

# EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS GAINED BY MBAs

**The transferable skills derived from study for an MBA include the following:**

- **Academic achievement:** demonstrates application and high standards of performance;
- **Communication skills:** listening, speaking carefully and clearly, the ability to put across your arguments fluently in writing;
- **Analysis:** distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information, identifying issues and problems;
- **Commitment:** seriousness of purpose, demonstrated both by taking time out from your career on a reduced salary (or no salary) in order to improve your qualifications and by combining work and part-time study;
- **Practicality:** realism, ability to set attainable goals;
- **Maturity:** tenacity, independence, organisation;
- **Decisiveness:** fact-finding skills, clarity, judgement, courage;
- **Intellectual creativity:** the ability to develop new concepts and ideas;
- **Capacity for hard work:** embodying self-motivation, self-discipline and time management;
- **Group skills:** teamwork, leadership, ability to motivate others;
- **The mastery of IT skills:** knowledge of statistical packages, spreadsheets, databases and programming languages;
- **Cross-cultural awareness:** working with fellow-students from many different nationalities and backgrounds.

**In addition to the skills outlined above you are likely to have developed the following skills to a high level through an MBA and through previous employment:**

1. The ability to **overcome difficulties** and to **solve problems**;
2. To be **independent** and to have developed the skill of managing your own time and work;
3. To be capable of **original and creative** thought;
4. To argue your case with logic and **not to be easily dissuaded** by the views of others.

## INTERVIEWS

The Careers and Employability Service booklet, "Interview Skills", is available from our office or on our website at [www.kent.ac.uk/careers/intervw.htm](http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/intervw.htm)

This covers the essentials of interview technique, but the following example questions may be especially relevant to MBA students and graduates.

### **Questions about yourself: your background and your ambitions:**

- Tell me about yourself
- Why did you decide to do an MBA?
- What do you feel you have gained from the course?
- How would the experiences you describe be useful in this company?
- What are your main strengths and weaknesses?
- What other jobs/careers are you applying for?
- Where do you see yourself in five years time?
- What were you doing between these dates? (asking you to explain any gaps in your career history, such as time out, travel or unemployment);
- What do you consider your greatest achievement?
- What do you do in your spare time?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How would your friends/colleagues describe you?

**Questions about your knowledge of the employer, or career area:**

- Why do you want to work for us?
- Why have you chosen to apply for this job function?
- What would you bring to the job?
- Who do you think are, or will be, our main competitors?
- What do you think makes you suitable for this job?
- What do you see as the main threats or opportunities facing the company?
- What impression do you have of this company?
- What was our share price this morning?

**Questions designed to put you on the spot and/or test your ability to think fast, reason under pressure and keep calm:**

- Why should we choose you rather than one of the other candidates?
- Which business man or woman do you most admire?
- What makes you angry?
- How many piano tuners are there in the UK? (A serious question but not one where they are looking for a precise figure! Questions like these want you to logically arrive at a guesstimate breaking down the answer into a series of steps, e.g. number of households in the UK; percentage which have a piano; number of other pianos in schools, concert halls etc; how often does a piano need tuning and so on). This is a scoping question
- If you could change one thing about your life, what would it be?

**Competency-based questions: questions designed to make you give evidence, from past experience, that you have the skills required for the job:**

*Describe a situation where you had to.....*

- show leadership
- make a difficult decision
- work as a member of a team
- show initiative
- introduce and implement change
- overcome a difficult obstacle
- persuade other people of your point of view
- work with others to solve a problem

See our competency questions page for advice on handling this type of question. This site also includes a range of practice interviews including areas such as marketing, HR and finance

**More interview tips and possible questions**

- [www.mckinsey.com/aboutus/careers/applyingtomckinsey/index.asp](http://www.mckinsey.com/aboutus/careers/applyingtomckinsey/index.asp)
- [www.joinbain.com/apply-to-bain/interview-preparation/crack-the-case.asp](http://www.joinbain.com/apply-to-bain/interview-preparation/crack-the-case.asp)
- [www.alec.co.uk/interview/index.htm](http://www.alec.co.uk/interview/index.htm)
- [www.businessballs.com/interviews.htm](http://www.businessballs.com/interviews.htm)

A copy of the book, Great Answers to Tough Interview Questions, is available in the Careers Advisory Service – ask at the Reception Desk.

An e-book, "**Top MBA Interviews**" can be downloaded from the MBAmatch website [www.mbamatch.com](http://www.mbamatch.com)

### **Our interview web pages include:**

- [The most common interview questions](#);
- [Interview dress](#);
- [Body language in interviews](#);
- [Assertiveness in interviews](#);
- [Nightmare interviews](#);
- [Practice interviews](#) for career areas including accountancy, banking and marketing;

  

- Your "bosses" will look for *translation skills*. They'll expect a business analyst to be able to translate business goals into specific objectives, and specific objectives into detailed needs. They'll also expect the business analyst to be able to elicit information from a variety of sources; to translate the information into meaningful understandings that are directly applicable to the project; and to articulate and/or document the information in such a way that those who need it will be able to understand it easily and accurately.
- They'll look for *analysis skills*. They'll expect the business analyst to be able to get up to speed quickly on any given topic or situation. They'll expect you to ask probing questions and be able to identify patterns, trends, and gaps. They'll also expect you to be able to look at a process and quickly discern how it can be improved. And, finally, they'll expect you to be able to compare solutions options, and evaluate how well they meet a particular need.
- They'll look for *relationship skills*. They'll expect a business analyst to be able to quickly build trust with the stakeholders, and to understand and adapt to the stakeholders' communication style, so as to gather information efficiently and recommend solutions persuasively. They'll expect the business analyst to understand the needs of the developers, quality assurance team, and project managers, and they'll expect you to build good working relationships with these people for the good of the project.

