



Standards History

In 1994, MBA career services professionals from around the United States met and expressed their frustration and dissatisfaction with the lack of agreed upon and accepted reporting standards for MBA employment data. They expressed the perception that (a) many MBA employment reports were generated primarily as marketing devices to attract students and employers and to attain media-generated rankings, (b) employment reports did not reflect an accurate representation of graduates' performance in the job market, (c) salary statistics were inflated by inclusion and/or exclusion of certain populations, and (d) prospective students and employers had no valid way of comparing schools one to another.

In July 1994, the MBA Employment Statistics Standards Committee was formed at the Career Services & Employer Alliances' (formerly MBA Career Services Alliance and MBA Career Services Council) inaugural meeting in San Diego, California. Pete League (George Mason University), Glen Payne (University of Maryland) and Jackie Wilbur (Babson College) agreed to lead the effort to conduct a survey of then current reporting practices and report back to the membership at the next meeting in Toronto, Canada in June 1995.

The survey was conducted, and Mr. League and Ms. Wilbur presented a report as requested (Mr. Payne had withdrawn from the committee upon accepting other employment). The survey data indicated a wide variance in how MBA programs reported employment statistics. The data clearly showed that some programs were reporting statistics based upon information provided by as few as 10-20 percent of their graduates. There were no recognized standards nor common definitions (or informal understandings) of the key components of a quality employment report. Additionally, few published reports provided adequate footnotes to enable the reader to understand *exactly* what was being presented.

At the June 1995 Toronto meeting, the committee was expanded and asked to develop specific preliminary reporting recommendations and to submit those recommendations at the June 1996 meeting in Chicago. During the next year, the committee met in Fairfax, Virginia and in Atlanta, Georgia and developed its recommendations. Mr. League (then with the Monterey Institute of International Studies) and Ms. Wilbur (then with Georgetown University) presented a formal report at the June 1996 Chicago meeting. Approximately 25 schools volunteered, as pilot schools, to use the preliminary standards in developing their MBA employment statistics during the next year. The committee was asked to incorporate a number of recommendations, meet again, and report to the Board in December 1996.

During the 1997 and 1998 Career Services & Employer Alliance annual meetings, additional membership comments and suggestions were solicited and accepted. The first edition of the reporting standards (later renamed Standards for Reporting Full-time MBA Employment Statistics) was adopted in 1999.

Standards Compliance Review

formerly known as Agreed Upon Procedures

In January 2005, the Career Services & Employer Alliance and the Graduate Management Admission Council® (GMAC)® announced to our membership the terms of a strategic partnership to collect and review employment data. With this agreement, CSEA took the biggest step since the Standards were finalized in 1999, to provide reliable, useful, accurate and comparable employment data on our industry. When GMAC® elected to withdraw from the employment data review partnership in 2012, Career Services & Employer Alliance decided to continue with the program independently. In summary, Standards Compliance Reviews (formerly known as reviews of Agreed Upon Procedures) help CSEA to increase the use and knowledge of our Standards and improve interpretation by a diverse audience.

Since the development of the original Standards, it has continued to be a priority for the Board of Directors to address the need to improve the reliability, usefulness, accuracy and comparability of reported MBA employment data.

Part-time MBA Standards

In 2013, Career Services & Employer Alliance surveyed its membership to obtain feedback on employment data tracking for part-time MBA students and determine the need to develop standards for the growing population. Members indicated via the survey and during a session at the Global Conference that there was a strong interest in establishing separate standards for this population based on their unique needs and profile.

In 2014, a task force was formed and charged with understanding the market, soliciting additional input from the membership, and drafting the part-time standards. The task force consisted of Nicole Hall (Wake Forest University), Tracy Handler (New York University), and Wendy Tsung (Emory University). A pilot survey was launched in 2015 with six schools to test a first draft of the standards. Results from the pilot were discussed with members during a breakout session at the Global Conference, and additional feedback was collected to help frame the survey questions. Key findings included:

- Traditional outcomes-based measures do not and should not be applied to this population. The part-time MBA population are typically already employed, and their “outcome” can occur at any time (or many times) during their program.
- Many part-time MBAs realize the career benefits of their degree well beyond graduation, and while those are important changes, life-long changes and the total value of the program are beyond the purview of CSEA.
- A point-in-time career profile is a much more appropriate approach to developing standards for this group.

