

# Italy's appeal soars among international business school hopefuls

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Italy has shifted from a mainly domestic to predominantly international aspiring students choosing it as a preferred study destination for graduate business schools, finds a new report by the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC).

Previously, Italian citizens comprised 56% of aspiring business school applicants, whereas now, international students make up 57%.

There's been a noteworthy change in the interest of international candidates. Last year, 70% were from Europe, but this year, only a quarter came from there. Instead, 25% are from Africa, another 25% from Latin America, and 13% from South Asia.

This data doesn't suggest a decline in Italy's appeal to European students; rather, it highlights a surge in interest from other regions worldwide.

These findings are from GMAC's annual Prospective Student Survey, conducted to measure the needs and demands of aspiring students in management and business education.

"The Italian business education market is one of the strongest in Europe, and for good reason," says GMAC Regional Head for Europe, Nalisha Patel.

"More international students from outside of Europe are considering top Italian schools, with the two-year MBA and the master of finance as the top programmes of choice for students, domestic and international, looking to study in Italy."

Among Italian candidates, the Prospective Student Survey also showed that the Masters of Finance stands out as the top choice, with 26% selecting it as their preferred programme. Following closely behind is the Master of International Management, maintaining its second position with 19% selecting it as their preferred programme.

However, there has been a shift this year, with the one-year MBA dropping from its previous third-place position, now replaced by the Master of Management.

This highlights an ongoing trend in Italian business education favouring Master programmes over MBAs. Last year, 23% of Italian candidates were contemplating MBAs, while 45% were considering Master programmes, and 32% were open to both options. This year, the interest in MBAs has declined slightly to 19%, while 40% are considering Master programmes, and 41% are open to either choice.

The GMAC annual Prospective Students Survey provides insights into the evolving preferences of prospective students across regions.

This year, the survey collected responses from 4,105 participants spanning 132 countries. Among them, 61% were from Gen Z.

These results underscore significant shifts in applicant demographics and their preferences, especially considering the increasing importance of Gen Z in the student pipeline for business schools.

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Founded in 1953, GMAC is a global association of leading graduate business schools and provides valuable insights into the evolving trends and challenges shaping graduate management education globally.

To speak with Nalisha Patel, or a copy of the GMAC 2024 Prospective Student Survey, please contact Alexandre Lopez at BlueSky Education at [alex@bluesky-pr.com](mailto:alex@bluesky-pr.com) or call +44 (0)1582 797959.