Graduate Management Association of Australia Inc

Index of the Attractiveness of Australian MBA Programs

A. D. McArthur - GMAA National Secretary

October, 2014

Graduate Management Association of Australia (GMAA)
P.O. Box 6328
St Kilda Road Central
Melbourne VIC 8008
Australia
Phone: 61 3 9536-3109
Fax: 61 3 9525-3656

www.gmaa.com.au

A. D. McArthur - GMAA National Secretary
Phone: 0438 001-404
E-mail: tony.mcarthur@bigpond.com

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA. All rights reserved.
This publication remains the property of the GMAA and may not be reproduced without the written permission of the GMAA.

Table of Contents and

1 Introduction 3
1.1 Purpose 3
1.2 Terms, Abbreviations and Acronyms 3

2 Confidentiality 4

3 Objective 5

4 History of the GMAA's 5 Star MBA assessment 6
4.1 The future of the assessment 6
4.2 Future Assessments 7

5 Differentiating between Hobsons and the GMAA 8

6 Presentation of the final results 9
6.1 Changes in rankings 9
6.2 Reviewing results 9

7 Methodology used to produce the assessment 10
7.1 Mandatory requirements 10
7.2 Scores 10
7.3 Exceptions 10
7.4 Weights for questions 11
7.5 Producing the final table 11
7.6 Questions and Categories 11
7.7 The treatment of missing and suspect data 11
7.8 Missing / suspect data relating to academic staff 12
7.9 Constraints and limitations 13

8 Process used to calculate score for core competencies 14
8.1 Assigning marks based on which areas of study the subject covers 14
8.2 Seeking additional information to assist in the assignment process 15
8.3 The assignment process 15
8.4 Adjusting the total score for the areas of study 15
8.5 Adjusting the final score to account for the number of subjects 16
8.6 A summary of the results for the "core competencies" question 16

9 Analysis of the 2014 results 18
9.1 The results of the 2014 GMAA 5 Star assessment 18
9.2 Summary of answers 18
9.3 Results for 2014 18
9.4 Results for previous years 18
9.4.1 2013 39 programs 19
9.4.2 2012 51 programs 19
9.4.3 2011 50 programs 19
9.4.4 2010 51 programs 19
9.4.5 2009 54 programs 19
9.4.6 2008 51 programs 19
9.4.7 2007 49 programs 20
9.4.8 2006 55 programs 20
9.4.9 2005 55 programs 20

Appendix A: Questions used with the weightings and scoring 21

Appendix B: 2014 GMAA 5 Star Assessment 22

Appendix C: Summary of 2014 answers 23

Appendix D: The number of Institutions / Programs 25

Appendix E: Recent changes in the assessment 26
E.1 Summary of the changes in the 2013 assessment 26
E.2 Summary of the changes in the 2014 assessment 26

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is fourfold, namely to:-

- *Outline the objective of the annual GMAA 5 Star MBA assessment*
- *Provide a history of the assessment*
- *Explain the methodology used to produce the assessment*
- *Provide an analysis of the results of the assessment.*

1.2 Terms, Abbreviations and Acronyms

Listed below are all of the terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this document.

Abbreviation	Definition
AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
AMBA	Association of MBA Schools
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
EPAS	An international program accreditation system operated by the *European Foundation for Management Development* which aims to evaluate the quality of any business and/or management programme that has an international perspective
Equis	European Quality Improvement System - a school accreditation system, specializing in higher education institutions of management and business administration
GMAA	Graduate Management Association of Australia
GUG	*The Good University Guide* - A series of books, published by Hobsons
Hobsons	Hobsons Australia Pty Ltd (publishers of *The Good University Guide* series)
MBA	Master of Business Administration

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

2 Confidentiality

Hobsons collects data for its publications and then passes some of the data to the GMAA, but the GMAA only receives data from Business Schools which have given Hobsons written authorisation to do so. That authorisation is obtained annually.

The GMAA recognises that much of the data is commercially sensitive, so we have given a commitment that none of the data about any individual school or program would ever be released to anyone.

To further reduce the possibility of any data being inadvertently released, the number of GMAA personnel who have access to the raw data or any spreadsheet involved in the compilation of the assessment is kept to a bare minimum.

Over the years, there have been a number of members of the GMAA National Executive Committee who have had, or still have, some type of link or association with one or more Institutions or Business Schools, often as a member of an advisory panel which is involved with the MBA program.

Where a person is in such a relationship with a Business School, they are **completely excluded** from any involvement in the annual assessment, meaning they have no access to any of the data from the schools, no access to any of the spreadsheets involved and they are not involved in any discussions relating to the assessment results prior to the official release.

They may, however, be involved in any discussions relating to changes to the assessment process, such as the reviews held prior to the National Conferences over the last three years, where all Business Schools were invited to discuss possible changes to questions, scoring and weightings.

Listed below are all of the members of the GMAA National Executive Committee who currently have any involvement with, or connection to a University.

Maxwell Gratton (Victoria)

Victoria University

Alumni Advisory Group

http://www.vu.edu.au/alumni/alumni-in-focus/alumni-advisory-group

Tony McArthur (South Australia)

Flinders University

Social & Behavioural Research Ethics Committee

http://www.flinders.edu.au/research/researcher-support/ethics/committees/social-behavioural.cfm

No contact with the Flinders Business School or their MBA program

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

3 Objective

Since the early 2000's, the GMAA has obtained data relating to MBA programs offered in Australia and used the material to produce an index of the quality ("'attractiveness") of the approximately 60 MBA programs provided by some 40 organisations in Australia to onshore students.

This year, data was received for 60 programs offered through 37 institutions, of which 46 programs were ultimately included in the final results. For details of the number of institutions, total number of programs and how many made the final results since the assessment commenced, please refer to **Appendix D**. The table also shows how many institutions offer multiple MBAs.

