

# MBA Scot

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## Enduring capacity to evolve and grow

**Growing inclusion of women on MBAs but more needs to be done to fully redress the gender balance**

In a world of unpredictability and volatility, demand for MBA programmes remains strong with business schools adapting to the learning-method needs of their students.

The latest *MBA Application and Enrolment Report* from the Association of MBAs (AMBA), published earlier this month, measures admissions trends among AMBA-accredited business schools. The annual study's findings provide crucial insights into the marketplace for leading MBA programmes across the globe.

This year's research analysed data from 230 AMBA-accredited business schools and 751 programmes in 52 countries that were delivered to students in the calendar year of 2017. The volume of applications and enrolments reported by AMBA-accredited business schools (118,378 and 43,280, respectively) demonstrates the vast number of individuals seeking to enrich their career through a top-quality MBA programme.

In 2017, the average number of applications and enrolments for each AMBA-accredited programme decreased slightly, however there was growth in the average number of enrolments at each School as a whole. The reason for this pattern is that the average number of programmes available at each School across the AMBA network increased by 14% (from 2.9 programmes in 2016 to 3.3 per School in 2017). Therefore, AMBA-accredited business schools are delivering more programmes to more students, but programme cohorts tend to be slightly smaller.

**THE AVERAGE** number of applications per programme fell from 175 to 156 (-11%), and the average number of enrolments per programme fell from 61 to 57 (-7%). When looking at these same indicators at a School level, rather than in terms of individual programmes, there was a small decrease in the average number of applications (-1% from 518 in 2016 to 515 in 2017) while average enrolments increased by 2% (from 185 in 2016 to 188 in 2017).

The greater breadth of programmes offered by Business Schools is only economically viable if they can foster sufficient demand for places. It is therefore worth noting that applications at a School level have increased



During the past five years there has been a notable increase in the proportion of women enrolling onto AMBA-accredited programmes globally

since 2016 in the regions of Asia and the Middle East, China and Hong Kong, Oceania, and the UK (typically by between 5% to 11%).

Schools in other markets have experienced small contractions in applications, including Africa, Europe (excluding the UK), and Latin America; regions in which applications typically fell by between 6% and 18%. These regional differences indicate that levels of demand for MBAs are not consistent across the world, due to factors such as geopolitics, immigration legislation, and fluctuations in the local economy.

AMBA also measured the application and enrolment numbers of 84 Schools that have participated in its annual study each year since 2011, thereby providing a picture of like-for-like movements over time. When looking at this measure, there has been an increase in both applications per School and enrolments per School since 2016 (+2% and +1%, respectively). This is further evidence of the strength of AMBA-accredited Schools in sustaining demand for their MBA programmes.

More adaptable programme methods are becoming more popular. While the classroom remains the most popular delivery method (82% of pro-

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Andrew Main Wilson

grammes are delivered in this setting), there has been growth in the proportion of blended online and classroom-based programmes (16% vs. 10% in 2016). Looking at programme format as opposed to delivery methods, there has been a decrease in the proportion of full-time programmes (22% vs. 26% in 2016) and an increase in the proportion of modular programmes (21% vs. 17% in 2016). Modular programmes are conducted via a number of intense teaching periods, and provide greater opportunity to study for an MBA alongside existing work and family commitments.

**DURING THE** past five years there has been a notable increase in the proportion of women enrolling onto AMBA-accredited programmes globally (36% in 2017 compared with 32% in 2013). Among programmes in China and Hong Kong, almost half (48%) of MBA enrollees were women in 2017. In contrast, female students comprised just 16% of cohorts in India, highlighting the significance of regional variations and the potential influence of the traditional roles held by women in business and society.

Will Dawes, research and insight manager at AMBA and the Business Graduates Association (BGA), said:

“These findings further demonstrate the resilience of the top business schools to attract students from across the world onto their MBA programmes. Pleasingly, we are also seeing further progress in terms of gender diversity, illustrating that the MBA can make strides on promoting inclusivity, while maintaining overall demand for programmes.”

“The growth in programmes offered by AMBA-accredited schools suggests that they are able to adapt to the needs of future business leaders, providing a more open opportunity for talented individuals to progress within business management.”

Andrew Main Wilson, Chief Executive of AMBA and BGA, added: “It is encouraging for our sector that in our ever-more competitive and unpredictable world, that AMBA-accredited school application and enrolment numbers are consolidating. These findings chime with the experiences that Deans from AMBA-accredited schools describe to us regularly. It is a credit to AMBA-accredited schools that they are able to continue to deliver high-quality business management education at this volume against such a challenging economic backdrop.”



