



## Shifting Demand and Preferences of Candidates and Implications for Future Strategies

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**Isabelle Dostaler**, Dean, School of Business, Memorial University of Newfoundland

**Detlev Zwick**, Dean, Schulich School of Business, York University

2021 Business Schools Association of Canada (BSAC) Annual Conference

November 2 | 2:25 – 3:15 ET

Graduate  
Management  
Admission  
Council™



### **Isabelle Dostaler**

*Dean, School of Business, Memorial University of Newfoundland*  
Isabelle became dean of the School of Business in 2017. Prior to this role she was a Professor at Concordia University. She received her PhD from the University of Cambridge.

### **Detlev Zwick**

*Dean, Schulich School of Business, York University*  
Prior to assuming the role of Dean in 2021, Detlev served as the School's Interim Dean. He has been a faculty member since 2002. He holds a PhD from the University of Rhode Island

### **Rahul Choudaha**

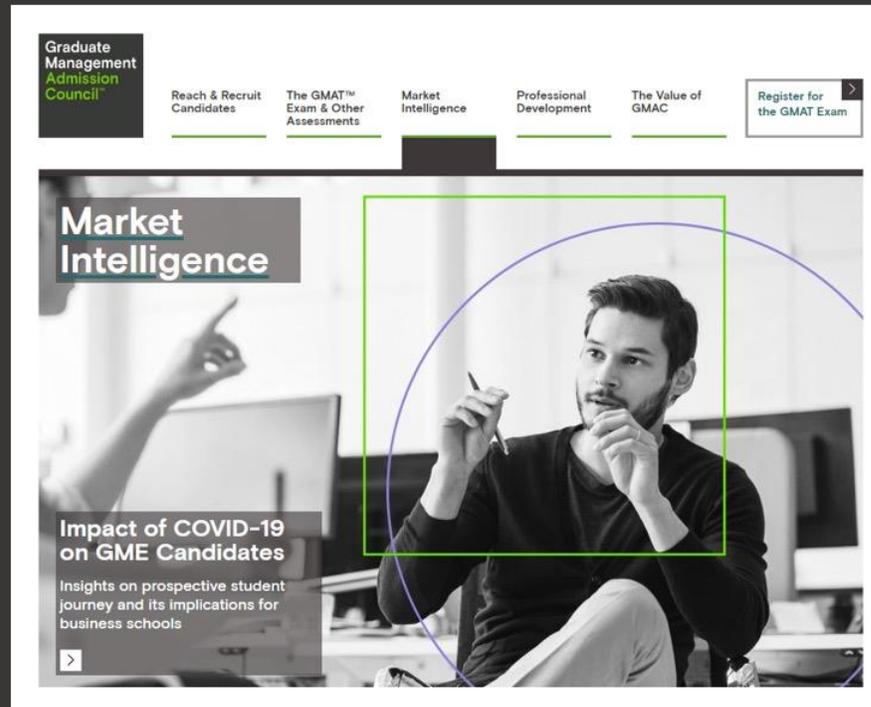
*Director of Industry Insights and Research Communications at GMAC.*  
Rahul is a researcher and analyst of graduate management education trends and its implications for business schools. He holds a doctorate in higher education from the University of Denver.

# GMAC Research

## GMAC Mission

Provide the tools and information necessary for schools and talent to discover and evaluate each other

[gmac.com/research](https://gmac.com/research)



## Resources

- [Blogs](#)
- [Infographics](#)
- [Reports](#)
- [Webinars](#)

## GMAT™

- [Geographic Trend Report](#)
- [Profiles of Testing](#)

## Survey Research

Nov 17

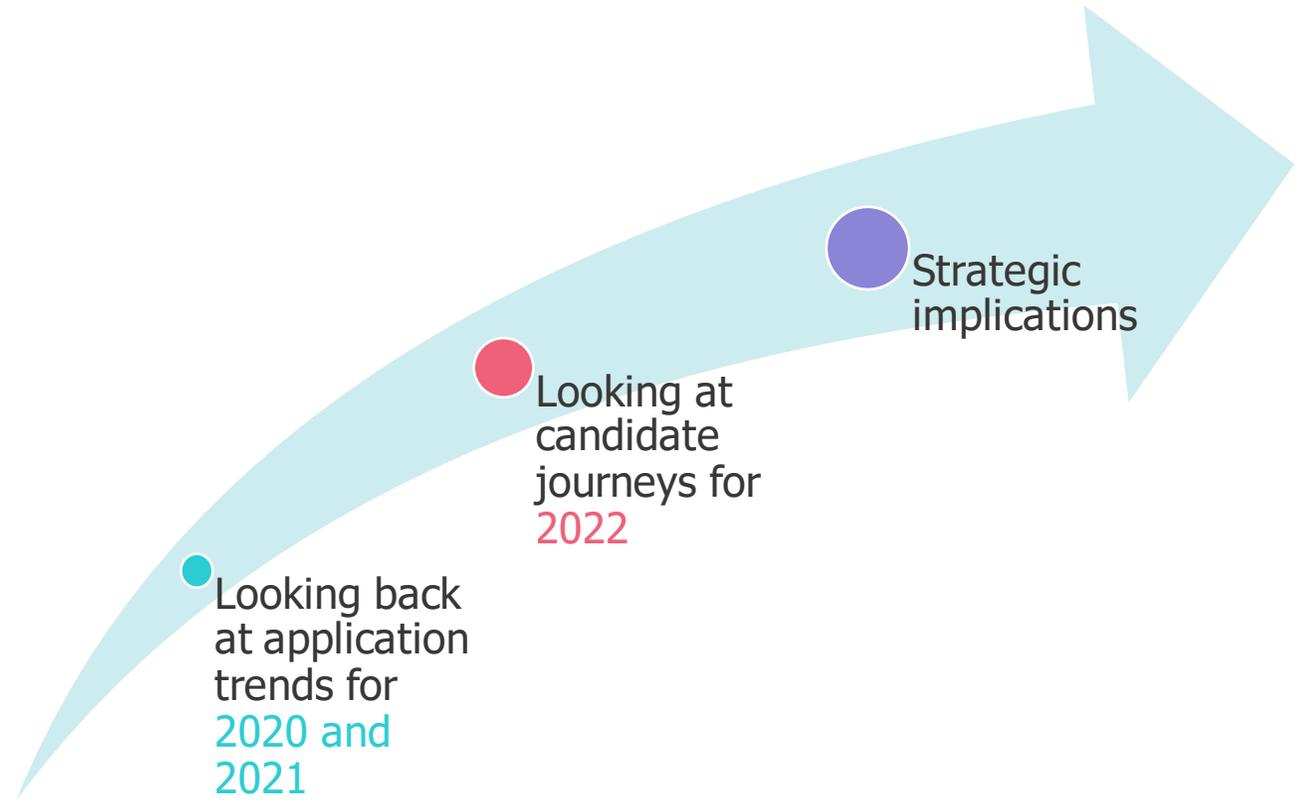
- [Application Trends Survey](#)
- [Alumni Perspectives Survey](#)
- [Corporate Recruiters Survey](#)
- [mba.com Prospective Students Survey](#)

