you plan to take a credit card. It will help you build your credit score quickly.
Himanshu Sharma  
Supply Chain Management  
Class of 2013

International students, be aware about how to take cell phone contracts and what all costs are required. For example, Many Indian students in my batch paid for SIM cards and we recently came to know that no company charges for SIM cards when a person goes for a contract. Ask someone who knows how the contracts and options work to go with you to the store. Do not rush to get a cell phone connection but take time to figure out how and from where to get them.

One more thing that could be of help is that international students who come, for Resume purposes, should get as much data as possible about their jobs as they can because it becomes difficult to get the data after a person has left the company and is here in Tempe preparing resumes.

Siva Sugumaran  
Dual MBA/MSIM, MBA Specialization: Supply Chain Management  
Class of 2013

As an international student, you would have many questions in mind about the location, climate, school environment, housing, transportation etc. Let me give you some useful tips from my experiences.

Many international students have misconceptions about Tempe that it is a very dry place and hence would not be as exciting as other places in USA. Please get rid of all those misconceptions. With a subtropical climate, Phoenix area is one of the best places in the country for students to concentrate on studies as well as to have fun because subtropical climate is known to keep people in high spirits and positive mood!! Make use of the climate here to study and have fun outdoors within and outside the university campus. There are a lot of places in campus to sit, relax and study (both indoors and outdoors). But, also keep in mind that it gets colder here from November to February but certainly not to the extent that it makes you depressed. Having one or two jackets/sweaters would be sufficient to manage the cold here.
The biggest thing that international students worry about is internship/job search. Career Management Center (CMC) is very helpful and supportive. But please make sure that you diligently follow what CMC says in terms of your resume, interview preparations, networking etc. Don't hesitate to seek help from second year students (both domestic and international students) who can share their internship experiences and interview tips with you. Please make use of the mentor assigned to you.

There are a lot of apartments that are close to campus. Start looking for apartments online starting from April/May. Some of the apartments allow booking via phone or email from your home country. Most of the students who live close to school, either bike or walk to school. Depending on your convenience, you can choose your apartment location. If you are planning to share your apartment with other students, start contacting other admitted students via the Facebook group for the class of 2014. This will save your time of looking for roommates when you come here.

There are a lot of academic and non-academic clubs in school. Try to involve in as many club activities as possible. You will not have a lot of free time but you will have to learn to manage your time to participate in club activities in order to have a well-rounded MBA experience. Moreover, those are fun too! Forget not to bring at least one or two of your traditional dresses!

Last but not the least thing that I would highly recommend is to positively look and appreciate any cultural differences that you might see here!! What you give is what you get!!

Be ready to work hard and to have fun too!! Good luck!!
ALUMNI:

2011 Garima Gupta
If you don’t own a car, then you will walk quite a bit. Make sure to get a really comfortable pair of footwear. As you arrive here in August, the heat is hard to miss and the best option would be to have an open and airy pair of footwear (flip-flops) as opposed to closed shoes (sport shoes). It may seem like a futile suggestion but when it gets to 120 degrees, anything that helps you get through the heat is important.

2011 Min Ho Lee
A tip: there is no need to be shy. The cultural environment may be different than where you are from, but it is the diversity which makes the W.P. Carey MBA program even more worthwhile. As a shy individual from South Korea, I initially had difficulties fitting into the MBA community. However, the more I opened up to others and the more I exchanged greetings with my colleagues and faculty, the more I experienced the close knit atmosphere of the W.P. Carey community and realized that everyone here was willing to help each other through difficulties. Open up and don’t be afraid to ask for help!

2011 Vineet Mehrotra
Though you do not need to go in depth, a brief refresher course on finance is helpful. Also if possible, revisit stats, but don’t fret over it. There are suggestions for course Boot Camps on the Newly Admitted Web site.

The main thing that I wish I knew would be how competitive the internship application process is. Start working on your resume before you arrive and go to Career Management Center (CMC) on day one.

