

**SONOMA  
STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

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**SCHOOL OF  
BUSINESS**

**MBA Programs**  
ADMISSIONS HANDBOOK



**Dear Prospective MBA Student,**

Thank you for your interest in our purpose-driven MBA programs at the School of Business at Sonoma State University. These programs are internationally-accredited by the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

**Determining Eligibility**

Students are required to have a bachelor's degree and it is recommended that applicants have two or more years of professional work experience before beginning the program. For those who are interested in our MBA with a wine concentration, it is required that they have an undergraduate degree in a related field, two years of wine industry experience, or the equivalent in coursework/certifications before beginning the program.

**Program Structure**

Our purpose-driven MBA programs are designed for individuals who are working full time and who are able to attend **in-person classes on campus**. Most students attend the program part time, taking classes two evenings per week, and complete the program within two years. Some students may be approved to attend full time and can complete the program in twelve months by taking four evening courses per week.

**Program costs**

The approximate cost to complete the MBA program is \$25,000 for in-state students and \$35,000 for out of state or international students. Please see the [University Student Charges/Fees page](#) for more details. Participants who apply for and are eligible to receive financial aid, may be awarded up to \$20,500 per academic year in direct loans. Some students also qualify for grants and/or Graduate PLUS loans. More information can be found at [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov).

**Admissions**

Our department takes rolling admissions for our MBA programs so the sooner you submit your online application, the sooner we can assess your eligibility for the program and notify you of the admissions decision. In addition to [submitting the online application](#), please request to have your official transcripts sent directly to the University Admissions office at [admissions@sonoma.edu](mailto:admissions@sonoma.edu).

I will be your point of contact throughout the admissions process and am happy to answer your questions. Again, thank you for your interest in our graduate programs and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

**Emily Porter, Graduate Admissions Lead**  
Sonoma State University, School of Business  
[porter@sonoma.edu](mailto:porter@sonoma.edu) | 707-664-3547

# ABOUT OUR LOCATION

Our campus is situated in the heart of Northern California's famed and world-class wine region, Sonoma County. An hour's drive north of San Francisco, Sonoma county boasts beautiful seashore beaches, hiking trails, towering redwoods, famed mountain biking, the Russian River, rolling vineyards, wineries, and an array of idyllic small and medium-sized towns.

The SSU campus is located in Rohnert Park, California, and offers a unique balance of academics, community, and lifestyle. SSU's campus is picturesque with lakes, forests, and meandering walking paths among notable buildings, including the School of Business' state of the art facilities in Stevenson Hall, the Wine Spectator Learning Center, and our world-class Green Music Center.

Virtual Campus Tour



# ABOUT SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

The School of Business is a leading institution of business education in the San Francisco Bay Area, with an emphasis on preparing students to succeed in an economy that is global in nature. Our commitment to sustainable business, diversity, social justice, and global partnerships echoes our core philosophy of purpose-driven leadership. As one of the 50 top-ranked public universities, we have been recognized worldwide for our investments in diversity, social responsibility, and visionary academics. Many classes average fewer than 40 students, allowing close interaction between students and faculty.

# ABOUT THE WINE BUSINESS INSTITUTE

The Wine Business Institute (WBI) serves as an intellectual and industry center for faculty, students, and the business community. Founded in 1996 as a partnership between the wine industry and the School of Business at Sonoma State University, the WBI provides cutting-edge research that informs industry best practices and program curriculum. The WBI offers online and in-person wine-focused degrees and industry certifications.



Home to our Graduate Students, the **Wine Spectator Learning Center** is an education and industry hub designed around advanced-technology classrooms, a student commons and gardens, and a collaborative space for faculty and business leaders.

# SONOMA MBA PROGRAMS

## MBA: PURPOSE DRIVEN

This purpose-driven MBA program prepares future leaders with the business skills and knowledge to create a sustainable positive impact in the world. Whether you seek to advance your career, or start and manage your own business, the MBA program provides you with the fundamental management skills and broader environmental and societal perspectives to excel as a competitive and responsible business leader.

