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Marketing masters degree

Whether you've been working in marketing for several years and are interested in higher-level advancement, or you've been working in a related field and are interested in pivoting to marketing, there may come a point in your career when it makes sense to explore a master's degree in marketing. Many marketing roles do not require a graduate degree, but it can be an advantageous step to build on your undergraduate education. By earning your master's in marketing, you can deepen your subject knowledge, elevate your educational credentials, and prepare to take on management roles. Let's go over what it takes to earn a master's degree in marketing and whether it's the best choice for you.

Master's degree in marketing: The basics A master's marketing degree is a graduate-level degree typically designed to deepen your knowledge of marketing—or the strategy a company deploys to promote its products or services. While a bachelor's degree in marketing often introduces students to several fundamental topics about market research, social media strategy, and effective messaging, a master's degree typically focuses on more niche topics. These might include applying data analytics to market research, digital messaging strategies, and consumer behavior. MS in marketing vs. MBA with concentrationWhen you're interested in advancing your marketing knowledge, there are two degrees to explore: the Master of Science (MS) in Marketing or the Master of Business Administration (MBA) with a concentration in marketing, such as marketing management, brand marketing, or product marketing. While there's no strict rule about which program you can attend, the difference between the two largely comes down to experience. The MS in Marketing is geared toward recent graduates who have some—but not much—work experience, while the MBA is generally intended for professionals who have spent at least four or five years in the workforce. Let's break that down a little further: An MS in Marketing is usually for graduates with one or two years of professional experience. It's likely better for students who didn't earn their bachelor's degree in marketing and are interested in—or have already started—a marketing career but desire advanced education. An MBAs usually for graduates with a minimum of four or five years of professional experience. It's likely best for students who earned their bachelor's degree in business or marketing and want to expand upon that education. As you think about the best degree program for you, take time to review the outcomes and coursework you'll be expected to complete and the job placement support or professional development each one offers. Consider how those factors align with your larger reasons for earning a master's degree. Interested in earning your MBA but want the flexibility of an online program? Explore the IMBA from the University of Illinois on Coursera. The program features multiple concentrations, including digital marketing, and you can try out a course first to see if it's a good fit before applying. Coursework and thesisMaster's courses tend to be more advanced than bachelor's degree courses because you learn about specialized topics. In your marketing master's program, you may take classes on aspects of business, finance, sales, advertising, and communications, as well as targeted marketing classes such as: Market researchMarket strategyConsumer behavior Visual marketingDigital marketing analyticsStrategic brand management Advertising managementYour master's marketing program may also require that you complete a thesis or capstone project before graduating. Often, this is an opportunity to conduct original research and apply what you've learned to an area of marketing that most interests you. How many years is a master's degree in marketing?No matter whether you choose to pursue your MS or MBA, you can expect to spend about two years in your graduate marketing program when you're able to attend full-time. Many schools offer part-time options to accommodate professional students that can add to the amount of time you'll spend earning your degree. Some options, such as accelerated MBA programs or dual degree programs, may speed up your timeline. Depending on whether you attend a public or private nonprofit institution, a master's degree in the United States typically costs between \$51,740 and \$62,550 (1). MBAs tend to be more expensive on average, with an average cost of \$60,410 (1).Is a master's in marketing useful?Marketing can be a lucrative—and long-lasting—career thanks to the number of products and services companies seek to sell. Marketing jobs will likely grow by 8 percent in the next decade (2). A master's in marketing is an educational opportunity to deepen your interest in some facet of marketing while refining your transferable skills. Marketing isn't limited to one type of work or one set path; there are numerous marketing areas you can explore, including research, strategy, events, and content. You may start in one aspect of marketing before eventually moving into another. For example, you may start as a social media marketer before becoming a marketing manager and applying your skill set to a wider array of marketing needs. While it's possible to grow as a marketer with an undergraduate degree and experience, a master's in marketing can be an attractive credential on your resume. Companies may prefer a master's for certain