Standards for Reporting Employment Statistics

A Commitment to Accurate and Credible Data Reporting

Every datapoint you share with prospective students, ranking agencies, accreditors, alumni, and industry partners shapes how your program is perceived. That's why leading business schools across the globe rely on the CSEA Standards—the gold-standard framework for collecting and reporting MBA/Masters employment outcomes and career profiles.

What the Standards Provide

A clear, consistent methodology that ensures your employment reports can be accurately compared across institutions. They eliminate ambiguity, reinforce transparency, and safeguard the integrity of the data your school publishes.

Why the Standards Matter

- **Institutional Credibility**
  Accurate data reflects the true success of your students and the strength of your employer relationships.
- **Ethical and Transparent Enrollment Practices**
  Prospective students expect trustworthy outcomes. Following the Standards protects your school and empowers students to make informed decisions.
- **Apples-to-Apples Comparisons**
  When your data aligns with peer schools, your program's strengths become clearer—and more compelling.
- **Reliable Storytelling and Brand Positioning**
  Marketing and admissions teams can confidently highlight achievements without the risk of misinterpretation or inconsistencies.
- **Enhanced Strategic Planning**
  Consistent reporting enables leadership to track trends, assess program outcomes, and make sound, data-driven decisions.

Reliable data begins with a shared commitment to clarity, consistency, and accountability. By following the CSEA Standards, you help protect your school's reputation and ensure your outcomes tell the most accurate story possible.

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2025 Standards Revisions

Full-time MBA, Part-time MBA & Specialty Masters programs

CSEA recently released revised Standards for Reporting Employment Data for Full-time MBA, Part-time MBA, and Specialty Masters Programs, which go into effect starting with the graduating class of 2026. The goal for the revisions was to update the Standards according to notable, ongoing changes in the recruitment marketplace, clarify frequent questions and concerns from CSEA members, and provide additional consistency across all documents. The documents were also reformatted for clarity and readability.

- **Definition of "Standards Compliant Report"** – There were some questions from members about what qualifies as a "Standards Compliant Report." Additional language was added to clarify that all tables noted in the Standards as required must be included and published in the school's Standards Compliant Report to meet the goal of transparency. It was also clarified that schools can include additional data not defined in the Standards in their Standards Report if it's noted that those items are not in the Standards.
- **Online and hybrid full-time programs** – With so many variations in programs, it's difficult to establish a shared definition. Schools can determine which Standards to use (Full-time or Part-time) based on the nature of the program (working professionals, full course load, number of online courses, etc.).
- **Standards title and scope** – Part-time Specialty Masters programs more closely mimic part-time MBA programs with regards to employment profiles. With that in mind, the title of the Specialty Masters Standards was changed from: "Standards for Reporting Specialty Masters Employment Statistics" to: "Standards for Reporting Fulltime Specialty Masters Employment Statistics". The title and language of the Parttime MBA Standards was updated to include Part-time Specialty Masters programs.
- **Purpose of the Part-time MBA Standards** – Updates were made to further clarify the purpose of the Part-time MBA Standards focusing on a point-in-time class profile vs. employment outcomes.
  - Table 3 (source of job) is now optional.
  - "Employment Profile" was changed to "Graduating Class Profile" in the title of the Standards.
- **Program definitions** – Language was added to clarify that reporting should be done at the program level, not at the student level. In other words, schools will use the same set of Standards for all students in each particular program. Clarification was also added to indicate that the definition of Full vs. Part-time programs is up to the school's discretion. Examples were added to assist schools who have difficulty with the definition.
  - Part-time MBA Standards: Breakdowns by modality (in-person, hybrid, online) were removed from the tables. Schools can choose to create separate reports or separate tables by modality if desired. Schools are asked to add text to their employment report to indicate the percent of students who fit into each modality within each program
- **Definition of graduating class** – Schools can now vary their graduation year by one month before or after the definition in the Standards, as long as they use the same definition every year and include a footnote about why it's different. This change was made to provide flexibility for schools in Europe that have have summer graduations which cause graduating classes to be split among class years. It was also made to accommodate schools in Asia where graduation dates may fluctuate based on the Lunar New Year, causing the graduating classes to be vastly different from year to year. This change allows schools to keep their graduating classes more intact which makes reporting easier and more consistent, while still maintaining a large degree of consistency across all schools.
- **Program length** – Language was added to clarify that all students should be accounted for in employment reports, regardless of the length of the program. An optional table was added to the Full-time MBA Standards for schools that want to report compensation by program length. A footnote was added to specify program lengths.

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- **Remote work** – The geographic location for students working remote will be the student's home office, or where they would go if they had to go into work. If a company is 100% virtual, the location where the student conducts a majority of their work will be used as the location. The frequency of when the student goes into the office isn't a factor. The clarifications are being made to help schools determine where to include a student's salary in the geographic tables.

