

On-Line PhD fair transcript - 9/19/2007

Welcome to the chat room for the University of South Carolina, Moore School of Business. This is very informal and I encourage you to ask any questions that you have.

My first question is do you plan to admit some PhD students for 2008 fall admission in the finance field?

The following departments will be admitting students for Fall 2008: Accounting, Organizational Behavior/Human Resources (Management), and Production/Operation Management (Management Science). All other departments should be admitting the following year.

Do the departments usually admit every other year? How do they decide what years they will be accepting students?

It varies by department. We have a limited number of spaces per department (most departments have 8 students). If two students graduate, then we will admit two more. We intentionally keep the program small so that there is a close student:faculty relationship.

Do I have to print out the online application and mail it in to grad school?

You can either mail the application or submit the materials on-line. Here is the link to our Graduate School application:

<http://www.gradschool.sc.edu/futurestudents/OnlineApplication.html>

I want to know where I should send the recommendation letters. Do they go to the grad school or department?

All application materials should be mailed directly to the Graduate School and they will forward them to the department once all materials arrive. You can either mail items individually or all in one package. I try to keep track of the files to see what you are missing, but it sometimes gets delayed depending on how long it takes the Graduate School to process the paperwork.

Can the recommendation letters be a paper form filled by the referees or must it be online? Which format is better for the recommendation letter, the write-out letter or the one using the SC recommendation form?

It is probably best if the letters of recommendation are not completed on-line and are mailed to the Graduate School. You should include the form from the Graduate Application even if you simply put "see other letter" for the letter of recommendation. Even if your recommenders have a different letter they write, still include the form from the application.

When we send a transcript should it be a certified true copy or original and who should certify.....a notary public?

Do not send your original transcript. Have an official transcript sent (or a certified true copy if you are an international student). Whoever at the school provides a certified copy (probably the Registrar) would be fine.

Will departments begin to review an application before all information, such as recommendations, have been received?

No, the Graduate School will not even forward the application file until all application materials are received.

What really separates those few that get in, I am guessing all applicants are fairly qualified or otherwise they wouldn't waste their time applying...and is prior research important?

There are a variety of factors involved when considering a student for admission. We look at GMAT/GRE scores, resume, statement of career objectives, TOEFL scores (if appropriate), undergraduate and graduate GPA, and letters of recommendation. A weakness in any one area can be compensated by the other areas being particularly strong.

It is most important to have letters of reference from credible resources. Someone who is aware of the rigors of a PhD program and can speak specifically about your abilities is the best person to get. The discipline is less important. Any research or publication experience is only going to help you. I would encourage you to emphasize that in the statement of purpose.

I have a BBA but a masters in a different area than business, would you suggest obtaining an MBA before applying to PhD program?

You do not have to have an MBA to get into a business PhD program. We have people who were engineers, English majors, etc.

Without the MBA, what will the admissions committee focus upon when reviewing my application?

See the note above about the requirements. They would look thoroughly at your test scores, letters of recommendation, experiences, and statement of purpose.

What key factors will the admission's department be looking for within the statement of purpose? What is expected of a student when it comes to the personal statement?

The statement of purpose should simply state why you want to pursue a PhD in business. What got you interested and what you want to do with it? I would recommend not going longer than 2-3 pages. The statement of purpose is your opportunity to sell yourself.

What is the general profile for students admitted to the PhD of Accounting program?

A profile of our current students can be found at http://mooreschool.sc.edu/moore/phd/prospective/student_profile.htm. It breaks down the information by departments. You can also find out more specific information about our current students at <http://mooreschool.sc.edu/moore/phd/Current/profile.home>.

What is the range of GMAT scores of the successful applicants?

Again it varies by the department, but if you check the first link mentioned above it will show you that information. Keep in mind the averages shown on the student profile page are averages. There are some students above, and some students below that. Although I will say that scores have been increasing the last few years. For example, we have not admitted a student with a GMAT below 600 in the last 5 years.

How much emphasis is placed on work experience?

It really depends on the department. Some departments will take people straight out of undergrad, while others will require an MBA or a couple of years work experience. Work experience may be less important if you have a good educational background and test scores. It depends on the department and who looks at the application.

I work for a consulting company and as consulting is heavily dependent on research, I have a lot of experience in research. Do you think that will be an advantage?

Any research experience will be beneficial. Make sure you emphasize that in your statement of purpose.

I am a second-year graduate student in US. As the Graduate Research Assistant, I have one publication and another working paper. Will this be a huge plus to my application?

I would certainly emphasize the research and publication in your statement of purpose.

I noticed that the application deadline for Moore is Jan 15. Can I apply right now?

Sure! We need to have all application materials by January 15 so the departments can review the files and nominate students for university-wide scholarships. Some departments will wait until January 15 to review all files, while others will review them as they come in. I would caution you about waiting too long, because if a department sees an attractive candidate, they may make an offer before all of the other applicants have submitted their materials.

How soon can I know the admission decision? Is it possible to be accepted before the application deadline?

It is possible you would know a decision before the application deadline, but it is highly unlikely. The national decision date is April 15. This is the date the applicants have to let the schools know their intent by. This means if you have been offered admission, you have to let us know by April 15. Every year you will have a few people accept other offers, so there will be a few offers made after April 15.