The results are presented as the "**GMAA 5 Star Assessment**" and distributed by the GMAA via a media release and by posting the assessment and this paper on the GMAA web site (www.gmaa.asn.au).

In previous years, the assessment has also been printed, in full, in Hobsons annual "***The Good Universities guide to MBA and management courses***" publication. Since 2010, only the programs awarded 5 Stars have been included in the Hobsons publication.

As from 2014, Hobsons have ceased publishing "***The Good Universities guide to MBA and management courses***" publication, but they are still collecting the MBA data and analysing it, with the results appearing on their website. The programs that are awarded 5 Stars by the GMAA also appear on the Hobsons website.

http://www.hobsonscoursefinder.com.au/ratings/mbasearch

The purpose of the assessment is threefold, namely:-

- *As a mechanism to help maintain the value of GMAA members' investment in their MBA*
- *To assist potential MBA students by providing an independent assessment of the various programs on offer by people who have been through the process*
- *As a service in the public interest.*

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

4 History of the GMAA's 5 Star MBA assessment

The GMAA began assessing MBA programs in the 1990s using similar questions to those used by its UK equivalent body AMBA and the American AACSB.

In the late 1990s, Hobsons and the GMAA, in the course of their normal operations, both collected essentially the same data and then used it for their own purposes.

The GMAA used the data in the preparation of its annual MBA assessment, whilst Hobsons published much of the same data in *The Good Universities Guides*, a series of books providing details of the institutions, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and executive short courses they offer and rankings and ratings on a variety of characteristics. The data used to produce these books were obtained from a variety of sources including questionnaires completed by the institutions and government departments.

Following discussions between Hobsons and the GMAA, it was agreed that provided there were no negative side-effects, reducing this duplication of effort was desirable. It would result in the various institutions only needing to respond to one request for data and the GMAA and Hobsons not wastefully duplicating each other's work. This led, in July 2001, to agreement by Hobsons to allow the GMAA to use some of the Hobsons data for its own purposes. The agreement is that, subject to approval by the various program providers, Hobsons would collect the data annually through its normal collection mechanisms and supply some of the material to the GMAA. As part of that arrangement, the GMAA has guaranteed not to provide any of the information it receives to any other person or organisation.

In 2001, the GMAA's Dr Richard Gould undertook a review of the questions previously used by the GMAA, those used by AMBA and those used by Hobsons. AACSB's assessment publication was ordered but received too late to be used during that review, however, subsequent inspection of AACSB's methodology indicated that very similar questions continue to be used by them.

Discussions were held during 2001 between Hobsons and the GMAA about the quality of the data obtained by Hobsons and the cross checking of data undertaken with independent data suppliers, such as DEST. Some desirable questions were discarded by the GMAA as a result of those discussions (e.g. research outcomes of MBA schools).

Dr Gould's review of questions led to only minor adjustments being made to the questions to be used by the GMAA in its 2002 assessment.

Following the 2002 cycle of data collection and production of the assessment, further discussions between Hobsons and the GMAA resulted in Hobsons adding a small number of questions to increase the breadth and depth of the assessment of quality of MBA programs.

Following the 2003 and 2004 cycles, further discussions took place between Hobsons and the GMAA resulting in additional minor changes being made to the questions used in the 2005 assessment.

For the period 2005 - 2012, exactly the same questions were used to produce the assessment.

Data used in the GMAA index is almost entirely made public in the GUG publication, although some datum is published as quintiles rather than as raw scores.

4.1 The future of the assessment

In July 2012, the GMAA invited all institutions that offer an MBA in Australia to attend a meeting to discuss and review the GMAA 5 Star assessment and specifically to address the following three questions:-

- *are there any questions which should be removed from the assessment process as they are no longer appropriate for an MBA being delivered today*
- *do the weights assigned to each question need to be adjusted to reflect the current importance of the questions being asked*
- *what questions should be added to the assessment process.*

The meeting proved to be a very useful exercise for all involved.

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

It provided the business schools with a much better understanding of how the assessment is undertaken and has given the GMAA a strong indication that the schools respect the integrity of the process and the results.

The schools indicated that they appreciated the transparency the GMAA has shown in the entire process and its willingness to consult with the schools on how to improve the assessment.

The general feeling among the schools was that the current assessment has been a useful indicator of the quality of MBA programs over the past decade, but that changes would be appropriate to reflect today's and tomorrow's MBA programs.

The GMAA fully supports this view and will be working to develop the assessment over the coming years using the valuable input provided by the schools.

4.2 Future Assessments

Following discussions with Hobsons and changes to their questionnaire, the 2013 assessment incorporated a number of changes that had been discussed at the 2012 review meeting

In July 2013, the GMAA again invited MBA providers to attend a review meeting in the lead up to the 2013 National Conference in Brisbane. The aim was to build on the meeting from 2012, to look at the changes that were implemented for the 2013 assessment and to consider further changes for the assessment.

In July 2014, the GMAA arranged the third review meeting in the lead up to the 2014 National Conference in Melbourne and again invited MBA providers to attend.

It is proposed that the annual MBA assessment review meetings will continue and further changes will be made to the assessment in the coming years.

A summary of the changes that have been incorporated into the assessment during the last two years is provided in **Appendix E:E.1**.

The questions used for this year's assessment are given in **Appendix A**.

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

5 Differentiating between Hobsons and the GMAA

While the GMAA 5 Star assessment is the product of a collaborative effort by the two organisations, it is important to distinguish between the role of Hobsons and the GMAA.

Hobsons is predominantly a publisher. It collects data from various education institutions and other sources and publishes the information in a variety of books / online each year. The GMAA is not involved in the data collection or in the preparation / presentation of the various publications produced annually or the Hobsons' website.

The **GMAA** is the national association for graduates having post graduate management qualifications. Some of the data collected by Hobsons relating to MBA programs offered in Australia is made available to the GMAA which uses it to develop the GMAA 5 Star assessment of MBA programs using the methodology set out in this document. Apart from providing the data, Hobsons is not involved in the production of the annual GMAA 5 Star assessment or the methodology used.