- **Contract work** – For Full-time MBA programs, contract work can be considered a job acceptance if the following criteria are met:
  - The contract extends past three months post-graduation
  - 30 hours or more are worked per week
  - The position is an MBA-level position.

  This change is being made to legitimize contract work for full-time students, as it is increasing in popularity and should be reflected in outcomes reports.

- **Status changes during data collection time period** – Students in Specialty Masters programs can be considered employed in short-term employment even if the contract ends before 6 months after graduation. These changes help clarify what to do in cases where a student's job status changes during the data collection time period.

- **"Not reported" row** – A "not reported" row was added to all Standards tables so that the totals in each table add up to 100%. This was added to aid in data collection processes and help schools identify errors.

- **Minimum threshold to report employment data** – It can be difficult to achieve a 75% response rate for schools that have large populations of Specialty Masters students. Therefore, the percent of students with known information about their employment status was lowered from 75% to 70%. This change was made to assist schools with becoming in compliance with the Standards. Schools are still encouraged to achieve as high a response rate as possible to assist with accurate reporting. The data reporting threshold for Full-time MBA programs remains the same (85%).

- **Data collection timeframes**
  - Full-time MBA programs: Clarification was added to clarify that schools can collect data at 6 months after graduation if they want to, but it shouldn't be added to the Standards tables.
  - Specialty Masters program: Rather than having to indicate that a report is "interim" if it's published before the 6-month after graduation timeframe, schools will be allowed to finalize their reports before 6 months if they either have 100% knowledge of their graduating class or have met the 70% knowledge threshold and are certain they won't gain any additional knowledge. The required student outreaches still need to be followed. This change was made to assist schools in Europe who have close to final data at three months and don't have the bandwidth to create a six-month report.

- **Minimum data points** – Some schools were concerned that including salary breakdowns within some of the tables might lead to confidentiality issues for some student populations, even with the required minimum data points or percentages. Clarifying language was added to let schools know they can use a higher number of data points as their minimum to protect confidentiality if needed.

- **Industry list** – Industries were updated to reflect industry norms and allow more consistency across all Standards. For Full-time MBA programs:
  - "Computers" was moved to "Technology"
  - "Clean tech" was removed
  - "Hardware" and "Software" were added under the technology sublist
  - "Accounting Services" was added.
  - Clarification was added that "-tech" can be put where the school chooses as long as it's consistent from year to year.

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- **Function list** – Functions were updated to reflect industry norms and allow more consistency across all Standards. For Full-time MBA and Part-time MBA programs:
  - “Product Management” and “Business Analytics” were added
  - “Product Management” was removed from the sublist
  - “CSR” and "other" were removed from the sublist
  - An explanation of what "other" is was added. “Accounting” was added

  For Specialty Masters programs:
  - “Business Analytics” and “Product Management” were added.

- **Source of employment table** – For Part-time programs, the title of Table 3 was changed from “Primary Source of Current/ Accepted Position” to “Primary Source of New/Accepted Position.” Language was added to clarify that the table does not include students who didn’t change jobs while in the program.

- **Definition of job level change** – For Part-time programs, language was added to clarify that salary increases and job title changes alone don't constitute a job level change. To qualify for a job level change, job duties must change substantially.

- **Column added to tables** – The following columns were added to tables to help schools reconcile the tables and minimize errors.
  - Full-time MBA: Table 2.B was amended to include a “Job Accepted by Three Months These changes were made to help schools reconcile the tables and minimize errors. After Graduation” column.
  - Specialty Masters - Table 2.A was amended to include a “Job Accepted by Three Months After Graduation” column.

- **Consistency Updates** – Updates were made to language, table numbers, and the order of sections to be the same in all three sets of Standards. Directions for each table were moved under each table and headings and examples are consistent or similar. Purpose, definitions and use of the standards sections were added to the top of all Standards incorporating all the same key elements.

The Standards Creation & Revision Process

When CSEA was founded in 1994, career services professionals voiced a common frustration—schools were reporting employment outcomes inconsistently, often for marketing purposes rather than accuracy. The lack of standards meant stakeholders couldn’t trust the data. In response, CSEA created the Standards for Reporting MBA Employment Statistics in 1996. Today, the Standards remain the only peer-reviewed, globally accepted framework for reporting MBA and business master’s employment data, regularly updated to reflect market realities.

The revisions to the Standards released in 2025 are the result of a multi-year effort which included market research, global member feedback surveys, in-person and virtual workshops, and a significant investment of time on the part of CSEA volunteers and staff. The goal for the revisions was to update the Standards according to notable, ongoing changes in the recruitment marketplace, clarify frequent questions and concerns from CSEA members, and provide additional consistency across all documents. The documents were also reformatted for clarity and readability.