

GME Demand: Candidate and Corporate Perspectives

Sara Strafino

Director, Market Development, Europe

GMAC

sstrafino@gmac.com



Agenda

- **What Candidates Want from GME**
 - Motivations and career goals
 - Degree preferences
 - Delivery preferences
- **Geographic mobility**
 - Preferred study destinations
 - Geopolitics and mobility
- **Employer perceptions**
 - Top skills
 - Business school and graduate sentiment



Who is GMAC™?

VISION A world where every talented person can benefit from the best business education *for them*.

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

PURPOSE To ensure talent never goes undiscovered.

Industry Research, Advocacy & Professional Development

- 10+ Annual and topical Research Reports
- 15+ Global and Regional conferences, training and convening activity.

Assessment for Business School Readiness

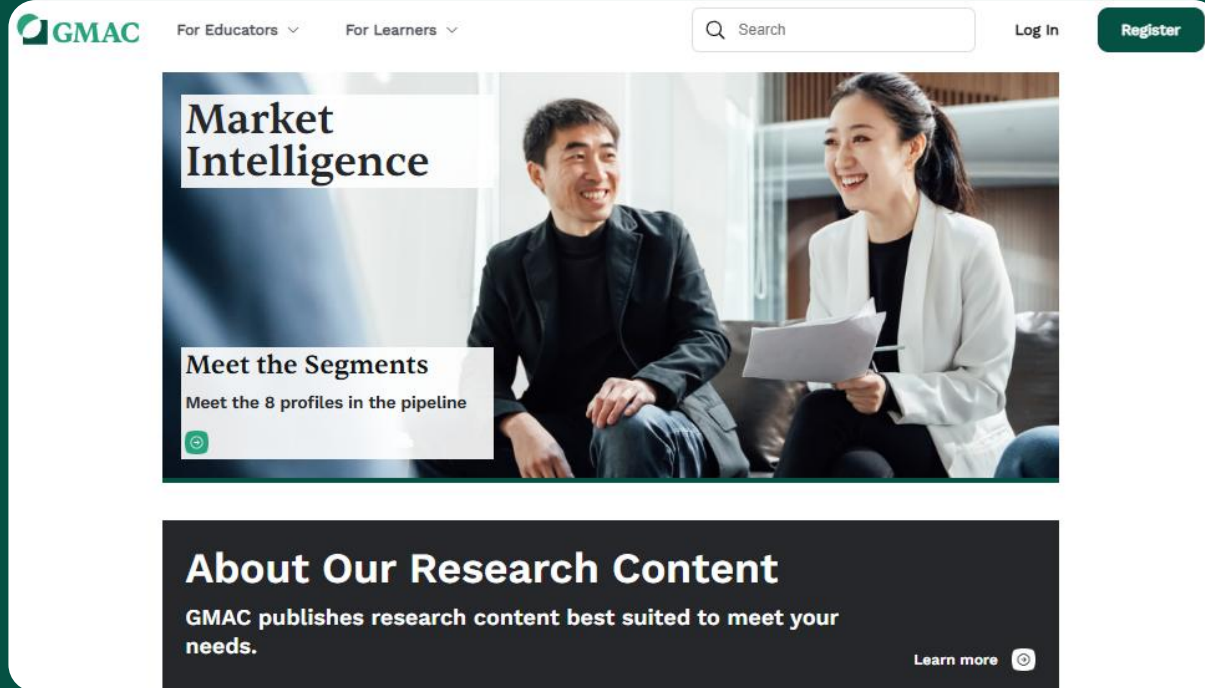
- 200,000+ business school candidates take one of our assessments each year

Marketing & Recruitment Services

- 800,000 unique visitors to candidate facing digital properties
- 575,000+ qualified candidates in our database
- 49,000+ students registering for our tours



GMAC Research



The premier provider of market intelligence for GME with timely insights across the candidate lifecycle.

gmac.com/research >

GMAT™ Exam

- Geographic Trend Report
- Profiles of Testing
- Competitive Intelligence Report

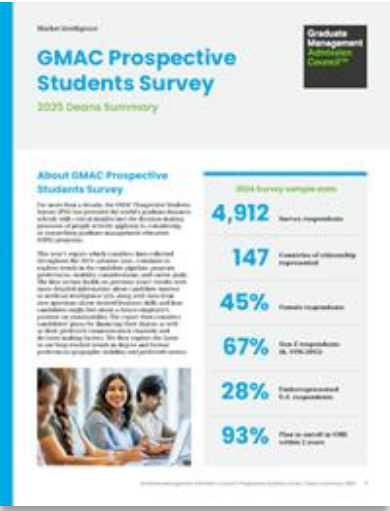
Survey Research

- GMAC Prospective Students Survey
- Application Trends Survey
- Enrolled Students Survey
- Corporate Recruiters Survey

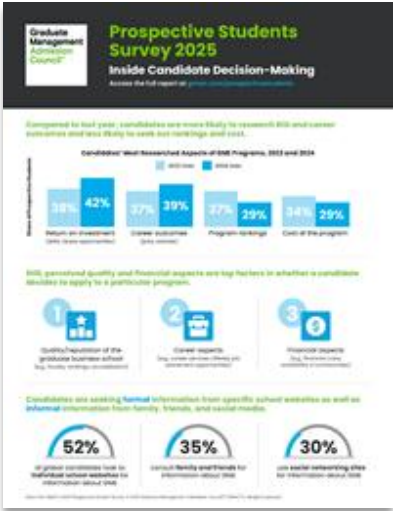
Resources

- Blogs
- Infographics
- Reports
- White papers
- Webinars

More ways to learn



Deans summary
Report highlights for a leadership audience



Infographic
With insights into candidate decision-making

Supplemental reports
Career, demand for GME, degree, and regional results



Interactive dashboard
Answer all your questions with the latest datasets

GME Demand: Candidate and Corporate Perspectives

Application Trends: What Happened last year?

Application Trends Survey

Benchmark against your peers to stay ahead in a competitive market

In the field June–August 2025

- Application volume trends, by program type and region
- Applicant pool composition, by gender, citizenship, and work experience
- Expected changes in enrollment and acceptance rates, program size, and class composition
- Candidate recruitment and outreach targets

[**gmac.com/applicationtrends**](https://gmac.com/applicationtrends)



1,172

Graduate business school programs participated in 2025

326

Business schools are represented in the 2025 sample

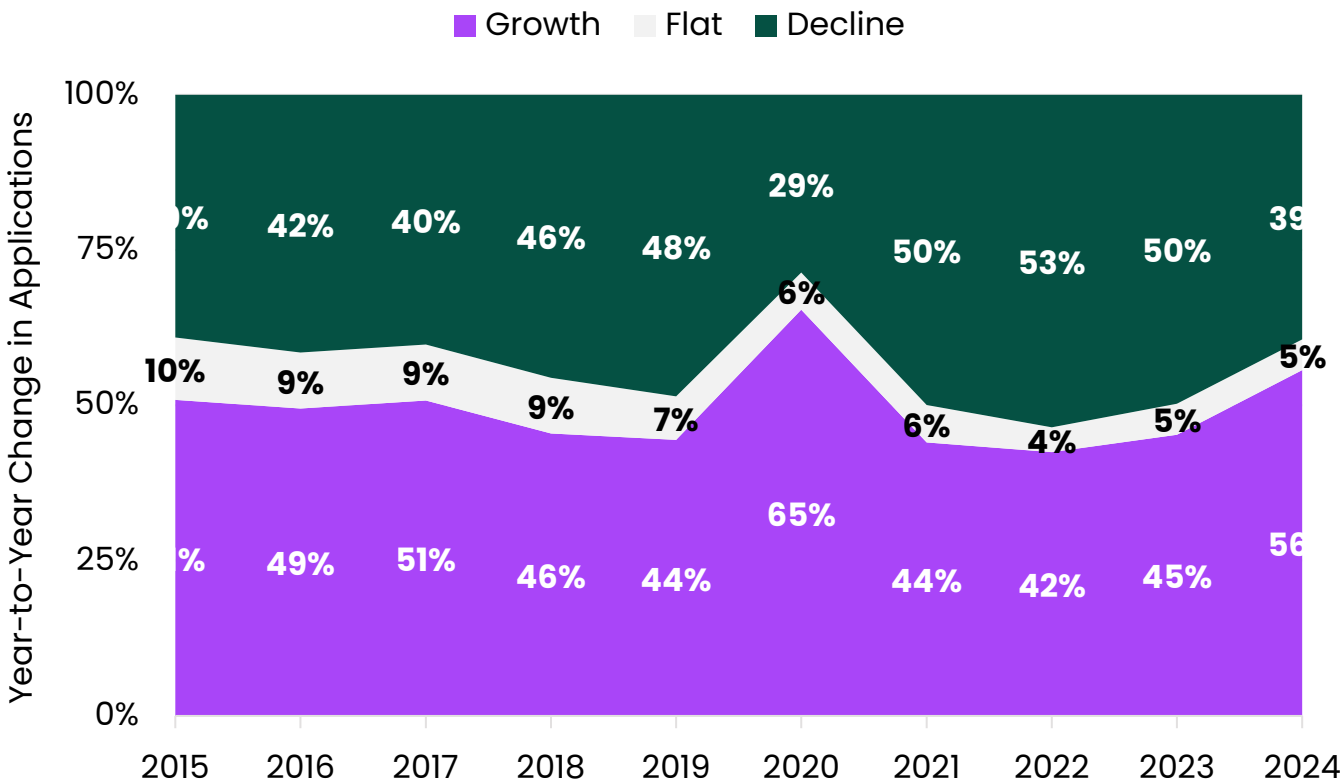
41

Countries are represented in the 2025 sample

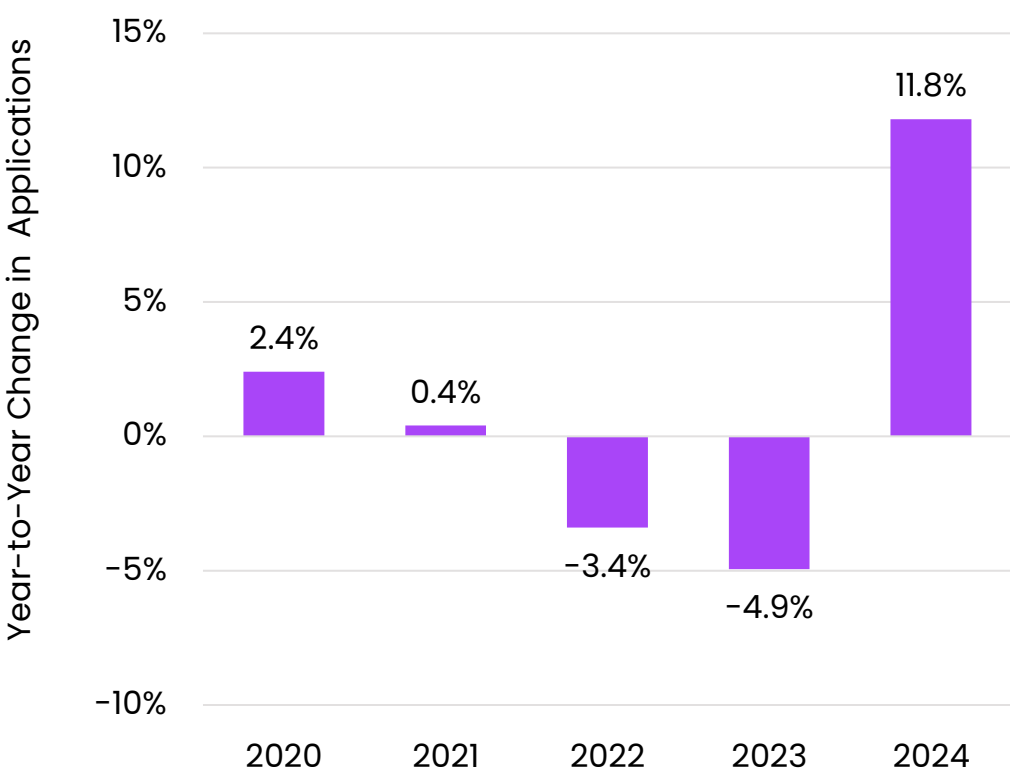
[**gmac.com/surveysignup**](https://gmac.com/surveysignup)

Applications increased 12%, with 56% of programs reporting growth

Relative Application Change Among All GME Programs, 2015-2024



Absolute Year-to-Year Change in Total Applications, 2020-2024



Total applications are up across the GME industry, but some regions experienced declines

Canada

- ↑ 32% programs report growth
- ↓ 65% programs report declines
- ↓ 21% total drop in applications

Europe (excluding U.K.)

