



BUSINESSCAS™

2020-2021 Cycle Report

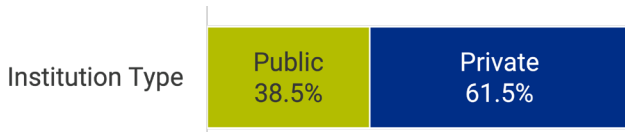
We are excited to release the 2020-2021 BusinessCAS™ Cycle Report which aggregates data for all submitted Centralized Application Service applications during the 2020-2021 admission cycle (**September 9, 2020 through March 31, 2022**). This cycle is specific to applications to **Summer 2021, Fall 2021, Winter 2022 and Spring 2022**. At the close of each cycle, Liaison offers this annual report as a resource to participating schools to assist in trend and recruitment analysis, benchmarking and strategic decision-making.

BusinessCAS Summary

2020-2021 marked the fourth cycle for BusinessCAS. The cycle opened when the world was in the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite uncertainties, BusinessCAS continued to rapidly expand its reach and experienced significant growth within the Graduate Management Education (GME) community.

PARTICIPATION BY STATE AND TYPE OF INSTITUTION:

Participation in BusinessCAS grew **56%** from the 2019-2020 cycle, which was even higher than the 40% growth it experienced the previous application cycle. The CAS increased its footprint to **8 additional states*** and continued to expand the services it provides to a diverse set of institutions, including but not limited to HBCUs, research institutions, liberal arts colleges, faith-based universities, etc.



- ✓ Alabama
- ✓ Arkansas
- ✓ California
- ✓ Connecticut
- ✓ District of Columbia
- ✓ Florida
- ✓ Georgia*
- ✓ Illinois*
- ✓ Iowa
- ✓ Kansas
- ✓ Kentucky*
- ✓ Massachusetts*
- ✓ Michigan*
- ✓ New York
- ✓ Nebraska*
- ✓ North Carolina
- ✓ Ohio*
- ✓ Oklahoma
- ✓ Pennsylvania*
- ✓ Rhode Island
- ✓ Tennessee
- ✓ Texas
- ✓ Virginia
- ✓ Washington

PROGRAM FEE COLLECTION:

During the 2020-2021 cycle, the BusinessCAS application processing fee remained the same as the previous cycle: **\$48**. Participating schools could choose to collect an additional program fee, specific to their institution. They could also set alternate fees or automatic fee waivers for specific applicant populations.

Programs Collecting Fees in addition to Liaison's Processing Fee



Total fees (i.e. Liaison processing fee + school program fee) range from: **\$50-\$150**

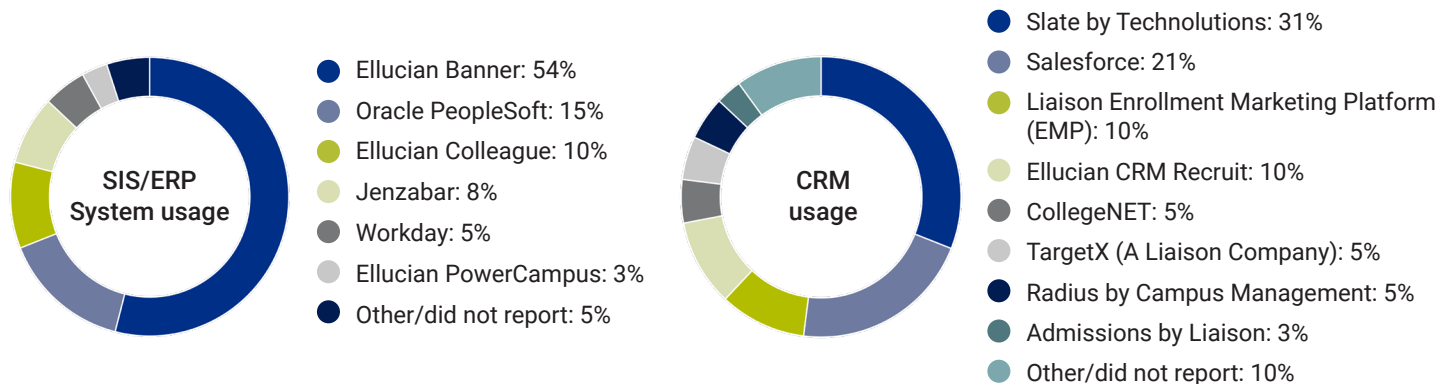
For those collecting additional program fees the average amount was: **\$42**