In previous years, one of the books published each year by Hobsons was "***The Good Universities Guide to MBA and Management Courses***". Hobsons are no longer producing this book, but much of the material that used to be in the book is now provided on the Hobsons website, including a number of specific characteristics of the institution or its MBA program(s) which are reviewed. The institutions / programs are ranked and awarded a grade based on the results of the review of the individual characteristics.

The results of the review of each of those characteristics is presented in a similar way to the GMAA 5 Star results, i.e. grouped into 5 bands with institutions achieving the best results receiving a grade of "*Very High*" and working down to the "*Very Low*" grade.

Whilst this process of assessing and presenting programs / characteristics appears similar to the way the GMAA 5 Star assessment is presented, it is important to realise that the way Hobsons determines its rankings on individual characteristics and the way the GMAA determines its rankings for overall MBA programs are **totally separate**. The GMAA is not involved in any way in how Hobsons determines and presents the ranking of individual characteristics and Hobsons is not involved, other than in the collection of the raw data, in the production of the GMAA 5 Star assessment.

While the GMAA uses the same raw data as Hobsons, the grades determined by Hobsons for the various characteristics are not used in any way in the production of the GMAA 5 Star assessment.

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

6 Presentation of the final results

The GMAA assessment is presented as a table split into five bands with the programs receiving the highest scores located in the top 5 Star band. Within each band, all programs are then listed alphabetically.

The total score for each program is not released.

The results of this year's assessment are given in **Appendix B**.

6.1 Changes in rankings

In most cases, where a program drops in the ranking it is not caused by a drop in their final score from the previous year, but because programs which had been ranked lower had improved their score either by implementing changes to their program(s) or through a careful review of all the information provided to Hobsons to ensure that the data provided was correct.

6.2 Reviewing results

The GMAA has always been happy to provide a detailed review of an institution's program(s) and identify questions where its program(s) scored lower than other programs that are ranked higher, thus identifying areas the institution may wish to focus on if it is looking to review its current program(s) and improve its position in the GMAA 5 Star assessment.

This offer of a review of the results of its program(s) is still open to all institutions.

Experience has shown that when such a review has been undertaken, one of the most common problems identified is that the information provided by the institution to Hobsons was inaccurate and this resulted in the program receiving a lower score than it would have had the information provided been accurate and up-to-date.

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

7 Methodology used to produce the assessment

The process for calculating the final result for each program involved:-

- *Determining if a program meets the four mandatory requirements*
- *Assigning a score (0 to 10) for the answer to each question*
- *Applying a weighting to each question to determine the weighted score for each question*
- *Totalling the weighted scores to determine the final total for each program.*

7.1 Mandatory requirements

To be included in the annual assessment, a program must first satisfy four requirements, namely:-

- *The program must have been operating for at least three years*
- *There must be at least 17 students currently in the program*
- *At least 40 people must have graduated from the program since its inception*
- *The program must be offered onshore and not be a specialised program (e.g. Aviation).*

The **Graduates** question was added this year and it is expected that the minimum number will be increased over the next few years.

7.2 Scores

The score given to each question ranged from 10 for the best answer to 0 for the worst.

For those questions which required a Yes/No answer, the scores were simply 10 for "Yes" and zero for "No".

There are now two questions, and likely to be more in the future, which require a Yes/Sometimes/No answer, eg "*is a prior degree required*". For these questions the scores are 10 for "Yes", 5 for "Sometimes" and zero for "No".

Where the answer given was a number, there were two ways to assign a score, namely:-

- *A stepped linear arrangement where the higher the answer, the higher the score up to a maximum of ten (e.g. percentage of academics with a doctorate).*
- *A bell curve arrangement was used where the maximum score was given for an answer that was in a range in the middle of the array of answers. Answers that were above and below the middle high score range then received lower scores (e.g. % of academic staff who are female).*

The process by which scores were given for each question (Yes/Sometimes/No, stepped line, bell curve) is given in **Appendix A**.

7.3 Exceptions

There are two exceptions to the "scoring" process described above.

The **first** is the question *"% of subjects that are considered by international accreditation organisations as core subjects*" in "The program length and content" category. For details on how the score is calculated for this question, please refer to section 8.

The **second** relates to the questions that ask if the business school has received accreditation, or is currently in the process of obtaining accreditation, from certain international agencies.

At the 2014 MBA review meeting, the discussion around Accreditation Agencies concluded that AACSB and Equis focused on the faculty, while EPAS (MBA) and AMBA focused on the specific MBA program and so there should be separate assessment for faculty specific and MBA program specific agencies. It was agreed that having obtained or being in the process of obtaining one accreditation was good, having or being in the process of obtaining a second accreditation should warrant additional points, but not double the points.

The table below outlines how this question will be assessed this year, but it may change in future years if additional accreditations are deemed important and worthy of obtaining.

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

Accreditation Type	Agency	Achieved	In progress	Nothing	Weights
Faculty specific	AACSB	7	3	0	**1**
	Equis	7	3	0	**1**
	Both	12	5	0	**1**
MBA program specific	EPAS (MBA)	7	3	0	**1.5**
	AMBA	7	3	0	**1.5**
	Both	12	5	0	**1.5**

7.4 Weights for questions

Weights are then assigned to each question. All questions start with a weight of one, reflecting the research practice of equally weighting all matters unless knowledge indicates otherwise.

The questions were then assessed for their importance in determining program quality and as a result of the assessment, weights for some of the questions were reduced while others were increased. Of the 47 questions used in this year's assessment, the distribution of weights was:-

- *4 are mandatory matters where there was no weight (refer to section 7.1)*
- *21 had a weight less than 1*
- *12 had a weight equal to 1*
- *10 had a weight greater than 1.*

Overall, criteria weights ranged from **.25** to **2** and the total of all of the weights was **38.5**.