- ↑ 69% programs report growth
- ↓ 24% programs report declines
- ↑ 20% total increase in applications

United States

- ↑ 53% programs report growth
- ↓ 42% programs report declines
- ↑ 8% total increase in applications

United Kingdom

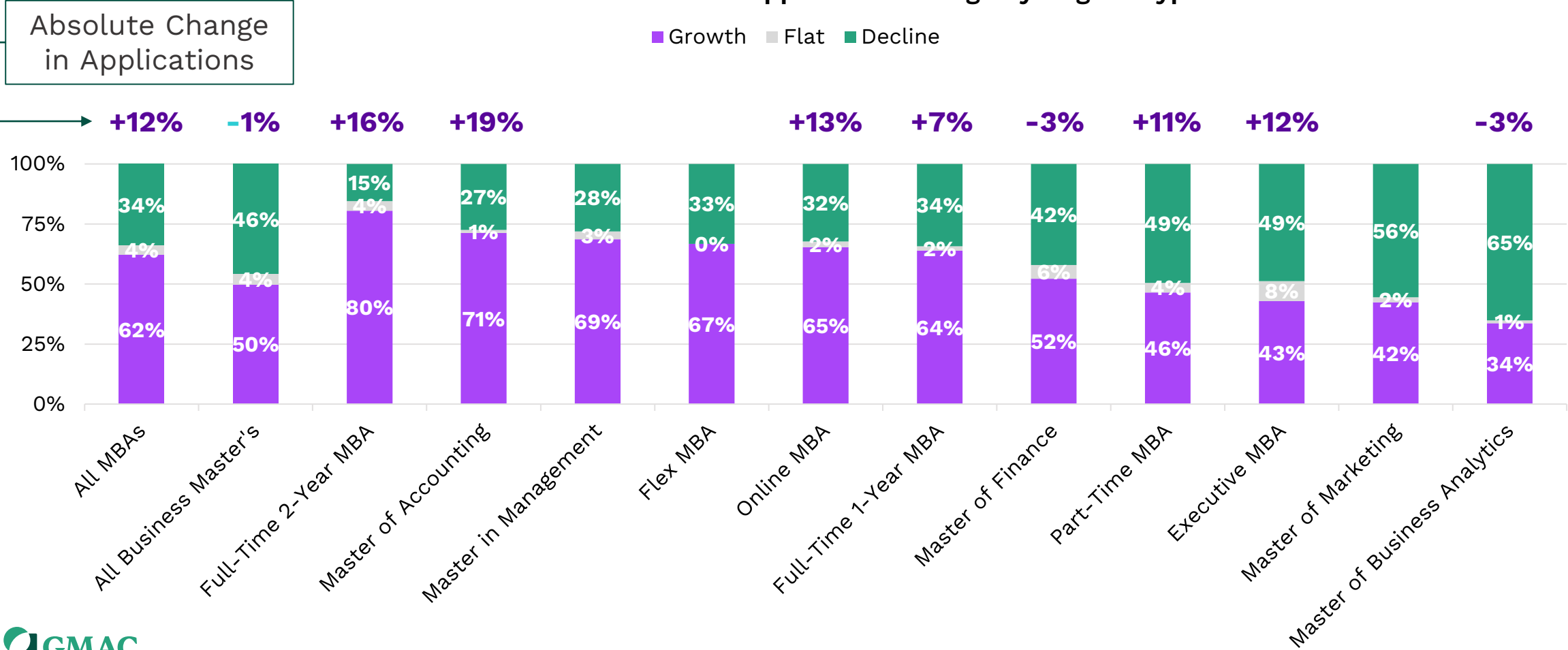
- ↑ 30% programs report growth
- ↓ 66% programs report declines
- ↓ 14% total drop in applications

Asia (excluding India & China)

- ↑ 53% programs report growth
- ↓ 45% programs report declines
- ↑ 9% total increase in applications

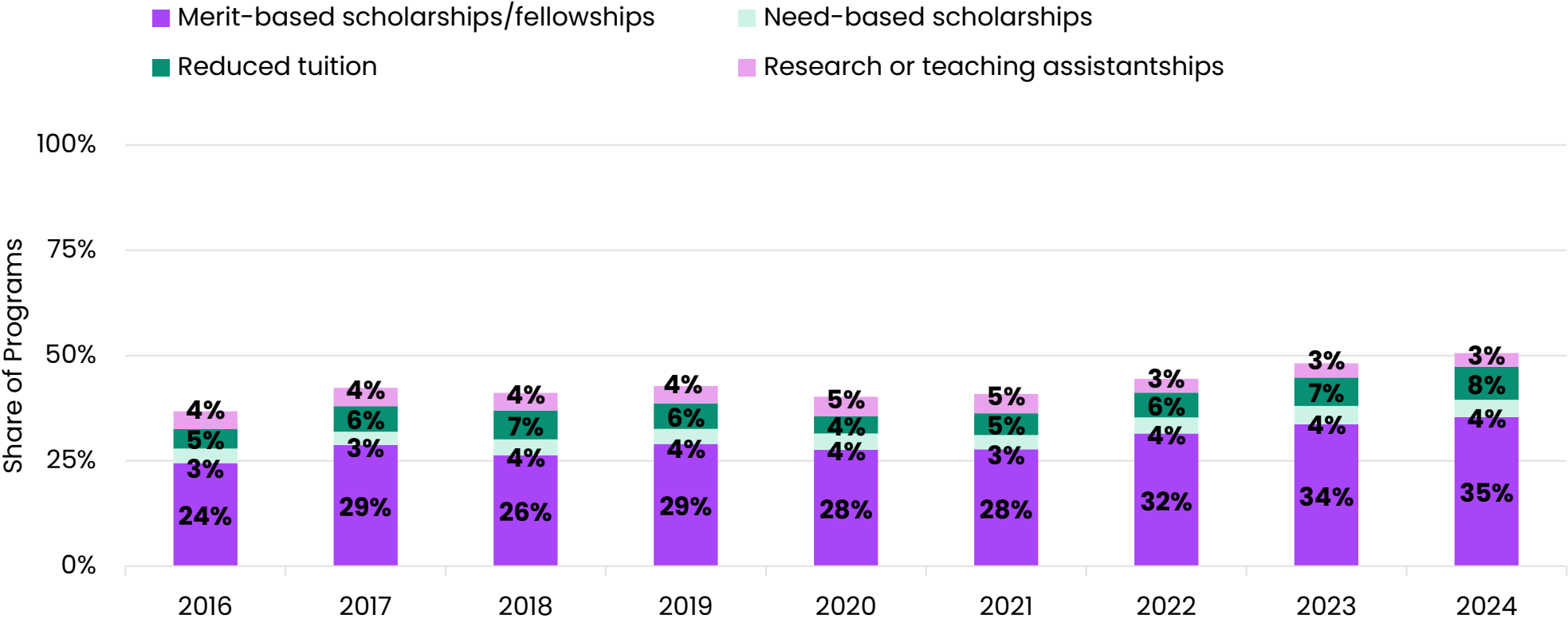
Applications increased for all MBA types, mixed results for Business Masters

Relative Year-to-Year Total Application Change by Degree Type



Programs are providing more financial aid to their incoming classes than ever before

Share of Incoming Class Receiving Financial Assistance Among All GME Programs, 2016–2024



Discuss: What do you think the 2025 Application Trends Survey will show?

- Compared to last year, have you seen any shifts in your applications for the 2025 intake – demographics, programmes of interest, study destination preferences?
- What are the key challenges that you have experienced with applications and/or enrolments?

GME Demand: Candidate and Corporate Perspectives

What Candidates Want from GME

GMAC Prospective Students Survey

Engage more effectively with your prospective students by knowing what drives their decision making

In the field January-December 2024

- The path to business school
- Program types considered
- Program preferences
- Study destination preferences
- School selection criteria
- Financing plans
- Desired b-school outcomes
- Candidate profiles

www.gmac.com/prospectivestudents >

4,912

Respondents represented in the 2024 sample

147

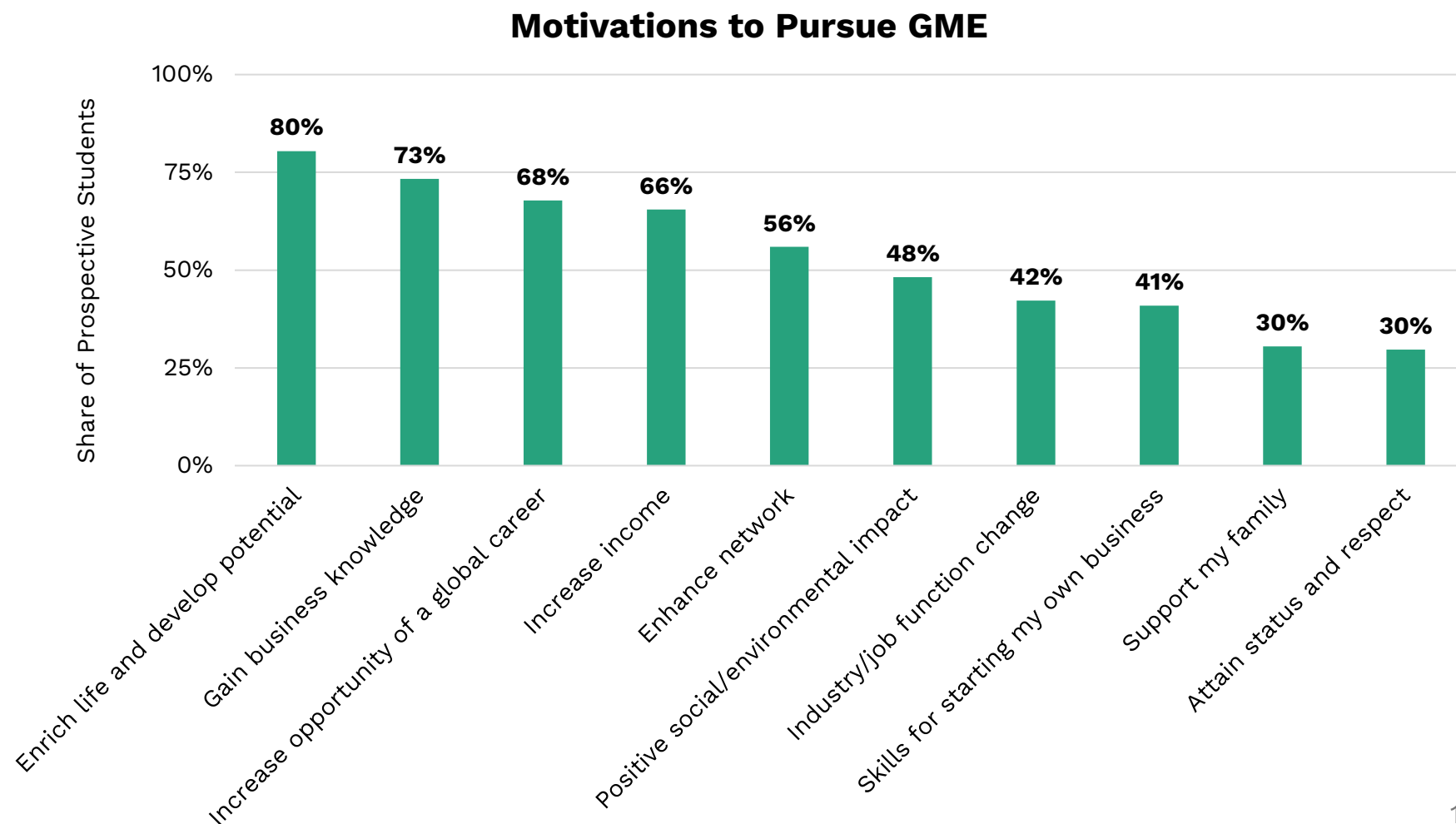
Countries represented in the 2024 sample

93%

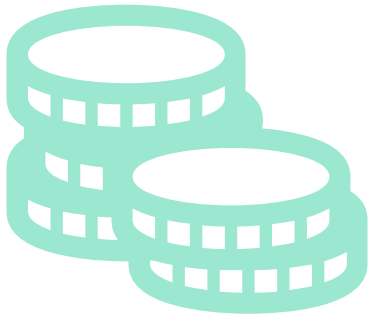
Candidates in the 2024 sample plan to enroll within two years

Globally, candidates have multidimensional goals for why they are pursuing GME

- **Traditional Outcomes:**
Increased income, enhanced network, new business knowledge
- **Inner Development:**
Candidates are most motivated to pursue GME to enrich their lives
- **Improving Outer World:**
About half of candidates want to make a positive impact in their career following GME



Cost remains a top barrier as candidates become more reliant on financial aid...