As a triple accredited business school Strathclyde offers a highly regarded MBA



## About the Strathclyde MBA

The Strathclyde MBA takes experienced executives from a variety of backgrounds, and equips them with the know-how, skills, and strategic orientation to sustain and scale business in today's global businesses. It is not just a business programme, it's a stimulating, challenging, life-changing experience which makes students re-think and re-evaluate how they do business.

It is highly experiential and based on collaborative learning. Students share their varied work experiences, knowledge, understanding, and skills. The Strathclyde MBA shapes and guides students as reflective, open-thinking, and adaptive learners. This is facilitated through enhanced understanding of the interplay of theory and practice in management.

In particular it provides the skills required for progression to higher level policy-forming positions, allows for successful career transitions, facilitates the move from technical specialism to general management, and polishes the skills and enhances the abilities of people working for themselves or about to set up in business.

# A strategic decision

Part-time and flexible learning provides the chance to upskill and not miss out on opportunities at work

BY WILLIAM PEAKIN

An MBA remains the go-to qualification for those who wish to upgrade their career, change sector or perhaps start a new business. It's such a broad-based qualification – covering finance, HRM, economics, marketing and strategy to name a few – that it can help with all of these aims.

As a triple accredited business school – one of only 89 in the world (2018) – to be accredited by AMBA, AACSB and EQUIS, the three international accrediting bodies, Strathclyde offers a highly regarded MBA, one which it has been honing since it first introduced the part time MBA format to the UK in 1976, the flexible learning model in 1983, and the full time MBA before that in 1966.

For those who have the financial wherewithal and the desire to take a year away from the workplace, a full-time option would suit them perfectly, but for some people taking a year out of work to complete the MBA might seem a risk in what may be a competitive job market. For them, being able to study whilst staying in their job is the ideal solution.

Strathclyde Business School offers an MBA which can be studied via part time or flexible options, as well as full-time, allowing students to gain a valuable degree as well as continuing in their current career. What's more, studying the MBA part time or flexibly allows participants to implement their learning straight away, providing benefits to employers and employees alike.

**THE FULL-TIME** programme is studied over 12 months in Glasgow amongst a group of international peers and involves nine months of participation in classes, group work and personal development processes and three months for the MBA project.

Strathclyde's part time programme is ideal for anyone who wants to fit the MBA programme around their career and is offered mainly through evening class once weekly with two compulsory weekend schools, and six intensive weekend seminars typically spread over three years.

The university also offers a flexible learning option which allows individuals to direct the pace of their own studies while providing the level of support that an internationally recognised school can offer. The Flexible Learning MBA offers a balance between self-study and group interaction, while stimulating peer interaction and group learning through workshops and seminars which gives those on the programme the opportunity to meet with their peers.

"One of the key strengths of a Strath-



Strathclyde's excellence of research in strategic management is a key differentiator

clyde MBA is the research base, both in terms of intensity and diversity, that is drawn upon to inform our teaching," said Dr Matthew Revie, Head of the Centre for Corporate Connections (CCC). "While many MBAs focus heavily on finance, our MBA also includes cutting edge teaching and delivery on core business skills such as analytics, operations management, managing people and entrepreneurship.

"Another key strength is the MBA's strategy element. For a large number of the people who choose Strathclyde, strategy is the 'why'. A key part of our MBA is the Strategic Management for Sustainable Success modules which benefit from Strathclyde's reputation and excellence of research in the area of strategy and strategic management. Across these modules, students explore complexity and uncertainty in international business environments, develop their ability to monitor and evaluate strategies, and learn how to develop effective strategies."

**DR REVIE** added: "In terms of the part-time and flexible MBAs, it's often thought that they are attractive because people don't have to take an

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Dr Matthew Revie

extended period away from their work. But actually, what you find, for most people the reason is they are not necessarily considering a career change – which can be the case with those doing an MBA full-time – instead they want to get promoted within their own organisation. People want to upskill themselves and apply their learning almost in real time – a part-time or flexible MBA means that people can continually develop without pausing their own career progression or missing out on opportunities within their own organisation.

"Students doing MBAs are acutely aware of things in their day-to-day job that can be improved if they are given the appropriate skills and techniques to do so. A lot of people are passionate about the businesses and organisations they work for and in between modules, they use the tools they have been given during their MBA studies to improve their companies. As they learn new techniques, they start to apply them within their organisation; that instantaneous benefit to the organisation is another reason why people are very attracted to the part-time or flexible learning model.