# Kailin Burns, Market Development

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- Joined GMAC in January 2017
- Over 15 years of experience in higher education
- **Consults Graduate Management Education programs** in Canada; Western US, Mid-Atlantic US and Northeastern US
- Your resource for data, marketing and recruitment insights
- Please contact directly at [kburns@gmac.com](mailto:kburns@gmac.com)
- **Fun Fact:** For those of you that are American Football fans, she spent 2 seasons working for the New England Patriots





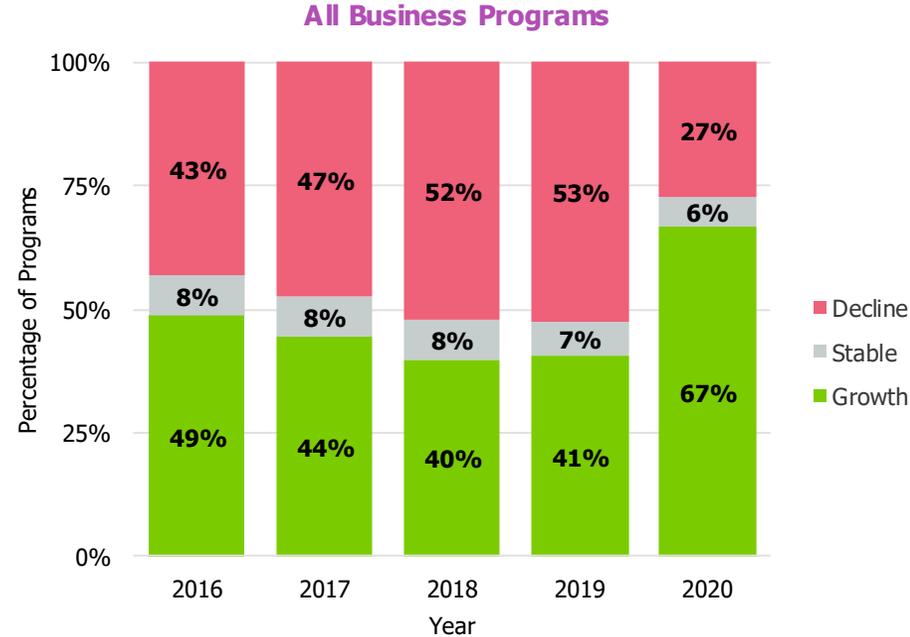
# Looking back at 2020

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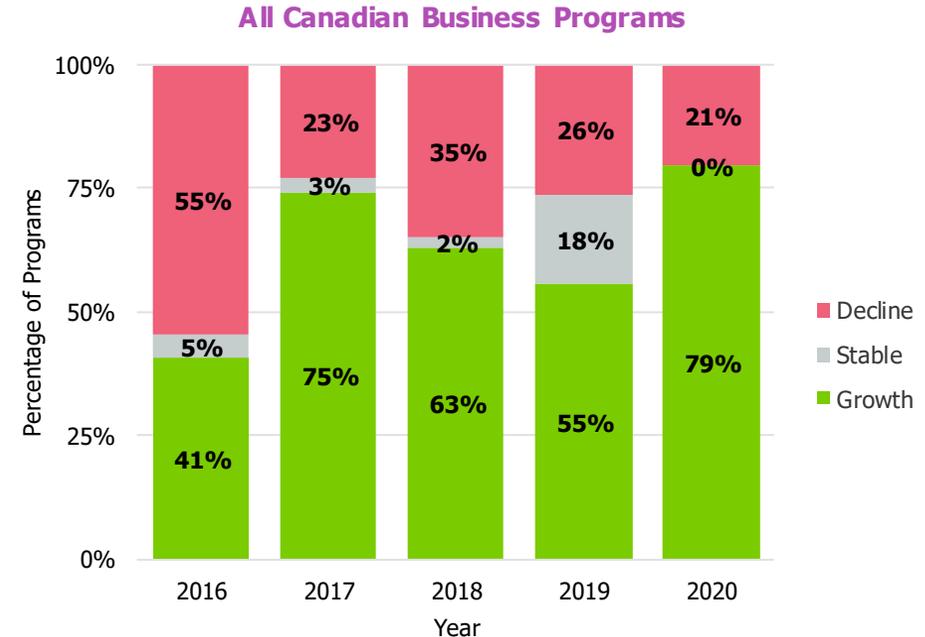