48%

Share of candidates who say **cost** is among their top three barriers to GME

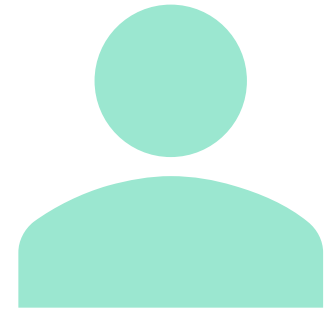
*The **#1** most cited barrier*



30%

Share of degree candidates plan to finance with financial aid in 2024

*Compared to **25%** in 2019*



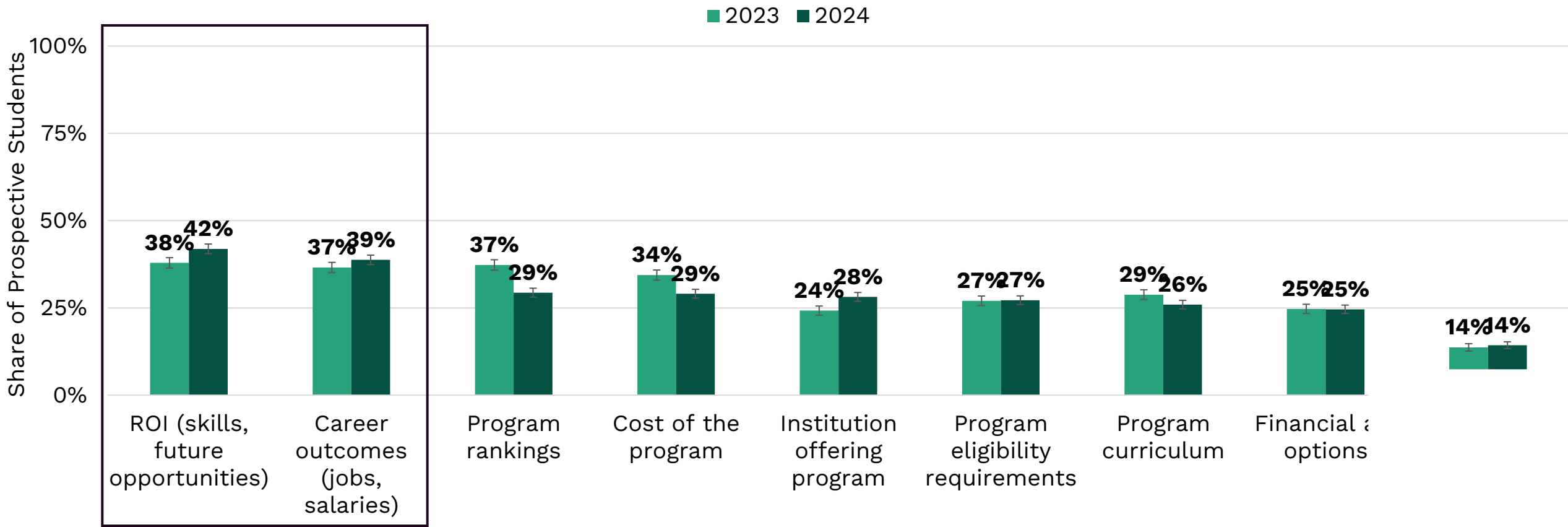
34%

Share of degree **millennial candidates** plan to finance with financial aid

*Compared to **29%** among Gen Z*

...so take advantage of candidates' increased focus on ROI in your storytelling

Candidates' Most Researched Aspects of GME Programs, 2023 and 2024



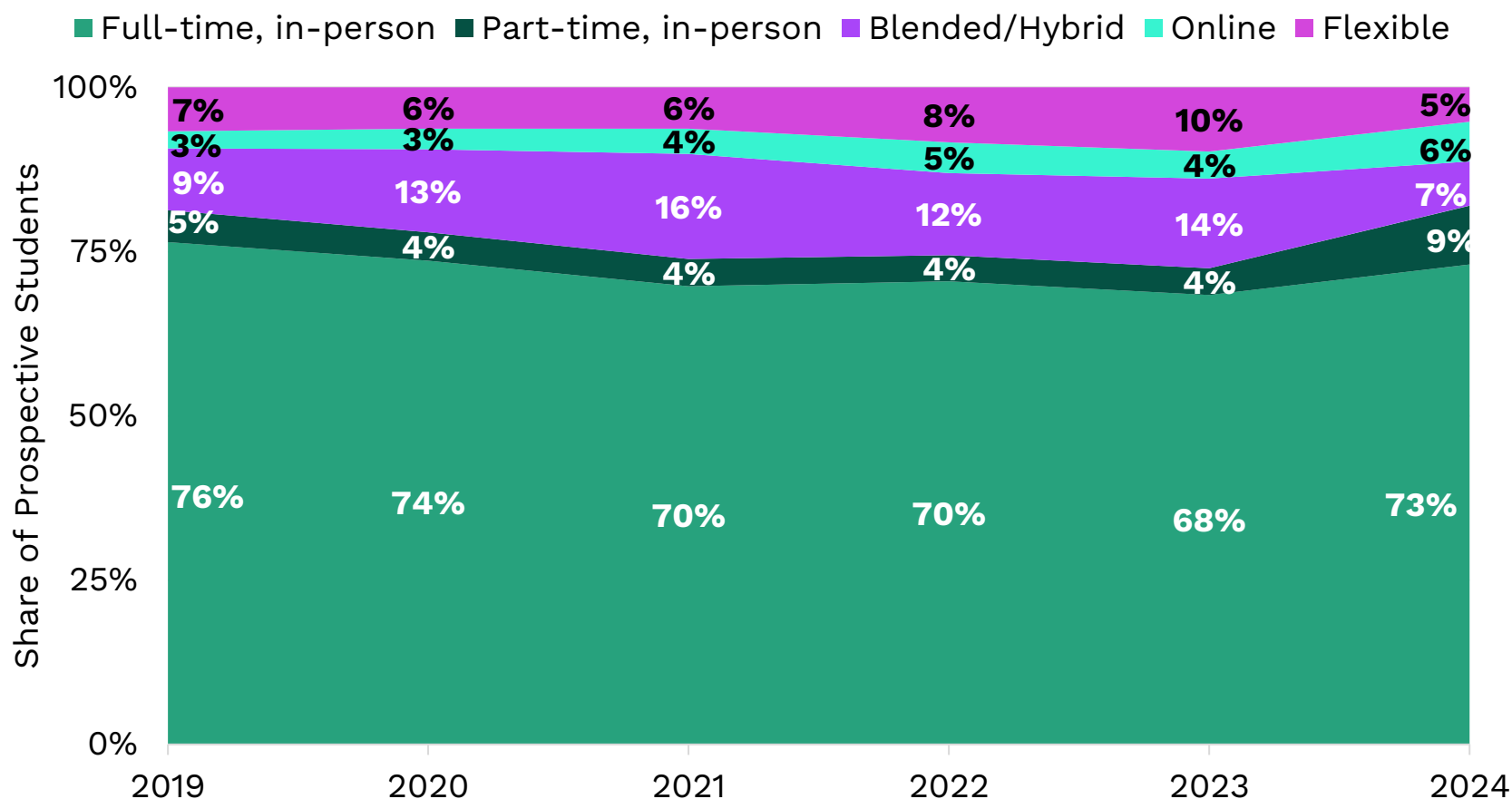
Salary increases, greater seniority, and geographic mobility are key career goals to message

Top Post-GME Career Goals Among Global Candidates 1. Get a raise/salary increase (40%) 2. Manage projects (37%) 3. Work for a company where I can travel internationally (36%)	Top Post-GME Career Goals Among Global MBA Candidates 1. Get a raise/salary increase (43%) 2. Manage people (37%) 3. Manage projects (36%)	Top Post-GME Career Goals Among Global Prof. MBA Candidates 1. Get a raise/salary increase (51%) 2. Obtain an executive level position (49%) 3. Obtain a senior level position (38%)
Top Post-GME Career Goals Among Master in Management 1. Manage projects (50%) 2. Manage people (43%) 3. Work for a company where I can travel internationally (43%)	Top Post-GME Career Goals Among Master of Finance 1. Work outside of my country of citizenship (36%) 2. Work for a company where I can travel internationally (33%) 3. Obtain a senior-level position (30%)	

Candidates reversed years of declining preference for full-time, in-person program delivery in 2024

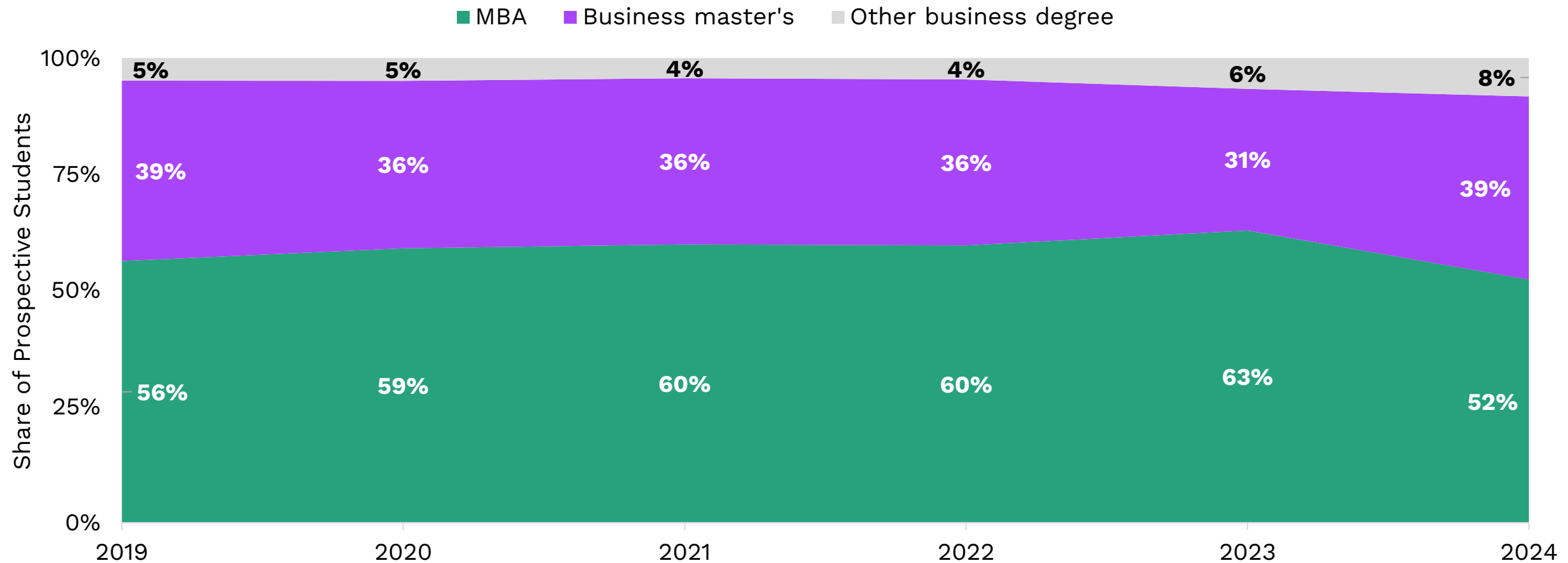
- Candidates in the **23-24** and **25-30** age groups showed the biggest YoY increases in full-time in person interest.
- **Women** also demonstrated a sizeable YoY swing in preference back toward full-time in-person