"The part-time and flexible learning models provide people with the choice to develop their own career at their own pace – the diversity of people wanting to do an MBA means that one model does not fit all. If you are local-based and your job does not involve a lot of travel, then the part-time model offers an opportunity to develop a strong network with similar students and to work at a constant pace throughout semesters. If your work involves a lot of travel or you are not based close by but are still attracted by what the Strathclyde MBA has to offer, then the flexible learning model – online material complemented by intensive weekend seminars – gives people a choice. We understand that circumstances change, and we allow people to move between the two models of delivery where appropriate."



# Meet the whisky storyteller

A Glasgow MBA has been pivotal in the success of one entrepreneur putting a modern spin on a traditional industry

BY WILLIAM PEAKIN

After studying business administration at university in Bogotá, Camilo Gómez was unsure whether the corporate world was for him; “for fun”, he went to New York and took a course in mixology at a bartending school, which led to the creation of his first company, *La Coctelería*. It specialised in mixology and mobile bars for corporate events; during the day, he was working in different marketing positions within the automobile industry, but nights were when he was able to do what he loved.

For Gómez, it was the starting point for a journey - from being a budding mixologist in the Americas to becoming an entrepreneur in Scotland, with plans to take his business, based on the little-known stories of whisky, to a global audience. It draws on his early experience travelling across North and South America, researching the art of whisky and other local drinks, such as whiskey in the US, Tequila in Mexico, Pisco in Perú and Chile, and Cachaça in Brazil.

“For me, one of the most interesting ways to discover the culture and customs of different countries is by understanding what they drink, how they drink it and where they drink it,” he said.

**GÓMEZ IS THE** founder of Once Upon A Whisky, a whisky tour with a difference; it eschews the staple knowledge of production processes in favour of fascinating insights into the spirit’s history and modern-day incarnation.

Instrumental in him establishing a thriving company was achieving an MBA from the University of Glasgow’s

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“It gives you the big picture of how businesses work and provides you with a spectrum of possibilities. It is a life changing experience”

Camilo Gomez

Adam Smith Business School. “It helped me develop a strategic way of thinking, leadership and entrepreneurial skills,” said Gómez. “It gives you the big picture of how businesses work and provides you with a spectrum of possibilities. It is a life changing experience.”

After several years working in marketing during the day and as a mixologist at night, he was hired as brand ambassador in Colombia for Glenfiddich. After a couple of years with William Grant & Sons, and several trips to Scotland, Gómez knew he wanted to have a go at creating a new venture. “The MBA gave me managerial skills to develop a successful business,” he added.

As part of his time studying at the Adam Smith Business School, Gómez visited whisky distilleries and developed a strong relationship with his mentor Gerry O’Donnell, a former director at Edrington, producers of *The Macallan* and *The Famous Grouse*, among others. Gómez saw that the industry was transforming the way it presented its product to the world, and that this gave an opportunity to engage with new audiences in a different way.

**BEGINNING WITH** just a mobile phone and laptop, he launched Once Upon A Whisky; chosen because on each tour he tells a compelling story. “We don’t focus on the production process or how whisky is made,” he said. “We show you how to enjoy whisky while learning curious facts and quirky stories about the Scottish national drink. From cocktails and food to music and films, whisky connects people through a variety of passions and cultures.”

From one tour in Glasgow he has grown to three in the city and a further two in Edinburgh. He also arranges bespoke tours and corporate events, tailored to the needs of the individual client and organises special events that pair whisky with food - with some unlikely combinations proving exceedingly popular; doughnuts and whisky served up at a film viewing was a particular hit.

Last year, Gómez was selected by Visit Scotland to be part of a European business development mission to Amsterdam and this year was a finalist in the AMBA Excellence Awards. Once Upon A Whisky is one of the small businesses selected by the Royal Bank of Scotland to be part of its accelerator programme, and Gómez has plans to expand into other cities in the UK with a different range of drinks tours such as beer, cocktails and gin.

“If it were not for the MBA I probably wouldn’t be where I am now,” said Gómez. “Gaining a Glasgow MBA is definitely the right way to become a leader in the future, whether it’s through setting up your own business or progressing your career and achieving a good position in any company.” <https://onceuponawhisky.co.uk/>

Camilo Gómez is bringing fresh insights into Scotland’s national drink to a global audience. Photograph: Sally Jubb Photography



## Why study for a Glasgow MBA

The Glasgow MBA transforms futures and prepares professionals to take the next step in their career. It is an intensive yet rewarding one-year programme which empowers students to emerge as leaders with the essential practical skills to unlock opportunities, tackle leadership challenges and make a positive impact.