The weights assigned to each question are presented in **Appendix A**.

7.5 Producing the final table

The score given for each question was then multiplied by the weight assigned to that question, producing a weighted score for each question for each program. The weighted scores for each program were totalled to give a final score for the institution's program.

All programs were then sorted using the final score and the sorted table was then split into five bands, with the programs having the highest scores assigned to the 5 Star band.

There are usually between 50 and 55 programs in the final results, resulting in each band having 10 or 11 programs. Where the final number of programs does not allow an equal number of programs in each band, the programs are split so as to make the number in each band symmetrical.

Within each band all programs are listed alphabetically.

7.6 Questions and Categories

The 47 questions used to produce the assessment were grouped into categories that examine:-

- *Mandatory pre-assessment matters (4 criteria)*
- *Institutions' links with the business community and overseas schools (9 criteria)*
- *The size, diversity and experience of the academic staff (11 criteria)*
- *Support facilities the institution provides to assist students / graduates (5 criteria)*
- *Entry requirements for prospective students (6 criteria)*
- *The size and diversity of the student population (3 criteria)*
- *The program length and content (5 criteria)*
- *Matters relating to accreditation (4 criteria).*

The categories highlighted above are used only to clarify and simplify the processing and reporting of the results. They play no part in the calculation of the results.

7.7 The treatment of missing / suspect data

During the process of assessing the programs, there are often situations where the data appears to be inconsistent or inaccurate or has not been provided by the institution. When this occurs, the standard practice is for the GMAA to forward details to Hobsons which checks the

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

information on the questionnaire submitted by the institution, discusses the matter directly with the institution and / or checks against data provided by government agencies.

The GMAA does not contact the institution in an attempt to resolve the query. There is one exception to this policy and that is explained in section 8.2.

The rule for handling missing / suspect data was as follows:-

- *Where a program had missing / suspect data and the question or questions involved had an accumulated weighted value of more than one point (out of a possible 38.5), the program was eliminated from the assessment on the basis that too large an estimate was required to be made*
- *Where the weighted value of the unanswered question(s) accumulated to no more than one point, the missing datum was replaced by the answer provided for that question from the previous year, if available, otherwise it is replaced by the arithmetic mean of the responses from all other programs.*

There is a different process used to address problems with data relating to academic staff details and this is explained in section 7.8.

Note that the weights of several questions might be accumulated to exceed the weight limit, or that a single unanswered / incorrect question might result in the exclusion of the program.

In this year's assessment, no program was eliminated as a result of missing / suspect data. Of the 14 programs that were excluded as they had not met one or more of the mandatory requirements, none would have been eliminated as a result of missing / suspect data issues.

No program had any missing / suspect data replaced.

7.8 Missing / suspect data relating to academic staff

Missing / suspect details relating to staff are addressed in a slightly different way. As part of the Hobsons questionnaire, institutions answer specific questions for each member of the academic staff. Those answers, excluding the names of staff members, are provided to the GMAA which uses the information to provide the answers to the 11 questions in the assessment that relate to staff.

Data quality relating to information provided about staff members has traditionally been an area of concern. All of the missing / suspect data elements have been in the questions relating to:-

- gender
- highest qualification
- part-time / full-time education.

The way each of these types of errors is handled is that if Hobsons is unable to clarify the position after reviewing the questionnaire and / or discussing the matter with the relevant institution, then the process used by the GMAA is:-

Gender - where the gender of a member of staff is not nominated, then the person is considered to be neither male nor female, but is still included in the overall staff count which is then used in all the other staff related questions which work on a percentage basis. This means the only question which could be affected by not knowing the gender of one staff member is the question which asks *"% of academic staff that are female*".

Highest qualification - where the highest qualification of a member of staff is not nominated, then the person is considered not to have a Masters or a Doctorate, but is still included in the overall staff count. This means the only questions which could be affected by not knowing the highest qualification of one staff member are the questions which ask "*% of academics with doctorate"* and *"% of academics with masters*".

Part-time / full-time education - where it is not clear if the person's teaching status is full-time or part-time, then the person is considered to be neither full-time nor part-time, but is still included in the overall staff count. This means the only question which could be affected by not knowing the status of one staff member is the question which asks *"% of part time academics"*.

The reason the approach outlined above has been used in relation to missing / suspect data relating to academic staff is that the overall number of questionable data elements is very small considering the total number of staff across all institutions.

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

In 2014 the number of staff and errors was:-

- *total number of staff 1,337*
- *gender errors 0*
- *highest qualification errors 7*
- *full-time part-time errors 22*

7.9 Constraints and limitations

Three practical constraints influence development of the assessment. They are:-

- *Due to the cost of collecting data, criteria are assessed using secondary data*
- *Data needs to be collected in a way which minimises the possibility of the institution misinterpreting the questions or exaggerating their attributes*
- *Data is sometimes available only at university or faculty level, rather than at MBA school or program level.*

The following issues have not been addressed in this year's assessment, principally because of the third constraint, data availability:-

- *The research outcomes of MBA schools*
- *The student-staff ratio (because the current Hobsons' questionnaire does not eliminate portions of staff time spent on areas such as overseas MBA programs delivered, non-MBA degrees delivered, etc.)*
- *Program outcomes (salaries earned, teaching quality, job seeking success and graduate satisfaction with the program and their qualification).*

In addition to the issues already listed, the GMAA believes that the inclusion of the issues listed below would enhance future assessments:-

- *Demonstrated adequacy of staff resources for students enrolled*
- *Staff aware of debates at forefront of knowledge and involved in appropriate research*
- *Staff development policy and mechanisms in place to ensure continuance of staff capability*
- *Participation in internal or national audit process and evidence of successful implementation of recommendations*
- *Having feedback mechanism for student reactions to program delivery and contents*
- *Demonstrated level and quality of administrative support*
- *Availability of up to date and an adequate volume of IT resources for students*
- *Demand for places in the program*
- *Success at attracting research grants (e.g. Australian Research Council)*
- *Success in the international market (full-fee international enrolments).*

It is hoped that future assessments will be able to assess some or all of these issues. To achieve this, GMAA is working with Hobsons and the Business Schools to ascertain if the required data could be collected.

