



Cornell Johnson Live Chat Transcript
Sept 12, 2018



Admission Directors: Ann Richards, Chelsea Hann, and Mandy Choie (Tech MBA).

Current Students: Shawn Weger, Melody Lam, Antonio Ricciardelli (1 yr).

- **Cornell Class of 2021 Discussion:** <https://gmatclub.com/forum/calling-all-johnson-2019-applicants-class-of-267888.html>
- **Cornell Decision Tracker:** <http://gmatclub.com/forum/johnson-198/decision-tracker.html>
- **Cornell Reviews:** https://gmatclub.com/reviews/business_school/cornell-johnson-16

Moderator: Hi Everyone, We are now officially starting the chat with the Cornell team. You'll have the opportunity to ask questions about applying to Cornell's Two-Year MBA, One-Year MBA, and Cornell Tech MBA programs. You will also be able to learn more about Cornell's performance learning approach, new NYC based curriculum, and life in gorgeous Ithaca! The current students are very eagerly looking forward to sharing their experiences with you, so please grab this opportunity with both hands. All the best!

Mandy: Hello! My name is Mandy Choie, and I'm the Assistant Director of MBA and LLM Enrollment and Admissions at Cornell Tech. Nice to chat with you all today!

Shawn: Hi everyone! My name is Shawn Weger, I'm a second year MBA student here at Johnson. I'm from Fairfax, VA originally. Prior to school I worked in digital marketing for hotels, and this past summer I interned at American Express. I also completed the Strategic Marketing Immersion - so I truly love marketing. Happy to answer any questions you have! Looking forward to chatting.

Chelsea: Hi everyone! Thanks for joining us today. I'm Chelsea Hann, Assistant Director of Admissions. I am looking forward to answering your questions about Cornell!

Antonio: Hello everyone, my name is Antonio, I come from Italy and I am a One-Year MBA student at Johnson. Prior to coming to Cornell, I have been working for five years in the pharmaceutical industry. I am happy to answer your questions.

Ann: Hi Everyone, I'm happy to see so many students interested in Johnson. I'm Ann Richards, one of the Associate Directors at Johnson.

Melody: Hi, my name is Melody Lam. I am a first year in the two-year MBA program. Prior to my MBA, I was in federal IT consulting. I am interested in going into management consulting post-MBA, specifically in digital transformation.

gmatprep30: How important is GMAT score in comparison to other criteria for Cornell 2Y MBA program?

Ann: The GMAT or GRE is just one component of the application. It points to a candidate's academic strengths, but so does an academic transcript or additional courses.

Melody: Speaking as an admitted student, the admissions team takes a holistic approach towards admissions. My GMAT score was my way to demonstrate my readiness, but I also used my work and extracurricular leadership experience to also showcase my readiness in the two-year MBA program.

pk123: Hello everyone, what kind of entrepreneurship opportunities does Cornell provide and are all in tech space?

Chelsea: Cornell has many entrepreneurship resources- competitions for seed funding, courses, clubs, etc. Not all are focused on tech. Here's the website to learn about entrepreneurship at Cornell: <http://eship.cornell.edu/>

Private: Hey Shawn, I'm currently working in the digital marketing field and I was wondering how your experience has been so far and what specific subjects pertaining to digital marketing and marketing, in general, you found really impressive?

Shawn: I've had an incredible experience going deeper into marketing at Johnson. I came in knowing I wanted to pursue a career in loyalty programs and customer experience, and was able to work on a consulting project for a renowned timeshare company to help reimagine their loyalty program. Additionally, I was able to gain an understanding about the metrics related to more traditional CPG companies, was able to apply that in our annual Battle of the Brands competition, and took all of this experience to AMEX this summer. There are so many ways to further develop your marketing skills here.

Private: Regarding Tech MBA- I studied business so my background is not in engineering but I have a strong interest in tech. To consider whether Tech MBA is suitable for a student without any engineering background, can you advise how much of the focus is on engineering in the program and the admission process?

Mandy: Having a STEM background is helpful, but not required - about 60% of our students come from STEM, to give you an idea. You will learn from basic coding in the beginning, but you aren't required to study the more technical components unless you really want to.

JosieRod145: I'm impressed by the Immersion Semester - any experiences with likes/dislikes about that?

Shawn: The immersion semester is AWESOME. It grounds you in the theory of whatever function/industry you want to pursue, and then many of the immersions have a practicum where you're able to solve real business problems for companies as part of a consulting project. The immersions truly help you to go deeper into what you're passionate about, and I believe help set you up for success in your internship. Many Johnson students remarked that their internship project was incredibly similar to their Immersion project.

pk123: can someone change from MBA program to JD program or PHD in between?