Preferred Delivery Format for Global Candidates

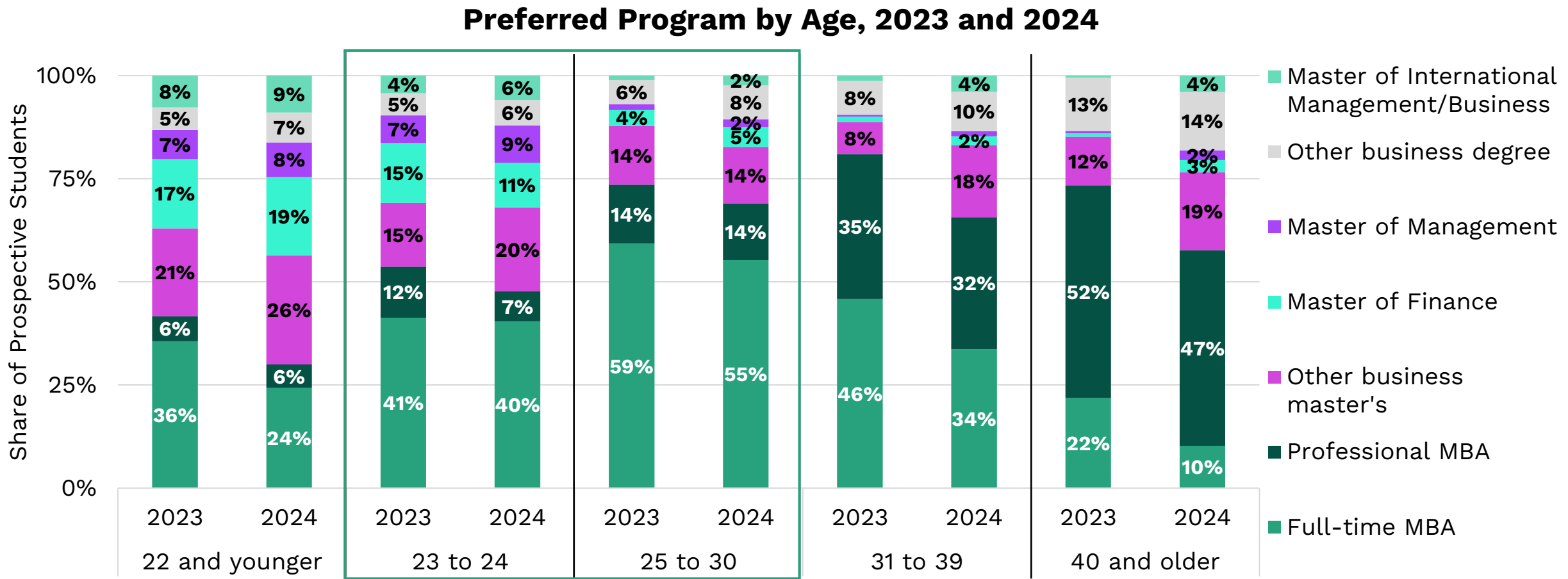


In 2024 MBA preference dipped to pre-pandemic levels...

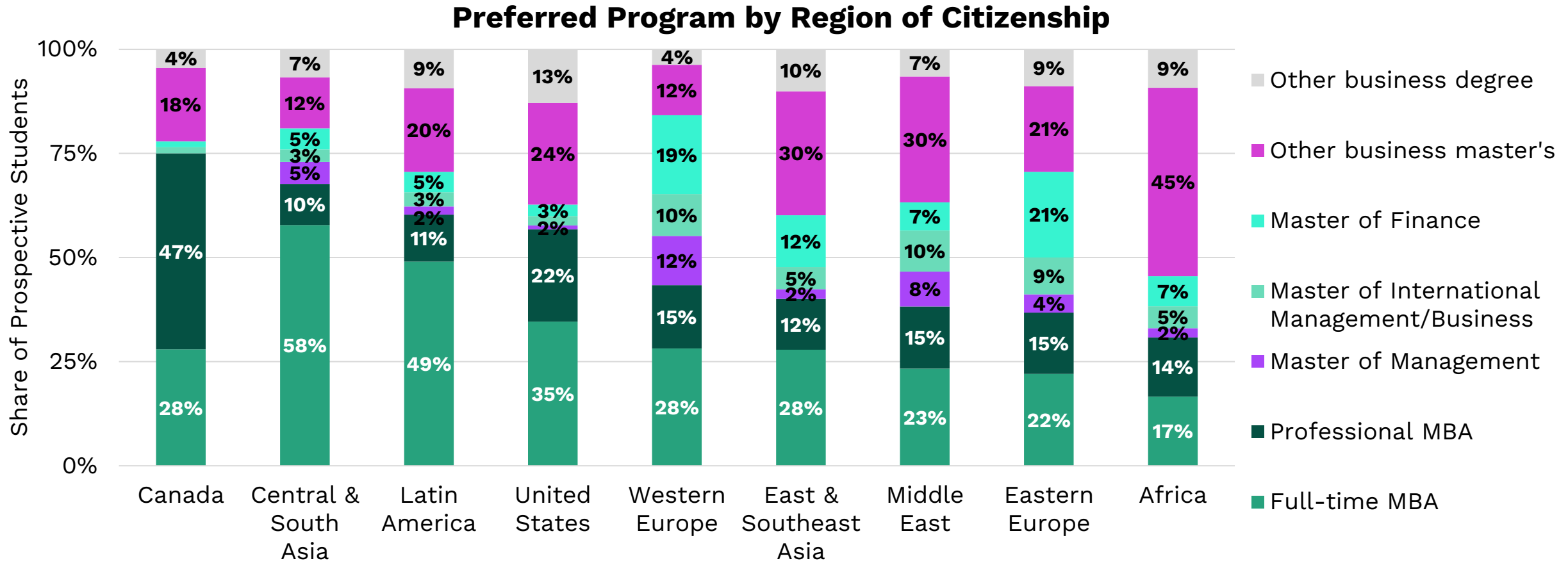
Global Candidate Degree Preference, 2019-2024



...though full-time MBA preference is mostly flat among 23 to 30-year-olds

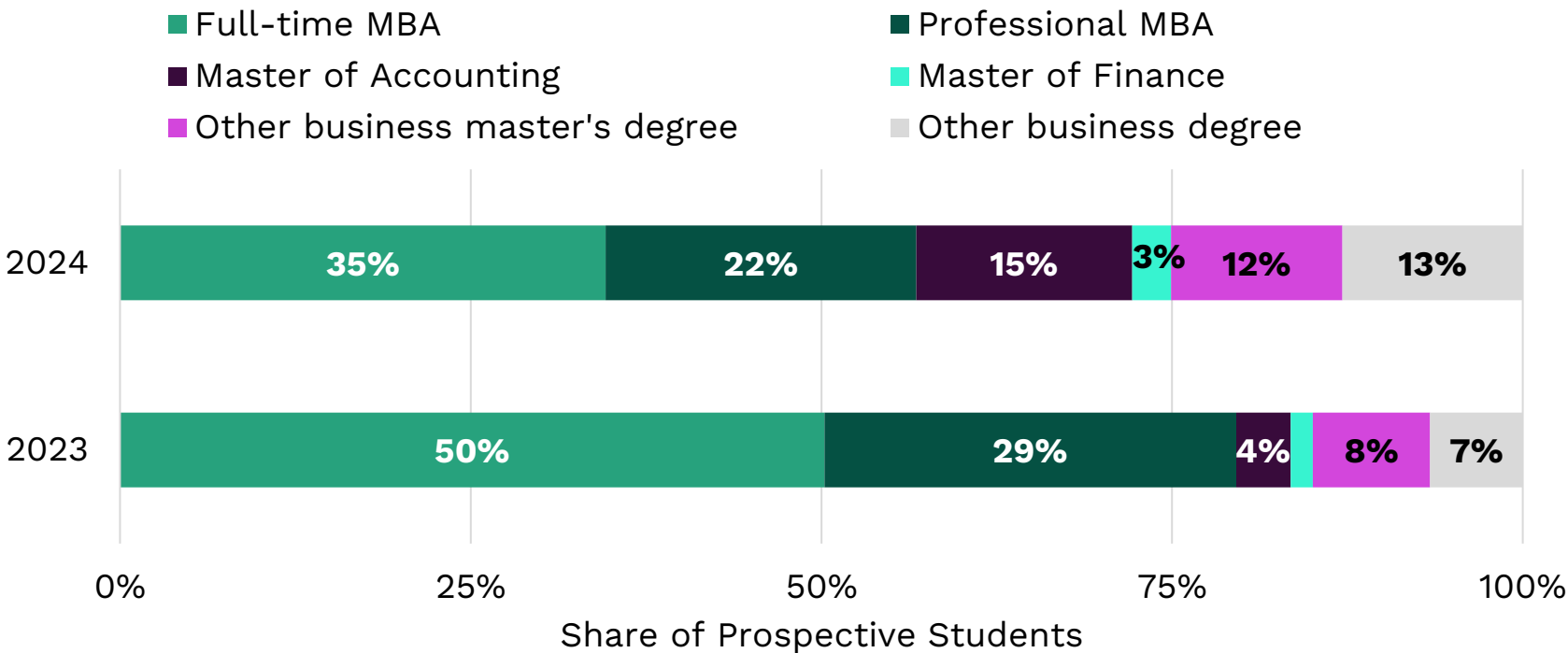


Canada, Central & South Asia, and the United States remain strongholds for the MBA...