The issues listed above will be considered as part of the ongoing reviews of the GMAA 5 Star assessment currently being undertaken.

The approach of an index is to accumulate points (or to not accumulate them) for a large number of matters which, in total, proxy the overall quality of the subject assessed. A disadvantage is that this approach conceals especially strong or weak performance levels by an organisation in a particular question. Nevertheless, an index is a robust overall indicator of quality. Advantages include an index being more transparent, more easily understood and less prone to statistical problems than many other approaches (e.g. regression or cluster analyses). Quantifying the differences between MBA schools is also more rigorous and accurate than attempting to make an intuitive assessment.

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

8 Process used to calculate score for core competencies

One of the questions in the assessment is ***"% of subjects that are considered by international accreditation organisations as core subjects***".

The intention of this question is to determine how well the **compulsory subjects** in each program cover the 12 "*areas of study*" or "*core competencies*" considered desirable in an MBA program.

The areas of study / core competencies are:-

- *Accounting*
- *Business Law*
- *Business Policy / Corporate Strategy*
- *Business Statistics / Quantitative methods*
- *Effects of international developments / international business*
- *Ethical / social / economic / technological change issues*
- *Finance*
- *General management problems at the operational & strategic level*
- *Management information systems including IT applications*
- *Management of change*
- *Marketing*
- *Organisation theory / behaviour / HRM / interpersonal communications*

The process to determine the score for this question is to assign one mark to each subject that is nominated as compulsory and then, based on the description of the subject, assign the mark to one of the 12 areas listed above, or assign part of the mark to one or more of the areas listed above. The maximum that can be assigned is one mark regardless of the number of areas that received a score and if it is considered that the subject does not touch on any of the areas listed above, then none of the areas receive any score for that subject.

8.1 Assigning marks based on which areas of study the subject covers

As mentioned above, this process uses the description of the compulsory subject to ascertain which, if any, of the areas of study the subject covers. For some subjects, see the list below, it is quite obvious to see what is covered by the subject.

- *Accounting*
- *Accounting for managers*
- *Corporate finance*
- *Finance for senior managers*
- *Australian law and business*
- *Legal issues for managers*
- *Information systems for managers*
- *Managing information technology in organisations*
- *Managing change*
- *Marketing for managers*
- *Marketing: concepts and applications*
- *Quantitative methods for business*
- *Statistical methods for business*
- *Corporate strategy*
- *Sustainable corporate strategy*
- *Global business strategies*
- *International business*
- *International business environment*
- *Economics for business managers*
- *Managing human resources*
- *Organisational Behaviour and Human Resource Management*

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

8.2 Seeking additional information to assist in the assignment process

In other cases it is quite difficult to ascertain exactly what the subject is intended to cover, so on some occasions details of the subject have been accessed through the institution's website to get a better understanding of what material the subject covers.

8.3 The assignment process

In some cases the assignment is quite straightforward.

The subjects listed below would get their mark assigned to **Accounting**

- *Accounting*
- *Accounting for business*
- *Accounting for management*
- *Accounting for managerial decisions*
- *Accounting for managers*

The subjects listed below would get their mark assigned to **Finance**

- *Business finance*
- *Corporate finance*
- *Finance*
- *Finance for Business*
- *Finance for senior managers*

The subjects listed below would get their mark assigned to **Business Policy** / **Corporate Strategy**

- *Business strategy*
- *Corporate strategy*
- *Strategic planning*
- *Strategy*
- *Strategy formulation and initiatives*
- *Sustainable corporate strategy*

In some cases the subject may cover multiple areas in which case the mark is split between the areas.

The subjects listed below would get .5 assigned to **Accounting** and .5 to **Finance**

- *Accounting and finance*
- *Accounting and finance for managers*
- *Fundamentals of accounting and finance for managers*

In some cases the subject may cover a specific area, but be focused on a particular industry rather than having a general application and so would only receive part of their mark against the specific area.

The subject listed below would get .5 assigned to **Accounting** and the remaining .5 would not be assigned to any area

- *Fundamentals of accounting for the XYZ industry.*

In some cases the subject may be very specific and touch on multiple areas, but may also include material which does not fit into any of the areas listed above, in which case the mark is split between the areas that are in the above list with the remainder of the mark not assigned.

The subject listed below would get .1 assigned to **General management problems**, .25 to **Management Information Systems** and .2 to **Marketing**

- *Electronic commerce*

In some cases the subject may not touch on any of the 12 areas listed above in which case the mark is not assigned.

8.4 Adjusting the total score for the areas of study

After each subject has had its mark assigned to the appropriate area(s) of study, the marks are totalled for each of the 12 areas of study. If any area has a mark in excess of one, then its mark is adjusted down to equal one. This is because the intention of this question is to give a score indicating how well the 12 areas are covered. If a program had a heavy emphasis on one of the

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

areas of study it would be at the expense of other areas which may not be covered at all given there is a limited number of compulsory subjects in each program.

Some programs may have a subject that specifically covers one of the areas, e.g. Accounting, but in addition may have one or more other subjects which touch on Accounting even though it is not the primary focus of that subject. This could mean that for that particular program, Accounting could have received a total score of 1.3 which was made up of 1 for the specific Accounting subject and .1 and .2 for two other subjects which have a small Accounting component.

8.5 Adjusting the final score to account for the number of subjects

After each area of study has, where necessary, had its total mark adjusted, all of the adjusted marks are added together to give a total out of 12.

This total may then need to be adjusted if the number of compulsory subjects provided is not the same as the number of compulsory subjects that the institution indicated on the questionnaire was required to be completed as part of the MBA program.