2011 Vijay Muniyandi
Please be aware that the electronic components work at a different voltage rating and have a different electrical socket shape as compared to other countries. It is best that you do not bring any electronic appliances. If you decide to bring any, be sure to bring a travel converter/transformer along.

Bring a couple of traditional outfits so that you can participate in the wonderful International events conducted by our school. This is an opportunity to highlight your country and cultural traditions.

2011 Usha Nadiveedhi
One of the things I was worried about was academic essay writing and the unfamiliar education system in the US. Over time, I realized that although I was unfamiliar, the professors were very comfortable with students from other countries. They make sure that you have enough background information on most content and also pick international case studies for discussion. I have also
noticed being unfamiliar with some of the background information is an advantage as it helps you analyze the cases objectively without biases!

Most of the writing was similar to business writing and did not require any rigorous practice. The ASU writing center was helpful in reviewing the first few assignments. They offer free services to review your assignments in person and give feedback on the writing style before submission. It helps to do this for the first few assignments to make sure the content is clear and has all of the required citations. References and citations are probably the most overlooked part if you are writing for the first time. The best thing to do is to check with the professors if you have any doubts with citation guidelines for the course, as plagiarism is taken very seriously in the United States. Do not worry too much about writing if you are comfortable with business writing; however make sure you use some of the available resources to succeed in the first few assignments.

2011 Nikhil Shamsundar Ghate
I wish I had packed my bags with more t-shirts and shorts. If you haven’t shopped already, I would strongly recommend a pair of sunglasses. The first month of your arrival in Tempe can be torrid and getting used to the dry heat can take some time. Therefore, make sure to bring light weight clothing that will protect you from the intense sun and heat and drink plenty of water.

2011 Lin Sun
What I know now that I wish I would have known then is to prepare for internship interviews before you enter this program. Research companies and practice behavioral interview questions. Find out what values companies cherish and how to convey your capabilities to recruiters in the interviews. The internship search begins day one and preparing early will ensure you are a part of the process from the beginning.

2010 Perrin A. Gayle
I wish I could change how I went about my housing decision. When I was looking for housing, I used various Websites that resulted in my living four miles from school and over a quarter of a mile from the bus stop. This made it difficult as I had to leave very early in the morning to get to school. I wish I had contacted some of the second year students or even the staff to get better information on housing.

2010 Ilke Mete
I wish I had brushed up on my Excel and PowerPoint skills before starting the MBA program. There is no limit to being an expert in these Microsoft Office skills and they are very helpful both in and outside of the class.
2009 Sabrina Goicoechea
I really wish I had brought all my original documents like undergraduate diploma, transcripts, birth certificate, marriage certificate, etc. and the corresponding notarized translations. It’s hard to find certified notaries approved by ASU and it’s probably going to be more expensive to translate the documents in the U.S. than it would be in your home country.

2009 Dilyana Pavlova
I wish I had forced myself more out of my comfort zone. As much as it is comfortable to stick with people like you (speaking the same language, coming from the same country), it is of vital importance that you make the effort to be part of the domestic students group. Interacting with the domestic students will help you improve your communication skills and learn the little cultural details (which can also be conversation starters!). And yes, I know it is hard, but it makes a huge difference.

2009 Vijay Shankar
I wish I had fully comprehended the expectations of class participation. You are expected to speak up and give your perspective. You are even graded on your quality and quantity of participation.

A primary reason that you have been selected to be a part of this program is the wealth of international experience that you bring to the table. You would be surprised to know that business practices that may be common in your country would be absolutely unknown to others and vice-versa. Faculty members and students are more than willing to learn about and understand these business trends. So, be prepared to talk about your background during class discussions.

2009 Nitin Sikka
It is always good to have some cash and not all currency should be in the form of traveler’s checks.

2009 Howard Yuen
I wish I had immersed myself more into the American environment because my conversation skills should have been better and life would have been easier. For those who are not native English speakers, try your best to surround yourself in a total English language environment: interacting with English-speaking classmates, listening to English radio stations, and watching American TV shows.