

The Military MBA Application Checklist

Every step of the MBA application process for military officers - from initial research through your deposit.

Work backward from your first application deadline, then follow each school's interview, decision, and enrollment dates. Map these alongside your PCS/ETS schedule.

PHASE 1 STRATEGY & SCHOOL SELECTION

12 months before applying

- ☐ Define your post-MBA career goal (industry + function)
- ☐ Research programs for academic fit, military community, and recruiting access
- ☐ Talk to military alumni and admissions staff at target schools
- ☐ Build a balanced list of schools you would actually attend
- ☐ Track current deadlines, test policies, funding, and contacts
- ☐ Map your military timeline against application and enrollment dates
- ☐ Choose an application round using each school's calendar and your readiness

Use this checklist alongside each school's current instructions. Record your actual deadlines and check each box as you complete it.

Want help applying this to your situation?

Find the book and information about application coaching at thembaopord.com.

PHASE 2 TEST PREP & GMAT/GRE

10-6 months before applying

- ☐ Check which tests each program accepts and whether a waiver is available
- ☐ Take an official diagnostic to identify strengths and gaps
- ☐ Compare current GMAT scores with the same exam edition; use GMAC concordance for older scores
- ☐ For the GRE, compare Verbal and Quantitative section scores with the school's current profile
- ☐ Build a study schedule from your diagnostic and available time
- ☐ Book your test with time for official score reporting and a possible retake

Current GMAT totals use 205-805; previous-edition scores use 200-800. GRE Verbal and Quantitative each use 130-170. A class median is a reference point, not an admissions cutoff.

PHASE 3 RECOMMENDERS

6-3 months before applying

- ☐ Follow each school's required number and recommender relationship criteria
- ☐ Choose people who know your work well and can give firsthand examples
- ☐ Ask early and confirm their availability for the deadlines
- ☐ Provide your resume, goals, factual examples, and the actual school deadlines
- ☐ Leave the assessment and writing to the recommender
- ☐ Agree on a working schedule and follow up politely

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PHASE 4 ESSAYS & APPLICATION

3-1 months before applying

- ☐ Use the current cycle's exact prompts and word limits
- ☐ Explain your goals, learning needs, and reasons for each school
- ☐ Draft essays using specific experiences and honest reflection
- ☐ Get feedback from readers who can identify unclear military language
- ☐ Prepare your military-to-civilian resume in the requested format
- ☐ Check transcripts, test reporting, recommendations, and all other requirements
- ☐ Use optional essays only as the school's instructions permit
- ☐ Submit a complete application with a buffer; confirm receipt in the portal

PHASE 5 INTERVIEWS

Before and after invitations

- ☐ Prepare a concise personal narrative that connects experience, goals, and the MBA
- ☐ Practice leadership, teamwork, failure, and school-fit questions
- ☐ Do mock interviews and use the feedback to improve
- ☐ Follow the school's interview format and scheduling instructions
- ☐ Listen carefully and answer the question actually asked
- ☐ Follow the school's post-interview policy; send a brief thank-you within a day only if permitted
- ☐ Complete any required post-interview reflection or follow-up

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PHASE 6 DECISIONS & NEXT STEPS

On each school's calendar

- ☐ Compare offers: funding, community, recruiting access, and fit
- ☐ Confirm GI Bill eligibility, program-specific Yellow Ribbon, and scholarship interactions
- ☐ Build a full household budget including savings, borrowing, and monthly cash flow
- ☐ Review the actual deposit deadline and conditions before accepting
- ☐ Coordinate your military transition early enough to meet enrollment requirements
- ☐ Decline other offers through each school's process when your decision is final
- ☐ Connect with the incoming class and school veteran community

Official sources

GMAC: scores and exam editions

<https://www.mba.com/exams/gmat-exam/scores/understanding-your-score>

ETS: GRE score scales

<https://www.ets.org/gre/test-takers/general-test/scores/get-scores.html>

NYU Stern: current test policy

<https://www.stern.nyu.edu/programs-admissions/tech-mba/admissions/standardized-tests>

Harvard Business School: application requirements

<https://www.hbs.edu/mba/admissions/application-process>

Guidance reviewed September 2026. Requirements and eligibility depend on the school, application cycle, and individual circumstances.