# More Canadian programs (79%) reported growth in applications as compared to all programs (67%)

Relative Year-on-Year Change in Total Applications, 2016-2020

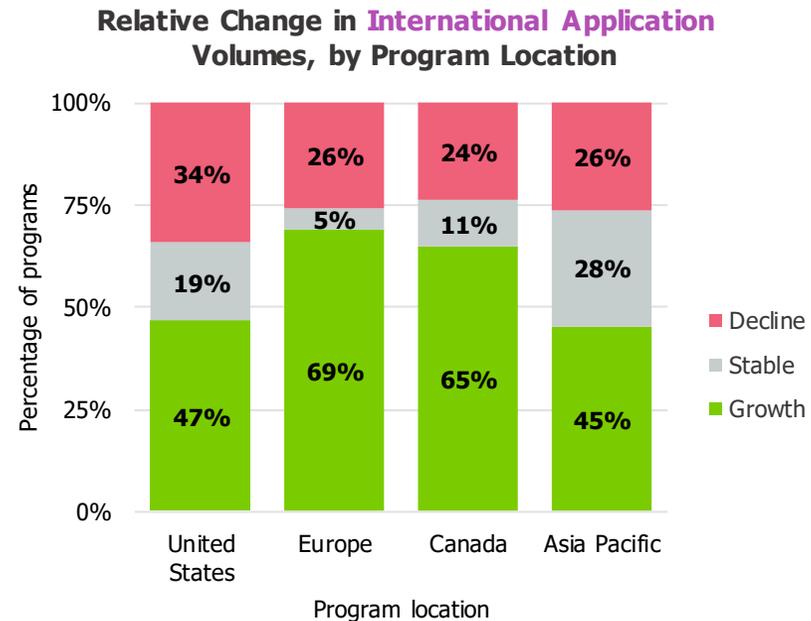
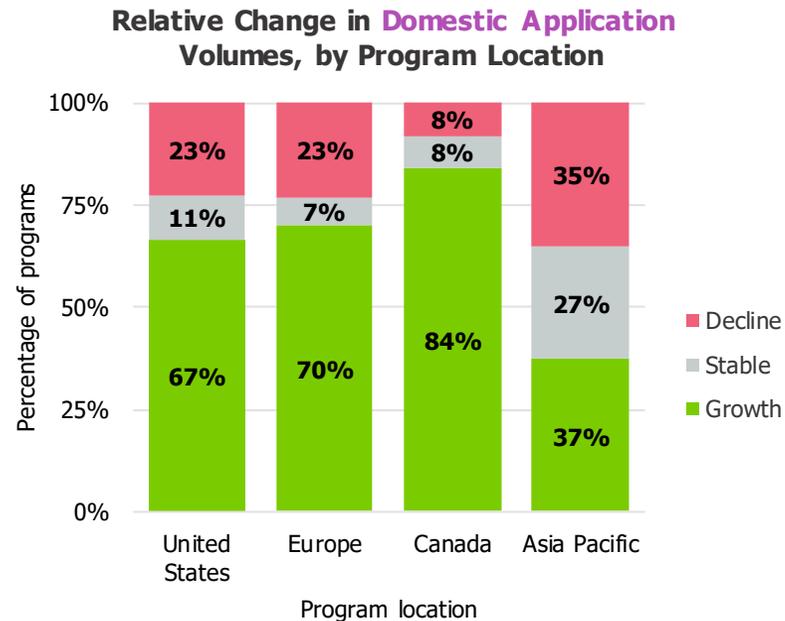


Relative Year-on-Year Change in Total Applications, 2016-2020



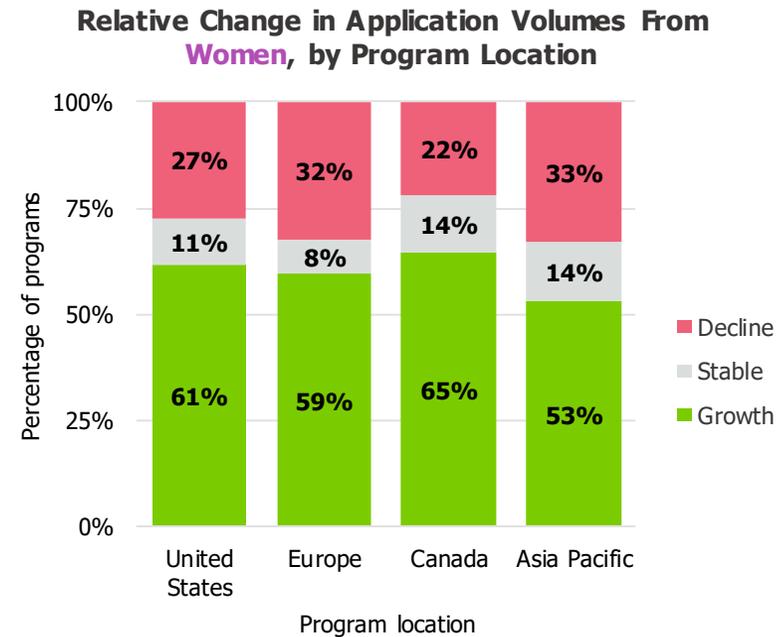
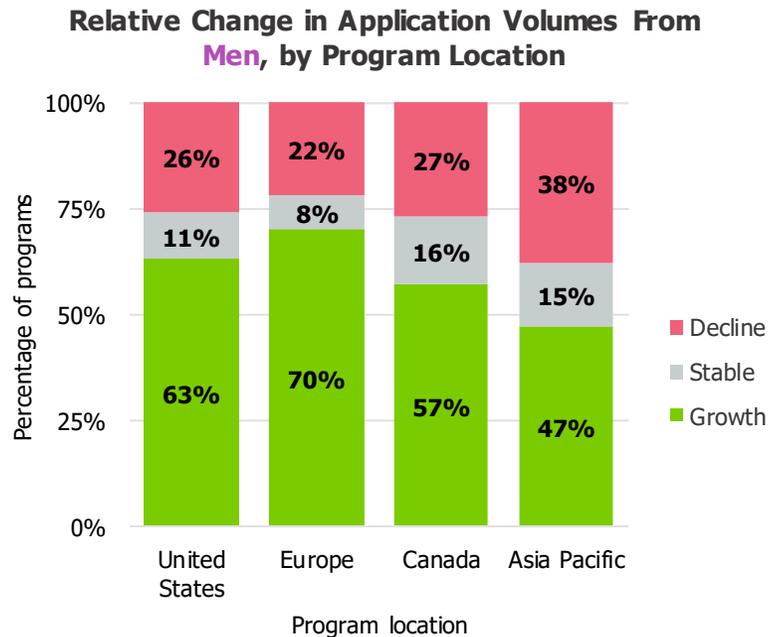
Source: GMAC Application Trends Survey 2020 | [gmac.com/ApplicationTrends](https://www.gmac.com/ApplicationTrends)

# More Canadian programs reported growth in domestic applications (84%) as compared to international applications (65%)



Source: GMAC Application Trends Survey 2020 | [gmac.com/ApplicationTrends](https://www.gmac.com/ApplicationTrends)

# More Canadian programs reported growth in applications from women (65%) than men (57%)



Source: GMAC Application Trends Survey 2020 | [gmac.com/ApplicationTrends](https://www.gmac.com/ApplicationTrends)