## MBA: WINE BUSINESS

The MBA program offers a concentration in wine business and is intended to prepare graduates for positions of management and leadership in wine industry organizations. Located in the heart of California's wine country, we offer extraordinary experiences in learning through local internships and student-run projects, with leading wine-industry faculty and connections to industry professionals.

## PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze quantitative and qualitative data to make strategic business decisions.
- Recognize and apply techniques for managing and motivating employees.
- Design purpose-driven business solutions that can contribute towards a more sustainable world.
- Navigate an ever-changing global environment.



## MBA PROGRAMS

<b>Duration:</b>	1 Year Full-Time 2 Years Part-Time
<b>Schedule:</b>	Weekday Evenings
<b>Program Start:</b>	August
<b>Location:</b>	Hybrid: SSU Campus & Online
<b>Minimum Work Experience:</b>	2 Years Professional

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The best takeaway is the connections that will last a lifetime. The Sonoma Purpose-Driven MBA has a convenient schedule that allowed me to pursue my master's while working full-time. The program provided dynamic projects that emphasized efficient communication and an understanding of creating and sustaining a business.

**Ranjot “Ricky” Sidhu**  
Sr. Finance Program Manager  
*Medtronic*

*\*Program schedule, activities, locations and delivery modes are subject to change.*

# **MBA COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

See [SSU's Course Catalog](#) for details about program structure and all possible course descriptions. The below courses represent a sample of courses within a typical program schedule.

## **COURSES REQUIRED**

eMBArk, 4 Core courses; 3 Theme courses, 2 Elective courses, Capstone (31 units total)

## **INTRODUCTION (1)**

### **BUS 509 EMBARK (1-2)**

This course is required for all incoming MBA students as orientation for masters level studies. Students will gain overview knowledge of case study approaches to learning. A study of each student's communication and learning profile will allow them to better understand how to communicate most effectively with fellow cohorts.

## **CORE COURSES (4)**

### **BUS 535 COST ANALYSIS AND CONTROL (3)**

The course focuses on concepts and managerial uses of financial information with a strong emphasis on management decision-making and the strategic effects of decisions, ethics, and new management accounting trends to prepare students for the challenges of today's workplace.

### **BUS 570 SEMINAR IN MANAGERIAL FINANCE (3)**

Financial theory and applied financial analysis. Topics may include security analysis, portfolio management, financial accounting, corporate financial policy, investment banking, and international finance. Prerequisites: ECON 501, BUS 501, BUS 507 or BUS 370, and BUS 508, or equivalent preparation.

### **BUS 540 MANAGING HUMAN CAPITAL (3)**

Blending theory and application, this course is aimed at understanding the development of human capital. It focuses on the strategic development of talent in the context of talent leadership. It views the arena of talent management as a critical means to achieve competitive advantage in the context of business strategy.

### **BUS 580 BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE (3)**

The course introduces students to methods of data-driven decision-making. This is a hands-on data intensive course where we analyze topics related to management, marketing, and finance such as pricing, promotion, branding, estimating return on investments, and forecasting. The course will make extensive use of modern data-driven analytical methods, including simple and multiple regression models.

## **THEMES (3) & ELECTIVES (2)**

### **BUS 516 OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT (3) IBGI**

Production/operations management of manufacturing and service operations. Topics include forecasting and scheduling, material requirements planning, and quality assurance. Additional tools include inventory control, project management, and product development. Modern techniques such as Supply Chain Management, e-business, Just-in-Time, and Total Quality Management are illuminated.

### **BUS 519 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS (3) CBI**

Study of the fundamental role information systems and technologies play in organizations and management issues they raise. Topics include IS/IT'S strategic importance; technology, legislative, and industry trends; systems development issues and practices; project management; database design and management; management of IS/IT assets.

### **BUS 552 LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION (3) L&E**

This course provides a combination of skill building and theoretical foundation in leadership and innovation. Topic areas include: 1) self-assessment and review of leadership theory, 2) vision, strategy formulation, and planning, 3) interpersonal leadership skills including motivation, performance management, and teamwork, and 4) technical leadership competencies in the areas of innovation, creativity, change and stress management, and decision-making.

