

PRD: MBACAS

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Vision

Our product MBACAS (Master of Business Administration Centralized Application Solution) is a single portal for prospective MBA applicants who apply to multiple MBA programs, and a solution for MBA admission teams to enable efficient planning and implementation of the admission process. The positioning statements, mentioned below, for our two set of customers explains the vision, soul and uniqueness of our product:

MBA applicants

For **“prospective MBA students”**

Who are **“facing hassles of applying to multiple Business schools and of managing multiple online applications”**

Our **“MBA Centralized Application Solution is an application management portal”**

That provides **“MBA students with a single portal to create, submit and track applications for multiple schools”**

Unlike **“existing 3rd party software”**

We offer an **“amazing user experience, synchronized time line for all application tracking and provide customized recommendations to enable smooth and intelligent application process.”**

B-School admissions team

For **“US B-School admission teams”**

Who **“evaluate hundreds of applications every year”**

Our **“MBA Centralized Application Solution is a software application”**

That provides **the “admissions team with a great tool to collaborate while evaluating applications, interact with applicants during the application process, plan their admissions marketing strategy, and predict their admission cycle.”**

Unlike **“existing solutions,”**

We offer an **“amazing user experience and data analytics to enable better planning and productivity.”**

Motivation

Unmet Needs

After researching articles about the MBA application process and conducting student surveys, we believe the most important unmet needs are as below:

- **Unavailability of one-stop solution for all MBA applications:**

One of the biggest pain points among the MBA applicants is the time consumption due to filling out the same basic background information for each and every school again and again. As per our survey of 100 MBA applicants, 50% of our survey respondents admitted that they spent on average more than 1 hour in setting up the profile on the application portal for a business school. When we asked about the number of business schools they had applied to, 77% responded that they had applied to at least two schools and 27% of the respondents applied to more than 5 schools. When asked about the ease of obtaining multiple recommendations from the same recommender, 43 students rated the process as 3.72 out of 5 on average and 5 representing very difficult. This clearly shows the needs to have a centralized application portal, which could save time for MBA applicants and improve their application experience.

- **Track the real time progress of an application:**

Most of MBA applicants admit that applying for B-schools is a full-time job. It involves constantly checking on all the applied business school websites for updates, tracking all deadlines and inquiring about the progress of your application over and over. After surveying MBA applicants, one of the top feedbacks we received was being able to get real time updates regarding deadlines, recommendation requests and progress of their application.

- **Single log-in or having one credential rather than multiple ones:**

Each MBA applicant submitted, on average, 3 applications according to the Graduate Management Admissions Council. As per our survey, 35 applicants had responded that they had forgotten their login credential more than 3 times during their application process. This leads us to conclude that a single sign on solution would add lot of value in improving the MBA application process.

- **One channel to reach out to all schools for queries during application:**

MBA application process is a tedious process, which involves filling out multiple forms, which, at times, could be intimidating if the requirements for each schools are not clear. This often leads to students wanting to get in touch with the admissions office at various schools. From our survey, one of the top recommendations provided by students was having a single channel to communicate with all schools so that they could get their queries resolved faster.

- **Data analytics engine that could provide schools as well as students with trends and statistics so that they could make informed decisions:**

With the evolution of technology, data analytics has been a vital resource in better decision-making. Companies use data analytics engine to draw correlations, trends and recommendations for their business. There has been an increase in the number of business school applications over the years. Students and the business schools could greatly benefit if all application data could be pooled into a central data analytics engine, which could provide statistics and recommendations to both students and business schools.

Customer Segments

On a high level, we have two target segments as below.

- US Business schools
- All MBA Applicants

US Business schools:

US MBA schools are our primary target segment. The early adopters in this segment would be schools, which receive many applications and are open to use of third party technologies to simplify the application process. As per Poets and Quants¹, Harvard Business School, Stanford and Wharton are the top 3 business schools that received the most number of applications in 2013. According to the Director of Admissions we interviewed at the University of Washington, he mentioned that Stanford is known to be one of the first to adopt third party solutions. Hence our strategy would be to target the top 25 business schools whose adoption would eventually influence other business schools to start using MBACAS. We would be using the push and pull strategy where in we would pull the top 25 business school to adopt our solution. The adapted schools would eventually push the use of the MBACAS portal to all MBA applications.

¹<http://www.usnews.com/education/best-graduate-schools/top-business-schools/slideshows/mba-programs-that-receive-the-most-full-time-applications/11>

MBA Applicants:

Amongst MBA applicants, MBACAS would be most beneficial to those that apply to more than 3 business schools. It takes a great deal of time to create a profile for each business school and to keep track of the progress via the different application portals. As per our survey, close to 70% of the applicants showed their concern on time utilized on filling out same data on multiple forms. They also voiced their hesitation for not being able to approach the same recommender for recommendations when they had applied to more than 3 business schools. The MBA Centralized Application Solution would solve most problems faced by the applicants and improve their application experience.

On a demographics scale, we believe MBA applicants who have more than 5 years of industry experience would be already busy with their professional life. This group would be our product advocates since it would save a great deal of time and have a better tracking mechanism for their applications.

Please see **Appendix 1** for a summary of all results obtained from surveying current and past MBA applicants.

Existing Solutions:

- **Existing School-owned portals:**

Currently, some business schools use their own graduate school application portals to receive and manage MBA applications. We interviewed the Director of Admissions at the University of Washington and he admitted that the grad school application portal, although it is free to use for the MBA school, does not have the customization and functionality required for the MBA application process. He stated that B-schools would be willing to switch to a new system if it can save time and meet their needs.

- **GMAC (Graduate Management Admission Council):**

GMAC offers trends and statistics data for business school and MBA applicants. It uses the GMAT exam data to provide information such as demand for graduate management education, current GMAT volume and profile of GMAT candidates. However, GMAC does not provide a solution to ease the rigorous process of applying to business schools.

- **Best MBA :**

Best MBA website is an online directory for finding best MBA programs in the world. The online directory provides ranking of the world's best MBA programs in each region and other reputable MBA programs in each country including the university/institute's address, telephone contact number, the city or cities in which the MBA program runs,

the length of the MBA program with start dates, the country and the course format. Best MBA can only help applicants find the best business schools, but it does not aid in the application process or facilitate communication with schools.

- **ApplyYourself (Hobsons) :**

ApplyYourself is a third party application management system owned by Hobson. ApplyYourself works with each school, who is the customer, to help them receive and review applications, however, each school has a separate portal. Students who apply to schools that use ApplyYourself still have to create separate profiles and log-ins for each school and re-enter and submit all application materials separately. This system is not a centralized application solution; it is an application management system.