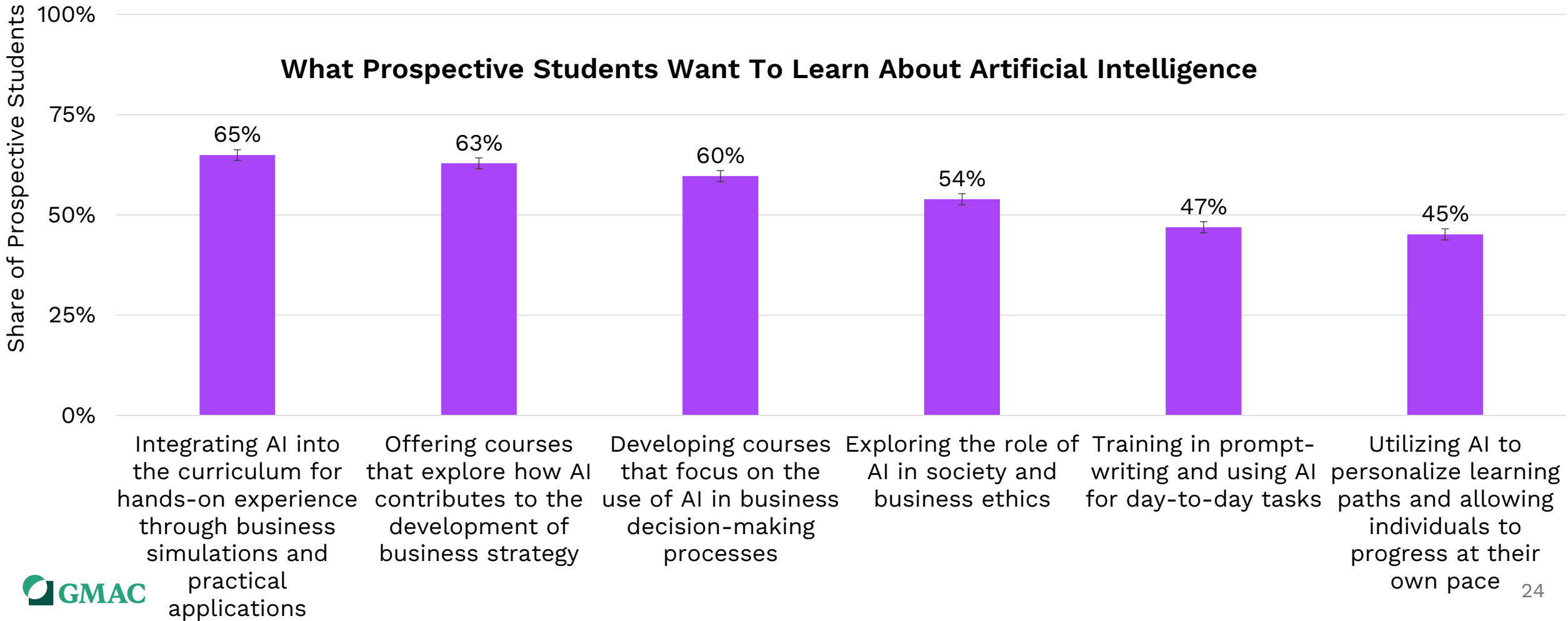
...however, MBA preference among U.S. candidates still declined year-over-year

Degree Preference of U.S. Prospective Students, 2023 and 2024



- Increased preference for the **Master of Accounting** occurred among both men and women, and was particularly pronounced among candidates 22 and younger.
- “**Other business degrees**” include joint/dual programs, Ph.D.s, etc.

46% of candidates want to learn about AI, especially focused on strategy and decision-making



Candidates are considering social impact in their educational and employment decisions

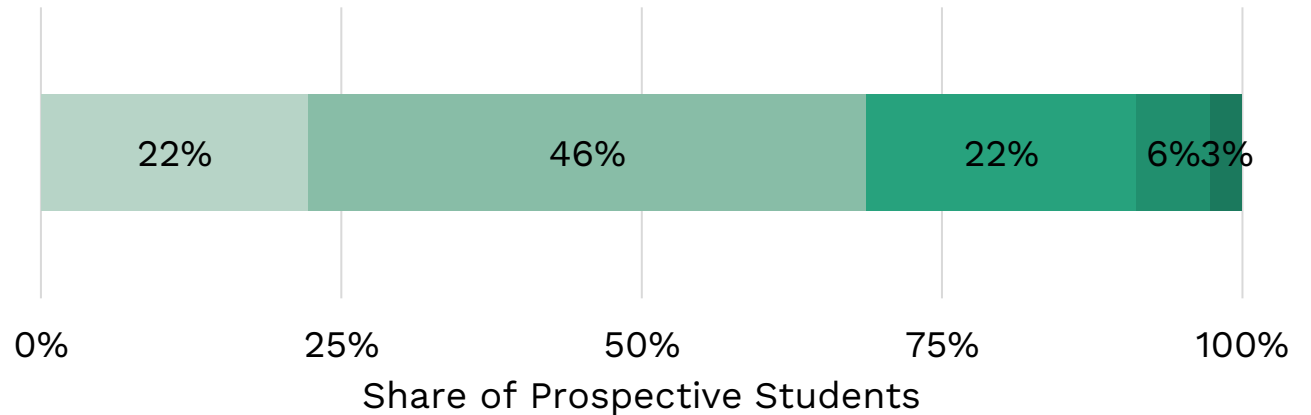
63%

of candidates say **sustainability** is important or very important to their academic experience

34% of these candidates would not consider a school that does not support sustainability

Agreement with the statement: "Potential employers' commitment to ethical and sustainable practices significantly influences their decision to accept a job offer."

Strongly agree Agree
Neither agree nor disagree Disagree
Strongly disagree



Apply the findings

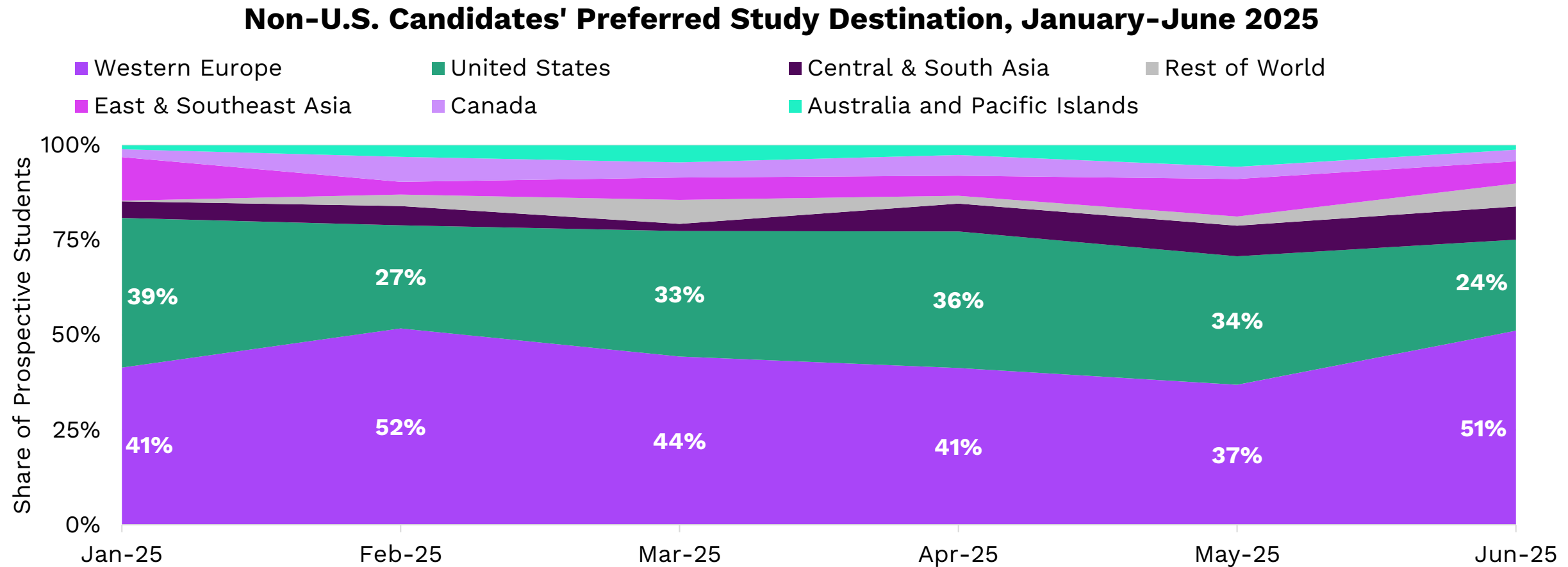
- **Ensure content is up-to-date**, relevant, engaging, and tailored to address prospective students' goals and key concerns.
- **Proactively highlight ROI** by sharing student and alumni stories that showcase how business school helped them to drive **meaningful change toward sustainability**.
- Leverage **AI simulations, case studies, and industry partnerships** across disciplines rather than just theoretical coursework.



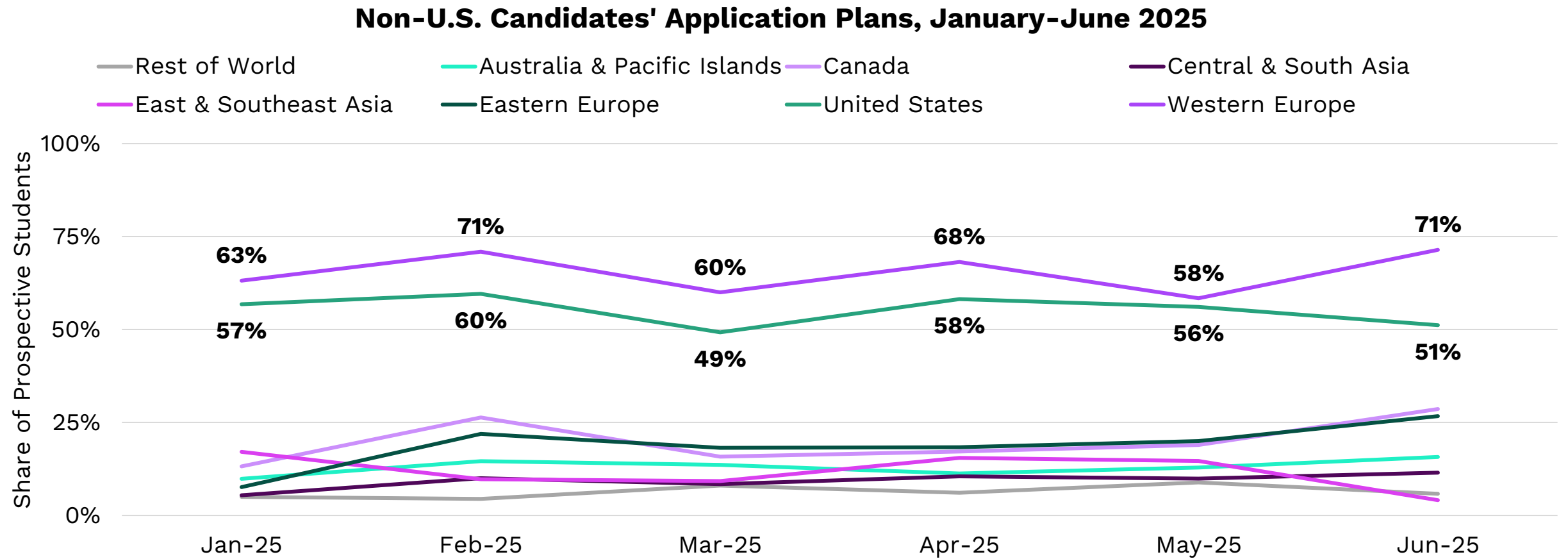
GME Demand: Candidate and Corporate Perspectives

Geographic Mobility

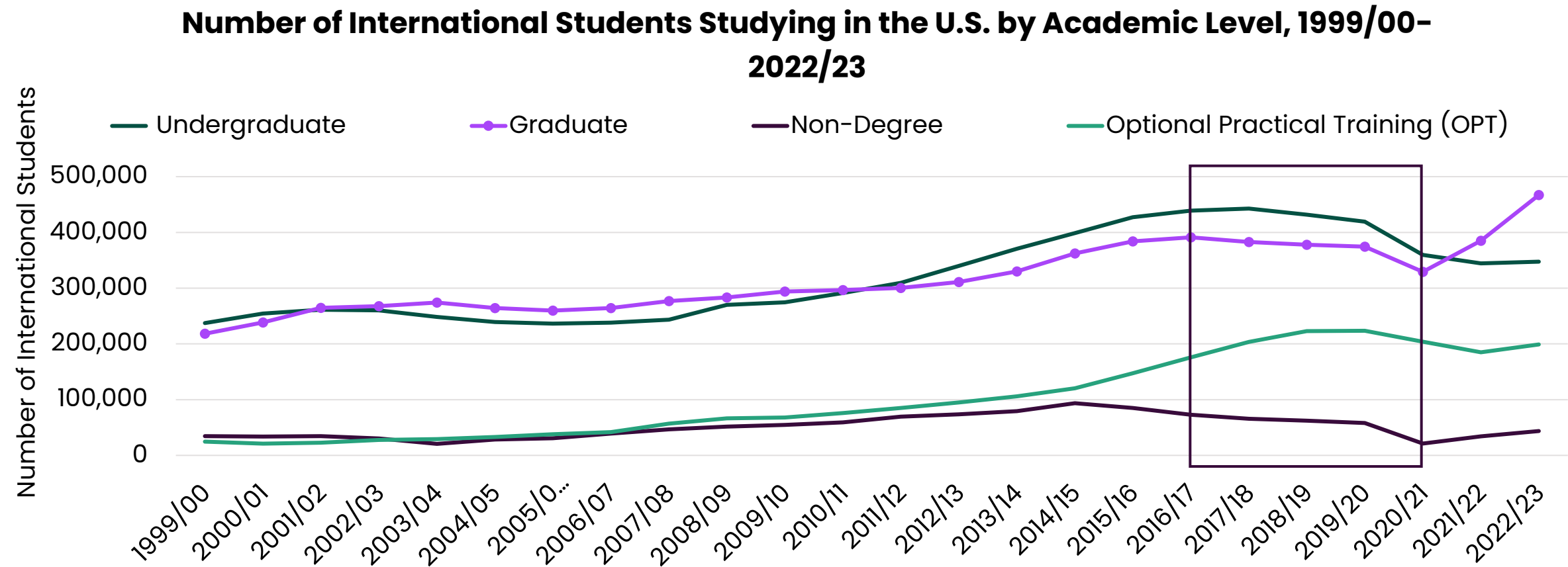
In 2025, non-U.S. candidates still prefer GME in the United States and Western Europe...