If the number of subjects provided is less than or equal to the number indicated on the questionnaire, then no adjustment is necessary.

If the number of subjects provided is greater than the number indicated on the questionnaire, then the total mark is multiplied by an adjustment factor. The adjustment factor is calculated by dividing the number of subjects on the questionnaire by the number of compulsory subjects provided.

8.6 A summary of the results for the "core competencies" question

This question, relating to how well a program covers the 12 "core competencies", is the equal highest weighted question in the assessment and is worth a maximum 20 points out of a possible of 385. To achieve the maximum points, a program would need to have a minimum of 12 compulsory subjects and those subjects to cover all 12 areas of study.

Listed below is a table showing the maximum, the minimum and the average score for the programs in the 5 bands for this question for the last several years. As there was no change to the way the results for this question were calculated between 2011 and 2013, the results can be compared for those years. In 2014, the weight for this question dropped from three to two.

2014 Results

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Average
5	17.08	12.24	8.78
4	14.58	9.40	11.61
3	13.56	8.78	11.34
2	13.31	4.01	9.94
1	12.53	4.00	7.94
Overall	**17.084**	**4.00**	**10.63**

2014 Results recalculated using 2013 Weights
This table can be compared to the 2011 – 2013 results

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Average
5	25.63	18.36	13.17
4	21.88	14.10	17.42
3	20.33	13.16	17.01
2	19.96	6.01	14.91
1	18.79	6.00	11.91
Overall	**25.63**	**6.00**	**15.95**

2013 Results

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Average
5	21.46	10.71	17.02
4	25.63	14.10	18.50
3	17.00	15.83	16.45
2	21.08	8.75	16.05
1	18.46	3.62	11.32
Overall	**25.63**	**3.62**	**15.87**

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

2012 Results

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Average
5	22.08	10.21	17.61
4	23.29	15.00	17.90
3	20.33	11.93	15.84
2	25.25	6.00	15.39
1	21.08	2.50	11.97
Overall	**25.25**	**2.50**	**15.74**

2011 Results

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Average
5	20.54	13.13	17.97
4	23.29	13.90	17.38
3	19.66	13.89	16.90
2	25.25	6.01	16.30
1	16.37	6.79	11.54
Overall	**25.25**	**6.01**	**16.02**

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

9 Analysis of the 2014 results

9.1 The results of the 2014 GMAA 5 Star assessment

The results of this year's assessment are given in **Appendix A**.

Initially, Hobsons provided data on 60 MBA programs offered through 37 institutions. Of those, 46 programs were included in the final results after the remainder were excluded for one or more of the following reasons:-

- *Program operating for less than 3 years* *5*
- *Student numbers too low (less than 17 students)* *7*
- *Total number of graduates since its inception too low (less than 40)* *9*
- *Primarily an offshore program or too specialised (e.g. Aviation)* *3*
- *Data inadequacies* *0*

The 60 programs were split amongst institutions in the following way:-

- *institutions offering one program* *17*
- *institutions offering two programs* *17*
- *institutions offering three programs* *3*

For more information on the number of programs institutions have offered each year since the assessment began, please refer to **Appendix D:**.

9.2 Summary of answers

Appendix C contains a table that summarises the answers given for this year's assessment.

9.3 Results for 2014

Listed below is a table showing the maximum, the minimum, the range and the average score for the 46 programs in the 5 bands.

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Range	Average
5	221.7	189.6	32.1	203.8
4	189.4	170.5	18.9	180.0
3	169.1	155.8	13.3	161.4
2	155.0	134.2	20.8	143.4
1	125.7	103.6	22.1	115.4
Overall	**221.7**	**103.6**	**118.1**	**160.8**

9.4 Results for previous years

As a result of the changes to the questions, scoring and weightings in the last two years, the scores in 2013 or 2014 should not be compared with those in previous years as the changes saw nearly every program achieved a lower score in each of the last two assessments.

Given that, it should be noted that of the eight 5 Star programs in 2013, six received 5 Stars in 2012, one moved up from four Stars, with the remaining program not included in the 2012 results.

In 2014, there were nine 5 Stars of which six had received the same result in 2013. The remaining two 5 Stars from 2013 dropped to four stars. Of the 3 new 5 Stars in 2014, two moved up from 4 Stars and the other jumped from 3 Stars.

While the last two years has seen considerable change in the questions, scores and weightings, the movement of programs between the 5 bands, particularly the 4 and 5 Stars, has been consistent with a degree of movement in the previous eight years (2005 - 2012) which used exactly the same questions, scores and weights.

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

9.4.1 2013 39 programs

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Range	Average
5	245.3	219.9	25.4	231.3
4	219.9	208.2	11.7	214.6
3	205.2	202.8	2.4	204.5
2	189.7	172.5	17.2	181.5
1	170.7	106.1	64.6	149.3
Overall	**245.3**	**106.1**	**139.2**	**196.2**

9.4.2 2012 51 programs

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Range	Average
5	281.2	258.3	23.0	268.8
4	257.8	247.8	10.0	252.8
3	242.9	227.3	15.6	236.3
2	225.1	207.4	17.7	216.0
1	206.7	147.6	59.2	186.0
Overall	**281.2**	**147.6**	**133.7**	**232.1**

9.4.3 2011 50 programs

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Range	Average
5	276.1	251.3	24.8	263.2
4	250.8	242.3	8.5	245.4
3	241.4	229.5	12.0	234.6
2	222.1	208.9	13.2	215.9
1	208.9	151.0	57.9	189.3
Overall	**276.1**	**151.0**	**125.1**	**229.7**

9.4.4 2010 51 programs

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Range	Average
5	268.2	250.4	17.8	258.7
4	249.0	238.3	10.7	242.9
3	236.0	218.7	17.3	226.7
2	214.4	201.1	13.3	208.3
1	199.4	146.0	53.4	172.8
Overall	**268.2**	**146.0**	**122.2**	**221.9**