Differentiation

The benefits of using a centralized application portal are multifold. It not only makes the application process simple and easy to track but with more data being fed to the centralized system, we are able to provide better information to students as well as school so that they can make an informed decision. We are also able to make recommendations based on historical data, which increases the overall performance of the students and schools.

We will provide a service similar to existing solutions; however, our product will seamlessly integrate the best of these solutions into one portal. Our system will also provide schools with the flexibility to create their own customized application requirements and allow them to communicate with applicants.



² *The Third Party Solutions existing for application service are by Hobsons

Why Now?

With the number of business school applications increasing year over year, MBACAS would be the ideal solution to improve the overall experience of students and also providing business schools with statistical data for improvements.

Verbal/Visual Walkthrough of Use Cases

Applicants:

A. A prospective applicant has just decided to apply for US MBA program. She is not sure where to start.

- She can create a profile at MBACAS to explore schools and MBACAS helps her find the right school. *Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Home page.*
- She can directly click on “Preparing to Apply” on MBACAS to find the right school for her. *Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Preparing to apply Explore page.*
- Selects all the B-school programs that she is interested in.
- Clicks on the various schools and analyzes past trend of average GMAT scores, student ratings, tuition fees, class size and applicant profiles. *Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Preparing to apply Results page.*
- She has an option to “apply” for that specific school.
- She can click on the school directory or important dates links to read more in depth details about the MBA schools, application requirements and dates.

B. A prospective student who is in the process of applying to MBA programs.

- She registers at MBACAS (if she doesn't already have one). *Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Registration page.*
- Enters basic information about herself and uploads recommendations and transcripts. *Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Applicants Profile page.*
- Selects schools she wants to apply to.
- MBACAS guides her through the application process for each school and helps her keep track of deadlines and her application progress. *Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Application Submission and Save pages.*

C. A prospective student wants to check the status of her application after she has applied.

- She logs into the MBACAS and finds her personal dashboard. *Refer Appendix 2 –*

Use case Mock-ups – Applicants Dashboard page.

- She has a list of the B-School programs, where she has applied, with present status for each B-School program.
- The status values are hyperlinks, which takes her to:
 - a. Interview scheduling tool if the status is “interview request”
 - b. Admit letter if the status is “admitted”
 - c. Reject letter if the status is “reject”
 - d. Special information page if the status is “additional information required”
 - e. Application if the status is “In-Review”
- She can check her mailbox through the dashboard page.

B-School admissions team

A. An admission committee member finalizes the requirements in terms of application material for a given admission cycle.

- She logs into her admin account page and selects the fields she wants on the application page for the school. *Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Home page.*
- School admissions team has a special registration process – they need to get approval before confirming the administration access.
- She enters the deadline for various rounds, essay questions for the applicants and other custom fields if required. *Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – School Administration Planning page.*
- She previews the page and also does a trial run for the whole process.
- She edits the required information and/or publishes it.

B. An admission committee member who is evaluating applications for a particular round.

- She logs into the system and finds her dashboard.
- Clicks on “applications submitted” and finds all applicants’ names as hyperlinks.
- She can either filter the list or search a particular student by name or application number. *Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Application Review page.*
- She clicks on a particular applicant name and finds his/her page and is able to view the application materials on-line. She can add comments and/or highlight sections of the application. The comments can be shared with other admission committee members and multiple admissions committee members can collaborate on any application.

C. Admission committee has decided to send interview invites for a particular round.

- She logs into her account, finds her dashboard and then clicks on “admin page”.
- Selects all applicants, selected for interviews, and selects open interview slots for them.
- Shares the interview slots to students by interview scheduling tool.

Detailed Design & Features Description

Design Principles

Our main aim with MBACAS is to make the MBA school application process easier and simpler for the students. Keeping this aim in the mind, following are our design principles:

- Ease of usability, simplicity, and informative for students not only from US but also across the world.
- Ensure that the website is compatible with the school’s database and easy to adapt.
- Easy to integrate with school’s existing applications.
- Customizable based on each school’s application requirement
- Data security
- Availability and scalability to have more schools and applications adopt our platform.

Infrastructure and Analytics	User Interface
<p>To begin with, the application will be running on public cloud platform such as AWS or Azure. We will be using the storage services available on public cloud platforms to store our application data.</p> <p>Usage metrics will be monitored with Adobe Omniture.</p>	<p>Web browser compatible across:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet Explorer • Safari • Chrome • Firefox

Features/information architecture

Applicants:

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Detail</u>	<u>Dependencies/ Mock ups</u>	<u>Priority</u>
Preparing to Apply	The applicants can view this page even without registering on MBACAS. The page will have two sections:	The dependency is to get the analytics about schools such as average	1

	<p>Filters – Students will be able to choose the schools they are interested in and the parameters they want to explore for these schools –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GMAT Score Range • Student Ratings • Tuition Fee • Class size • Applicants profile <p>Search Results – Once the applicants click on the show results after choosing filters, the results will be displayed as charts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicants will be able to choose what type of chart they would like to view. • They will have access to print the charts. • They can go back to the filters page to change the selection. <p>If students have created a profile, they will be able to save the chosen schools to their wish list and submit an application.</p>	<p>GMAT score, student ratings, tuition fee, class size, and accepted applicants' profiles. Also working with GMAT to get student ratings, and applicants' profiles.</p> <p><i>Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Preparing to apply Explore page</i></p> <p><i>Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Preparing to apply Results page</i></p>	
School Directory	The applicants will be able to search for the schools and this link will give them access to the official school website, general information, and application rules and policies.	The dependency is to get the applications details for different schools.	1
Important Dates	The applicants will be able to search for the schools and get access to the important deadlines for each school in a calendar view.	The dependency is to get the deadlines details for different schools.	1
Login	The applicants will be able to login to the MBACAS website with the username (or email address) and	<i>Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Home page</i>	1

	password set up by them while registering on MBACAS. The user name and password will be validated.		
Registration	<p>The applicants will be able to register on website by providing following details and agreeing to the terms and conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Name • Last Name • Middle Name • Birth Date • Sex • Email address • Phone number • Username and Password • Security questions 	<p>The dependency is to get the terms and conditions and getting legal approvals to store applicants' information.</p> <p><i>Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Registration page</i></p>	1
Forgot your Password	The applicants will be able to reset their password in case they forget by using the registered email address, phone number or security questions.	<i>Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Home page</i>	1
Dashboard	<p>Once the applicants successfully login to the MBACAS website, they will land up on dashboard. Following details will be displayed on the dashboard –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profile completion status with clickable link to update the profile. • Mailbox – number of new mails, link to mailbox • School applications – status and clickable link to update the applications • Interview Scheduler link – any pending requests. 	<i>Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Applicants Dashboard page.</i>	1
Update your profile	<p>The applicants will be able to edit/update their profile.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Name 	<i>Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Applicants Profile page.</i>	1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last Name • Middle Name • Birth Date • Sex • Email address • Phone number • Username and Password • Security questions • GMAT Score • TOEFL Score (if applicable) 		
Background Details	<p>The applicants will be able to edit/update their background details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools attended • Address • Contact details • Scores 		1
Employment Details	<p>The applicants will be able to edit/update their employment details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past and present employment history • Job details 		1
Transcripts	<p>The applicants will be able to upload their transcripts for verification. This tab will display the status of the transcripts.</p>	<p>The dependency would be to get the mechanism in place for verifying transcripts from universities across the world. Provide ability to MBA schools to download the transcripts.</p>	1
Recommendations	<p>The applicants will be able to send invitations to the recommenders and check status.</p>	<p>The dependency would be to get the answers to the common questions asked across schools and ensure that the applicants don't need multiple recommendations for</p>	1

