

7 'mini MBAs' offered by top institutions and organizations that'll give you a taste of business school for a fraction of the cost

Mary Kearl Apr 23, 2020, 10:26 AM



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MBA programs are both costly and time consuming, but you could try the "mini MBA," which are weeks long and teach you a lot of the same subjects covered in business school.

Top schools like Rutgers, Clemson, and Bentley and organizations like Marketing Week offer these certificate-granting programs.

Learn the core principles of business online at programs like these for anywhere between \$275 to \$6,000.

You can choose to specialize in certain aspects of business that are most appealing, from digital advertising to entrepreneurship.

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A traditional MBA is a two-year commitment — or more if completed while also working part or full time — and can be costly. Prestigious programs like Stanford and Harvard, ranked No. 1 and No. 5 in the world respectively, can charge up to \$120,000 for full tuition.

If spending the extensive time and money to go to business school doesn't pique your interest, but you're still intrigued by the value an MBA can have for your career, there's another option: the "mini MBA."



While there's no set definition or criteria for what's involved in a mini MBA, these are generally short (think: weeks-long), certificate-based programs geared toward business professionals who want the chance to network and advance their understanding of core principles covered in business school. They're offered by select business schools as well as well-respected organizations, and can be completed either in person or online.

Business Insider reached out to some of the most notable mini MBA offerings currently available to learn from the program leadership and alumni about their experiences.

1. Rutgers' Business School Executive Education, starting at \$3,495

Rutgers' Business School Executive Education — part of the State University of New Jersey — offers nearly 20 different mini MBA options, both online and on campus. For in-person classes, the school is currently adapting these due to the coronavirus pandemic with a focus on live, virtual programs that "blend the interaction traditionally fostered via in-person classes with online delivery," said Christina

Mumby, associate marketing and program director of Rutgers Business School



The in-person sessions are one-week sessions (Monday through Friday), while the online courses are self-paced over 12 weeks. Costs for these programs vary between \$3,495 and \$4,995 based on the format, with offerings across multiple topics and subject matter — from the "[Mini-MBA: Business Essentials](#)" to the "[Mini-MBA: Enterprise Artificial Intelligence](#)."



Christina Murphy. Christina Murphy

"For those who haven't already completed a traditional MBA, the mini MBA offers a fast-track opportunity to update one's skills in a relevant area of business through practical application of learning, to expand their professional network, and to update



may be a fit. Participation in these programs can also be used toward earning credits for the Rutgers MBA program (although they may not be accepted by other schools' MBA programs), noted Murphy.

Charles Mohs. Charles Mohs

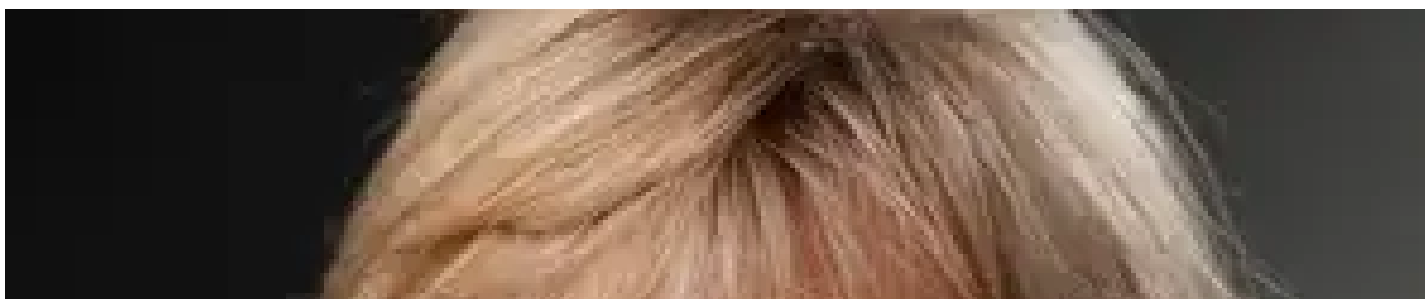
After six years as the global chief marketing officer of Pfizer Consumer Healthcare, [Charles Mohs](#) told Business Insider he was ready for a new phase of his career, to become a marketing and innovation consultant. After researching what programs were available, he found and enrolled in the [Rutgers "Mini-MBA in Digital Marketing"](#) in 2016.



"It seemed like the perfect way to update my skill set to get back on the leading edge of digital marketing and build on the foundation of my original MBA," he shared, adding, "I gained so much from my first 'Mini-MBA in Digital Marketing,' I went back to Rutgers and did an online [content marketing certificate](#) (in 2016) and then just recently completed a second '[Mini-MBA in Social Media Marketing](#)' online earlier this month."