Overall, the average application fee paid by applicants (including CAS processing fee and program fee) was: **\$64**

SOFTWARE SYSTEMS:

BusinessCAS users have the option to use Liaison's own products, WebAdMIT™, TargetX™ or Admissions by Liaison™, to manage their admission processes. They can also build integrations into their local systems to support existing communication plans, review processes, etc. Liaison provides implementation consulting services as part of onboarding to BusinessCAS, for users who choose to take advantage of Liaison's export tools and move data and documents to their local systems.

Below is a breakdown of the software systems Liaison supported for BusinessCAS users in the 2020-2021 cycle:



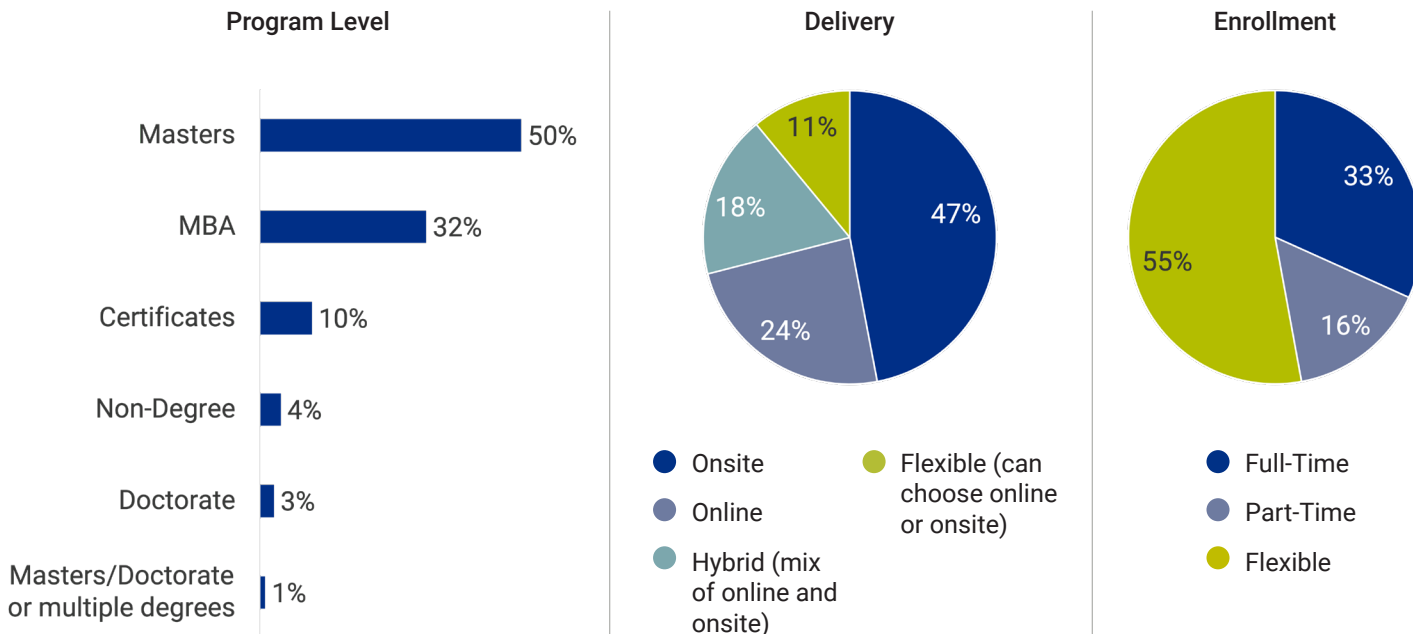
Program Summary

Programs that participate in BusinessCAS reap the benefits of a Centralized Application Service (CAS™) and a community of their peers while maintaining the unique branding and requirements that help them admit and enroll best-fit students.