Chelsea: We do have a JD/MBA dual degree (3 year and 4 year formats!) and a PhD here at Johnson, but I encourage you to decide which type of degree program you're looking for (JD, PhD, MBA, JD/MBA, etc.) to ensure that you have a plan for yourself academically and professionally. We can always help you navigate and talk through your options.

helas92:

awr2JohnsonAdCom wrote:

The GMAT or GRE is just one component of the application. It points to a candidate's academic strengths, but so does an academic transcript or additional courses.

You have mentioned additional courses, how would adcom look at a grade of master degree in case undergrad GPA is low? (Provided GMAT is above school average.)

Ann: We look at your grades in context - did you have a rough undergrad experience because you were immature, in the wrong major, had health problems? Are your graduate grades stronger for other reasons? We like to see an upward trend and an ability to take rigorous courses and do well. I think if you know you have a weakness in a particular area (accounting, finance, etc) you may want to focus any supplemental coursework in that area.

helas92: As part of MBA, Cornell also has a separate consulting program. What percentage of MBA students opt for this program? Is there a limit on percentage/number of students to opt for the a certain immersion?

Chelsea: We have a fantastic curriculum for aspiring consultants- the SSO immersion is a popular option for strategy consultants, but you can do many of the immersions with a consulting focus. There's a really nice distribution of students among the different immersions and generally are not capped.

ps123: what is being taught in tech MBA....does the curriculum teach coding or business analyst roles?

Mandy: You can get an idea of the curriculum on our website: <https://tech.cornell.edu/programs/master-culm-mba/> Basically, you do your business core over the summer at Cornell in Ithaca. After that, you're at Cornell Tech - the fall is mainly focus on technical entrepreneurship, and the spring is focused on the creation and management of startups. Throughout the two semesters, you'll also be taking Studio and other electives of your choosing.

helas92: I have heard that Cornell is a school which has lot of focus on diversity compared to other US schools. Does knowing multiple languages and living/working in multiple countries counts as diversity factors? (I ask this because I have heard from people that US schools do give much weight-age to international experiences and knowing multiple languages)

Antonio: I can speak of my experience as an international students here at Cornell. I don't have a comparison with other US school but I can absolutely confirm that there is a multi-cultural and international environment where everybody is enriched from each other life's and job's experiences.

Shrey9: How do you suggest to prepare for admission essays and can I study more courses while in the college apart from the curriculum?

Melody: As a first year, I have only been taking core courses. I can only speak to the essays. I prepared for my essays months in advance of the deadline. The amount of time will vary from person to person. For me, it required self-reflection to tell the most genuine story about why Cornell and why MBA.

Chelsea: Essays are an important piece to the application and the piece you have most control over. They may require you to really think about why you're pursuing an MBA and your career goals. Doing some homework on the program and ways in which you can contribute to the community can be helpful. Also, talk to current students and alums to make sure you have a good idea of the culture and have identified the program as a good fit for you.

JosieRod145: What's one thing you'd change about Johnson?

Shawn: I think one of the biggest challenges is trying to do it all - from courses, to recruiting, to clubs & extracurriculars. What I'd change about my experience is that I likely would've focused on ensuring that I totally mastered the material of my quantitative classes, but in some cases you have to prioritize what truly matters to you, as there are only so many hours in the day. That being said, at a higher lever, because Johnson is a community based on the input of the students, faculty, and staff, if there's something that you want to change, Johnson ensures you have the support system to make that change.

dasarind: is it possible to go for PHD programs after 1yr/cornell tech mba?

Ann: You can pursue a Ph.D after earning the 1 year MBA, but an MBA or advanced degree is not required for most Ph.D. programs.

Mandy: If you're looking to join a PhD program at Cornell Tech, doing an MBA here first will most likely not make you a strong candidate. In general, the MBA is more geared for professionals who want to get back out in the workforce.

shong102: Regarding 1 vs 2 year mba- Is the admission process more strict for the 1-year mba program? for example, do students tend to have more years of work experience?

Ann: The evaluation process is the same - we look at your academic profile, your experience and your goals to make sure you will thrive at Johnson. The 1-Year program requires a Master's degree or additional credential.

GmatDM2016: is the focus of TechMBA mainly entrepreneurship or startup management and learning ? Do students move to consulting or management roles (in tech firms) or fintech post 1 yr TechMBA?