# Looking ahead at 2022...

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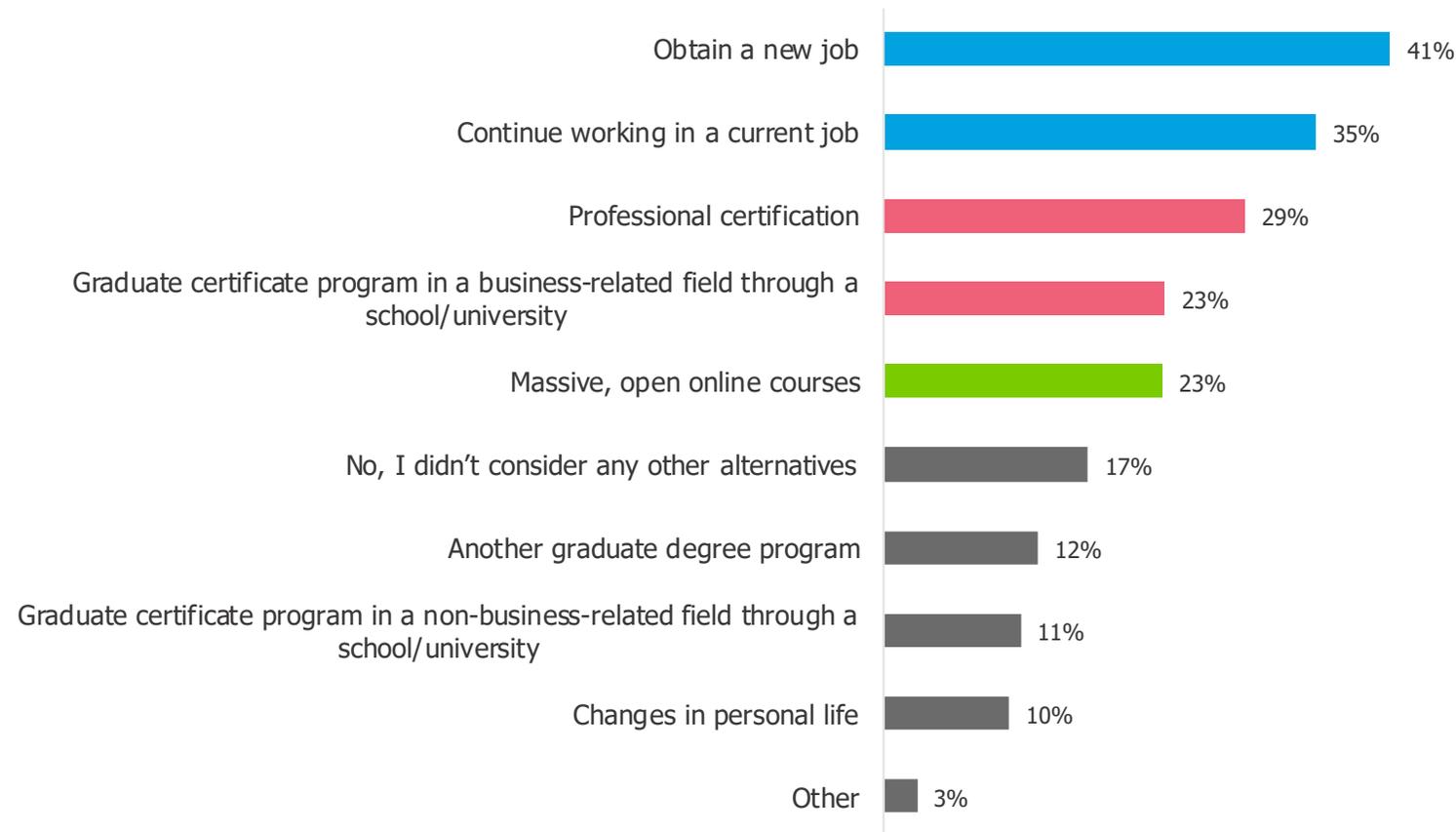
# Data

- [mba.com Prospective Students Survey](#)
- **Sep 2020-Aug 2021**
- **N = 1,951**
- **Preferred Enrollment Year = 2022**
- **Region = Region of Citizenship**
- **International Candidates:**  
**Defined by their preference to study in a destination outside their country of citizenship. For example, a US citizen preferring to pursue an MBA program in Spain would be categorized as an international candidate.**

The screenshot shows the mba.com website with a navigation bar at the top containing links for Partner Sites, GMAC, Calling All Optimists, BusinessBecause, The MBA Tour, and mba.com. Below the navigation bar, there are more links: mba.com, Exams, Exam Prep, Business School & Careers, Explore Programs, Connect with Schools, and Home. The main content area features a large heading "Launch Your Business Master's or MBA Journey" followed by a paragraph: "Learn how you can reach your career goals with a graduate business degree. Explore your business school options, prep and register for exams, and get advice on the admissions process." Below this is a featured article titled "GRE to GMAT Conversion: Why You Can't Compare Scores" by Chris Han, dated October 18, 2021. The article text reads: "Is it possible to do a GRE to GMAT score conversion? The GMAT exam's head of test development discusses why GRE to GMAT score conversions are not valid." To the right of the article is a photograph of a young woman and a young man sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop screen together.

# New or current job is a key alternative to GME followed by certificates...

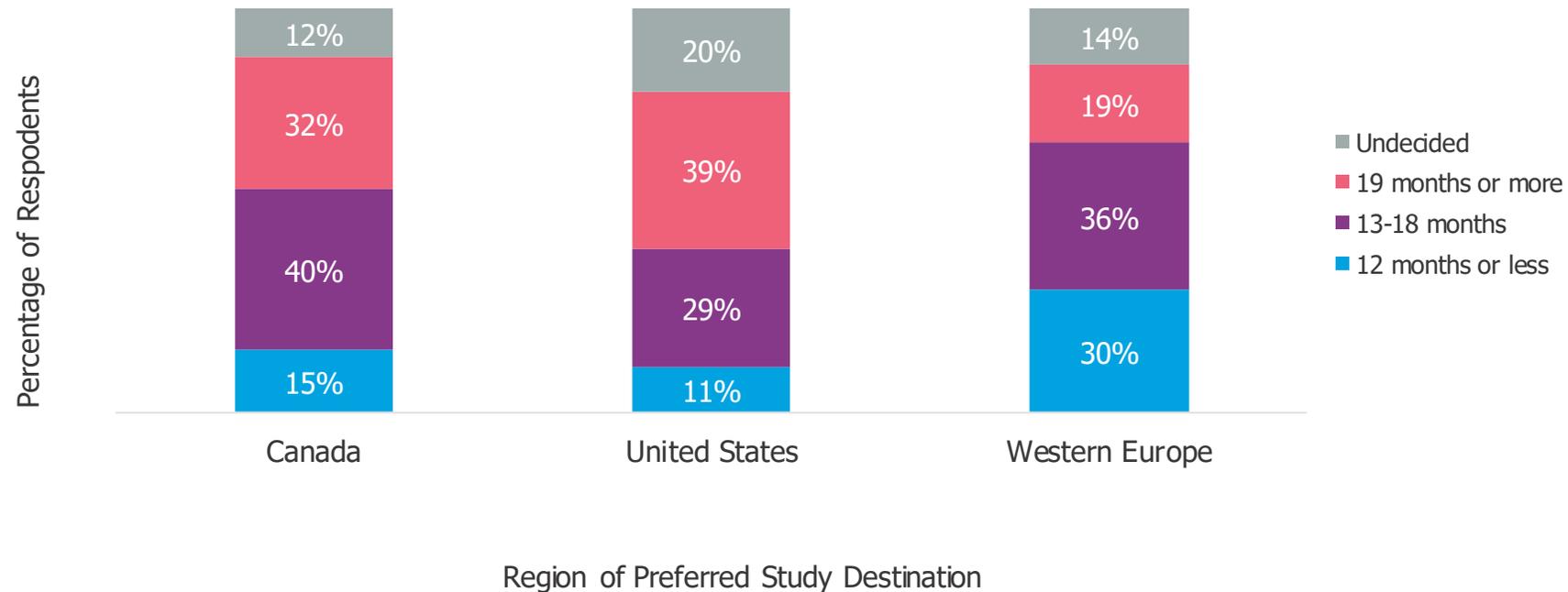
Alternatives considered by prospective students instead of pursuing graduate business education