DESIGNATION DETAILS:

A “designation” refers to how a particular program is listed and can be selected within the CAS. Each designation allows BusinessCAS users to specify the program name, fee, track, term, population and method of delivery. Prospective applicants select and submit applications to programs as per these designation listings.

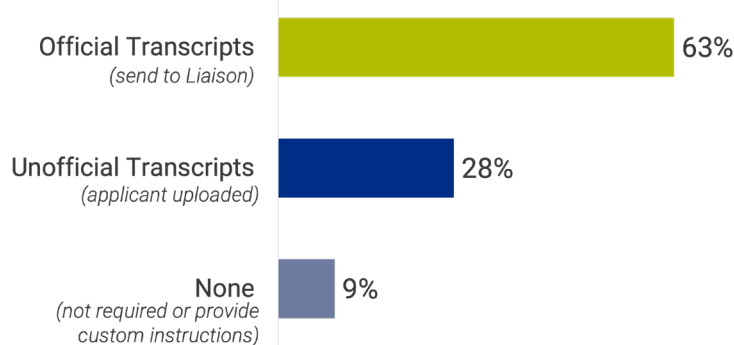
The 2020-2021 cycle saw most growth with programs at the masters level (including MBA). There was also a trend towards offering more flexibility to students, reflected by a decline in programs that required onsite delivery and a growth in programs that accommodated flexible enrollment.



TRANSCRIPTS REQUIREMENTS:

One of the benefits of BusinessCAS is that participating schools have the flexibility to set their transcript requirements individually. Programs can either require official transcripts or allow applicants to simply upload an unofficial transcript.

The 2020-2021 cycle saw an increase in the number of participating schools that allowed students to upload unofficial transcripts, often asking only matriculants to provide official transcripts/foreign evaluations at the time of enrollment.



TRANSCRIPT PROCESSING:

For programs requiring official transcripts, Liaison offers all BusinessCAS programs the service of processing official transcripts, helping programs to streamline transcript management. Reflecting the trend in transcript requirements set by participating programs, BusinessCAS processed a lower number of official transcripts this cycle. Total number of transcripts Liaison processed for BusinessCAS for the 2020-2021 cycle:

	For Submitted Applicants	For In-Progress Applicants
Official US Transcripts	2,811	405
Unofficial US Transcripts	5,619	1,678
Foreign Evaluations	3,133	1,299

Program Summary (continued)

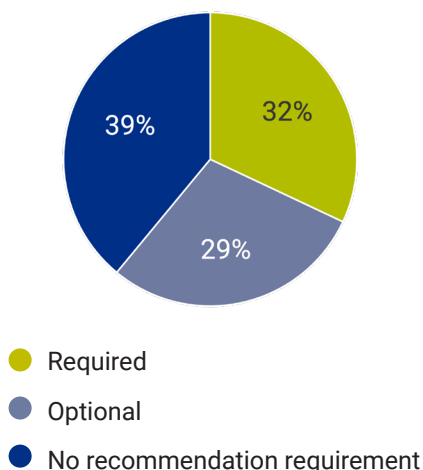
RECOMMENDATION REQUIREMENTS:

Recommenders can use the Letters by Liaison™ portal to send recommendation letters to programs in BusinessCAS when it is required. The platform provides recommenders an easy-to-use experience and streamlines the process for both BusinessCAS users and applicants with notifications and status updates.