### **BUS 560 SEMINAR IN MARKETING MANAGEMENT (3) CBI**

Study of marketing situations, development of marketing plans, and evaluation of marketing programs. Careful consideration of the conceptual background of marketing including trends and emerging developments. Prerequisite: BUS 506 or equivalent.

### **BUS 563 STRATEGIC BRANDING (3) CBI**

This course offers a solid, proven theoretical foundation with practical insights to assist managers in their day-to-day and long-term brand decisions. Specifically, a number of key concepts related to brand management, such as brand equity and brand positioning, are incorporated with a series of case studies to optimize students' learning. Prerequisites: completion of the four core M.B.A. courses: BUS 540, BUS 570, BUS 535, and BUS 580.

### **BUS 592 ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND NEW VENTURE CREATION (3) L&E**

Entrepreneurship focuses on new venture creation and venture feasibility analysis. Working in teams, students will learn to identify, conceptualize, plan, finance, launch, manage, and harvest new ventures. Entrepreneurship, the application of entrepreneurial methods of management to established organizations, will also be discussed. Course Prerequisites: BUS 535, 540, 570, 580 and MBA students only.

### **BUS 593 SEMINAR IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS (3) IBGI**

Comprehensive view of the international economic environment as it relates to international business. Topics include the multinational corporation, subcontracting, counter trade, and international institutions such as the World Bank and GATT. Prerequisite: ECON 501.

### **BUS 595 SPECIAL STUDIES IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (1-3)**

Supervised independent study. A maximum of 3 units may be applied toward the requirements for the M.B.A. degree. Prerequisites: consent of faculty member under whom the individual work is to be conducted, consent of the M.B.A. director, and approved "Application for Special Study 495/595."

### **BUS 596 GRADUATE INTERNSHIP (1-3)**

Field experience for qualified graduate students in business administration. A maximum of 3 units may be applied toward the requirements for the M.B.A. degree. Students must establish with the M.B.A. director that the work involved is clearly integral to the student's graduate studies. Cr/NC only. Management are illuminated.

## **WINE CONCENTRATION**

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At least three of the Theme Area and Elective Courses need to be Wine Business Courses.  
Prerequisite: classified graduate status in the Wine M.B.A. Concentration.

### **BUS 545W GLOBAL WINE BUSINESS (3) IBGI**

Current theory and practice of how wine businesses have evolved to become a global industry. Students analyze and debate cutting-edge issues in strategic management, leadership, organization, human resources, entrepreneurship, family business, government regulation, management of technology, financial management, and socially responsible practices.

### **BUS 555W SUSTAINABILITY IN THE WINE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY (3) L&E**

Current theory and practice of how wine and hospitality businesses can become sustainable business. Course content includes business rationale for adopting environment and social equity practices for improved business performance and success. Students analyze and debate cutting-edge issues in sustainability including a review of global wine and hospitality businesses using sustainable practices, audit and compliance, energy management systems, ISO standards, creation of sustainable business strategies, development of policies and practices for sustainable practices for operations, success measures, and cost-benefit analysis.

### **BUS 565W MARKETING AND SALES STRATEGIES FOR WINE (3) CBI**

Study of wine marketing and sales on a global basis. Focus on branding, research, positioning, and promotion of wine. Consideration of distribution alternatives and sales strategies for wine. Development of marketing plans for wine products.  
Prerequisite(s): Course Open to Wine Business MBA students.

### **BUS 546W INTERNATIONAL WINE BUSINESS STRATEGIES (3) IBGI**

This course is comprised of two intensive, week-long, residential sessions and associated projects and homework, one hosted by SSU and the other hosted by an AACSB-accredited university in another wine-producing country. The course includes observation and critical analysis comparing and contrasting business processes, regulations and practices in the two countries. Taught in face-to-face, hybrid or online modes. This course requires admission into the Wine Business concentration of the MBA program and completion of the four core courses: BUS 535, BUS 540, BUS 570 and BUS 580.