Source: mba.com Prospective Students Survey | [gmac.com/ProspectiveStudents](https://gmac.com/ProspectiveStudents)  
Sep'2020 – Aug'2021 | Candidates Indicating Preference to Enroll in 2022

# 1 in 6 candidates preferring to study in Canada indicates preference for program duration of 12 months less as compared to 1 in 3 for W. Europe

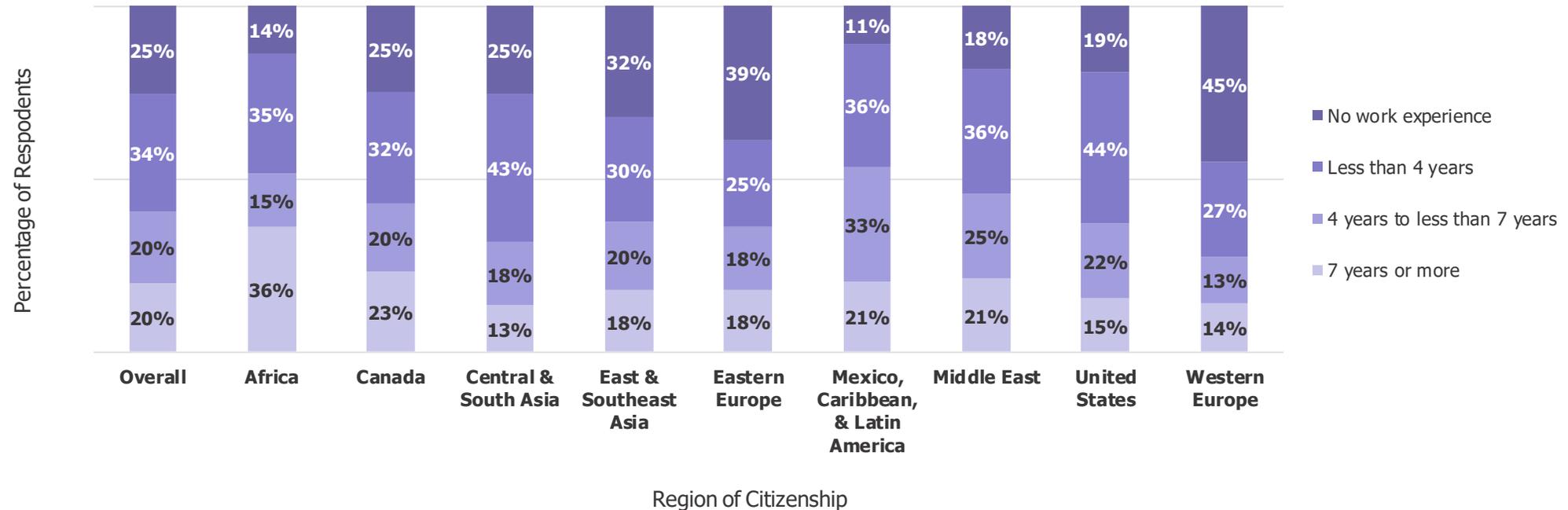
Preferred program duration by preferred destination of study



'International' candidates are defined by their preference to study in a destination outside their country of citizenship.

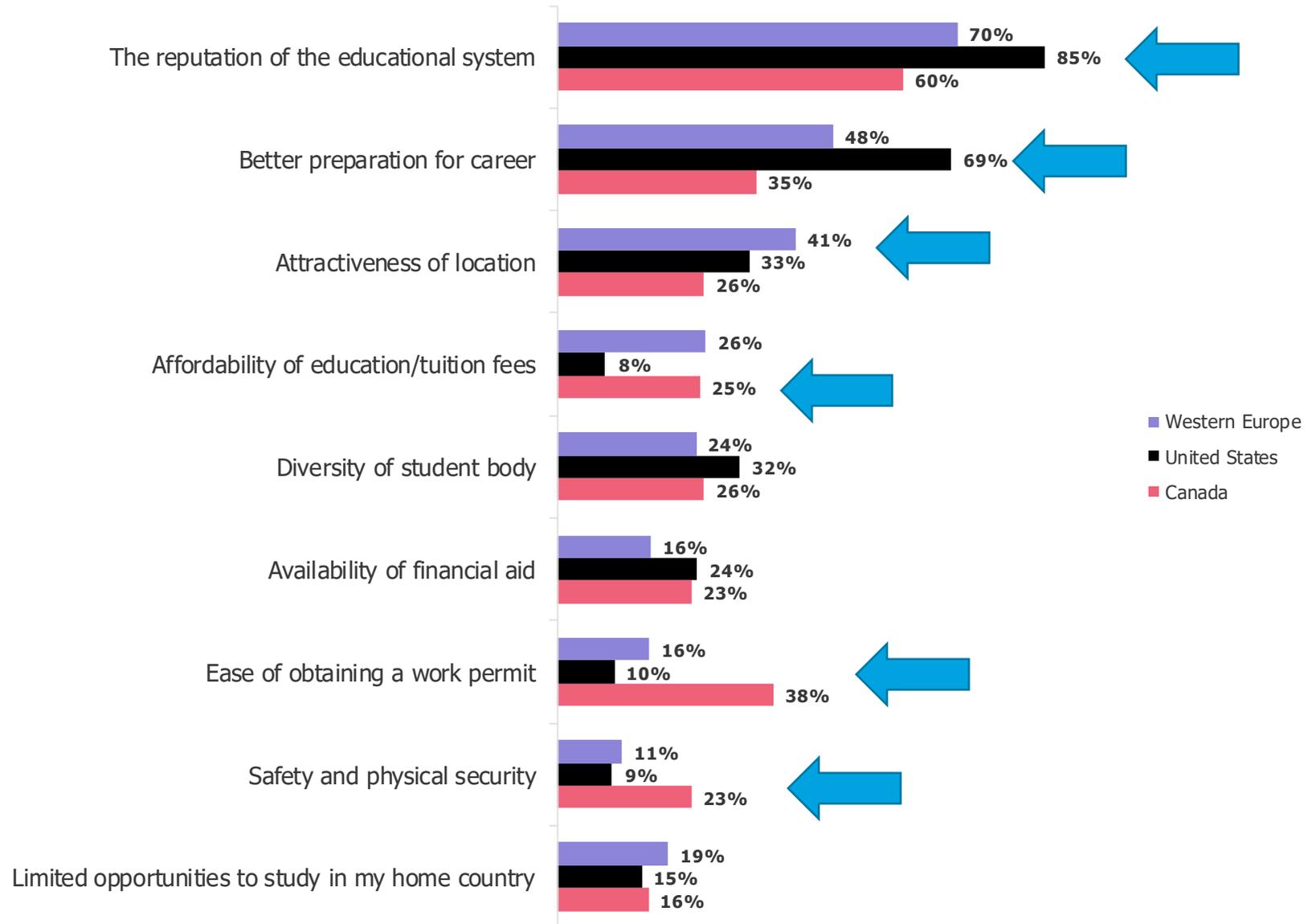
# Candidates from Western Europe (45%) are more likely to have no work experience as compared to candidates from Canada (25%)

