

4 VS 5-6 YEAR PROGRAMS

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When applying to medical school five years ago, I looked primarily at medical schools offering the opportunity to obtain an MBA on the side. At that time, and still as of this writing, I know of only 2 accredited 4-year MD-MBA programs in the country: Tufts/Northeastern in Boston and Texas Tech in Lubbock, TX. The primary difference between the 4 vs 5 year route appears to be the hectic pace of the former.

Four-year combo programs tend to schedule the bulk of MBA coursework during the summers before entering medschool and the year between MSI and MSII year. At Texas Tech, additional classes were taken during evening sessions of MSI, MSII, and MSIV years.

Pros of 4-year combo:

- Often tight knit MD-MBA cohort (same classes/schedules)
- Time savings (Don't make me calculate the net present value of 1-2 additional years in the workforce!)
- Combo programs are often subsidized with med school scholarships
- Greater cooperation between the business and med schools for class scheduling

Cons of 4-year combo:

- Lack of ability to fully network with the rest of the MBA class
- Majority of 4-year combo students tend to be straight out of undergrad, so you don't get much diversity of background
- Not as much time to fully focus on B-school coursework
- May not have time to devote for internship/field experience
- The programs offering the 4-year approach do not have the "top 10 name" of other B-schools

COMBO PROGRAMS (4 vs 5-6 year) AND BUSINESS BACKGROUND.

I think its important to stress the relevance of a prior business background in deciding whether to go into a 4 vs 5-6 year programs and even whether you should wait a few years after medical school to get the additional degree.

I had a prior business background in publishing and had taken a significant number of business/finance/economics courses in undergrad. This background seemed to be of significant assistance in B-school. Two-thirds of the others in my cohort did not have similar business backgrounds. Everyone seemed to get thru the program just fine. However, in my opinion, a significant part of B-school seems to be applying the instruction to personal or vicarious (thru your classmates') experiences in the field. This seems to suffer especially in 4-year programs. Bottom line: the lack of a business background may not hinder getting thru B-school (translation: you'll still pass), but it may not allow you to get as much out of the B-school courses.

Some people know they want to get an MBA at some point - the question is when: Now, while in med school, or Later, say 20 years down the road with actual experience in hand. You should probably first consider whether you want to go into a field that is surgical or medical. Having spoken with numerous surgeons who have considered getting an MBA, I think you should understand the significant toll that a 2 year sabbatical for getting an MBA may take on your surgical practice. Unless you are based in an academic center, the option of taking off significant time from your surgical practice could take a high toll on the practice that you helped build over the course of 5, 10 or 15 years. Conversely, going into B-school after 5-10 years of practice will allow you to get a whole lot more out of the MBA education.