## **CAPSTONE (1)**

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### **BUS 591 SEMINAR IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT (3)**

A consideration of the entire organization from the viewpoint of the chief executive officer. Topics to be covered include strategy formulation, the development of competitive advantage, strategy implementation, and the management of strategic change. Students taking the wine concentration are required to focus their capstone project on the wine industry.

Course Prerequisites: BUS 535, 540, 570 and 580 and three theme area courses; MBA or Wine MBA students only.

# **COSTS AND TUITION**

The cost for the **MBA** program is approximately **\$25,000 for in-state students** or **\$35,000 for out of state and international students**.

## **MBA FINANCIAL AID & EMPLOYER OPPORTUNITIES**

We understand that an MBA can open doors to new opportunities, or enable you to create your own. We also know financial aid can be paramount in making an MBA a possibility and are pleased to assist students in applying for available tuition support.

**Federal student loan** eligibility may award up to \$20,500 in Direct Loans per academic year. Students may apply online at [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov). The U.S. Department of Education's federal student loan program offers two types of direct loans, which eligible applicants can borrow directly from the federal government at a fixed interest rate.

If you are interested in requesting federal financial aid for your MBA, we ask that you file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) using the Sonoma State University federal school code of 1156. This Federal Student Aid Estimator can help you understand your eligibility for federal student aid.

**Employer-sponsored support is a great way to finance your MBA. Ask your employer today.**

Key Findings from an EdAssist study of more than 22,000 participants in tuition assistance programs include:

- 85 percent of participants maintain the program has made them a more effective employee.
- 8 out of 10 respondents say that tuition assistance makes them more likely to stay with their employer, regardless of any policy requiring them to stay.
- 85 percent of participants report that tuition assistance is an important factor related to job satisfaction.

## **LOAN REPAYMENT AND FORGIVENESS**

Loan repayment and forgiveness programs can significantly reduce or eliminate your graduate school debt. Please visit the Federal Student Aid website for the latest information about which loans are eligible and other considerations.

## **TUITION AND FINANCIAL AID CONTACTS**

If you have questions or concerns about how you can finance your Online MBA, please contact the Financial Aid Office at 707-664-2389 . Our financial aid specialists are dedicated to helping you find financial support and can help you navigate available resources, including grants, scholarships, and federal student aid.





# Prerequisite Courses

Applicants may apply for admission to the MBA program with or without an academic background in business administration, though some prerequisite courses are required.

## Overview of Prerequisites and why they are important:

**Financial Accounting and Managerial Accounting** are essential prerequisites for an MBA program because they provide students with a fundamental understanding of the language and concepts of accounting. Financial Accounting teaches students how to analyze financial statements, including balance sheets, income statements, and cash flow statements, which are critical in understanding a company's financial performance. Managerial Accounting, focuses on internal management and decision-making, including cost analysis and budgeting.

**Microeconomics and Macroeconomics** are necessary prerequisites because they provide students with a foundation in economic theory and concepts. Microeconomics focuses on the study of individual behavior, such as how businesses and consumers make decisions, while Macroeconomics studies the economy as a whole, including topics such as inflation, interest rates, and economic growth.

**Statistics** provides students with the skills necessary to analyze and interpret data. In today's data-driven business environment, the ability to analyze and interpret data is essential for making informed business decisions. A solid foundation in statistics provides students with the tools to analyze data sets, test hypotheses, and make data-driven decisions.

**Finance** provides students with an understanding of financial management and decision-making. This course teaches students about capital markets, valuation techniques, risk management, and financial analysis, providing them with the skills necessary to make informed financial decisions in a business context.

## Sonoma MBA Prerequisite Classes

Applicants may submit their Cal State Apply online application even if all prerequisite courses have not yet been completed and may be admitted as a Conditionally Classified Graduate Student, pending the completion of the needed courses.