Mandy: Yes, those are generally the main goals. Graduates have gone on to consulting and general management roles after the program, but the 1- and 2-year Johnson programs are more specialized in those fields. Fintech is popular here as well; we also host a Fintech intensive at Cornell Tech in conjunction with Johnson -[https://www.johnson.cornell.edu/Program ... -Intensive](https://www.johnson.cornell.edu/Program...-Intensive)

Nightblade354: What do people like to do in the Finger Lakes area

Shawn: Apple Fest, Chili Fest, Brew Fest, they even turn the downtown Commons into Harry Potter's Diagon Alley for a weekend in the Winter. People are great about taking advantage of the great hiking trails, lakes, wineries, breweries, and restaurants. Ithaca has the second best restaurants in the state, apart from NYC. There's truly never a shortage of activities, and Johnson students are great about getting groups together to take advantage of those opportunities in our free time.

Melody: There are a lot of things to do in the Finger Lakes. As someone from the city, I chose Johnson to be away from the city, and to spend time with my classmates as much as I can. During our first month here, 100 of us first years went on a wine tour to a few of the wineries around the Finger Lakes. We also enjoy hiking. I attended JWiB last year, and hiked for the first time here at Taughannock Falls with students. We've also hiked at Treman and Buttermilk Falls. I also organized a movie outing when "Crazy Rich Asians" came out. Over 40 of us went to it.

Albertodmi88: Considering that the TechMBA is mainly focused on entrepreneurship, is it preferred that applicants already have a project/startup/idea before entering the program? Or can students develop areas of interest during the MBA to pursue a startup.

Mandy: Cornell Tech isn't an incubator, so while we encourage students to come in with ideas the expectation shouldn't be that you will definitely make your startup/app/etc. happen by the end of the program - though sometimes, that can be the case. As you said, it's more for students to better understand how the startup/tech operates and the best practices for operating within that space. Also, about 1 in 6 of our students becomes a startup founder, and most go on to take leading roles within the industry that aren't necessarily heading a startup.

Petebraz22: Do you have any insights re the Investment Banking Immersion?

Ann: The investment banking immersion does a fantastic job preparing students for IBanking internships and our immersion students have been very successful in IBanking placement. [https://www.johnson.cornell.edu/Program ... nt-Banking](https://www.johnson.cornell.edu/Program...nt-Banking)

shong102: I have a question for the current students, what's courses are you enjoying the most?

Antonio: I have generally really enjoyed all the core courses in my summer semester. If I had to choose a couple of them, I loved data analytics, business strategy and finance.

Shawn: Second year is awesome because it allows for more freedom in courses, because of our Accelerated Core and Immersions. I'm loving my Hospitality Brand Management course, which I'm able to take through the Hotel School and get credit for because of the College of Business affiliation, and I'm also really enjoying (surprisingly!) Financial Statement Analysis.

ahnafkeef: The Johnson website states that the MBA program accepts "a small number of outstanding applicants with less than one year of full-time experience". What about the profile of these students makes them "stand out"? How do they make up for lack of work experience?

Chelsea: It is important that as an MBA student, you are able to share experiences with your peers and contribute to the learning environment of other students. Focus on leadership experiences, community involvement, and be sure to communicate to the committee why you feel that now is the best time to pursue the MBA.

Questions received via email...

What kind of experiences fare well in the admissions process if I want to get into the tech MBA program, coming from an industry different from tech (for example, corporate finance in consumer goods)?

Mandy: This MBA is tech-centric, meant for professionals who have some expertise in the tech sector/digital business realm, want a hands-on approach to learning about the tech industry, and most likely want to go into tech when they graduate. Because it's a 1-year intensive program, this MBA is not for someone who wants to change careers or learn how to become tech-y/digital.

How does tech MBA differ from regular MBA?

Mandy: We welcome students from all different backgrounds, both academically and professionally. Having a background directly in tech can be helpful, but we are more interested in your specific experience at your jobs, your overall career path, and what you're hoping to get out of the Johnson Cornell Tech MBA both during and after the program.

I understand from the application that endorsement from 1 recommender is sufficient, but I also have the option of getting it from 2 recommenders. Although I completely understand that the decision on the number of recommenders is up to the applicant. Which is more preferred (1 or 2 recommender) by the adcoms?

Ann: We really only need 1 rec to evaluate your application, if you feel a second recommender will add a new dimension to your application then we would welcome a second recommendation.

Moderator: Chat is concluding! Thank you all of the Cornell folks for all of your wonderful insights! Veritas CR chat is now beginning!

helas92: Thank you Cornell team for your time

Chelsea: Thank you all! Feel free to reach out to us with other questions: mba@johnson.cornell.edu.

Ann: Thanks everyone! Good luck in the application process. Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions!

Shawn: Thanks for all your questions. Feel free to send any additional questions you may have for me to smw273@cornell.edu. Best of luck in your process!

Chats/Webinars with Cornell: Calendar, Recordings, & Discussion 2018-19
<https://gmatclub.com/forum/chats-webinars-with-cornell-adcoms-calendar-recordings-discussion-272584.html>