...with some signs of declining willingness to apply to U.S. programs and rising interest in Western Europe

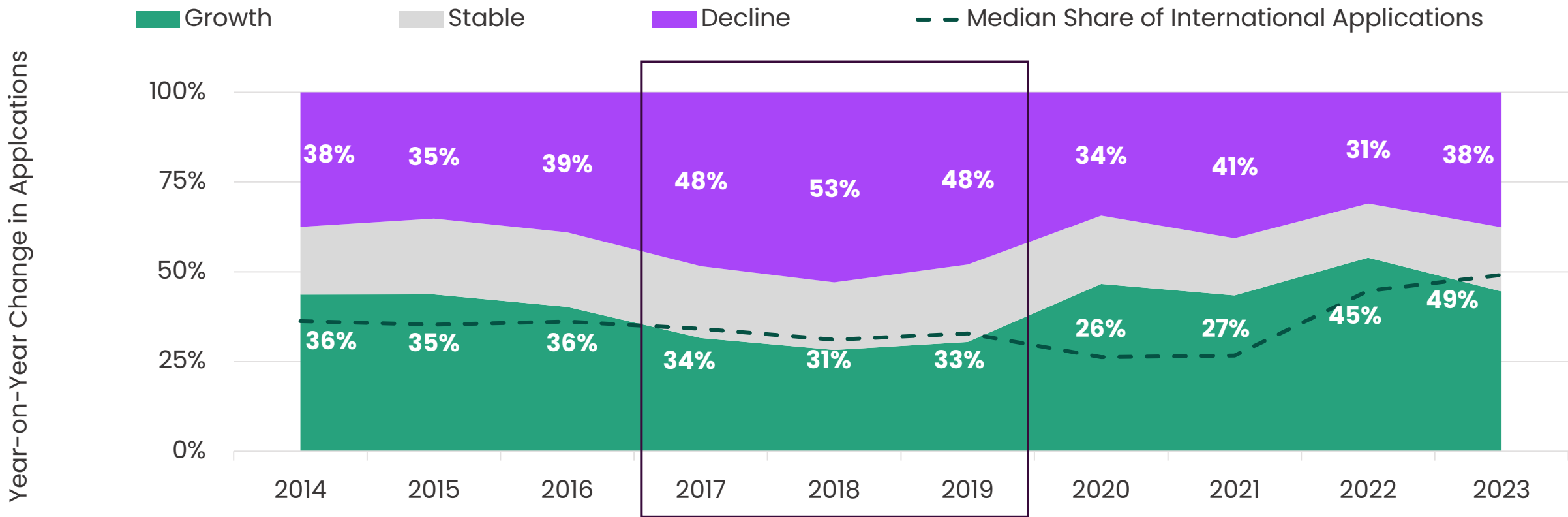


During Trump’s previous term, international grad enrollment declined...



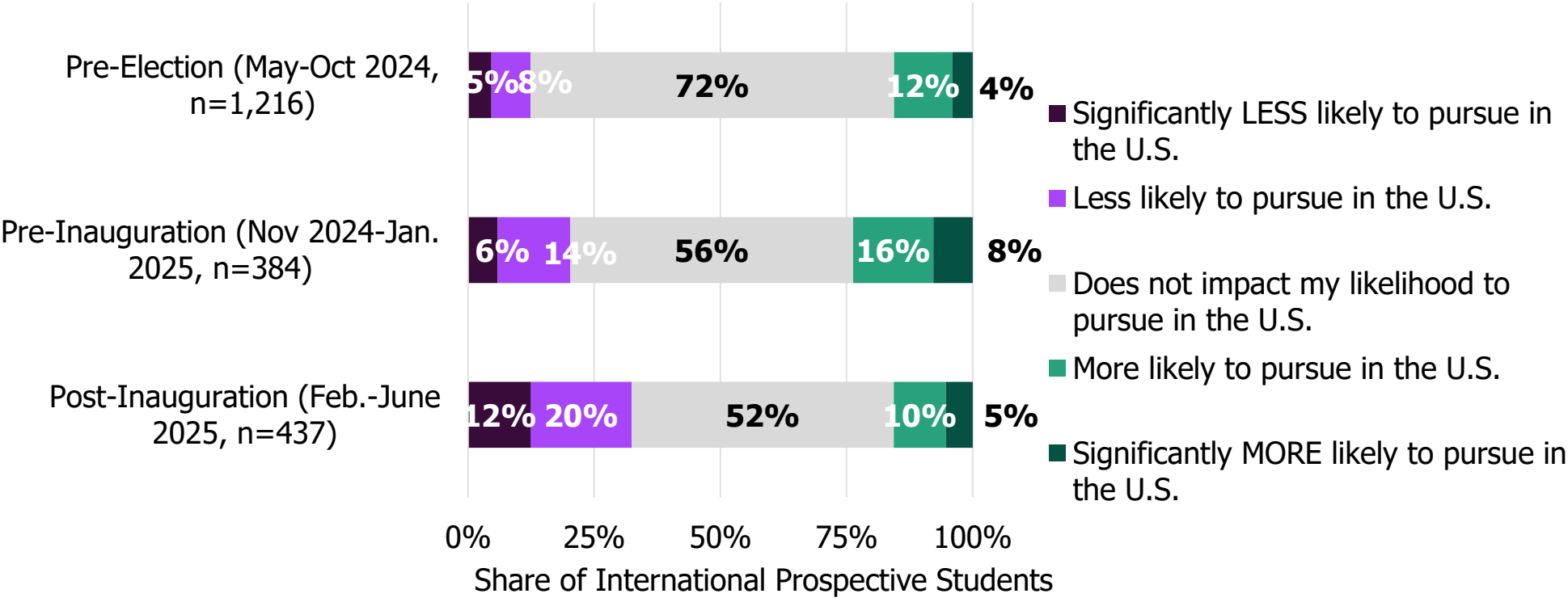
...along with international applications to U.S. GME programs

Relative Change in International Applications to U.S. Programs, 2014-2022



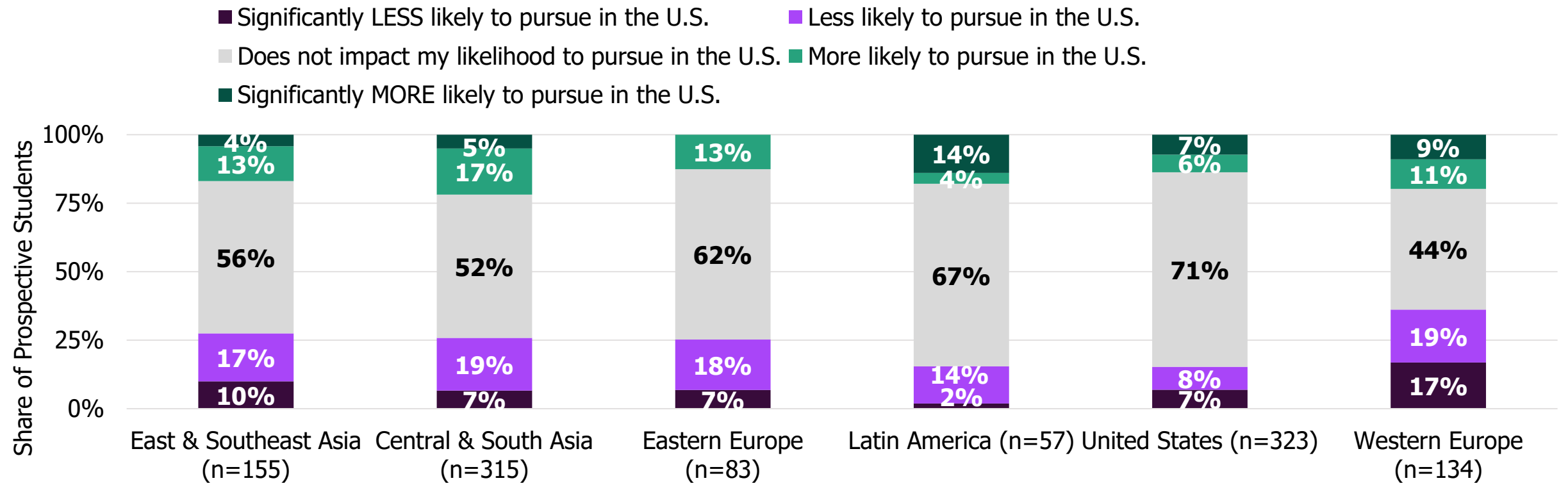
International students are growing more discouraged from pursuing GME in the United States

Pre- and Post-Election International Student Sentiment



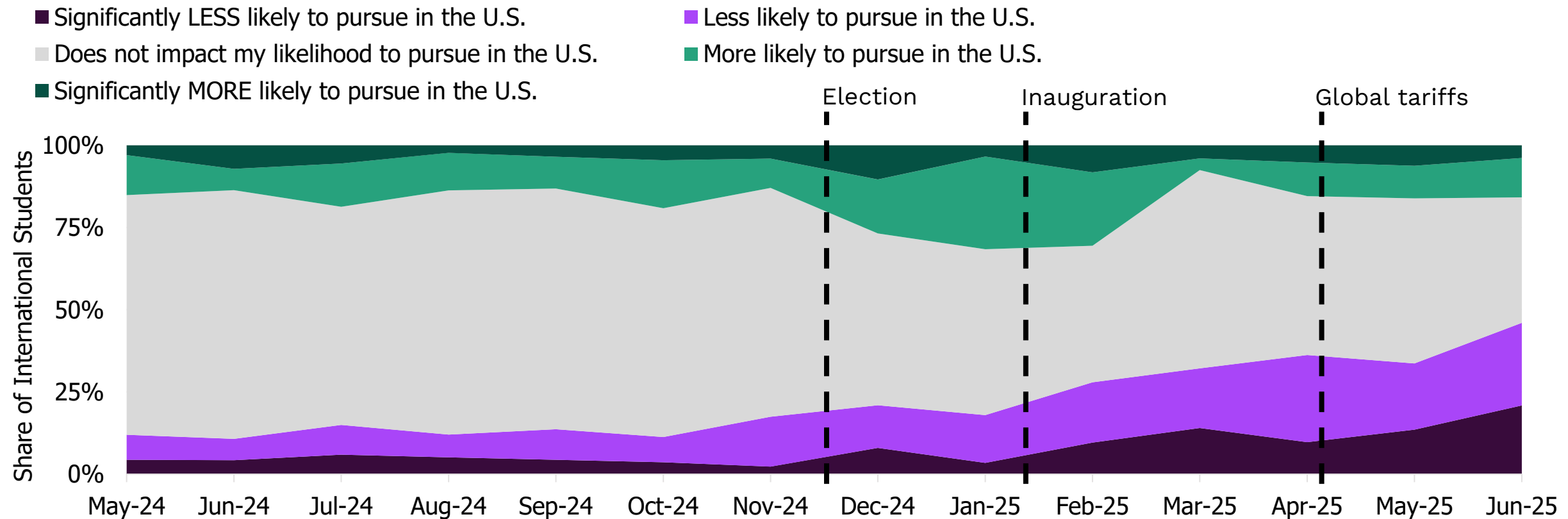
Across regions, candidates are typically more likely to be discouraged from U.S. study than encouraged

Post-Election Influence of U.S. Presidency on Likelihood To Study in United States by Region



International students are growing more discouraged from pursuing GME in the United States

Influence of U.S. Presidency on International Students' Likelihood to Study in the United States



U.S. policy is changing alongside other top study destinations

- **Canada** capped the number of international student visas available
- **Australia** introduced “high” and “standard” priority visas to slow enrollment after a formal cap was blocked in Parliament
- The **United Kingdom** restricted family members from joining international students in the country
- Candidates seeking alternative study destinations post-U.S. election are most likely to look to **Western Europe** instead



Discuss: Central and Eastern Europe as an alternative study destination?