		multiple applications.	
Application Status	Once the schools make decisions for the applicants' applications. The applicants will be able to view the status and choose either to accept or to reject the offer.		1
Make Payments	The applicants will be able to make payments based on the number of applications submitted.	The dependency would be aligning with the schools for new payment terms.	2
Mailbox	The applicants will be able to check their mailbox – read emails, and send emails to the school admission officers.	The dependency would be aligning with the schools to use our platform to get in contact with the applicants.	1
Apply to Schools	The applicants will be able to upload their essays both in writing as well as videos, and other supplement information.	<i>Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Application Submission and Save pages.</i>	1
Schedule Interviews	The applicants will be able to schedule interviews and accept the invitations from schools.	The dependency would be aligning with the schools to use our platform to set up interviews with the applicants.	1
Manage your Calendar	The applicants will be able to manage their calendar – view application deadlines of the schools they are interested in, and the interview schedules.		2
Content pages – About us, Contact us, FAQs	The content pages such as about us, contact us and FAQs will have applicants answer their queries and contact us for any technical help.		1
Logout	The logout link will be available on all		1

	the pages. Once applicants click on the logout link and if they are in middle of the application, the confirmation will be displayed to save all the information.		
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B-School admissions team

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Detail</u>	<u>Dependencies/ Mock ups</u>	<u>Priority</u>
Research and Recruit Students	The school officials can view this page to review the students profile and purchase the students contact details for which they are interested in recruiting.	<i>Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – School Administration Planning page.</i>	2
Market Intelligence	The school officials can view this page to see the current profile of students on average, and analytics for different schools.		2
Tools	The school officials will be able to view the tools available for them in MBACAS to build the applications.		2
Login	The school officials will be able to login to the MBACAS website with the username (or email address) and password set up by them while registering on MBACAS. The user name and password will be validated.	<i>Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Home page</i>	1
Registration	The school officials will be able to register on website by providing following details and agreeing to the terms and conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Name • Last Name • Middle Name • Birth Date 	The dependency is to get the terms and conditions and getting legal approvals to store applicants' information. <i>Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups –</i>	1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex • Email address • Phone number • Username and Password <p>Security questions</p>	<i>Registration page</i>	
Approval	The school officials to register successfully on the MBACAS website, they would have additional approval process where the school administrator would verify and confirm the access to any new official registering on MBACAS.		1
Forgot your Password	The school officials will be able to reset their password in case they forget by using the registered email address, phone number or security questions.		1
Dashboard	<p>Once the school officials successfully login to the MBACAS website, they will land up on dashboard. Following details will be displayed on the dashboard –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profile completion status with clickable link to update the profile. • Mailbox – number of new mails, link to mailbox • New applications – clickable link to view the new applications • Applications under review status • Application Planning status • Interview Scheduler link – any pending requests. 		1
Update your profile	The school officials will be able to edit/update their profile.	<i>Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups –</i>	1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Name • Last Name • Middle Name • Birth Date • Sex • Email address • Phone number • Username and Password • Security questions • GMAT Score • TOEFL Score (if applicable) 	<i>Applicants Profile page.</i>	
Plan Application	<p>The school officials will be able to set up the application format and requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application deadlines for all rounds • Requirements for test scores • Essays questions and formats • Supplement information • Information session • Welcome weekend • Interview dates • Notification dates 	<i>Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – School Administration Planning page.</i>	1
New Applications/ Applications under review	<p>The school officials will be able to view new applications submitted by the applicants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profile • Exam scores • Essays • Recommendations • Supplemental Information • Transcript • Update Rank • Take notes • Change status to accept/reject • Search applicants using name 	<i>Refer Appendix 2 – Use case Mock-ups – Application Review page</i>	1

Manage interviews	The school officials will be able to manage the interviews – send an invitation, accept or confirm an invitation and cancel an invitation.	The dependency would be aligning with the schools to use our platform to set up interviews with the applicants.	1
Inbox	The school officials will be able to check their mailbox – read emails, and send emails to the applicants.	The dependency would be aligning with the schools to use our platform to get in contact with the applicants.	2
Content pages – About us, Contact us, FAQs	The content pages such as about us, contact us and FAQs will have officials answer their queries and contact us for any technical help.		1
Logout	The logout link will be available on all the pages. Once the officials click on the logout link and if they are in middle of a process, the confirmation will be displayed to save all the information.		1

v1 aka Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

All of the above features with the priority 1 would be part of the minimum viable product (MVP).

vNext

Here are the features that will be part of the next release:

- Anything listed as priority 2 – market intelligence, research and recruit students will be part of the next release.
- We will also be focusing on improving the filters, and search functionality across the pages to provide more flexibility to the users.
- We will be adding notifications feature to the website – for sending notifications emails on change of any status or new mail.
- Feature to download all details about the applicants using .csv file to provide integration flexibility.

- Syncing the MBACAS calendar/ interview schedule with public calendars such as Google calendar, and outlook etc.

v longterm

Our long-term plan would be to create a mobile app to provide flexibility to users to perform basic functions such as reading emails, checking status and confirming interviews, and reading notifications. Other important function that we want to focus on is having feedback form for schools in case students reject the invitation.

Roadmap / Timing

Our website directly correlates with the business schools admission cycles, so we are planning to align our launch with the admission start date for year 2016.

Milestone	Timing	Notes
First launch – Beta version – open only for business schools	April	Enabling schools to set up the application requirements on our website. May be available only for school from a particular region.
Analyze metrics and incorporate feedback	May	Make changes as necessary to prep for beta launch for students and also enabling for other business schools
Beta version – open for students	May	Enabling students to research about schools on our website.
Analyze metrics and incorporate feedback	June	Make changes as necessary to prep for full launch
Go through the first application deadlines and analyze metrics	September	Ensure to communicate existence of website to all students and schools.
Second version launch, including Post-launch analysis and adjustments	October	Make whatever tweaks possible to enable the functionalities of vNext noted above.