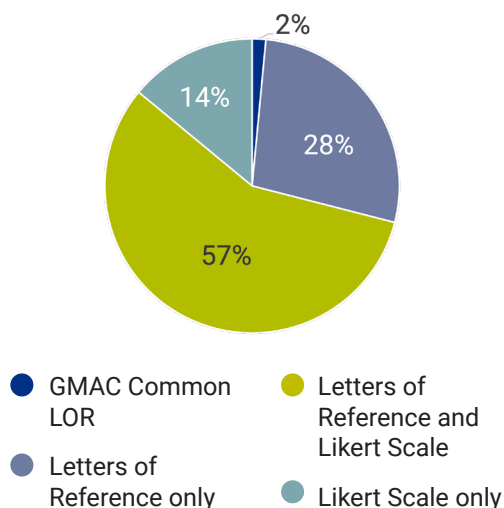
The 2020-2021 cycle saw a major trend reversal with recommendation requirements. Only **32%** of programs in BusinessCAS required recommendations as opposed to 64% of programs in the 2019-2020 cycle. More programs chose to make recommendations optional or not require them at all.

Programs that require recommendations can take advantage of the flexibility BusinessCAS offers to select from a variety of recommendation options to meet their admission needs.

Recommendation Requirements:



Requirements by Recommendation Type:



The average number of recommendations required (for programs that required recommendations) per program held steady from the previous cycle.

⬇️ **Minimum recommendations required 1.79**

⬆️ **Maximum recommendations allowed 2.81**

While the number of programs requiring recommendations decreased in 2020-2021, the number of recommendations submitted by applicants and processed by Letters by Liaison grew in 2020-2021. BusinessCAS received **4,821** more recommendation letters in 2020-2021 than it did in the previous cycle.

	Submitted Applicants
Recommendation letters submitted by Letters by Liaison (Total)	13,182
Letters of Reference and Likert Scale	10,284
Letters of Reference	2,511
Likert Scale	228
GMAC Common LOR	159



Average number of recommendations received per applicant


2

In addition, we received **1,323** recommendations via Letters by Liaison for applicants who began applications to BusinessCAS but did not submit.


Applicant Pool Summary

As BusinessCAS continues to grow, the applicant pool continues to become larger and more diverse. The 2020-2021 cycle saw a **55% increase** in application volume from the previous cycle. Liaison continues to invest in marketing efforts to drive qualified applicants to the CAS, which we expect will continue to be reflected in both the quality and volume of applications.


FIRST GENERATION STATUS:

 **31%** of all submitted applicants identified themselves as **first-generation college students** in the 2020-2021 cycle, a number that held steady from the previous year.


LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:

 **42%** reported a language other than English as their first language. Of these, **20%** reported **Chinese** as their first language.

MILITARY STATUS:

 **Nearly 6%** of BusinessCAS applicants reported that they were either on **active duty, members of Reserve or National Guard**, had served as **veterans** or were **military dependents**.

DEVICE USAGE:

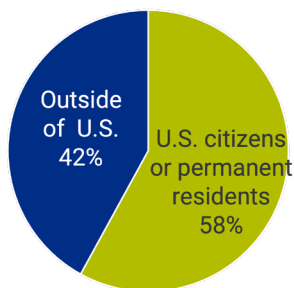
 **15.64%** of all BusinessCAS prospective applicants, or approximately **1 of every 6** users used a **mobile device** (as opposed to a desktop) to access their BusinessCAS application.

 **Nearly 70%** of applicants used **Google Chrome** as their browser to apply to BusinessCAS.

COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP:

As with previous cycles, BusinessCAS received domestic applications from residents of all 50 US states. The international applicant pool drew more diverse, however, with submitted applicants reporting a total of **136** countries as their countries of citizenship.

Residency Status:



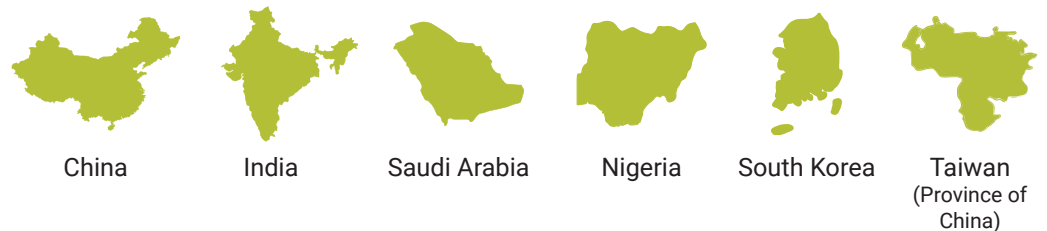
Applicants who indicated that they needed an F-1 or a J-1 visa to study in the US, if admitted:



Top US States of Residency:



Top Sending Countries for International Students:



ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:

Although students who attended both US and non-US schools report their credits and GPA, the diversity of grading and credits systems internationally makes it difficult to report averages. The data below reflects academic performance of students who reported their studies at US institutions only.