2. The University at Buffalo School of Management's '[Online Mini MBA Certificate Program](#),' \$995

The University at Buffalo School of Management's \$995, self-paced online mini MBA can be completed in as little as two months, if students spend a couple of hours per day, or, if spread out over time, up to a year.





Courtney J. Walsh. Courtney J. Walsh

"The program is ideal for participants who have little business knowledge, such as professionals in a technical, scientific, or clinical healthcare field," said Courtney J. Walsh, assistant dean of the university's Office of Professional and Executive Development. "Participants learn the most important functions of business and management [and] how to apply those concepts and build a foundation for making sound business decisions," she shared, adding that the program can help signal to employers a commitment to life-long learning and may spark an interest in enrolling in a traditional MBA program to gain more in-depth knowledge.

Jorge Richard Angulo. Jorge Richard Angulo

Class of 2019 alum Jorge Richard Angulo, a program manager at General Electric who previously obtained a masters in mechanical engineering, said he enrolled in the course to fill in gaps in knowledge he realized he had as he advanced in his career and gained more responsibilities. While he had the chance to learn some aspects of business dynamics in an informal way, he realized, "these were company specific and may not necessarily be ... universal knowledge I could leverage, if moving for another role in another region or another company."

3. Marketing Week's 'Mini MBA in Marketing,' \$1,560



years, the 12-lesson certificate program has had about 8,000 marketing students, including those from major brands. In the last year, the program has now expanded to include a "[Mini MBA in Brand Management](#)" for about \$1,805.



Mark Ritson. Mark Ritson

Ritson said his program services "a very different market from the traditional top MBA programs." One, because his participants tend to be older and more experienced than traditional MBA students. Second, because these individuals are interested specifically in marketing, "not the broad syllabus offered by a traditional MBA," Ritson explained. "We offer a very high level of marketing training for those that are too busy to take time





Rachel Fairley. Rachel Fairley

Class of 2017 alum Rachel Fairley, senior director of marketing at Oracle, said she enrolled in the program as a way to re-enter the workforce with confidence after having to take time off for the removal of a benign brain tumor and subsequent recovery.

"I learned I knew a lot, which honestly was incredibly reassuring," said Fairley. In addition to gaining an understanding of the most effective marketing approaches, she gained colleagues, "people at very different levels and from different backgrounds and organisations ... marketing folks all over the world who three years later I still turn to for advice," she explained. She's applied what she's learned into her daily work and encouraged coworkers to take the course as well. "I can see the effect on how we think and work, and the impact on our marketing," she said.



4. Clemson University's Center for Corporate Learning mini MBAs, starting at \$2,800

Clemson University's Center for Corporate Learning offers three mini MBA programs — the 12-course "Executive miniMBA" (\$4,500), the nine-course "Professional miniMBA" (\$3,600), and the six-course "miniMBA Certificate" (\$2,800). This gives students with some background in business to pick and choose which areas they'd like to gain additional exposure to, explained Nan S. Johnston, director of the Center for Corporate Learning at Clemson.

"Our content is targeted to providing trending thought leadership to professionals who are already working," said Johnston. "Often, students who have been out of higher ed classes for 10 or more years see this as an affordable and engaging way to learn new ideas and share problems with others for discussion."

While the program is traditionally held on campus, to adapt to the need for physical distancing due to the coronavirus pandemic, the school is offering shorter classes via Zoom with live instruction. noted Johnston.





Amber Carter. Amber Carter

Currently enrolled in Clemson's "Executive miniMBA Certificate" program and having completed 10 of the 12 courses, Amber Carter, the assistant general counsel for the South Carolina Public Employee Benefit Authority, the state agency that manages the state employee retirement and insurance programs, shared that the program has given her "the language and understanding I needed to follow along with my executive management, who mostly come from heavy accounting backgrounds — a world with which I was unfamiliar until joining the agency." She shared that her law degree prepared her to handle legal matters, but not the business world.



That's why Carter sought out additional education. She opted for Clemson because of its academic reputation, and a mini MBA specifically because of the smaller time and financial commitment compared to a traditional MBA.

5. Pepperdine University Graziadio Business School's 'Mini MBA Certificate Program,' \$5,999



Mark W.S. Chun. Mark W.S. Chun

The five-day program offered by Pepperdine University is designed to help students identify "aspirational career targets" and offers resources needed to achieve these in "real work situations" with concrete action plans to put into practice, explained Mark W.S. Chun, executive director of the executive education program at Pepperdine's Graziadio Business School.