- What unique strengths do you offer that perhaps haven't been effectively communicated so far?
- What are the areas of excellence and differentiation that could be strategically positioned to attract globally mobile students?

GME Demand: Candidate and Corporate Perspectives

Employer perspectives

Corporate Recruiters Survey

Maintain your programs' relevance with timely insights from employers

In the field January-March 2025

- Skill sets, qualities, and traits employers look for in making hiring decisions
- Employer hiring plans for the coming year, by candidate type and region
- Expected starting salaries, job functions, and job-level placement for new hires
- Recruiter behavior, including recruitment methods and candidate selection criteria

www.gmac.com/corporaterecruiters >

1,108

Employers participated in the 2025 survey

46

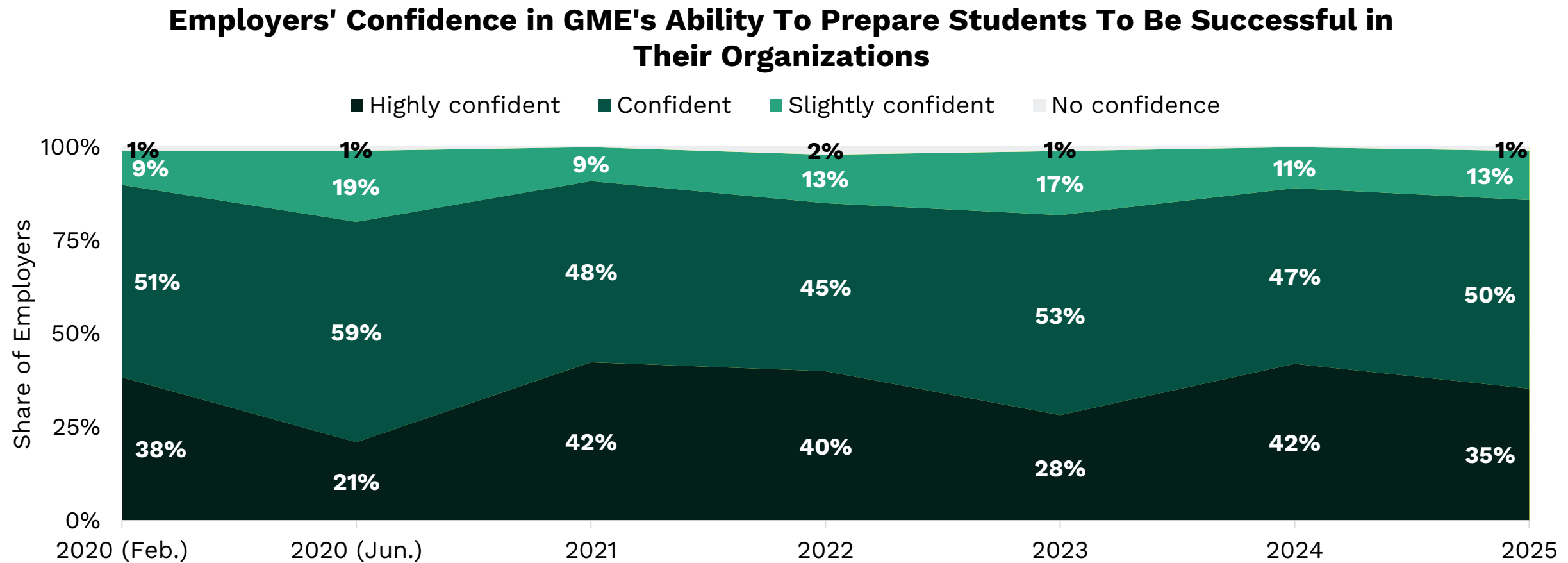
Countries represented in the Corporate Recruiters Survey

64%

Coverage of the Global Fortune 500 amongst all companies participating

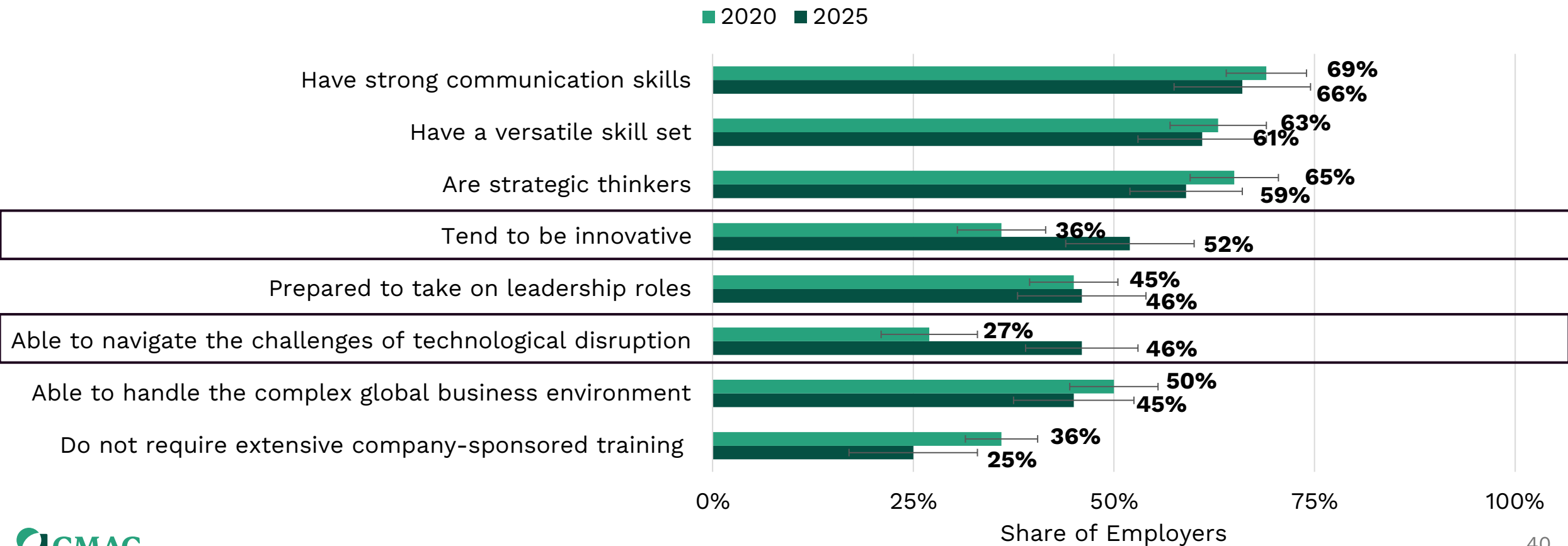
gmac.com/surveysignup

99% of employers are confident in GME’s ability to prepare successful graduates...



...increasingly due to graduates' innovation and tech savvy

Why Employers Are Confident in Business School's Ability To Prepare Graduates To Be Successful, 2020 and 2025





In the next five years, employers anticipate continued importance of **strategy** and **problem-solving**, with increased importance in **technology/IT skills**, **using AI tools**, and **data analysis and interpretation**.

Most Important Current Skills
(Select all that apply)

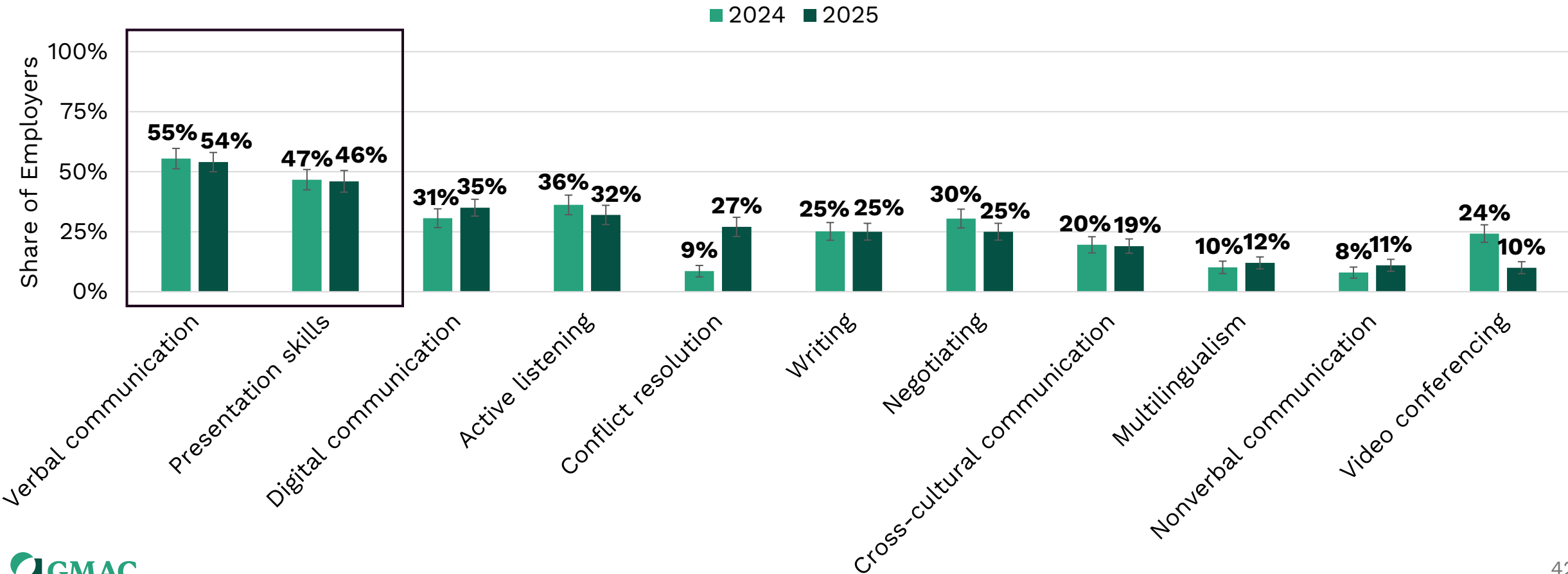
- 1. Problem-Solving
- 2. Strategic Thinking
- 3. Communication Skills
- 4. Adaptability
- 5. Leadership Skills
- 6. Decision-Making
- 7. Interpersonal/Teamwork Skills
- 8. Time/Project Management
- 9. Initiative
- 10. Data Analysis/Interpretation
- 11. Technology/IT Skills
- 12. Emotional Intelligence
- 13. Innovation
- 14. Coachability
- 15. Networking/Relationship Building
- 16. Skills in using AI tools
- 17. Grit
- 18. Global Business Skills
- 19. Lifelong Learning
- 20. Cross-Cultural Competence
- 21. Entrepreneurship
- 22. Managing Human Capital