roles, and the degree can show companies the extra time you dedicated to the subject.How much can you make with a master's in marketing?The median weekly earnings for a master's degree holder is \$1,737, compared to \$1,493 for bachelor's degree holders, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) (3). With a master's in marketing, you can explore a number of management roles, including higher positions such as creative director and chief marketing officer.Job titleUS salaryEvent managers\$65,021 (4)Brand managers\$111,173 (5)Communications managers\$81,335 (6)Sales managers\$86,117 (7)Marketing manager\$81,217 (8)Creative directors\$142,476 (9)Chief marketing officers\$181,423 (10)Is a master's degree in marketing right for you?Whether a master's in marketing is right for you largely depends on your experience and career goals. Those two factors can help you determine whether an MS or an MBA makes more sense. It can also be worthwhile to think about why you're interested in earning a master's degree in the first place since there are educational alternatives. If you want to increase your knowledge in some area of marketing, a professional certificate or an individual course may be a strong option. You can list the certificates from either track on your resume, signaling to a potential employer the work you've invested to stay up to date. You can also highlight what you learned in your cover letter and job interviews.Professional certificates are shorter programs (typically less than a year) designed to help you develop or improve your career-ready skills. Individual courses boost your subject knowledge with focused education. Explore marketing master's programs on Courserafor an online MBA (MBA) from the university of Illinois on Coursera, and enjoy the flexibility of taking classes remotely and at your own pace. Or if you're looking for a shorter, comparably career-focused program, explore Professional Certificates from Meta in high-demand marketing areas such as social media marketing or marketing analytics. You are Currently on slide 1 Editorial Note: We earn a commission from partner links on Forbes Advisor. Commissions do not affect our editors' opinions or evaluations. Whether you are in the process of advancing your marketing career or launching a new career as a marketing professional, earning a master's in marketing can help propel you toward your goals. In this article, we provide information on admission requirements, common courses in master's in marketing programs and potential marketing careers for master's graduates. These are all important factors to consider as you explore graduate marketing programs. What Is a Master's in Marketing? A master's degree in marketing is a graduate degree that prepares students to advance their marketing careers or pivot into the marketing field. Marketing roles rarely require a master's, but this degree can help graduates stand out as qualified and knowledgeable job candidates. During a marketing master's program, students learn about advanced marketing topics, such as market research, consumer behavior and strategies for digital messaging. Most marketing master's degrees take about two years to complete, though part-time learners might need more time and students in accelerated programs might earn their degrees more quickly. A typical master's in marketing program involves around 35 credits. Students can opt for an in-person, hybrid or fully online master's degree. Some students opt to pursue an M.B.A. in marketing rather than the more common M.S. in marketing. M.B.A. in marketing programs tend to explore business with an emphasis in marketing, whereas M.S. in marketing degrees focus on marketing specifically. Master's in Marketing Admission Requirements While admission requirements vary among educational institutions, below are some requirements most applicants must meet for master's in marketing programs. Check with your prospective schools to learn more about their specific admission requirements. Undergraduate Degree Before enrolling in a master's degree in marketing program, you should have already earned a bachelor's degree. Not all master's in marketing programs require applicants to have bachelor's degrees in marketing. Transcripts, GPA and Test Scores Bachelor's degree transcripts, GPA and Test Scores Financial aid encompasses the cost of tuition, fees and class materials. Some schools require GMAT or GRE test scores. In some cases, if your GPA is above a specified threshold, you may be eligible for a standardized test score waiver. Check with your prospective university for its policy on transcripts and test scores. Résumé You may need to include a résumé with your application. A résumé reflects your work experience, educational background and other significant career information that may be useful in applying to a grad program. Personal Essay A personal essay provides your intended university with insight into your personality, creative ability and thought process. Letters of Recommendation You may need to supply letters of recommendation from business associates or former professors who can attest to your personal qualities and suitability for a master's degree program. Interview Interviews are a common requirement, and universities may require you to submit your interview virtually or in person. An interview allows you to share more information about why you are an excellent candidate for a master's in marketing program. English Language Proficiency