Students may complete the prereq courses at the university of their choice or via Coursera using the links below. Once completed, please email your unofficial transcripts and/or Coursera certificate of completion to [mba@sonoma.edu](mailto:mba@sonoma.edu).

Course	SSU Equivalent	Coursera Equivalent
Financial Accounting AND Managerial Accounting	<b>BUS 230A</b> Principles of Accounting (Fin).  <b>BUS 230B</b> Principles of Accounting (MGRL)	<b>Coursera</b> Intro to Financial Accounting <a href="https://www.coursera.org/learn/wharton-accounting">https://www.coursera.org/learn/wharton-accounting</a>
Micro Economics AND Macro Economics	<b>ECON 204</b> Intro to Macroeconomics  <b>ECON 205</b> Intro to Microeconomics	<b>Coursera</b> Strategic Bus. Mngmt: Economics <a href="https://www.coursera.org/learn/intro-economic-theories">https://www.coursera.org/learn/intro-economic-theories</a>
Statistics	<b>BUS 211</b> Managerial Statistics	<b>Coursera</b> Basic Statistics <a href="https://www.coursera.org/learn/basic-statistics">https://www.coursera.org/learn/basic-statistics</a>
Finance	<b>BUS 370</b> Intro to Managerial Finance	<b>Coursera</b> Introduction to Corporate Finance <a href="https://www.coursera.org/learn/wharton-finance">https://www.coursera.org/learn/wharton-finance</a>

\*Prerequisite classes are typically waived for Executive MBA students

# ADMISSIONS CHECKLIST

## MBA PROGRAM



### ITEMS FOR THE UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS OFFICE:

#### **COMPLETE THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY APPLICATION**

Please visit the [Cal State Apply website](#) to submit your online application before the April 30th deadline. The MBA programs (purpose driven and wine concentration) are listed under the “Sonoma Graduate” heading.

#### **OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS\***

Please send copies of all **official** transcripts directly to SSU’s [Admissions & Records Office](#). Official transcripts must show proof of completion of a Bachelor’s Degree and must have been issued within the last two years.

Students with foreign transcripts must submit a Foreign Coursework Evaluation through a company such as [WES](#) or [SpanTran](#). Students who studied at a foreign university must show proof of English Language proficiency and may need to submit official IELTS or TOEFL scores directly to the admissions office. Visit the [International Admissions page](#) for more details.

*\*Official transcripts must reflect a 2.5 GPA or higher in your last 60 units of coursework and bachelors degree completion.*

### ITEMS FOR YOUR DEPARTMENT FILE:

The following supporting documents may be submitted along with your [Cal State Apply online application](#) or uploaded directly to the department using the [Department Review Form](#).

#### **RESUME**

Please submit your resume, including name and contact information for two professional references.

#### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Submit a one to two-page statement of purpose essay (double-spaced, 12 pt. font) explaining your academic and professional background, why you are interested in getting your MBA, and what you hope to do in your career after completing the program.

#### **PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY AND COMPLETION OF PREREQUISITE COURSES**

Your uploaded resume and/or unofficial transcripts may be used to confirm your **eligibility for the MBA program**:

- 1) **Completion of a bachelor’s degree, and must have achieved a 2.50 GPA in the prior 60 semester units (90 quarter units) attempted.**
- 2) **Two years of professional work experience.**
- 3) **Applicants for the wine business concentration:**

Completion of 20 units of wine-related coursework, a major in wine in your undergraduate degree, 2 years of wine industry work experience, the completion of the first two levels of our online Wine Business Management Certificate offered through the Wine Business Institute’s Professional Development programs, or any combination thereof.

Applicants may apply for admission to the MBA program with or without an academic background in business administration, though some prerequisite courses may be required\*. You may view the [prerequisite courses here](#).

*\*Applicants may submit their [Cal State Apply online application](#) even if all prerequisite courses have not yet been completed and may be admitted as a Conditionally Classified Graduate Student, pending the completion of the needed courses.*

#### **OPTIONAL LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

Students may submit up to two letters of recommendation from professional or academic contacts.