Metrics

Quantitative Metrics	For Students	For Schools
Number of total visits	X	X
Number of absolute unique visits	X	X
Ave. number unique visitors per day	X	X
Number of new accounts	X	X
Conversion rate = number of unique visits / number of new accounts	X	X
Number of applications started by applicant	X	
Number of applications submitted by applicant	X	
Number of visits per user per week	X	X
Average time spent on website per user	X	X
Average time spent per application (from start to finish)	X	X
Number of applications submitted per round		X
Number of applications submitted per school-year	X	X
Number of messages sent per day/per week	X	X
Total number of pages per visit	X	X
Average number of pages per visit	X	X
Bounce rate	X	X
Number of leads	X	X
Average number of leads per month	X	X
% of visitors that turned into leads	X	X
% of leads that turned into business	X	X
Ongoing return on investment (revenue – cost)	X	X

Qualitative metrics:

- Top landing pages
- Top exit pages
- Top content
- Social media / share button stats
- Traffic sources
- Top referring URLs
- Lead generating goals
- Visitors' browsers
- Location of visitors
- Visitors using mobile devices
- Map overlay (monitors traffic patterns)
- Network properties (visitors' computer speeds, operating systems)

International

Internationalization is not applicable in our website directly. We will be focusing on making this application available only for US business schools and our website will support only English language. However, the students across the world will be using our website. Our application will not be customized based on the users' home country, but it will be informative and easy to use keeping in mind students from different countries or cultures will be using for applying to the US business schools.

Projected Costs

Here is the costs breakdown (including assumptions*) only for the development and release of the MVP version:

- Total time required for development = 8 person months
- Total effort including development, testing and design = 20 person months
- Compute systems: Amazon EC2 = 1 machines per month (5040 hours)
- Storage systems: Amazon S3 = 250 GB per month
- Total operational costs = \$105,000 = \$96000 (engineer costs) + 9000 (Amazon infrastructure costs)

**Assumption:*

- *32 pages to develop*
- *One person month to develop 4 pages*
- *Development is only 40% of the total effort*
- *Engineer per hour costs \$30.*
- *5 engineers would be working in a month.*
- *For infrastructure, we are planning to use AWS (Amazon web services). Amazon EC2 costs \$0.070 per hour³ and Amazon S3 costs \$0.0300 per GB⁴*

³ <http://aws.amazon.com/ec2/pricing/>

⁴ <http://aws.amazon.com/s3/pricing/>

Operational Needs

Operational support will be needed from the below parties on an ongoing basis for the smooth functioning of MBACAS:

- **Business School Admission Members**
 - An admissions committee member needs to finalize the requirements in terms of application material for a given admissions cycle.
 - The task involves entering the deadline for the various application rounds, essay questions and other custom fields.
- **Transcript verification**
 - We will be partnering with an external agency for transcript verification. This will be an ongoing process, which gets triggered as soon as an applicant submits his application along with the transcripts.
- **Partnership with schools for obtaining student profile information for data analytics**
 - MBACAS would partner with the schools to obtain information about average GMAT score, class size, tuition fee, accepted applicants profile etc. to provide customized recommendations to prospective students.
- **Integration of MBACAS with school's database**
 - MBACAS provides centralized application solution that provides one-time transcript verification, which is shared with different schools. Hence we need to integrate MBACAS system with the internal database for each school to transfer the verification data.
- **Integration of MBACAS recommendation system with school's internal system**
 - MBACAS also provides a recommendations engine, which aids students to have recommendation only once and MBACAS would integrate with the school's internal system for transfer of recommendation data for each student.
- **Legal advise and approval**
 - We would need to partner with 3rd party legal teams to get legal advice and approval for the terms and conditions. We would also need to learn about the privacy protection acts, which we need to comply with for storing student information in our database.
- **Student Feedback**

- We are also soliciting student feedback to help improve the functionality of the MBACAS system and to help solve all the major pain points of students in terms of MBA application.

Addressing Caveats/risks

Risk	Description	Mitigation Strategy
User privacy	All user data must be protected from inappropriate use and access from third-party	All personally identifying information (PII) will not be provided to third-party without consent of the user. Any data provided to partners for research will not include PII. Strategies to optimize website security (not inclusive): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep software up to date • Error messages • Server side validation/form validation • Complex passwords • Inspect all files uploaded into the server • Using website security tools
Legal compliance	Ensure compliance with all laws governing the use of private personal data and e-commerce. Reduce number of lawsuits arising from negligence or misuse of user data.	Contract with law firm to ensure compliance with all federal laws and regulations.
Access and downtime risk	Prevent server crashes and ensure zero downtime	24-hour development and IT team to ensure data integrity and protection.
Low adoption by B-Schools	B-Schools may be hesitant to adopt a different technology when they have a currently solution that works well for them.	Hire and train competent sales team to ensure that we accurately convey the value of our product to B-schools. Provide an exceptional user experience.
GMAC pushback	GMAC may not “endorse” MBACAS and will not either	Work with GMAC as a partner instead of competitor.

	share data with us or partner with us.	
High cost	Operating costs may be too high.	Operate on lean start-up model and have appropriate monetization strategy.

Other Areas for Investigation

We are aware that GMAC or ApplyYourself have a capabilities to offer a centralized application system, however, we are not sure why this has not been accomplished. Each of these entities may have different objectives, therefore, may not be looking to provide our proposed solution right now.

We plan to start piloting our system with small regional schools to test our hypotheses before approaching large/high-ranking schools. Our primary strategy would be to target the top 25 business schools whose adoption would eventually influence other business schools to start using MBACAS. We would be using the push and pull strategy where in we would pull the top 25 business school to adopt our solution. The adapted school would eventually push the use of the MBACAS portal to all MBA applications.

The other logical extensions that are being currently researched and will be part of the future versions of MBACAS are mentioned below. These are not part of the MVP version, as they would need more user testing.

- **Social media networking with other applicants** – It would be a great opportunity for the prospective students to connect to current students or alumni at a business school, to learn more about the school. Social media networking is an excellent way to achieve this. This will also help prospective students to connect with other prospective students and build networks. We are researching on integrating MBACAS with the social media websites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube to leverage the strength of social media connections.
- **Dashboard and customization** – One of our core strength is the data analytics engine that we own which provides customized information for prospective students. As the data engine would need enough data from a larger sample of applicants, we would be hosting this service in future versions of MBACAS.