What are the criteria for receiving for receiving tuition waiver and stipend?

All incoming PhD students receive 100% tuition supplement and a minimum \$18,000 stipend for 4 years (some departments are higher). In exchange for this you have an assistantship teaching and/or working with a professor for 20 hours a week.

How many students are typically admitted in the OB program?

Last year we had 40 people apply for OB and we admitted 2. This year we will be admitting 2 more.

What about other departments?

Here's the admission schedule: Accounting (2 students); Management (2 students); and Management Science (up to 5 students). All other departments should be admitting for Fall 2009.

What's the admission rate to your university?

We usually have between 20-30 applicants for every one opening.

Wow.... the competition would be tight.

Yes, it is a very competitive process and if you get in, you want to make sure you have the support there to be successful. I'm not trying to scare anyone; I just want to make sure you have a realistic picture of what is required to complete a PhD.

Could you please provide me an overview of life of a PhD student? People say that it is too long and can get really frustrating.

Typically, you do coursework the first two years. Then years 3-5 you focus on your dissertation. Our programs take 4-5 years depending on the discipline. At times it can be frustrating and take a long time. But if you stay focused and work hard you'll be fine. Remember to rely on your resources. We are here to help you be successful.

Let me also recommend that everyone visit any school they are considering going to. (Most schools will want to interview applicants before they admit them). The school may look good on paper or the internet, but be awful in person. Keep in mind you'll need to work there for the next 4-5 years, so you want to pick a place where you'll be happy

Do you offer an off-campus PhD program?

No, because of the rigors involved in earning a PhD we do not offer an off-campus or on-line PhD. All students who come in have an assistantship working 20 hours a week for a professor and/or teaching. This is as important to earning the PhD as the coursework is.

I am an international student, if I graduate from a US university with a Master degree, do I still need TOEFL score? Is it possible for me to have TOEFL requirement waived if I apply for your school's PHD program?

If you have a degree from an American university you do not need the TOEFL.

Do most students opt for a career in academia or do typically students opt for industry?

Our program is primarily designed for students to pursue a career in academia, but we always have a few students (primarily Finance and Economics) that will go into business or industry.

Do you recommend talking with some faculty members before submit the application?

Talking to some faculty can certainly help specify what the focus of the department is. If you give me a few dates, I can see if there is a date agreeable with the appropriate PhD faculty coordinator. The list of PhD coordinators can be found at:
<http://mooreschool.sc.edu/moore/phd/prospective/ba/phd-ba-faculty.htm>.

I have a Finance MBA, will that reduce my credits?

If you have a master's degree (MBA, MA Finance, etc.) it will probably reduce the number of prerequisites you'd need to take, but likely would not reduce the number PhD courses required. PhD courses are taught in a seminar format and tend to be much different in format than regular master's level classes (sometimes between 3-15 students in a class).

I have taken some of the PhD level statistics class, would that reduce some of the PhD courses in Moore?

It is possible you could transfer in a few credits. That would need to be looked at on an individual basis.

How much weight is given to Beta Gamma Sigma membership?

I don't know that a lot of weight would be given to BGS membership, unless you can show you did research or something while involved with the organization. The things you did to earn BGS membership would be more important than the membership itself.

How is the weather in SC?

Today the weather in Columbia is beautiful (80 degrees right now). This summer we had 17 days in August over 100 degrees which broke a record (5 days during the summer is normal). It will snow here about once every three years. It is a very mild climate and is very reasonable economically. South Carolina has a very low cost of living.

If someone takes GMAT twice, do you take the average?

We simply look at the best test score. Honestly, I wouldn't recommend taking it more than three times, but as long as you are improving your score every time that's fine.

So GMAT is the most important factor? What is the average scores of admitted applications? Is it the most important part? Is it used as the initial screening criteria?

There are a variety of factors involved when considering a student for admission. A high score can certainly help you, especially if transcripts or letters of recommendation aren't as strong as the other applicants. However, a strong test score alone will not get you into the program. You have to show that you are well balanced and successful and appear to have the drive necessary to withstand a PhD program.

GMAT is probably the initial screening factor. It helps determine if you are competitive or not. A list of the current averages for each department is available on the link mentioned above. After the test scores they look at work experience, letters of recommendation, statement of purpose, etc. Research or publication experience can be a big plus.

My GMAT was taken in 2004; do I have to retake it due to the time?

The GMAT and GRE are good for 5 years; TOEFL is good for 2 years. The Economics department requires the GRE; all other departments prefer the GMAT.

I did my undergraduate in China; the score is in 100Grade system instead of 4.0, how does it transfer?

Don't worry about the grades transferring; we'd be looking more what classes you had and how you did in those classes.

Are you a student or an admissions advisor?

I'm an admission representative that oversees all of the PhD programs.

What is your email address? I will like to contact you beyond this chatting session.

Feel free to contact me with any follow-up questions you have. My contact information is: Scott Ranges, sranges@moore.sc.edu, (803) 777-2748. If you would like to chat with a student I can put you in touch with one. Just let me know the department and I'll send you their e-mail address.