9.4.5 2009 54 programs

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Range	Average
5	264.6	244.6	20.0	252.6
4	243.5	230.8	12.7	237.5
3	230.6	212.4	18.2	223.6
2	211.6	186.2	25.4	201.2
1	185.9	146.2	39.7	173.8
Overall	**264.6**	**146.2**	**118.4**	**217.6**

9.4.6 2008 51 programs

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Range	Average
5	274.3	250.6	23.7	256.6
4	244.3	232.7	11.6	239.0
3	231.7	221.4	10.3	225.9
2	217.7	193.9	23.7	203.0
1	192.2	168.9	23.3	181.0
Overall	**274.3**	**168.9**	**105.4**	**221.2**

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

9.4.7 2007 49 programs

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Range	Average
5	270.3	251.7	18.6	260.7
4	251.6	235.8	15.9	244.3
3	233.3	210.8	22.5	223.5
2	210.3	193.9	16.4	200.6
1	182.7	169.2	13.5	175.2
Overall	**270.3**	**169.2**	**101.1**	**220.8**

9.4.8 2006 55 programs

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Range	Average
5	262.5	237.4	25.1	252.1
4	235.6	218.8	16.8	227.2
3	216.1	205.8	10.3	209.6
2	205.4	189.1	16.3	197.0
1	188.2	138.5	49.7	165.3
Overall	**262.5**	**138.5**	**124.0**	**239.1**

9.4.9 2005 55 programs

Stars	Maximum	Minimum	Range	Average
5	281.8	259.7	22.1	268.4
4	258.3	237.0	21.3	245.9
3	232.0	211.7	20.2	224.1
2	211.7	178.8	32.9	198.7
1	178.6	142.8	35.7	166.3
Overall	**281.8**	**142.8**	**138.9**	**220.7**

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

Appendix A: Questions used with the weightings and scoring

Questions	Weights	Scoring
Institution's links with the business community and overseas schools		
Number of chairs sponsored	0.50	Linear
Number of corporate relationships	0.50	Linear
Number of corporate members on School Board/Advisory Boards	0.50	Linear
Number of exchange students - incoming	0.25	Linear
Number of exchange students - outgoing	0.25	Linear
Number of links with overseas schools	0.50	Linear
Number of Internships	0.50	Linear
Number of donations > $5,000	0.50	Linear
Number of research partners	0.50	Linear
The size, diversity and experience of the academic staff		
Number of academic staff	1.00	Linear
% of academic staff who are female	0.50	Bell
% of part time academics	1.00	Bell
% of academics with doctorate	2.00	Linear
% of academics with masters	0.50	Linear
% of academics with international industry experience	1.00	Linear
% of academics with international consulting experience	1.00	Linear
% of academics with domestic industry experience	1.00	Linear
% of academics with domestic consulting experience	1.00	Linear
% of academics with domestic teaching experience	0.50	Linear
% of academics with international teaching experience	0.50	Linear
Support facilities the institution has to assist students		
English language learning support available	1.00	Yes / No
Job placement support is available	0.50	Yes / No
Child care facilities are available	0.25	Yes / No
Alumni numbers	0.50	Linear
Alumni meetings	0.50	Linear
Entry requirements for prospective students		
Is the GMAT score used	1.00	See note 1
If used, what is the minimum score	1.00	Linear
Is a prior degree required	1.50	See note 1
Required years work experience	0.25	Linear
Required years management experience	1.00	Linear
Fees for domestic students	1.50	Bell
The size and diversity of the student population		
Number of students enrolled	0.50	Linear
% of female students	0.50	Bell
% of students from non-English background	0.50	Bell
The program length and content		
Number of units required to complete the program	1.50	Bell
% of compulsory subjects	1.50	Bell
% of subjects that are considered core subjects	2.00	See Note 2
Total time commitment in hours	2.00	Linear
Number of contact hours	2.00	Linear
Accreditation		
Faculty Specific - Achieved	1.00	See Note 3
Faculty Specific - In progress	1.00	See Note 3
MBA Specific - Achieved	1.50	See Note 3
MBA Specific - In progress	1.50	See Note 3

Notes -

1. The options are Yes / Sometimes / No
2. The process used to calculate the score for this question is explained in section 8
3. The process used to calculate the score for this question is explained in section 7.3

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

Appendix B: 2014 GMAA 5 Star Assessment

Within each band, programs are listed alphabetically.

Stars	Institution	Program Name
5	Deakin University	MBA
	La Trobe University	MBA
	Queensland University of Technology	MBA
	Queensland University of Technology	Executive MBA
	RMIT University	MBA Executive
	University of Adelaide	MBA
	University of Queensland	MBA
	University of South Australia	MBA Onshore
	University of Western Australia	MBA Flexible
4	Deakin University	MBA International
	Griffith University	MBA
	Monash University	MBA
	RMIT University	MBA
	Southern Cross University	MBA
	University of Southern Queensland	MBA
	University of Technology, Sydney	MBA
	University of Western Sydney	MBA
	University of Wollongong	MBA Advanced
3	Bond University	MBA
	Flinders University	MBA Advanced
	Flinders University	MBA
	Murdoch University	MBA
	Swinburne University of Technology	MBA
	University of New South Wales	MBA Full Time
	University of Technology, Sydney	Executive MBA
	University of Wollongong	MBA
	University of Wollongong	Executive MBA
	Victoria University	MBA Onshore
2	Australian Catholic University	MBA
	Bond University	Executive MBA
	Edith Cowan University	MBA International
	Edith Cowan University	MBA
	James Cook University	MBA
	University of Canberra	MBA
	University of Newcastle	MBA
	University of the Sunshine Coast	Executive MBA
	University of the Sunshine Coast	MBA
1	Australian Institute of Management	MBA
	Charles Darwin University	MBA
	Chifley Business School	MBA Technology Management
	Chifley Business School	MBA
	CQ University Australia	MBA
	Federation University Australia	MBA
	Holmes Institute	MBA
	University of New South Wales	MBA Executive
	University of Tasmania	MBA