Full-time work experience after completing undergraduate degree



Source: mba.com Prospective Students Survey | [gmac.com/ProspectiveStudents](https://gmac.com/ProspectiveStudents)  
 Sep'2020 – Aug'2021 | Candidates Indicating Preference to Enroll in 2022

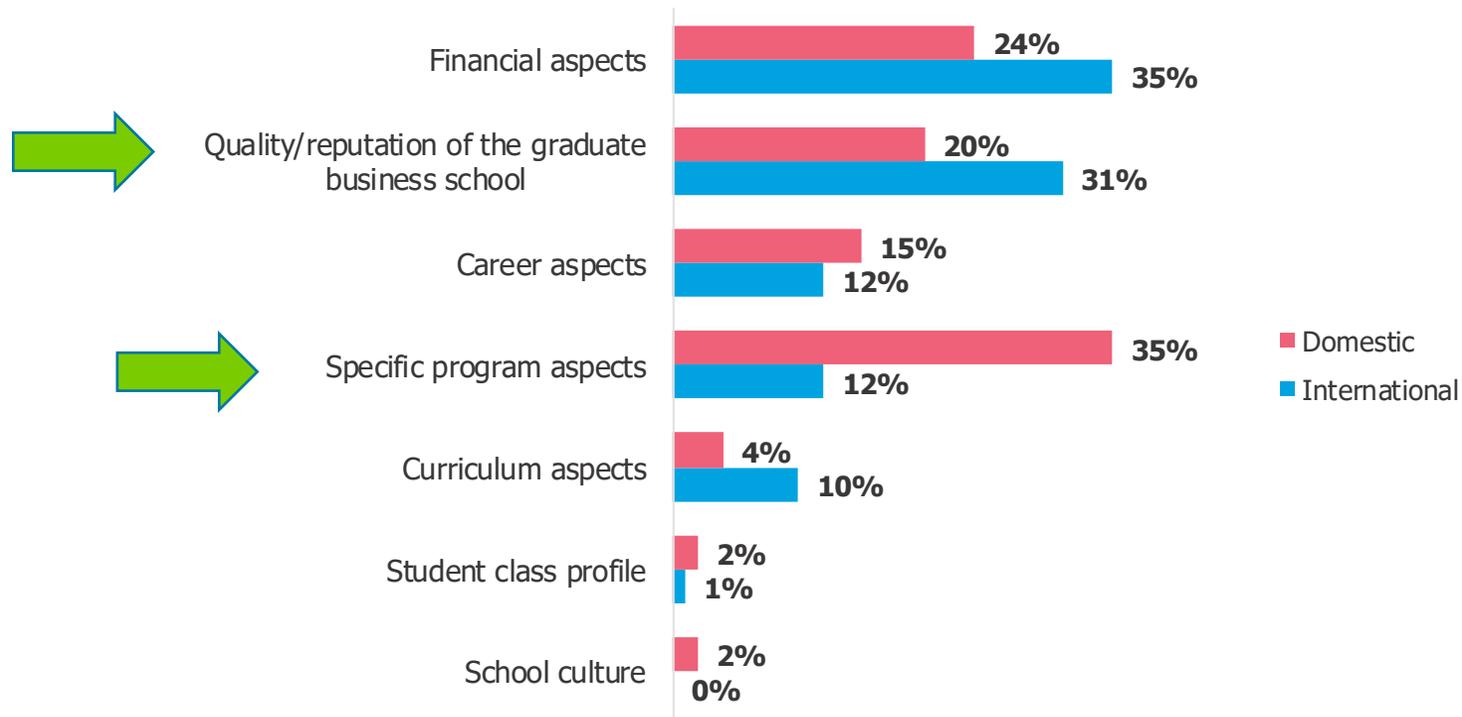
## Reasons for choosing most preferred study destination



Source: mba.com Prospective Students Survey | [gmac.com/ProspectiveStudents](https://gmac.com/ProspectiveStudents)  
 Sep/2020 – Aug/2021 | Candidates Indicating Preference to Enroll in 2022