Being proficient in English prepares you for the rigorous communication skills required to participate and accomplish your goals in a marketing degree program. Courses in a Master's in Marketing Program Master's in marketing coursework may differ depending on each institution's specific requirements and curriculum offerings. Below are some courses that are common among marketing master's programs. Business fundamentals for marketing Buyer behavior Brand strategy Digital marketing management Marketing analytics Marketing communications: advertising and social media Pricing strategies Ethical marketing Statistics for marketing Why Can You Do With a Master's in Marketing? Is marketing a good major? If you already have a Bachelor of Science in Marketing, a marketing master's can help you deepen your knowledge of marketing principles and grasp more complex marketing concepts. Many master's students typically learn to develop pricing strategies, conduct in-depth market research and use data analysis to communicate value. A master's in marketing can also be a step toward the doctoral-level education needed to lead in marketing careers. Every business relies on marketing tactics. Without marketing, consumers wouldn't know about products or services, and businesses wouldn't be able to connect with their target audiences and solve their problems with those products or services. Since marketing fills such a prevalent role in businesses and organizations, many career options exist for those working in the field. Below are some of the more common careers for people with master's degrees in marketing. We sourced the below salary and job growth data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Payscale. Advertising, Promotions and Marketing Managers Median Annual Salary: \$138,730 Projected Job Growth (2022-2032): +6% Job Description: Advertising, promotions and marketing managers oversee advertising and promotional activities for organizations. They develop marketing plans, analyze information, perform market research, develop pricing structures for products and generate public interest through the media. Sales Manager Median Annual Salary: \$130,600 Projected Job Growth (2022-2032): +4% Job Description: Sales managers are responsible for managing sales teams, analyzing sales data, training sales staff, setting sales goals and implementing procedures for improving sales performance. Brand Manager Average Annual Salary: Around \$78,000 Job Description: Brand managers typically promote certain brands that belong to their organizations. They focus on conducting market research, developing and implementing branding strategies and creating publicity for new trademarks. Public Relations Specialist Median Annual Salary: \$67,440 Projected Job Growth (2022-2032): +6% Job Description: Public relations specialists help maintain and promote an organization's public image or corporate identity. These professionals perform audience analyses, write press releases, develop advertising campaigns and communicate with stakeholders. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Master's in Marketing Programs No, they are not the same. A master's degree in marketing focuses on a more in-depth information about various aspects of marketing. An M.B.A. is a master of business administration, which focuses on business management and typically requires students to choose a concentration, such as accounting, management or marketing. Completing a master's degree in marketing typically takes one to two years, but each educational institution sets its own timelines for degree completion. Enrollment status also affects program length since part-time students typically need longer to earn their degrees. No, you do not need an M.B.A. to work in the marketing field. An M.B.A. focuses more on business fundamentals, and you may have the option to choose a marketing concentration. If you want a comprehensive marketing education, you may want to consider a marketing degree instead of an M.B.A. The following list is a review of the 25 Best Master's Degrees in Marketing for 2020. Each program is located in the United States and is perfect for students and working professionals seeking high-level positions in marketing. Specialists in the field of marketing work by servicing businesses and non-profit organizations, AKA analyzing consumer demand, and promoting goods and services. They design advertising and public-relations campaigns, coordinate sales strategies, and enhance brand awareness through various media and platforms. Master's degree holders qualify for careers heading marketing and public relations departments. The median salary in 2017 for advertising, promotions, or marketing management was \$129,380, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The agency predicts 10 percent job growth in marketing – better than the average profession – from 2016-26. Master's degree programs typically require a bachelor's degree with a minimum grade-point average, school transcripts, letters of recommendation, a personal statement or essay, and an acceptable score on the Graduate Record Examination. Ranking Methodology: "It's science!" The researchers and writers at Best Master's Degrees don't make recommendations based upon preference– we back our rankings with science. Here's a quick breakdown of how we organize ranking data: Finances (40%) Academic Reputation (25%) Student Satisfaction (25%) Nearly half of the data used to score each ranking involves