



## 2009 Survey on Accredited Business Schools offering MBA/MBL degrees in SA

Respondents (employers) rated MBA graduates in the workplace on the attributes listed below. The graduates/students were rated on a scale of 1.00 to 5.00; where 1.00 = poor and 5.00 = outstanding.

Milpark Business School's MBA graduates achieved the following ratings:

• Academic knowledge	3.75
• Application of knowledge in the workplace	3.75
• Communication skills/abilities	4.00
• Emotional intelligence	3.90
• Entrepreneurial skills/capacity/abilities	3.75
• Environmental awareness	3.40
• Ethical business conduct	3.75
• Financial management	4.00
• Human resource management	4.00
• Implementation of corporate governance	3.70
• Information management	3.70
• Innovation	3.80
• Insight into sound sustainable development	3.20
• International perspective	3.40
• Leadership skills/abilities	3.75
• Marketing management	3.75
• Operational management	3.80
• Quantitative abilities/skills	3.80
• Strategic management	3.70

MBS is rated on an adjusted mean score of **3.65 out of a possible 5.00** which places us in the **Top 10 Accredited Business Schools** in South Africa.



# MBA Rankings

## Quality, quantity, or both?

When Rhodes University vice-chancellor Saleem Badat took a swipe at the ethics of US MBA alumni during his university graduation address this year, he was probably expressing a popular view.

A number of business people at the heart of the US financial scandals that contributed to the global economic malaise are graduates of leading business schools. Badat said: "Judging by their actions, the MBA graduates of these outstanding universities or, as they are now being called, Masters of the Business Apocalypse', or Mediocre But Arrogant', or Me Before Anyone', seem to have had a higher education lacking in any deep engagement with issues of ethics and morality."

His remarks may have been about the US business community, but they also caused some local squirming. SA business schools are anxious to distance themselves from the perceived excesses of their transatlantic counterparts. For years, they have been proclaiming how they have incorporated issues like ethics and governance into MBA programmes - initially as optional add-ons and now usually as core components.

Gavin Staude, head of Rhodes' own business school, says: "We want people taking our MBA to be brainwashed into ethical behaviour." Maybe schools need deeper brainwashing techniques. Many employers still consider MBA graduates arrogant and ethically challenged.

For this 10th edition of the *FM Ranking the MBAs*, market research company Ipsos Markinor polled nearly 1 000 graduates who have completed their MBAs in the past three years, and over 330 employers.

The latter seem to have taken a tougher line this year in paying salary premiums to the former. Barely 40% of employers say they automatically pay MBA graduates a premium, compared with more than 50% a year ago. Milpark Business School director Cobus Oosthuizen says it's a temporary blip and that once the recession is over and companies are expanding again, MBA skills will be as tradable as before.

It's just as well that less than 30% of this year's graduate respondents say they entered MBA programmes with money in mind. Despite MBA fee increases of over 20% in some cases, schools report they are taking as many students as they can handle. Some are turning away more than they accept.

Henley Management College director Fran Connaway thinks that's a good thing. Though Henley has accepted a second MBA intake this year for the first time, she believes schools should be more selective. SA may lack management skills but that doesn't mean an MBA should become the studying norm. Other management and executive courses are available to teach the necessary skills.

"There are a lot of people doing MBAs who shouldn't be," she says. "They see an MBA as a beginning and an end. It should be the peak business qualification, not the standard one. We're in danger of creating an environment full of highly qualified executives with no business experience. Growing MBA numbers is less important than improving the quality of graduates."

Anesh Singh, director of the University of KwaZulu Natal's graduate school of business, believes he can do both: grow numbers and quality. So does Piet Naude, head of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's (NMMU) school in Port Elizabeth. A number of smaller schools are watching developments at NMMU jealously. The university has ambitious plans for its school and plans to invest R25m over three years in marketing, facilities and new programmes - this is in addition to a proposed new city campus.

International accreditation also beckons, Naude hopes - though Singh thinks it a luxury for most schools. "Local accreditation is our licence to trade. Anything more is bells and whistles."

It's not a view shared by most ambitious schools. International recognition is not only good for institutional ego but also attracts top-quality visiting faculty, exchange programmes and international students. It pumps up the bottom-line. Africa is an obvious talent pool but some schools say they are starting to see growing demand from further afield.

David Abdulai, head of Unisa's School of Business Leadership, says: "With the US and Europe in recession, it's China that's growing. It's investing in Africa. So we should look at how to find advantage in China's foray into Africa."

Internationally, top schools are anxious to attract foreign students. At the Switzerland-based IMD school, over 90% of MBA students are foreign. Frank Horwitz, former head of the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business and now of Cranfield School of Management in the UK, reports that 80% of his full-time MBAs and 40%-45% of executive MBAs are international.

Some SA schools have been slow to recognise they are in competition for students not only among themselves but also with overseas institutions. Abdulai welcomes the competition but says well-structured SA schools should have little to fear. Foreign currency-based fees work against foreign schools. So should their programme content. "Many have limited relevance to local African students. Their problem is that they are not African-specific."