# Int'l candidates tend to make school choice on reputation; domestic candidates on program specifics

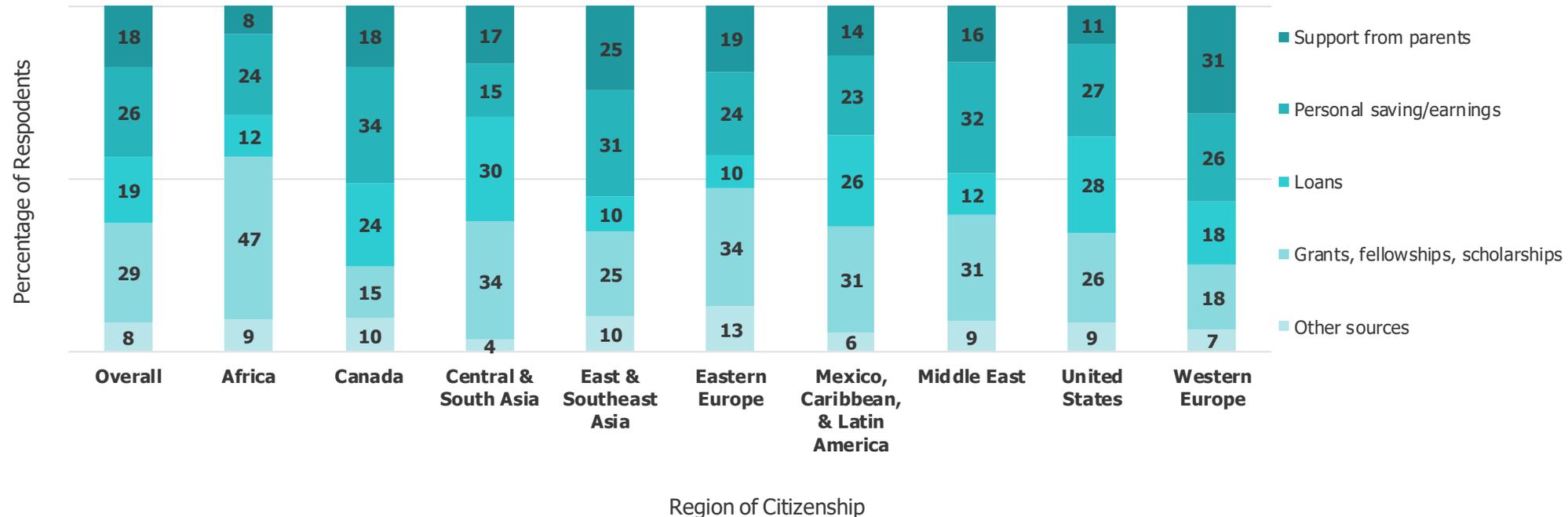
Ranking of School Selection Criteria, Candidates Who Prefer Canada as their Study Destination, by Citizenship  
*Percentage selecting a criteria as most important*



Source: mba.com Prospective Students Survey | [gmac.com/ProspectiveStudents](https://gmac.com/ProspectiveStudents)  
Sep'2020 – Aug'2021 | Candidates Indicating Preference to Enroll in 2022

# Candidates from Africa (47%) and Central and South Asia (34%) are more likely to indicate reliance on scholarships as compared to those from Canada (15%)

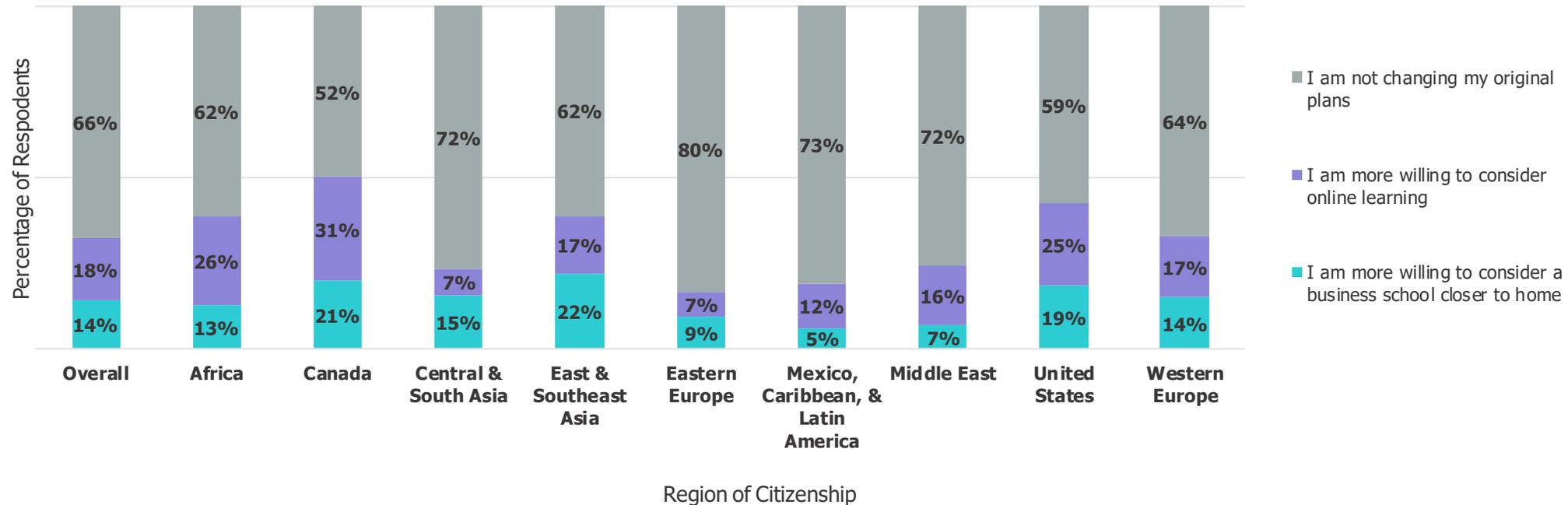
Mix of financial sources on financing graduate business education



Source: mba.com Prospective Students Survey | [gmac.com/ProspectiveStudents](https://gmac.com/ProspectiveStudents)  
 Sep'2020 – Aug'2021 | Candidates Indicating Preference to Enroll in 2022

# Four time as many candidates from Canada (31%) are willing to consider online learning as from Central & South Asia (7%)