finances and are acquired from sources such as the National Center for Education Statistics, the U.S. Department of Education, Glassdoor and PayScale. Financial data encompasses the cost of tuition, fees, and class materials. Some schools offer financial aid, but the average price of living, access to financial aid and social services; and lastly, the projected annual salary acquired from degree outcomes and income for loan repayment. The second largest category of information involves the quality of education, how competitive degree applicants should be for consideration, and how exclusive a degree program is overall. The final 25 percent of collected data is dependent on student and alumni reviews from sources such as PayScale, Rate My Professor, and Students Review. Want to Learn More? The amount of information available for specific degrees are plentiful, and Best Master's Degrees aims to provide as many resources as we can. Check out our Methodology page for more information and resource links. #25 – University of Wisconsin – Madison Master of Science in Brand and Product Management Madison, WI Website The University of Wisconsin – Madison, with a history dating back to 1848, has an enrollment of more than 44,000 students. About 14,000 of them are in graduate school as there are 148 master's degree programs. Earning a master's at the university's Center for Brand and Product Management involves a minimum of 30 credit hours of coursework, and applied learning. The required core courses cover Data Analysis, Business Accounting, Financial and Marketing Operations, Strategic Management, Marketing Research and Analysis, Economics for Managers, Product Development, Brand Strategy, and Marketing Communications. Among the options for elective classes are product design, organizational behavior, entrepreneurial management, e-business, and qualitative research. Graduate-level certificates are available in business analytics, entrepreneurship, strategic innovation, and sustainability. The university also offers a Master's of Business Administration in Marketing research degree program that focuses on data analytics, consumer behavior, and psychology. The job-placement rate for graduates is 97 percent. #24 – University of Colorado Master of Science in Marketing Denver, CO Website The University of Colorado in downtown Denver, founded in 1912, enrolls about 20,000 students. Forty-one percent of them are pursuing graduate-level degrees. The master's location provides a blend of vibrant urban culture with the natural splendor of the nearby Rocky Mountain National Park. The 30-credit-hour master's program in marketing is available full- and part-time, on campus or online. Terms begin in the fall, spring and summer. The core courses are Marketing Dynamics in the 21st Century, Marketing Strategy, Consumer Intelligence, and Marketing Intelligence and Metrics. Elective classes include Big Data and Customer Relationship Management, Brand Identity and Integrated Marketing, Hot Topics in Digital Marketing, and Marketing Sustainability. Students may specialize in Advanced Market Analysis, Brand Communications, Global Marketing, High-Tech Entrepreneurial Marketing, Marketing Intelligence and Strategy, Marketing and Global Sustainability, or Sports and Entertainment Marketing. #23 – Purdue University – Purdue Polytechnic Lafayette Master of Science in Marketing West Lafayette, IN Website A large public research university established in 1869, Purdue offers 70 master's and doctoral degree programs. The institution's Krannert Graduate School of Business is the 47th-best such college in the country, according to U.S. News & World Report. The master's degree in marketing takes a full-time student one year to complete on average. Terms start in July, with class sizes of 20-25 students. The program begins with required courses in persuasive communications, marketing analysis and planning, marketing management, and business analytics. In the fall, students must take four of the following elective classes: Brand Management, Digital Marketing Strategy, Marketing Research, New Product Development, Marketing Analytics, and Business Marketing. A marketing consulting project is required in the spring, along with additional electives. The program also features consulting projects, small-group immersion courses, career mentorship, and marketing forums. Graduates often obtain employment in brand management, marketing consulting, marketing research and analytics, and business development. #22 – Vanderbilt University Master of Science in Marketing Nashville, TN Website Founded in 1873, Vanderbilt is an independent, privately supported school. About 13,000 students – 6,000 of them in graduate and professional programs – attend classes in 10 colleges. The master's degree in marketing is a 10-month, 31-credit-hour program. The university does not require work experience, but strongly recommends the completion of an internship in marketing or a related field before enrolling. In addition to the usual marketing research and insights, marketing management, consumer and buyer behavior, managerial decision strategies, and data- and financial-driven marketing. In addition, students must take five of the following specialization classes, which are provided exclusively online: Leadership Development, Foundations for Data Analytics, Marketing Communications, Marketing Management in the Digital Marketplace, International Marketing, Quantitative Methods, Product and Brand