- **Recommendations to students for their prospective schools (based on previous success rate of students with similar background/data)** - One of the customized service we would be providing to the prospective students would be recommendations for business schools that best fit their profile. After gathering large amount of information regarding the student profile for each business schools, the acceptance rate, the average GMAT scores etc., our data analytics engine would be able to make highly plausible match in terms of business schools to each of the applicants. As this service would need more data and more user testing, we would roll out the service in future versions.
- **Mobile version of MBACAS** – With mobile penetration almost reaching 100% and almost all students owning their own cell phones, we are planning to offer mobile app version of MBACAS which would provide real time pushed notifications for updates on their application.

Group Members

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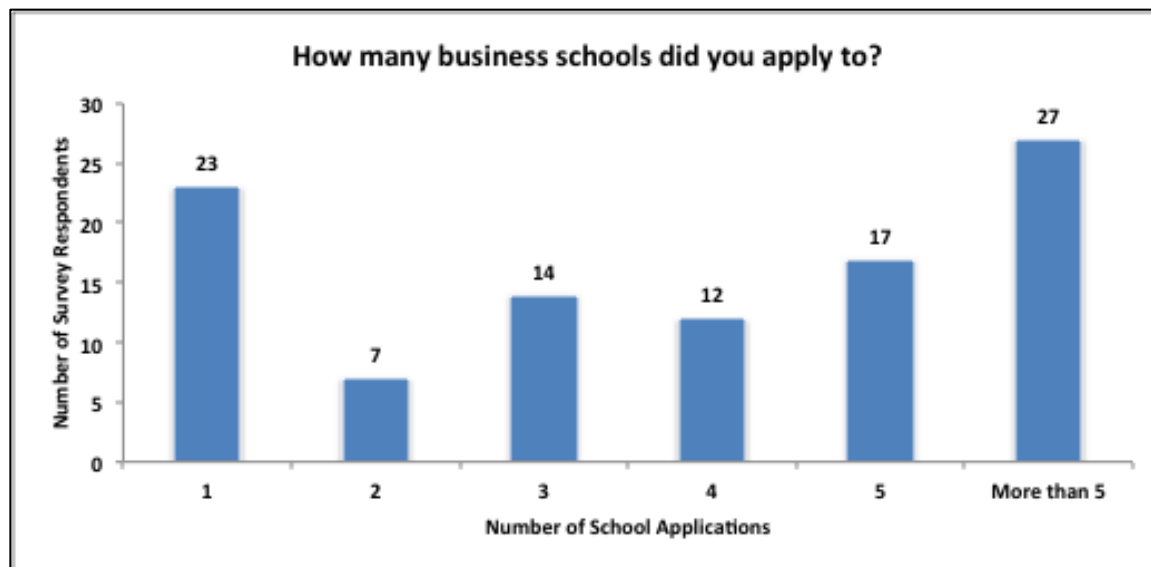
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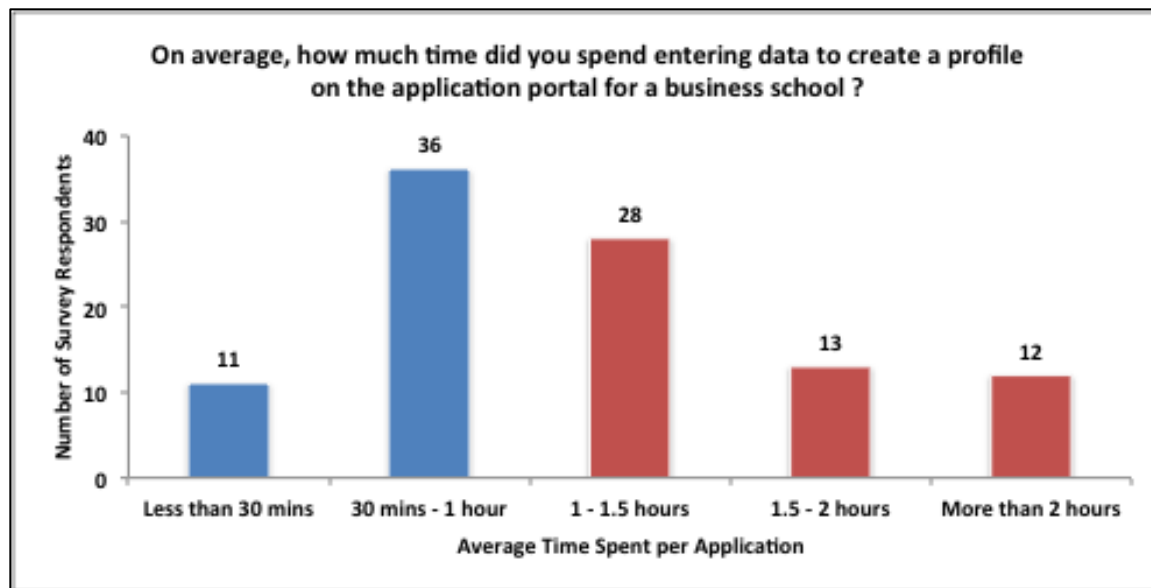
Appendix

1. Applicant Survey Results

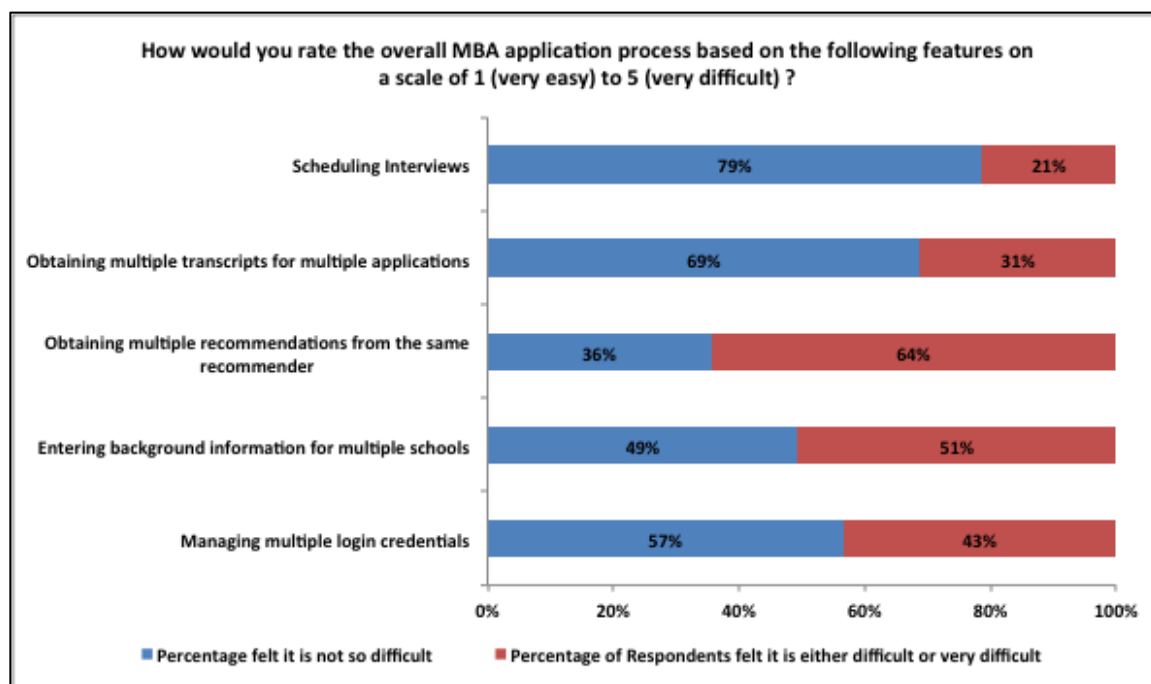
Out of 100 survey respondents, 77% applied to at least two schools and 27% of the respondents applied to more than 5 schools.