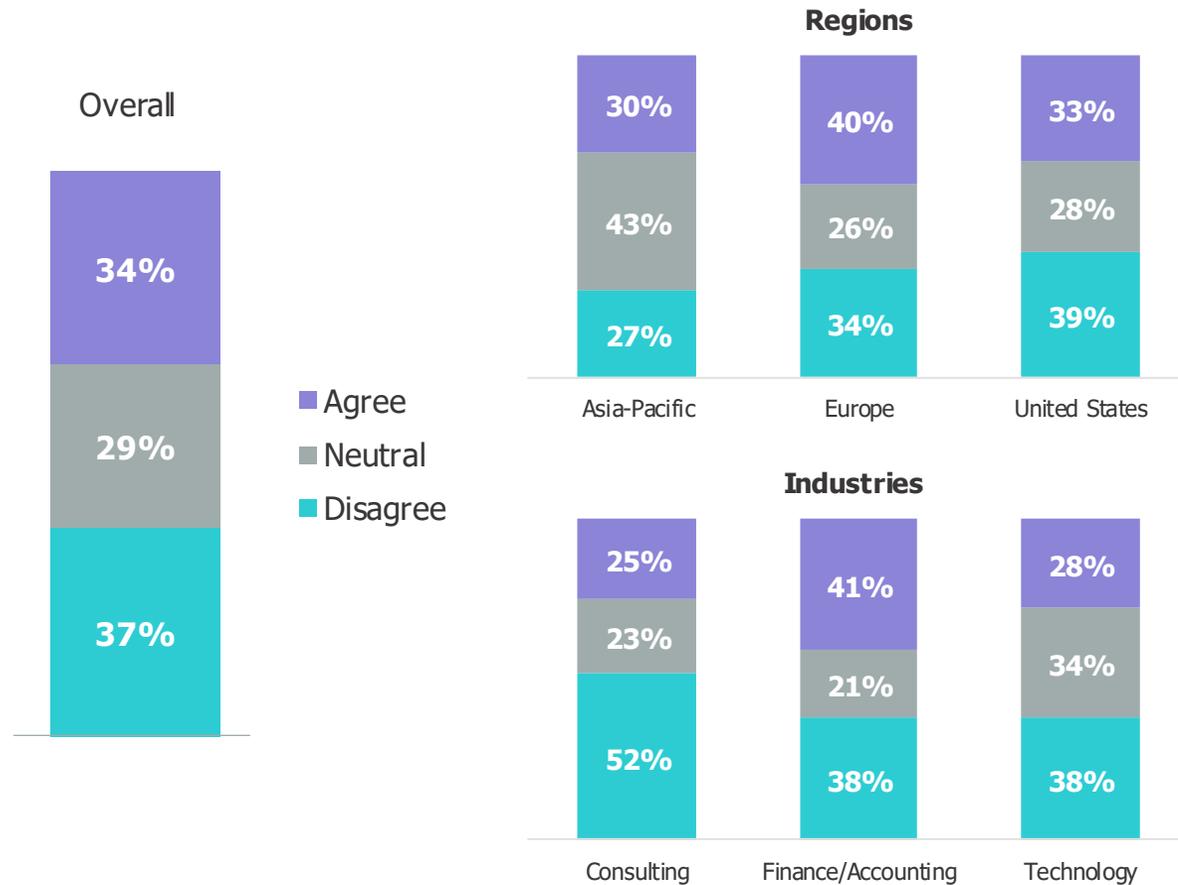
Impact of COVID-19 on business school decisions



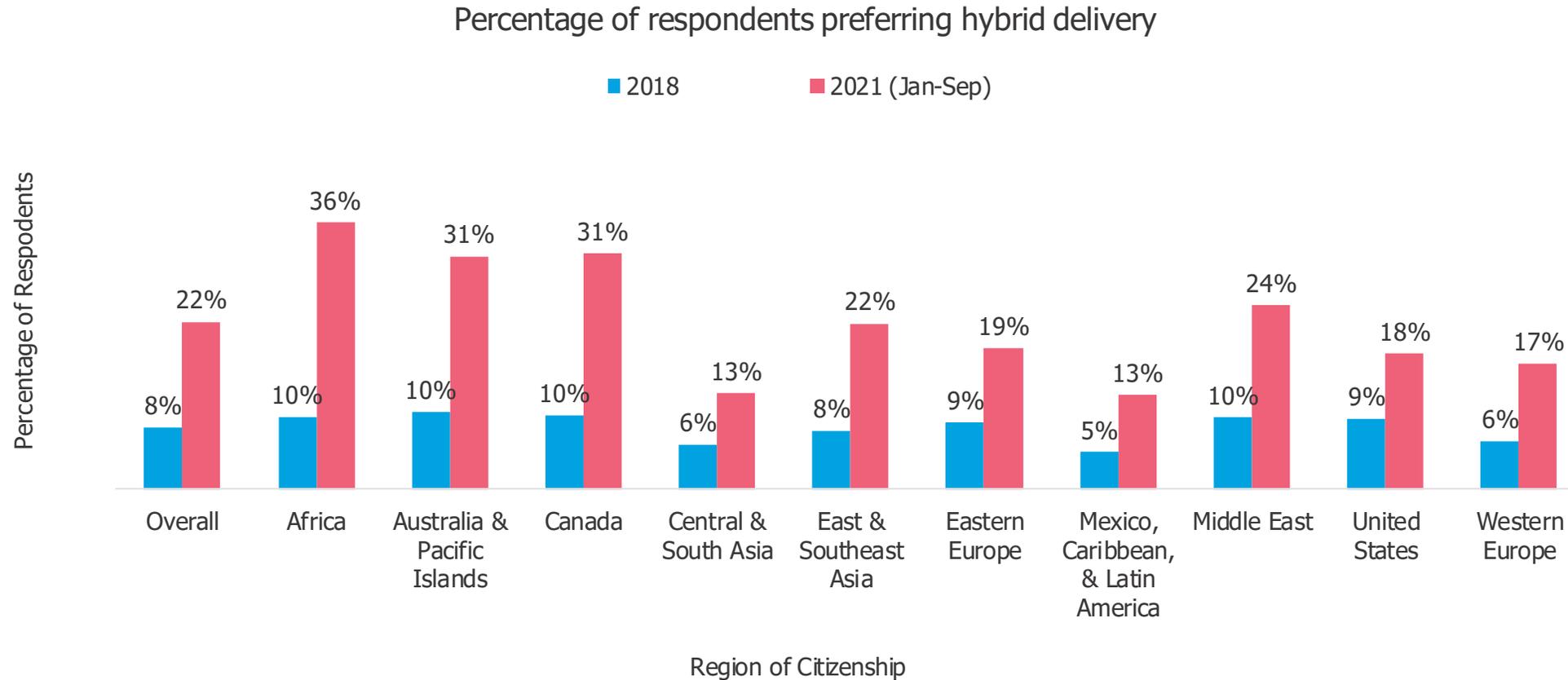
Source: mba.com Prospective Students Survey | [gmac.com/ProspectiveStudents](https://www.gmac.com/ProspectiveStudents)  
 Sep'2020 – Aug'2021 | Candidates Indicating Preference to Enroll in 2022

# Recruiters' do not value online and in-person programs at parity

My Organization Values Graduates of Online and In-person Programs Equally, 2021



# Preference for hybrid programs among prospective students is on the rise...



Source: mba.com Prospective Students Survey



## Take-aways and implications...



Demand for GME among candidates is robust, however, with variations by programs and regions



Sustaining demand would require deeper understanding of diversity among candidates



Alignment of institutional strategies with candidate insights can improve sustainability of demand



**“It is better to be roughly right than precisely wrong.”** —John M. Keynes

# Thank you! Questions? Comments?

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