Management, Mobile Marketing and Communication, and Pricing Strategies and Tactics. Semesters begin in August and January. Completing the program takes three semesters on average for full-time students, and as long as two and a half years for part-timers. #19 – Hofstra University Master of Science in Marketing Long Island, NY Website About 11,000 students, of whom 2,900 are in graduate school, attend this private university. The student-faculty ratio is 13:1, and 91 percent of the professors hold the highest degrees in their fields. U.S. News & World Report ranks Hofstra No. 140 in the country, with the 90th-best business college. The master's program in marketing is crafted to meet the needs of working professionals who wish to qualify for higher-level positions. The core courses in the 30-credit-hour program are Marketing Analysis and Management, Research and Analytics for Marketing Decisions, Consumer Behavior in the Global Environment, Advanced Strategic Planning in Marketing with a Global Perspective, Advanced Quantitative Analysis for Managers, and a research seminar. In addition, students must take four elective classes: There are 11 options, including a marketing internship. Another requirement is the completion of a residency workshop in Library Information Resources, Calculus for Business Applications, Information Technology, or Statistics for Business Applications. Additional workshops may be mandated, depending upon a student's previous coursework. #18 – DePaul University Master of Science in Marketing Chicago, IL Website DePaul University, a private university that traces its history to 1898, is the largest Catholic postsecondary institution in the country. It enrolls about 22,500 students, nearly 8,000 of whom are in graduate school. DePaul is proud of its diversity, noting that about 40 percent of the students are racial minorities. U.S. News & World Report ranks DePaul at No. 119 nationally. Ten colleges offer more than 300 degree programs, with a student-faculty ratio of 15:1. Ninety-two percent of students who earned graduate degrees in 2017 were either employed or continuing their education by the following year. The master's in marketing program entails taking eight required courses: Decisions in Marketing Management, Market Research, Analytical Tools, Marketing Strategies and Planning, Consumer Behavior, Business Communication, Monetizing Marketing Analytics, and Managing for Effective and Ethical Organizational Behavior. In addition, students must complete four elective classes in one of the following areas of interest: Sales Leadership, Digital Marketing, Marketing Strategy, and Planning, or Healthcare. #17 – Saint Joseph's University Master of Science in Marketing Philadelphia, PA Website Saint Joseph's enrollment of more than 9,200 students includes about 3,000 in graduate schools. There are 53 advanced degree programs from which to choose. The university's Haub School of Business has received high marks from a number of ranking organizations, including the Princeton Review and Forbes. According to the U.S. News & World Report, the college offers the nation's ninth-best undergraduate marketing programs and the 13th-best graduate programs in the field. More than 2,500 students are taking business classes. The master's degree in marketing is available on campus and online; full-time or part-time. Students may choose to specialize in either International Marketing, on campus, or Customer Analytics and Insights online. The required 30 credit hours of coursework focuses on consumer behavior, marketing, and consumer trends, marketing analytics, and marketing research. There are also "opportunities for interaction with business leaders, live case studies, and personalized instruction." #16 – The University of Alabama Master of Science in Marketing Tuscaloosa, AL Website The University of Alabama, a large public institution with roots dating to 1820, consists of 13 colleges and schools. The student enrollment exceeds 38,000. U.S. News & World Report ranks U of A in a tie for the No. 129th-best in the country overall and rates its online graduate business programs No. 10. Earning a master's degree in marketing requires 30-33 credit hours of classes, depending upon the specialization and focused area of study, which typically takes two semesters to complete. Students may specialize in either Marketing Analytics or Digital and Social Media Marketing. Those who choose management as their area of study must take classes in Global Marketing Management and Advanced Marketing Analysis, in addition to electives. Core courses in the professional sales area of study are Global Market Management, Client-Based Marketing Consulting, Advanced Marketing Analysis, as well as Personal Selling and Sales Management. Students with undergraduate degrees in fields other than business may also apply for the master's program. #15 – The University of Cincinnati Master of Science in Marketing Cincinnati, OH Website This public school traces its history all the way back to 1819. Today, it educates 44,000 students – 20 percent of them from other countries – and offers more than 250 degree programs. The Cincinnati area is home to nine Fortune 500 companies, which benefits those enrolled in UC's Lindner College of Business which was founded in 1906. Graduate students work on marketing projects with professionals at General Electric, P&G, Johnson & Johnson and other locally based corporations. The marketing master's program, available