As in past years, some MBA schools do not feature in certain tables because responses were too low to be statistically reliable. For this reason, the university business schools at Rhodes and Limpopo are excluded from graduate opinion rankings.

Undertaking an MBA can be both a life-changing and bank-breaking experience. Its time demands can stretch and even wreck relationships. The tables on these pages provide a snapshot comparison between schools and a graduate's eye view of what to expect at each.

They also show that a positive MBA experience depends as much on the student as on the institution. The "Big Four" university business schools - Wits, Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science (Gibs) - enjoy an international reputation.

Yet many of the "junior" schools clearly have satisfied graduates, often outranking their more illustrious competitors. It is sometimes suggested that students go into schools with different expectations; that someone enrolling at, say, Milpark, is more easily satisfied than someone else at Cape Town. There's no denying that major schools generally provide facilities and faculty expertise that small competitors would kill for. Their programme content is often more wide-ranging. It's also difficult comparing the experience of a full-time course with a distance-learning one.

But the idea that their students would accept second-best is firmly denied by smaller schools. Free State University school director Helena van Zyl, who is also vice-chair of the SA Business Schools Association, says rankings reflect different strengths. "We may not have the resources of a big school but our small intake allows us to offer students personal attention they might not get elsewhere."

Oosthuizen adds: "All MBA students expect an above-average experience."

*By David Furlonger (Financial Mail 18 September 2009)*

<b>CLOSE CONTACT</b>		<b>ELECTION FEVER</b>		<b>NATURAL SELECTION</b>	
<b>Face-to-face teaching hours during MBA programme</b>		<b>Number of compulsory elective courses</b>		<b>MBA applicant acceptance rates</b>	
Gibs	<b>742</b>	Wits	<b>5</b>	Unisa	<b>98%</b>
Limpopo	<b>680</b>	Gibs	<b>5</b>	Milpark	<b>84%</b>
KwaZulu Natal	<b>680</b>	Rhodes	<b>4</b>	Henley	<b>82%</b>
Stellenbosch	<b>630</b>	Cape Town	<b>4</b>	Stellenbosch	<b>73%</b>
Rhodes	<b>576</b>	Free State	<b>3</b>	KwaZulu Natal	<b>71%</b>
Nelson Mandela	<b>576</b>	Nelson Mandela	<b>3</b>	Potchefstroom	<b>57%</b>
Cape Town (full-time)	<b>550</b>	Stellenbosch	<b>3</b>	Free State	<b>52%</b>
Potchefstroom	<b>476</b>	KwaZulu Natal	<b>2</b>	Rhodes	<b>52%</b>
Wits	<b>473</b>	Henley	<b>2</b>	Nelson Mandela	<b>50%</b>
Milpark	<b>468</b>	Limpopo	<b>1</b>	Limpopo	<b>49%</b>
Cape Town (modular)	<b>450</b>	Unisa	<b>1</b>	Cape Town	<b>42%</b>
Free State	<b>408</b>			Gibs	<b>41%</b>
Unisa	<b>310</b>			Wits	<b>37%</b>
Henley	<b>208</b>				
<b>CORE STRENGTHS</b>		<b>MONEY, MONEY, MONEY</b>		<b>WHAT IT'S WORTH</b>	
<b>Number of core MBA courses</b>		<b>Total course costs including tuition, books, compulsory travel, exam fees and sundries</b>		<b>Respondents' salaries before and after MBA (%)</b>	
					Before After
Gibs	<b>20</b>	Gibs	<b>R167 500</b>	Under R150 000	<b>9</b> <b>5</b>
Stellenbosch	<b>19</b>	Henley	<b>R140 100</b>	R150 000-R300 000	<b>29</b> <b>11</b>
Limpopo	<b>17</b>	Wits	<b>R120 000</b>	R300 000-450 000	<b>28</b> <b>22</b>
Wits	<b>16</b>	Free State	<b>R101 815</b>	R450 000-R600 000	<b>17</b> <b>23</b>
KwaZulu Natal	<b>15</b>	Cape Town	<b>R99 500</b>	R600 000-R750 000	<b>9</b> <b>16</b>
Potchefstroom	<b>14</b>	Unisa	<b>R94 473</b>	R750 000-R1m	<b>5</b> <b>13</b>
Free State	<b>14</b>	Milpark	<b>R87 750</b>	R1m+	<b>0</b> <b>6</b>
Rhodes	<b>14</b>	Stellenbosch	<b>R84 900</b>		
Milpark	<b>13</b>	Potchefstroom	<b>R82 520</b>		
Nelson Mandela	<b>12</b>	Rhodes	<b>R80 520</b>		
Unisa	<b>12</b>	KwaZulu Natal	<b>R64 000</b>		
Cape Town	<b>11</b>	Limpopo	<b>R60 850</b>		
Henley	<b>11</b>	Nelson Mandela	<b>R55 450</b>		