In 2015, the survey was further refined and a modified survey was shared with the CSEA Working Professionals Resource Group, as well as the MBA Career Services for Working Professionals organization (MBA CSWP) for additional feedback. Later that year, additional pilot schools tested the survey with their class of 2015 graduates. A webinar was hosted with CSEA members to discuss results from the pilot survey and capture additional feedback.

In 2016, MCSEA met with the MBA CSWP to capture additional feedback, and a breakout session was held at the Global Conference. A working group was formed to review, comment on and discuss the draft standards. The working group consisted of: Tracy Handler (New York University), Erika Harrigan (University of Maryland), Ana Herranz Martin (IE), Blaze Konkol (University of Chicago), Shawnice Meador (University of North Carolina), Helen Rutledge (Queens University), Adnan Rukiah (Northwestern University), Wendy Tsung (Goizueta Business School), Beth Ursin (Willamette) Amber Wigmore (IE).

In 2017, a draft of the standards was provided to the Standards Committee and Board of Directors for review and comments, and then to the CSEA membership for additional feedback. Later that year, version I of the standards was approved by the Standards Committee and Board of Directors.

Specialty Masters Standards

In 2013, the organization also noted a trend in increased enrollment of specialty master's programs at business schools worldwide. A survey was conducted among CSEA members to confirm the trend and identify what, if any, employment data was being collected from graduates. Based on the results of this survey, in 2014 the Board of Directors discussed the need to explore the creation of standards for specialty master's programs, with the overarching goal to provide context for applicants when selecting programs that match their educational and career goals (and not to establish an MBA-style rankings competition based on employment rates and base salaries).

In June 2015, a session was held at the CSEA Global Conference to discuss current data collection processes being used by schools and gather feedback from the membership. In March 2016, a task force was convened to develop a draft of the Standards. The task force consisted of: Tom Kozicki (chair), (Paul Merage School of Business, University of California, Irvine), Emily Anderson, (Owen School of Business, Vanderbilt University), Tracy Handler, (NYU Stern), Sue Kline, (MIT Sloan), and Mark Peterson, (Iowa State College of Business).

In April 2016, a more extensive survey was conducted among CSEA members to gather data on the variety of specialty master's programs offered and career services provided to those students. Some of the challenges driving the development of specialty master's standards that were uncovered through the survey and multiple follow-up discussions included:

- Specialty masters programs are broad and diverse. There were 58 different programs identified in the survey, with more expected in subsequent years. Even programs with the same names can vary significantly in size, time to degree completion, average years of work experience, and intended career outcomes.
- Many schools report large numbers of international and/or entry-level candidates in these programs. Time to employment varies greatly among these populations, with many of them taking alternative employment opportunities that vary from MBA programs, including short-term and contract positions.
- Many schools have not yet invested in resources to support the career needs of specialty master's program graduates in the same way they have for MBA graduates.
- Some specialty master's programs are very specialized and small (with less than 20 students) making it difficult to report employment in a meaningful way using the standard function, industry, geography, undergraduate major and years of work experience tables.

In May 2016, a draft set of Standards was written, using the original Standards as a basis, and adjusting for insights gathered from the members. In June 2016, a session was held at the CSEA Global Conference to present the draft standards and solicit feedback. A working group was formed to test the standards and provide additional insight. The working group consisted of: Wendy Clay, (Simon School of Business, University of Rochester), Stephen Glomb, (Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota), Mitchell Kam, (Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western University), Shari Kern, (Olin Business School, Washington University St. Louis), Patrick Perrella, (Daniels College of Business, University of Denver), Sondi Pripstein, (Tepper School of Business, Carnegie Mellon), Andy Rabitoy, (Foster School of Business, University of Washington), Leonard Williams, (Freeman School of Business, Tulane University).

In October 2016, a webinar was held with the working group to review the draft and make revisions. In December, 2016, testing was completed by the working group. In early spring 2017, the draft was revised based on feedback from the working group, the Standards Committee and the Board of Directors.

In April 2017, a draft of the standards was approved by the Standards Committee to be distributed to the members for comment. Member comments were collected via an online survey. The task force reviewed feedback from the membership and made additional revisions. In June 2017, a draft of the standards was approved by the Standards Committee and then finalized by the Board of Directors.

Original Standards Rename

With the introduction of standards for part-time MBA and specialty master's programs, the original Standards were renamed to Standards for Reporting Full-time MBA Employment Statistics in 2017.