50% of our survey respondents admitted that they spent on average more than 1 hour in setting up the profile on the application portal for a business school.



When we asked our customer segment of MBA students, we found that most of the students felt obtaining multiple recommendations from the same recommender, entering background information for multiple schools and managing multiple login credentials are difficult.



On scale of 1(very easy) to 5 (very difficult), here is the average of all responses.

Features	Managing multiple login credentials	Entering background information for multiple schools	Obtaining multiple recommendations from the same recommender	Obtaining multiple transcripts for multiple applications	Scheduling Interviews
Average Difficulty Level	3.12	3.51	3.66	2.65	2.69

24% of those who submitted application to more than one school responded that they missed the application deadline at least once during the process. At the same time, 73% of them agreed on forgetting their login details more than once while applying to the business schools.

Some of the common concern about the current MBA application process across the survey respondents:

*"I felt there were many questions on the application form that were **repetitive** and I had to enter **several times**"*

*"Greater transparency by the schools of what they are looking for. **One unique** application process for all schools would be very beneficial. "*

*"**Standardize** application costs amongst programs"*

*"I really didn't like inviting senior managers to type down their recommendation **several times** for me. Hope this could be improved."*

*"A **one stop shop** for all schools would have been great--huge time saver"*

*"leverage **same background** and work experience data across different application"*

*"**Standardization** across MBA programs."*

*"A **common platform** from where data can be pulled and automatically populated into the application"*

*"Develop a tool for retaining all possible data in **one time**, and then can be automatically feed into different format by different school."*

*"It would be fantastic if there were a "Linkedin" type profile that could be **homogeneously** applied across multiple MBA programs."*

*"It would be great to have **one portal** that manages all MBA applications with nuances for particular schools."*

*"have **one website** that will fill out the applications automatically"*

*"**One application** for many schools (universal app)"*

*"**Standardize** the stuff that isn't integral to determining fit."*

*"Automatically import **standard information** somehow such as address, education, job history."*


2. Use Case Mock-ups

a. Home page

The mockup is presented within a browser window titled "A Web Page". The address bar shows "http://www.mbacas.com". The page content includes the MBACAS logo, a navigation bar with links to "Preparing to Apply", "School Directory", and "Important Dates", a login section with fields for "Username" and "Password", a "Submit" button, and links for "Forgot your Password?" and "Create new Account". A large grey box contains the text "Begin your MBA research here ...". The footer contains links for "Home", "About us", "Contact us", and "FAQs".

A Web Page

http://www.mbacas.com

 [Preparing to Apply](#) | [School Directory](#) | [Important Dates](#)

Login

Username

Password

[Forgot your Password?](#)

[Create new Account](#)

Begin your **MBA** research here ...

[Home](#) | [About us](#) | [Contact us](#) | [FAQs](#)

b. Registration page

A Web Page

http://www.mbacas.com/registration

MBACAS

[Preparing to Apply](#) | [School Directory](#) | [Important Dates](#)

Registration

First Name

Last Name a tooltip

Middle Name

Birth Date / /

Sex ☐ Male ☐ Female

☐ Agree to terms and conditions


[Click here if you are a School Admin for verification](#)

[Home](#) | [About us](#) | [Contact us](#) | [FAQs](#)

c. Preparing to apply – Explore page

A Web Page

← → ✕ 🏠 🔍

 [Preparing to Apply](#) | [School Directory](#) | [Important Dates](#)

MBA Schools Research

Choose the schools

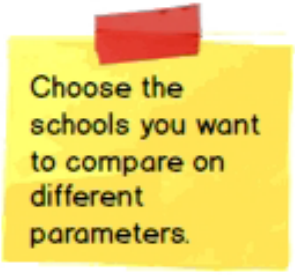
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Duke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foster
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stanford	<input type="checkbox"/> UCLA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> USC	<input type="checkbox"/> Yale

Select the parameters you want to compare

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GMAT Score Range
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Ratings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tuition Fee