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

Appendix C: Summary of 2014 answers

Questions	Maximum	Average	Minimum	Yes	Some-times	No
Institution's links with the business community and overseas schools [1]						
Number of chairs sponsored	6	2.2	1			
Number of corporate relationships	217	43.2	2			
Number of corporate members on School Board/Advisory Boards	76	17.5	1			
Number of exchange students - incoming	139	19.8	1			
Number of exchange students - outgoing	128	25.8	1			
Number of links with overseas schools	126	19.7	1			
Number of Internships	52	15.6	1			
Number of donations > $5,000	47	6.4	1			
Number of research partners	91	21.2	1			
The size, diversity and experience of the academic staff						
Number of academic staff	148	39.2	12			
% of academic staff who are female	50	30.5	12.5			
% of part time academics	91.7	29	0			
% of academics with doctorate	100	81.1	16.7			
% of academics with masters	100	98.1	81.8			
% of academics with international industry experience	84.4	36.1	8.3			
% of academics with international consulting experience	84.4	37.5	4.5			
% of academics with domestic industry experience	91.7	55.1	16.7			
% of academics with domestic consulting experience	100	62.2	28.9			
% of academics with domestic teaching experience	94.1	66	28.9			
% of academics with international teaching experience	100	62.4	23.7			
Support facilities the institution has to assist students						
English language learning support available				41		5
Job placement support is available				26		20
Child care facilities are available				36		10
Alumni numbers	50,000	8417	0			
Alumni meetings	59	11.4	0			
Entry requirements for prospective students						
Is the GMAT score used				2	26	18
If used, what is the minimum score	550	550	550			
Is a prior degree required				11	19	16
Required years work experience	8	1.8	0			
Required years management experience	6	2	0			
Fees for domestic students	71,040	39,300	18,624			
The size and diversity of the student population						
Number of students enrolled	1,492	410	17			
% of female students [2]	54.0	30.6	0			
% of students from non-English background [2]	100	30	0			
The program length and content						
Number of units required to complete the program	32	14.2	9			
% of compulsory subjects	100	72.9	41.7			
% of subjects that are considered core subjects	See section 8.6					
Total time commitment in hours	3,120	1,813	1,053			
Number of contact hours [3]	960	469	350			

Accreditation [4]				
		Number of schools		
Accreditation Type	Agency	Achieved	In progress	Nothing
Faculty specific	AACSB	9	11	14
	Equis	6	2	26
	Both	5	0	
	Neither	26	24	
Accreditation Type	Agency	Achieved	In progress	Nothing
MBA program specific	EPAS (MBA)	2	4	28
	AMBA	2	3	29
	Both	0	0	
	Neither	33	30	

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

Notes

1. For each of the questions **in this section**, at least one program has a minimum of zero, so the minimum that is being reported is actually the lowest non-zero number. For some of the questions, the majority of programs have an answer of zero, so **all averages** have been calculated **ignoring** those answers of zero.

2. Minimum figure was questioned, but confirmed by the institutions

3. Distance education programs excluded

4. The statistics provided in Appendix D are calculated using the information from the 46 MBA programs that made the final report from the 60 programs that were initially provided by Hobsons, with the following exceptions:-
   - Institution's links with the business community and overseas schools
   - The size, diversity and experience of the academic staff
   - Support facilities the institution has to assist students
   - Accreditation.

   For these four categories, the statistics are calculated using the information that relates to the institution that offers the MBA program. Where there is a situation that the institution offers multiple MBA program and one or more program was excluded, the institution's information is included in the statistics if it has at least one program that was included in the final report.

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

Appendix D: The number of Institutions / Programs

The table below provides details, for each year the GMAA 5 Star assessment has been produced, showing the:-

- total number of programs where data was provided to the GMAA
- number of institutions that offered them
- number of those programs that were included in the final report
- number of institutions that offered multiple programs.

GMAA Assessment				# of programs offered by an institution				
Year	Total # Programs	Total # Institutions	Total # in final list	1	2	3	4	5
2002	50	40	44	32	7		1	
2003	79	44	53	23	14	2	3	2
2004	80	44	51	21	14	5	4	
2005	76	45	55	24	14	4	3	
2006	82	43	55	21	11	6	4	1
2007	67	42	49	26	9	5	2	
2008	68	41	48	22	13	4	2	
2009	71	43	54	23	13	6	1	
2010	66	41	51	21	15	5		
2011	62	31	47	19	14	5		
2012	63	37	51	16	17	3	1	
2013	47	31	39	16	14	1		
2014	60	37	46	17	17	3		

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA

Appendix E: Recent changes in the assessment

E.1 Summary of the changes in the 2013 assessment

In addition to adding, removing and changing questions, there were also changes in the way some answers were scored and in the weights assigned to some questions.

E.1.1 Questions added

- Number of corporate relationships
- Total number of current exchange students
- Number of Internships
- Number of research partners

E.1.2 Questions removed

- HECS places available

E.1.3 Questions changed

- Number of donations > $5,000 previously $10,000
- Number of formal, documented exchange arrangements with overseas schools previously the question was not as tightly defined
- Prior degree required Yes / Sometimes / No

E.2 Summary of the changes in the 2014 assessment

In addition to adding, removing and changing questions, there were also changes in the way some answers were scored and in the weights assigned to some questions.

E.2.1 Questions added

- A fourth mandatory question – total number of graduates
- Total number of Alumni
- Number of Alumni meetings annually
- Accreditations – achieved and in progress

E.2.2 Questions removed

- Completion time
- Journals and books in the library
- Several online access questions

E.2.3 Questions changed

- Total number of current exchange students split into two questions – incoming and outbound
- Changing sponsorship of chairs and lectureship to just chairs

Copyright © 2002-2014 GMAA