Average cumulative GPA:		Average number of credits earned:	
Undergraduate	3.31	Undergraduate	91.79
Graduate	3.55	Graduate	46.59

Applicant Pool Summary (continued)

TEST SCORES:

The 2020-2021 BusinessCAS applicant pool self-reported higher GMAT scores than in the previous application cycle.

Average self-reported GRE score (scaled):		Average self-reported GMAT score:	
Overall	315	Overall	650
Quantitative	163	Quantitative	45
Verbal	155	Verbal	33
Analytical	3.55	Analytic Writing Assessment	4.36
		Integrated Reasoning	5

TOP UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS:

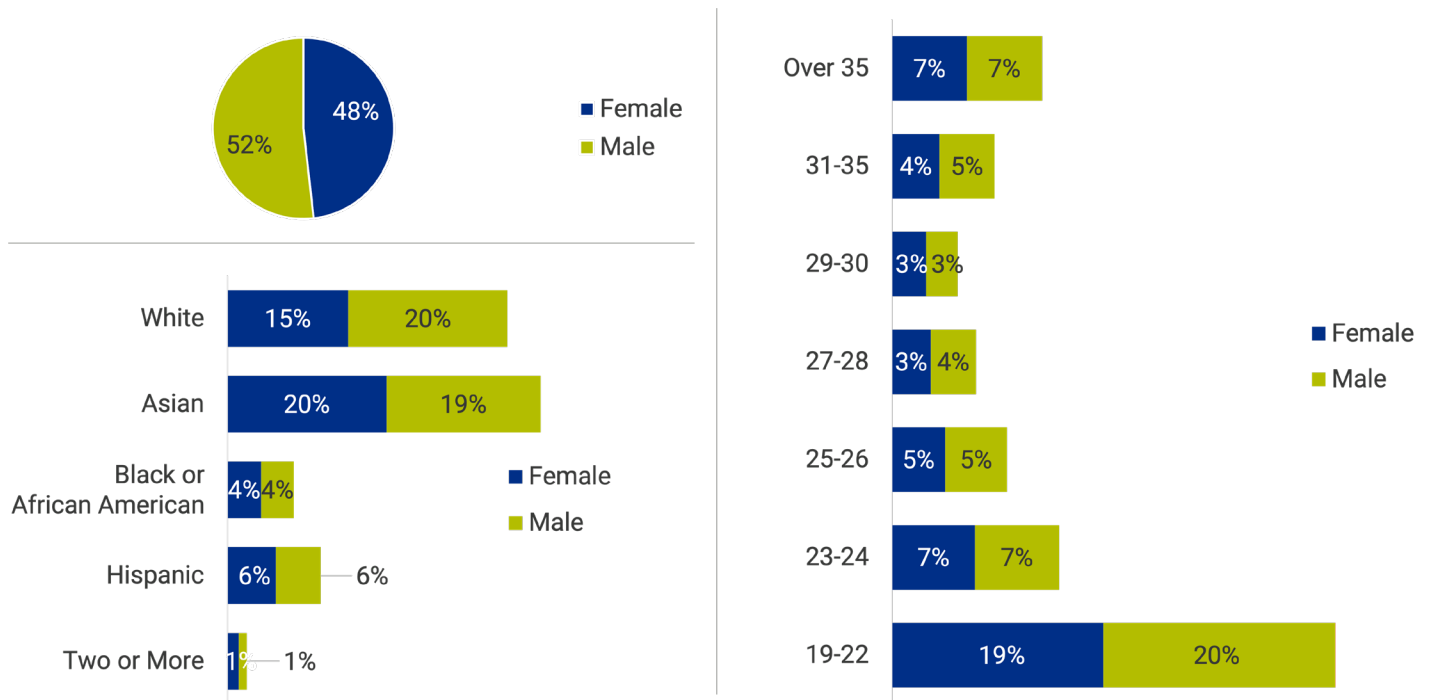
The top undergraduate majors reported in 2020-2021 BusinessCAS remained unchanged from previous years, as can be expected.