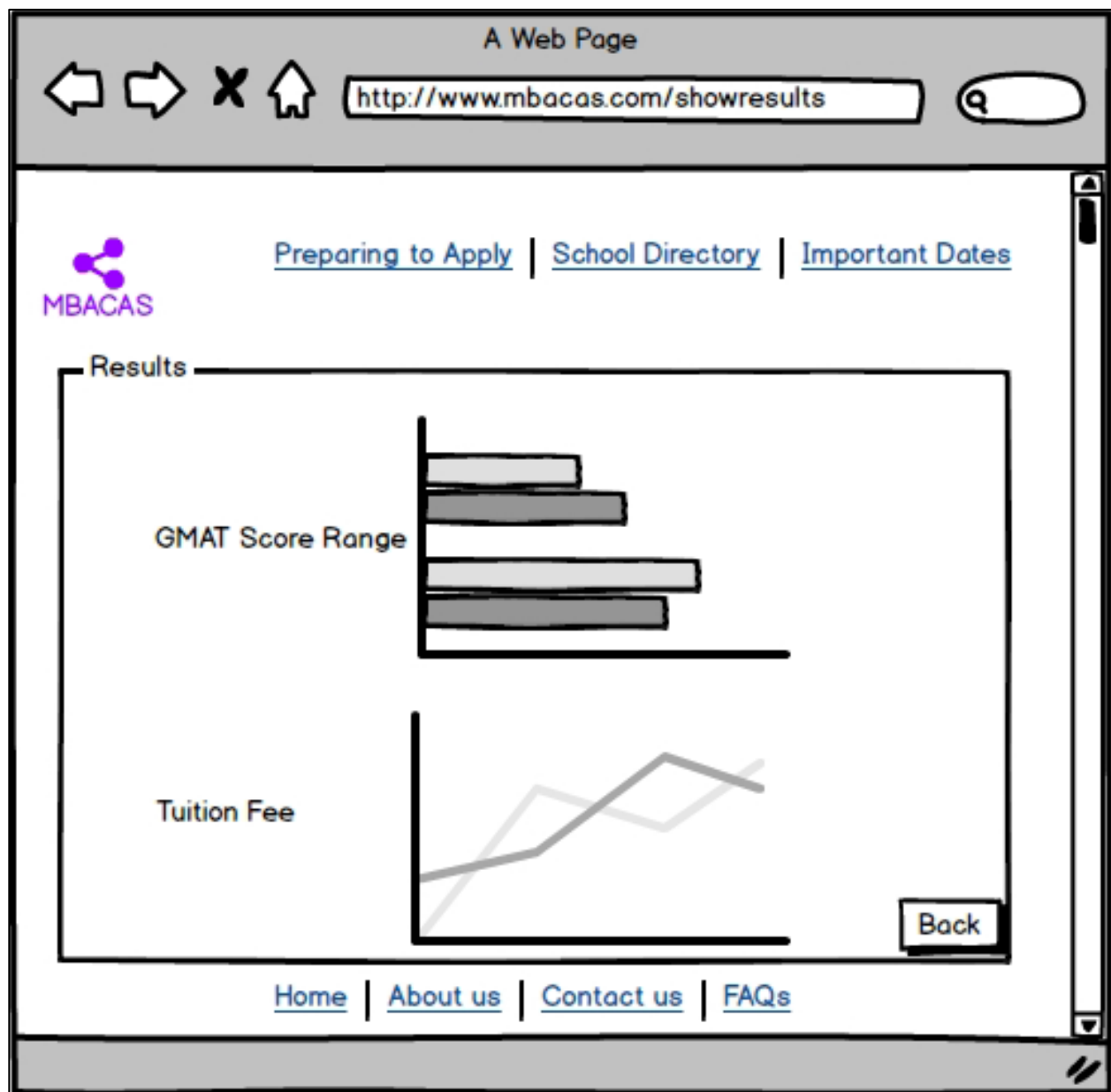
[Show Results >](#)

[Home](#) | [About us](#) | [Contact us](#) | [FAQs](#)

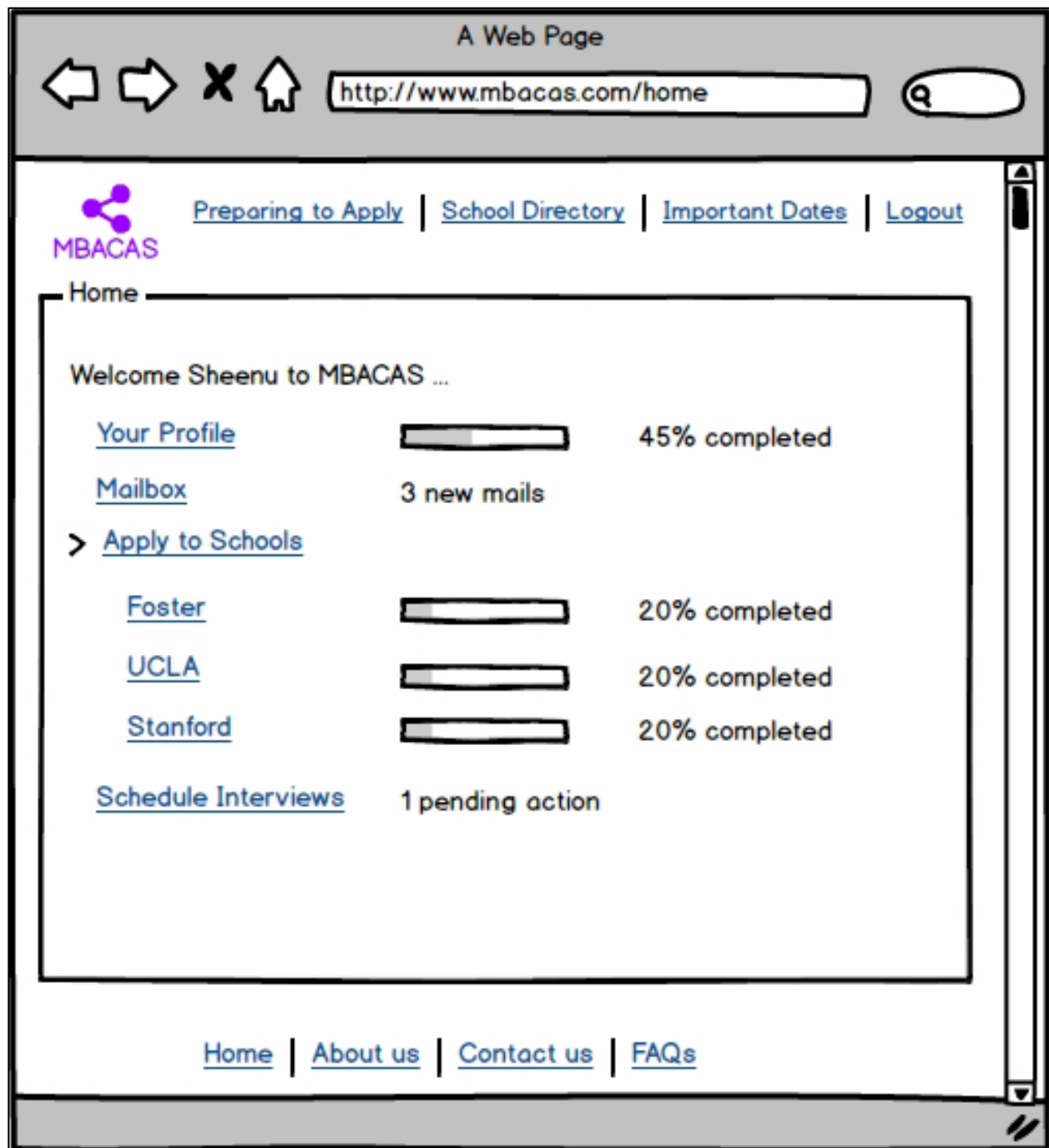


Choose the schools you want to compare on different parameters.

