

# Cass MBA Admissions Essay

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Why have you applied to the Cass MBA? How would you contribute to the course? What will you do if you are not accepted onto the Cass MBA?

My promotion at x company has seen me transition away from a predominantly technical focus, where accounting principles and the analysis of numbers were paramount, to strategy development, line management and project management. I have begun to recognise that these non-technical areas appeal to my interests and have engaged my strengths, from communications skills and leadership to problem-solving. Moreover I have demonstrated an ability to learn from and adapt to new situations and to take a pragmatic approach to the realities of a small organisation with limited resources. The Cass MBA will help me refine these existing skills and help me make a career change to a top-five consultancy, such as McKinsey, where I will be given the opportunity to make a real impact by analysing problems, framing hypotheses and making recommendations in areas that directly and positively affect the client firm.

This short-term goal to change the focus of my career is determined by my long term goal to be a politician, a member of parliament and ultimately a minister. More than political experience alone, I strongly believe that a solid grounding in business, leading large teams, developing long-term strategy, championing innovation and implementing change, will give me skills needed to run a government department.

Five years after graduation I plan to move to a PLC such as BP where I can make a more concerted effort in developing and leading the strategic direction of a large organisation. The experience will help me gain greater operational experience and would include dealing with institutions, change management and strategic planning. I expect to be dealing with people who are external to my firm on a regular basis which will allow me to further develop my communications and influencing skills and to help build important contacts for building a career in politics and when entering Parliament.

As Cass attracts high calibre students, this peer group will challenge and stretch me. I feel that that level of stimulation and growth is what makes the Cass MBA an excellent investment. I expect my professional, voluntary and political experience will let me make a valuable contribution to the course.

Cass's MBA provides the right balance of practical learning and theoretical analysis through interactive lectures and group projects. This suits my learning style as I engage best with real-world based approaches. Electives in 'frontiers of strategy' and 'risk: practical management issues' together with a consultancy-focused research project will have an immediate impact on my employment upon graduation by providing directly relevant knowledge and experience that I can draw on during client work.

Whilst my knowledge of business and management techniques will undoubtedly improve. I also expect to make life-long friends and build a strong, international network to help both my business and political career and their careers.

I believe my professional, voluntary and political experience will allow me to make a valuable contribution at Cass, I have experience of private and public sector enterprises as well as political organisations and the groups that lobby them. These multidimensional perspectives should allow me to provide a different perspective in class-room discussions and project work and I hope to be seen as someone who can provide refreshing and challenging input.

I was recently selected to stand in the local elections in May 2006 as a prospective councillor and I am a regular contributor on the x Channel as a political commentator on a live prime-time programme that digests the week's major stories. These activities have helped me to develop skills in public speaking and empathy.

In a team setting I often take on the role of the coach who ensures that agreement and harmony are maintained in order to create a positive team atmosphere and reach a consensus. This has proved to be a valuable skill, especially during my voluntary work with x voluntary organisation where I am currently leading a project. As all of the team members are volunteers my seniority is notional and, whilst in a professional setting I can take an autocratic approach where appropriate, it is not an option in voluntary work so reaching a consensus is crucial.

I believe building consensus will be an important role to play in study groups which will be composed of people from different professional and ethnic backgrounds. Key to this will be the ability to understand and address different perspectives and bridge-build where disputes occur - my political and voluntary experience should be invaluable here. Effective and joint project planning will help to ensure that fellow students have 'bought-in' to the rationale behind decision making and the ethos of allowing experts responsibility should ensure a quality output.

As a British Muslim I am conscious that the general public are unaware of the nature of Islam and its commonalities with British culture. I have been working, through x voluntary organisation to address issues internal to the Muslim community; I would like to give my fellow students at Cass the opportunity to challenge their perception of Islam and Muslims in

general so they can confirm or alter their perception, expand their knowledge about the faith of a third of the world's population and examine how this impacts the world in areas such as the global economy.

I intend to develop a series of lectures which would provide direct access to scholars and more importantly, Muslim business leaders. Direct access to business leaders, such as entrepreneurs and company executives will help fellow students to understand how they have achieved success in the business world. As business leaders themselves, my fellow students can only benefit from understanding a massive and increasingly affluent market. I would also hope to dispel some of the myths that surround Islam and Muslims in general.

I will aim to link the events with the "Cass Entrepreneurs Network" by explaining to its members that the events will help attendees better understand a growing market with significant opportunities. This will allow me to present the events as something other than religiously or ethnically based. It will also allow that club's members to bring in their ideas and its mailing lists will ensure that the events receive suitable promotion. I envisage sending promotional emails, advertising through the "First Monday Club", "Coffee Machine" and also wider advertising within the business community using the schools links.

I will build a multi-faith team to develop and deliver a series of events over an academic year. The vision of what the team will deliver will be developed by the team and tasks will be allocated based on people's specialisms.

I will seek sponsorship for the events from x voluntary organisation and its affiliate organisations, embassies of Muslim countries and government departments such as the Home Office. The benefit to the sponsoring organisations will be the increased awareness of Muslims and related business opportunities for potentially influential future leaders. Such sponsorship should help to draw in high calibre speakers which would include business leaders dealing with Muslim markets, such as Islamic financial services which is an existing area of growth.

If I am not accepted onto the Cass MBA this year then I will request feedback on why my application was not successful. In light of this feedback I will then apply to my second choice business school. An MBA is an important component and the most direct way for me to achieve the goals that I have outlined above. However, it is not the only way and I would attempt to bolster my skills and experiences in areas where I am deemed to have any short-comings. The non-MBA route to achieving my goals would mean that I will take longer to achieve those goals and will be challenging, however, I am focused on my future and aim to fulfil my potential, irrespective of the route I have to take.