1. Account/Finance
2. Business (including Business Administration and Management)
3. Engineering (various specialties)
4. Economics
5. Computer Science/Information Technology
6. Marketing

SEX, AGE, RACE & ETHNICITY:

(Percentages <1% not shown)

The sex distribution for the BusinessCAS 2020-2021 cycle looks almost identical to 2019-2020, demonstrating that we remained almost equally distributed even with the growth in participating schools.



0.8% of applicants declined to state their sex on the 2020-2021 BusinessCAS application.

0.3% of applicants identified as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander or as American Indian or Alaska Native. 4.3% of applicants did not respond to this question on the 2020-2021 BusinessCAS application.

Applicant Feedback

Each CAS application cycle we ask applicants to complete a survey once they have submitted their first application to any program. We are including some highlights from the 2020-2021 BusinessCAS applicant survey as part of this year's annual report.



84.16% of respondents indicated that applying to programs using a CAS was **easier than applying to each program separately**.



88.61% of the respondents indicated that they **would recommend BusinessCAS** to others who are applying to graduate business programs.



4.34 out of 5 is the average score that respondents gave the BusinessCAS application in terms of the overall process.



86.14% of the respondents described BusinessCAS as **"easy" or "very easy"** to use.

APPLICANT TESTIMONIALS:

“ I will recommend using BusinessCAS to all graduate applicants. I am extremely thankful for the support it provided and the ease of use.”

“ First time using it, by filling this form I've learned there are more universities I could apply to through CAS.”

Summary

This academic year has been exceptionally complex as schools returned programs to campus classrooms, staff returned to the office, and myriad disruptions have continued to redefine how students, faculty, and staff navigate the operations of business graduate programs.

Enrollment leaders have been faced with a whole host of challenges that will shape the strategic approach to building cohorts that meet institutional goals. The portfolio of programs at most schools has been in growth mode for at least a decade, but this year schools saw disruptions in what was formerly the most stable part of the portfolio: the MBA. Despite the growth most schools saw in online MBA programs this year, there have been reported challenges in sourcing domestic candidates for MBA programs, in finding candidates for part-time MBA programs, and in determining how best to manage recruitment for Executive MBA programs. Further complicating the enrollment management process this year has been a drop reported by most schools in the number of applications coming from China and India, traditionally the most reliable international sources of students for US graduate business programs. As such, administrative attention has been highly focused on pipeline development, yield management, and reducing barriers to entry for applicants.

As the Cycle Report shows, BusinessCAS provides a highly effective tool to mitigate many of these challenges, as the CAS platform continues to demonstrate high utility for applicants from the perspective of ease-of-use and has delivered a more diverse pool of highly qualified candidates.

Until now, very little data has been captured about graduate-level business programs and the students who leverage these opportunities to either enhance their current careers or begin new career paths. With the support of the BusinessCAS community, we are now in the position to create a one-of-its-kind report that lays a foundation for longitudinal analysis of how students make academic choices in pursuit of graduate degrees in the field.

In a world constantly in flux due to COVID-19 and its repercussions, the most important realization business schools can make today is that they should not and will not return to a pre-pandemic state of affairs. BusinessCAS will provide such data annually to help participating schools navigate the new normal, informing their ability to structure, enhance and improve their academic offerings while helping students understand the breadth of opportunities available in graduate management education. While the report focuses on data trends within BusinessCAS as a whole, participating schools can choose to utilize Analytics by Liaison™ to review how their institution performs in comparison.



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