Of course, there's lots of other, practical stuff your bosses will expect you to know or have at your disposal, including tools, resources, and special skills. But, rest assured, you should be able to learn or acquire these as you go, and quickly fill any gaps in your "tool kit." This is assuming, of course, that you're fully up to speed with your superiors' expectations regarding translation, analysis, and relationships—the three areas where a business analyst's core expertise should lie.

### **What Qualities a Business Analyst should possess.**

A good Business Analyst is **creative, a people person**. Someone wanting a more hands on approach to business and problem solving. The good Business Analyst will look for opportunities to grow and [learn](#). He or she will listen attentively to what others are saying. The good Business Analyst is like a walking encyclopedia about the company he or she works within. They will know people from every department.

What makes a good business analyst is the ability to listen to what is being said and hear what is not. The good business analyst can read into the meaning of stakeholders

words. He or she can understand the needs being expressed when the stakeholders do not always know what they are. The good Business Analyst will be able to determine if the requests from stakeholders or end users are viable. In some cases they are not and it is up to the business analyst to inform what can be done versus what is wanted.

A good Business Analyst is a **visionary, a creative thinker, and innovative**. He or she is fun to work with and carries a positive attitude.

To summarize, a good Business Analyst must possess following qualities.

- 1) Quality of a Business Analyst may include some **degree in technology**.
- 2) Another quality a Business Analyst should have is the ability to be **comfortable in the board room** as well as in front of the drawing board.
- 3) Another best attribute for the Business Analyst is being **able to supply options**. He or she will know what is available and from whom.
- 4) Being **open minded** is a good quality for the Business Analyst.
- 5) A Business Analyst should be **able to analyze the attributes of another individual**. He or she can show that person where their expertise can help a project.
- 6) A Business Analyst should possess a quality that allows him to **look into the future** to see where business and technology are going.

There are times when services from outside sources may be utilized by the business. The business analyst is trained to understand the importance or lack of need for these sources. He or she can determine the most cost effective way to use the sources. The business analyst may find directing the designated tasks to in-house departments more beneficial to the company. This is part of researching the project proposal. The Business Analyst is to determine the most cost effective way to reach the goal and still succeed with a bottom line net profit. Learn more about the roles and responsibilities of a

## Knowledge, Skills and Abilities of the Business Analyst

- **Business knowledge:** The Business Analyst should have some background knowledge of the subject to make the requirements gathering efficient, although it is not always a must and depends highly on the complexity of the project.
- **IT knowledge:** The Business Analyst should understand what the company information systems can and cannot do. A skilled business analyst does not need to have a deep technical knowledge but should have some general knowledge of network, operating systems, hardware capabilities, database concepts, and the System Development Life Cycle and project methodology.
- **Interpersonal and communication skills** (both written and verbal): The Business Analyst should be a great communicator and diligent team member. Because she or he has to liaise with various business units to gather requirements and resolve different business issues.
- **Data collecting skills:** The Business Analyst should know what data do the company currently have and need to be carried over into the new systems or analysis around what can be achieved with a new system by projecting previous figures of a successful project on the business.
- **Analytical and problem solving skills:** The Business Analyst needs to have the ability to assemble, analyze and evaluate data and to be able to make appropriate and well-reasoned recommendations and decisions to support the Business stakeholders and the Project team. The Business Analyst should also be able to analyse the feasibility of requirements in terms of efforts, inputs, time, and costs. Identify and resolve issues
- **Ability to understand and document business processes:** The Business Analyst should be able to recognize, analyze and map processes, model and improve business process and anticipate future state.

To summarize, qualities and skills of a Business Analyst are:

Technical	Analysis	Business	Leadership
Systems engineering concepts & principles	Fundamentals of business analysis	Business process improvement and reengineering	Fundamental of project management
Complex modeling techniques	Ability to conceptualize and think creatively	Strategic and business planning	Capacity to articulate vision
Communication of technical concepts to non-technical concepts	Techniques to plan, document, analyze, trace & manage requirements	Communication of business concepts to technical audiences	Organizational change management; management of power and politics
Testing, verification and validation	Requirements risk assessment and management	Business outcome thinking	Problem solving, negotiation & decision-making
Technical writing	Administrative, analytical and reporting skills	Business writing	Team management, leadership, mentoring and facilitation
Rapid Prototyping	Cost / benefit analysis	Business case development	Authenticity, ethics and integrity
Technical domain knowledge	Time management & personal organization	Business domain knowledge	Customer relationship management.

**A good Business Analyst will be one of the best assets a company or organization can invest in. Finding a Business Analyst with these qualities is like finding a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow.**

Learn more about [roles and responsibilities of a Business Analyst](#).