full time and part time, can be completed in as little as nine months. Core courses consist of classes such as Marketing Strategies, Marketing Research, Buyer Behavior, International Marketing, Marketing Ethics, and Career Management. There are a dozen classes from which to choose for 16 additional credit hours. Students lacking undergraduate business degrees must also take courses in Marketing Foundations, Data Analysis, Accounting, and Economics. Over 75 percent of the program's graduates find a job upon completion with an average salary of \$47,000, with their first job. #14 – Syracuse University Master of Science in Marketing Syracuse, NY Website Syracuse University, founded in 1820, enrolls more than 17,000 students and employs 200 full-time professors. Required coursework covers marketing research and insights, marketing management, consumer and buyer behavior, managerial decision strategies, and data- and financial-driven marketing. In addition, students must take five of the following specialization classes, which are provided exclusively online: Leadership Development, Foundations for Data Analytics, Marketing Communications, Marketing Management in the Digital Marketplace, International Marketing, Quantitative Methods, Product and Brand Management, Mobile Marketing and Communication, and Pricing Strategies and Tactics. Semesters begin in August and January. Completing the program takes three semesters on average for full-time students, and as long as two and a half years for part-timers. #13 – Clemson University Master of Science in Marketing Greenville, SC Website Founded in 1889 as an agriculture college, Clemson now enrolls about 23,000 students in seven schools that offer more than 100 graduate degree programs. In addition to the main campus in the city of Clemson, there are educational sites in five other South Carolina communities. The university is No. 24 in U.S. News & World Report's 2019 national rankings. The College of Business in Greenville plans to nearly double its classroom space with the opening of a new building in 2020. The college collaborates with area businesses, industries, non-profit organizations, as well as civic and government agencies. Professional work experience is among the entrance requirements for the master's program in marketing. The curriculum combines coursework, seminars and a research project. Earning the degree takes one year for full-time students and two years for part-timers. Core courses are Statistical Methods, Advanced Marketing Strategy, Marketing Research, Quantitative Marketing Methods, and Buyer Behavior. #12 – University of South Florida Master of Science in Marketing Tampa, FL Website A large institution with more than 50,000 students in 14 colleges, USF ranks 58th in the U.S. News & World Report rankings of the best postsecondary schools in the country. In 2017, it produced more Fulbright Scholars than any other university. The MSc in Marketing is a 30-credit-hour program that includes a research project. The program is available full-time or part-time. Students may choose to specialize in either International Marketing, on campus, or Customer Analytics and Insights online. The required 30 credit hours of coursework focuses on consumer behavior, marketing, and consumer trends, marketing analytics, and marketing research. There are also "opportunities for interaction with business leaders, live case studies, and personalized instruction." #11 – University of Houston Master of Science in Marketing Houston, TX Website The University of Houston, which enrolls more than 45,000 students, consists of 14 colleges that offer 282 types of degrees, including 105 master's programs. It ranks 91st among public universities and 171st overall in the nation, according to U.S. News & World Report. Houston is the country's fourth-largest city and is home to 26 Fortune 500 companies. MSN Now rates the metropolitan area as the best place in the United States for recent college graduates. The master's in marketing program is a 36-credit-hour curriculum that takes one year to complete, depending upon whether a student is full-time or part-time. In addition to the usual entrance requirements, selected applicants must take part in personal interviews. Earning the degree entails completing a professional project and taking foundation courses in Financial Accounting, Quantitative Analysis for Business Decisions, Marketing Administration, and Practical Marketing Analysis. In addition, students must take multiple classes in one of six areas of interest: Digital Marketing, Marketing Analytics, Selling and Sales Management, Product Management, Entrepreneurship, and Technology. #10 – Georgia State University Master of Science in Marketing Atlanta, GA Website This public university, founded in 1913, consists of 10 colleges and schools or 10 different degree programs. The university is No. 29 in the U.S. News & World Report's 2019 national rankings. The master's in marketing is a 36-credit-hour program known for being research-intensive and designed for professionals already employed in the field. Students choose one of three emphasis options: Marketing Analytics, Digital Marketing, and Brand Management, or Supply Chain Management. Those lacking an academic background in business must take statistics and marketing classes. Students with undergraduate degrees in business other than marketing may be eligible to waive the statistics requirement. 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