Most Important Future Skills
(Select Top Three)

- 1. Skills in using AI tools  15
- 2. Strategic Thinking
- 3. Technology/IT Skills  8
- 4. Problem-Solving
- 5. Data Analysis/Interpretation  5
- 6. Communication Skills
- 7. Adaptability
- 8. Leadership Skills
- 9. Innovation
- 10. Decision-making
- 11. Interpersonal/Teamwork Skill
- 12. Emotional Intelligence
- 13. Networking/Relationship Building
- 14. Initiative
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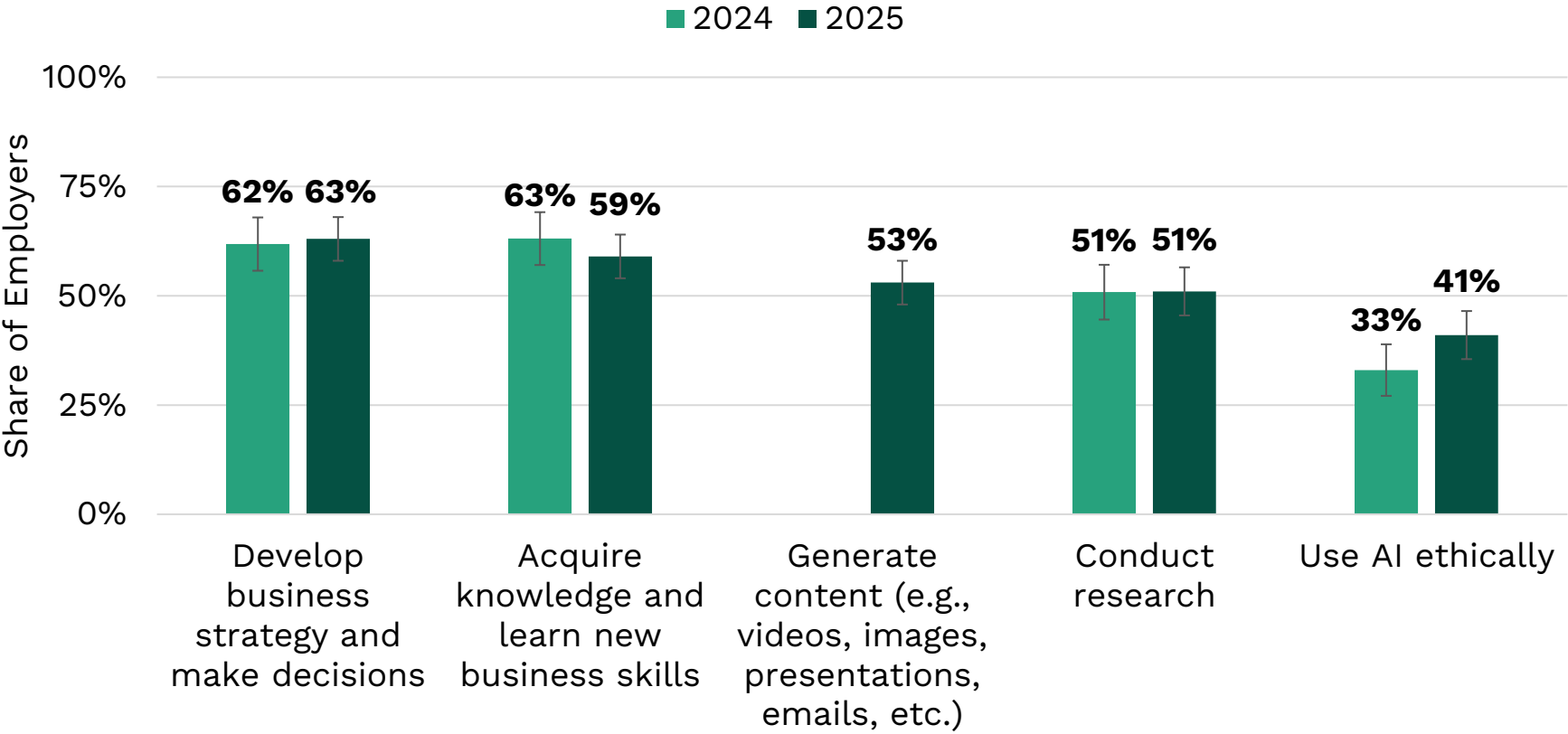
Comms-concerned employers are focused on verbal and presentation skills

Importance of Specific Communication Skills to Comms-Concerned Employers



Employers and candidates want hands-on AI training in support of strategy and decision-making

Importance of Specific AI Skills to AI-Concerned Employers



65%

of global candidates want to learn how to use AI through **hands-on simulations and practical applications**

63%

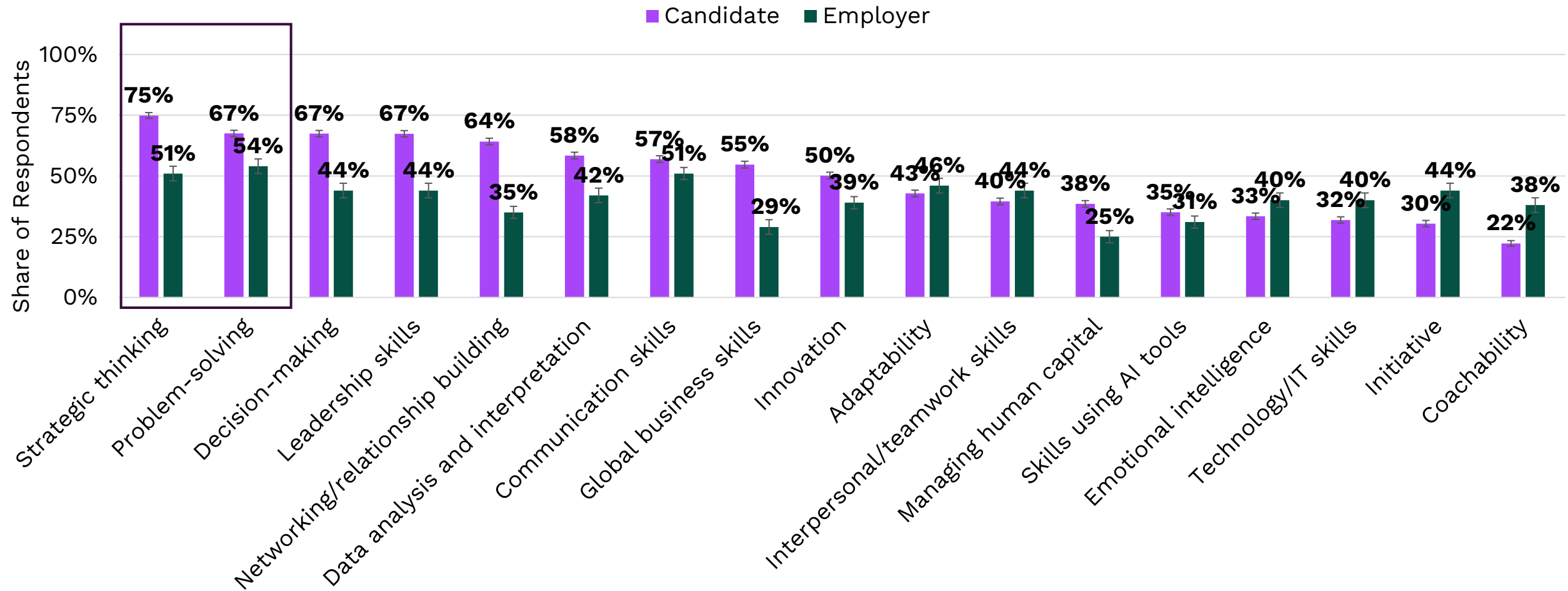
of global candidates want to learn how to use AI to **develop business strategy**

60%

of global candidates want to learn how to use AI to **make decisions**

Strategy and problem-solving are top skills for employers and candidates...

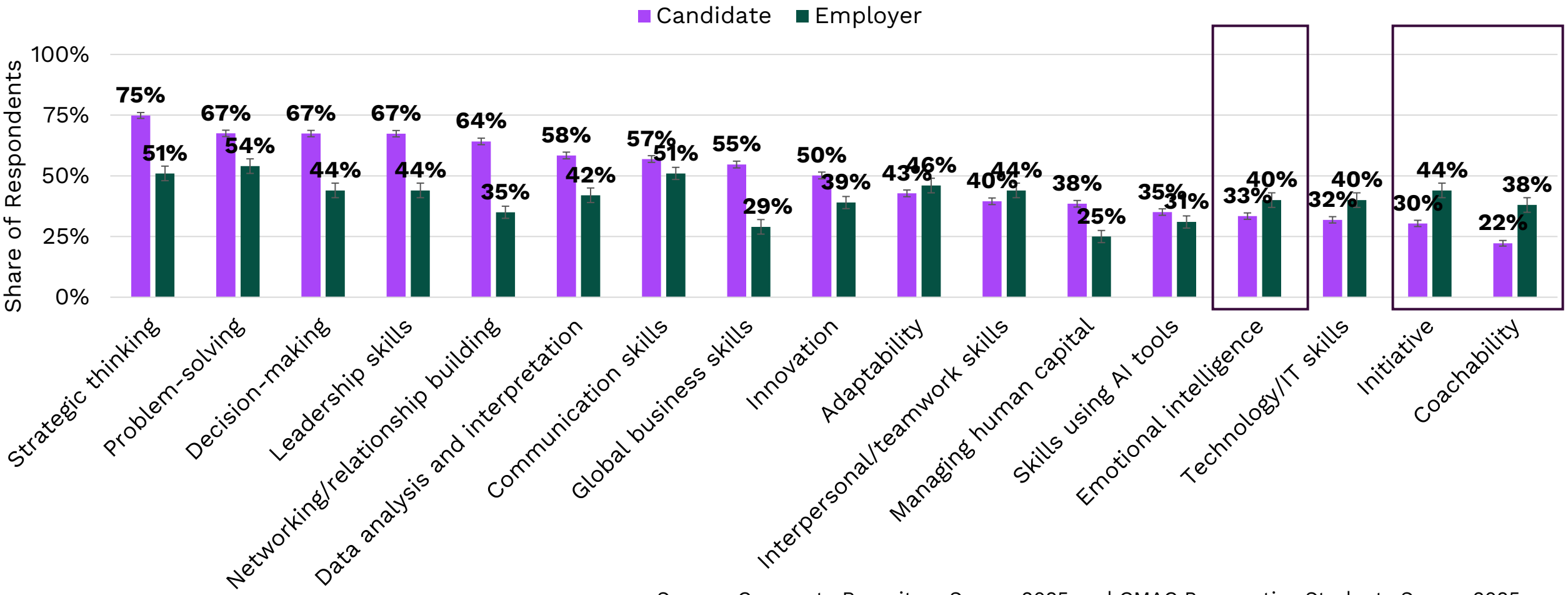
Candidate and Employers' Top Skills to Learn in Business School



Source: Corporate Recruiters Survey 2025 and GMAC Prospective Students Survey 2025

...but employers demonstrate stronger interest in human skills

Candidate and Employers' Top Skills to Learn in Business School



Source: Corporate Recruiters Survey 2025 and GMAC Prospective Students Survey 2025

Summary and Q&A

- **What candidates want:** Candidate emphasis on ROI is on the rise as they are more reliant on financial aid to fund their GME
- **Mobility:** Candidates are increasingly discouraged from pursuing GME in the United States in the Trump era; immigration policies in the 4 top study destinations (US, UK, Australia and Canada) may encourage students to consider other options
- **Employer Perspectives:** Problem-solving and strategic thinking remain employer and candidates' most important skills, with preference for AI on the rise



Thank you

Sara Strafino

Director, Market Development, Europe

sstrafino@gmac.com



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sstrafino@gmac.com>