While the program is intended to be offered in person, the next course start date has been postponed to late summer, noted Chun. If the campus is not yet reopened at that time, the program will be transitioned into an online learning format, he added.

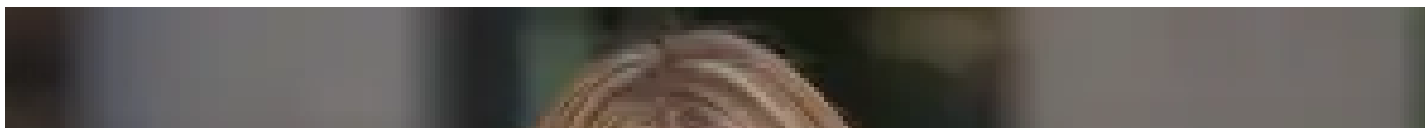


Tom Miller. Tom Miller

"I joined the mini MBA program at Pepperdine to get a high-level overview of business from all aspects: legal, financial, etc., and to discover new tools in the industry, as I had not been in graduate school in over 20 years," said class of 2019 alum Tom Miller, director of strategic solutions at [Allied Universal Services](#), a facilities company that offers security, janitorial services, and staffing. "I also wanted to learn from my fellow students about their industries, what problems they faced, and how they had solved those."

Through the program, Miller learned about new applications (like Tableau), made networking connections, and gained "strategies for growth, leadership, and success," he shared.

6. UC San Diego Rady School of Management's [Micro-MBA](#), \$275

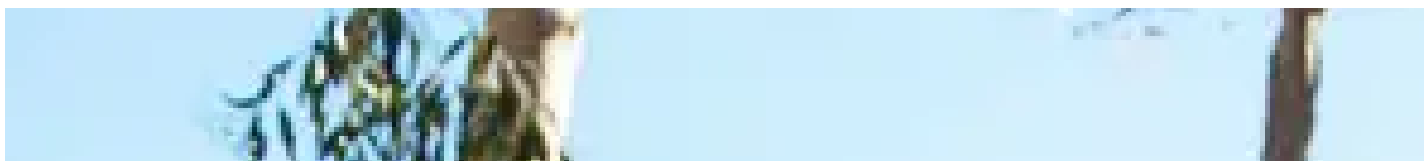




Jill M. Farwell. Jill M. Farwell

"The [six-week] program provides ... a unique introduction to business concepts, networking opportunities with local executives, and [the chance] to become part of the science and tech community at the Rady School of Management," said Jill M. Farwell, director of the Rady Center for Executive Development, who noted that while the program is typically held on campus, this year's summer 2020 session will be offered online via Zoom, in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

As someone who had been working in a lab full time for 15 years, Kendra Hailey said she had little business knowledge but was eager to learn the basics at an "accelerated pace." So when she learned about the UC San Diego Rady School of Management's mini MBA, she enrolled.





Kendra Hailey. Kendra Hailey

"[It] was the perfect platform for a busy postdoc like myself to quickly be immersed in a broad range of subjects including marketing, finance, leadership, and strategy, while also giving me the opportunity to interact with local business leaders in an informal, coffee chat format," she shared.

After completing the program as a 2014 alum, Hailey, now a technical advisor at the law firm [Mintz Levin](#), learned how she could apply the analytical thinking she acquired from her laboratory background to broader business roles like technical marketing and business development.



The six-day intensive curriculum offered by Bentley University is designed to offer participants with a solid foundation in business fundamentals over the course of three two-day sessions every other week. At the end, students receive a certificate of completion.



Deborah Pine. Deborah Pine

"Through an intensive exploration of business topics including business strategy, finance, marketing, and leadership, participants are provided the broader organizational context and understanding necessary for professional advancement," said Deborah Pine, the school's associate vice president of corporate education.



social distancing, Bentley has the capability to offer our courses virtually."



Jasvinder Khera. Jasvinder Khera

Jasvinder Khera, manager of information security at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and a 2019 alum of Bentley's mini MBA program, said that while he'd had exposure to leadership and management responsibilities throughout his career, he hadn't had the chance to learn about business administration and how companies actually operate. With Bentley's mini BMA, he learned about negotiation, the end-to-end process of marketing, how department-level budgets tie back to overall organizational operations, and, at the macro level, how the stock market works.



"Until I took this course, I always felt like I was missing the bigger picture," he told Business Insider.

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