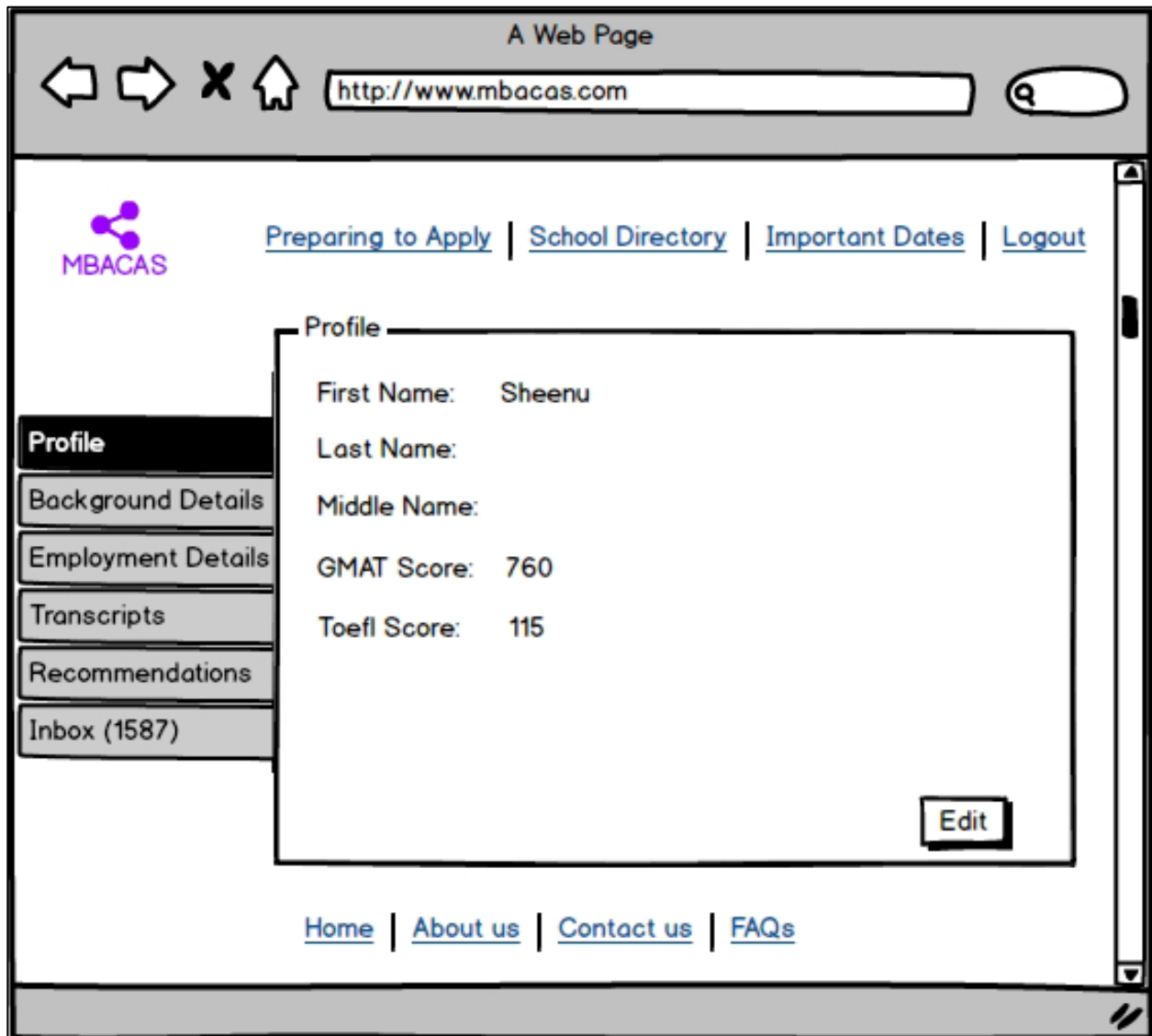
d. Preparing to apply – Results page



e. Applicants Dashboard page



f. Applicants Profile page



A Web Page

Navigation icons: back, forward, stop, home, search

URL: <http://www.mbacas.com>

MBACAS logo

Navigation links: [Preparing to Apply](#) | [School Directory](#) | [Important Dates](#) | [Logout](#)

Profile

First Name: Sheenu

Last Name:

Middle Name:

GMAT Score: 760

Toefl Score: 115

Edit

Left sidebar menu:

- Profile
- Background Details
- Employment Details
- Transcripts
- Recommendations
- Inbox (1587)

Footer links: [Home](#) | [About us](#) | [Contact us](#) | [FAQs](#)

g. Application Submission page

A Web Page

http://www.mbacas.com/home

 [Preparing to Apply](#) | [School Directory](#) | [Important Dates](#) | [Logout](#)

Apply

Foster School of Business

Essays : ?

Essay 1 : Please describe your short term and long term goals (500 words).
Essay 2 : Describe a situation where you displayed leadership skills? (500 words)
Essay 3 : How do you fit into the Foster culture ? (500 words)

Video Essay:  ?

Essay :Tell us why you a good fit to Foster School of Business (500 words).

Supplement Information : ?

[Home](#) | [About us](#) | [Contact us](#) | [FAQs](#)

h. Save Application page

A Web Page

http://www.mbacas.com/home

MBACAS

[Preparing to Apply](#) | [School Directory](#) | [Important Dates](#) | [Logout](#)

Apply

Foster School of Business

Essays : ?

Essay 1 : Please describe your short term and long term goals (500 words).
Essay 2 : Describe a situation where you displayed leadership skills? (500 words)
Essay 3 : How do you... (500 words)

Video Essay

Alert
Are you sure ?
No Yes

Essay : Tell us why you are a good fit to Foster School of Business (500 words).


Supplement Information : ?

[Home](#) | [About us](#) | [Contact us](#) | [FAQs](#)

i. School Administration – Planning page

A Web Page

http://www.mbacas.com

 [Research and Recruit Students](#) | [Market Intelligence](#) | [Tools](#) | [Logout](#)

School Year 2015 - 16 ▼

Profile

Plan

New Applications (302)

Applications Under Review (584)

Manage Interviews

Inbox (1,587)

search


- + Application Deadlines
 - ☐ Deadline 1: / /
- + Requirements
 - + Test Scores
 - ☐ GRE ☐ GMAT
 - + Essays
 - ☐ Essay 1: Tell me a time when....
 - ☐ Essay 2: Describe a situation...
 - + Other Requirements
- + Information Session
- + Welcome Weekend
- + Interview Dates
- + Notification Dates

[Home](#) | [About us](#) | [Contact us](#) | [FAQs](#)

j. School Administration – Application Review page

A Web Page

http://www.mbacas.com

 [Research and Recruit Students](#) | [Market Intelligence](#) | [Tools](#) | [Logout](#)

School Year 2015 - 16 ▼

Profile

Plan

New Applications (302)

Applications Under Review (584)

Manage Interviews

Inbox (1,587)

search

Applicant: Sheenu

Profile
Exam Scores
Essays
Recommendations
Supplemental Information
Transcript
Rank
Notes

Accept Reject Save

[Home](#) | [About us](#) | [Contact us](#) | [FAQs](#) [Prev](#) [Next](#)