The Adam Smith Business School is triple accredited and internationally recognised to the highest standards. It has a small but diverse cohort of students each year at Glasgow. As a result, students receive dedicated

one-to-one support while also being able to learn from their classmates’ experiences and skillsets. This year there are students from 15 countries, from many sectors and backgrounds.

Interactive classes balance tuition and discussion. In addition to acquiring the academic knowledge required by business leaders and entrepreneurs, Glasgow MBA graduates acquire the skills to think critically and learn how to ask the right questions. A particular strength of the course is its focus on coping with and managing uncertainty; a key

strength in today’s world.

Association of MBAs (AMBA) accreditation is the global standard for all MBA degrees. The University of Glasgow Adam Smith Business School holds the crown of triple accreditation, being accredited by AMBA, AACSB and EQUIS. This external recognition of quality is an important consideration for anyone considering where to undertake an MBA. Last year it was ranked in the top five one-year MBAs in the UK and in the top 20 worldwide in the Times Higher Education global rankings.



# Best in class

## Maximise your potential with an MBA from RGU

Continuous transformation of global industries and the emergence of new markets means that up-skilling – and the development of a creative, flexible and adaptable mindset – are increasingly important to stand out from the crowd in a highly competitive employment landscape.

Robert Gordon University (RGU) offers one of the best MBA programmes to help students realise their aspiration, build career capital, and develop the professional skills and behaviours required in order to keep up with these fast-paced changes.

RGU's MBA programme is designed with student's aspirations and industry demand in mind and maintains a truly global perspective. Courses are delivered through flexible study options of full-time on campus, part-time and distance learning, with students from as far afield as India and Dubai to Australia and Canada having completed an MBA through RGU via online distance learning.

The Association of MBAs (AMBA) – the premier MBA industry body, accredits RGU's MBA and MBA Oil and Gas Management courses. This assures that the MBA is of direct relevance to the real world of busi-

ness as well as meeting the highest international standards. Out of 50 online MBA programmes from around the world included in the 2018 QS Distance Online MBA rankings, RGU was ranked joint 15th in the world overall. The rankings also show that RGU's online MBA programme scored highest (100%) for class experience.

Recent RGU MBA graduate, Dr Jenna Ross, a scientific researcher currently developing a spin-out based on a pioneering slug control project states "I feel that I graduated with all the tools required to spin out my business".

Dr Ross completed her MBA via online distance learning and has just been announced as The Chartered Management Institute's (CMI) Student of the Year in their Higher Education Awards 2019. This award celebrates outstanding student achievement and contribution in terms of their academic and professional development.

She was also recently shortlisted at the AMBA Student of the Year Awards, a global award that recognises the talents and contributions made by students. Dr Ross was one of five nominees for MBA Student of the Year and the only one from Scotland – shortlisted among MBA alumni from Hong Kong, Spain, Ireland and the UK.

The MBA courses at RGU are designed specifically to meet the current demands of industry, with course



Helping students realise their aspiration, build career capital, and develop professional skills

content designed to relate to real life working environments, and every student conducts an applied Consultancy Project for an industry client on an issue of strategic importance to the organisation.

**ONE OF THE** programme highlights is the annual MBA Leadership Week which brings together MBA students and alumni from all over the world. Leadership Week gives students from the MBA and MBA Oil and Gas

Management degrees a chance to meet industry experts from a range of business sectors in a week of learning opportunities which focus on the fundamentals of leadership, communication and change.

Empowering students by providing them with the tools to develop a sustainable business is crucial – but, igniting that spark and providing inspiration and confidence is also a key component of developing the entrepreneurial mind-set. The school

invites alumni to return to provide master classes to both undergraduates and postgraduates, as well as hosting student placements and projects.

RGU's MBA Director, Dr Ian Broadbent, said "Our MBA improves the employability of our graduates through the development of their knowledge, skills, competences, and behaviours, which ultimately helps them to make better business decisions, to lead organisations more effectively, and to enjoy successful careers."

**RGU** ROBERT GORDON  
UNIVERSITY ABERDEEN

## MBA STUDY AT RGU

We offer two internationally recognised and industry connected MBA Programmes, a general **MBA** and a specialist **MBA in Oil and Gas Management**.

Both degrees are highly applied and practice-driven to hone your skills and support your career development. You'll participate in our acclaimed Leadership Week event, take control of a business in an online simulation, and apply your learning in a Consultancy Project to bring value for a client organisation.

Join us in **September 2019**, we have a range of study modes to suit you including full-time, part-time, on campus or online.

[www.rgu.ac.uk/mba](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/mba)

# MAXIMISE YOUR POTENTIAL

