

Sample Letter/Template for Requesting Employer Support and Financial Sponsorship for Fuqua's Weekend MBA Program

Note: This document is pieced together from letters used by students to present a case to their company to secure support for time off and financial sponsorship to attend their MBA. Not all of the statements apply to each company nor the desires of each applicant. This letter should only be used as an example, not a definitive model, and carefully examined for content that may or may not be accurate or relevant to your situation.

Dear XXXXX,

I have prepared this letter to discuss pursuing my MBA through Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. So that I can continue to work full-time and fulfill my responsibilities at COMPANY, I've chosen to attend the Weekend Executive MBA program. I've considered all that this entails and concluded that studying at a highly regarded MBA program is right at this juncture in my career and will enhance my ability to drive successful results for COMPANY.

I am requesting employer support for at least the time required to attend the mandatory class sessions. Support can be attested to through a company letter that I will provide upon being admitted. I would also like to request financial support for the cost of tuition and have laid out some points for your consideration. I hope to convey my value proposition that includes further leadership development and academic training along with a new extended network that will lead to growth opportunities and synergies for COMPANY. I am confident my participation in Duke's Weekend Executive MBA program will lead to increased financial results well beyond the cost of tuition.

I see earning an MBA as a route to helping me grow at COMPANY for many years to come. The tuition is approximately \$XXX,XXX spread over two calendar years and the program completes in only 19 months, which is a timeline I favor. I am also highly motivated to get as much out of the experience as possible. This includes—with your help—being very intentional in leverage my learnings at work.

Why should COMPANY sponsor my MBA

COMPANY is experiencing tremendous growth (or rapid decline) and needs Managers who are equipped to lead in uncertain times.

Cite revenue, stock value, etc. Companies in periods of rapid growth or decline can be vulnerable and require more strategic know-how and leadership throughout all ranks.

The global economy is changing at a pace we've never experienced before.

Duke's network and global focus provide a context through which to view our rapidly changing business world and their general management curriculum attracts students from a variety of functions and industries. After visiting Duke's campus and sitting in on a class, I was impressed with the professor-facilitated level of discussion, which convinced me that I would learn ways others have overcome challenges similar to ours.

My performance record, drive and dedication are hopefully seen as indications of my passion and ability to leverage my newly learned skills at COMPANY.

Throughout my employment, I believe my achievements have demonstrated a high level of intelligence, innovation, flexibility and leadership. Specifically, COMPANY has seen: (Include evidence of performance and quantifiable measurements, awards, feedback from clients, employee review, etc. Provide hard data if applicable in the form of appendixes attached to the letter.)

Developing Managers internally is valuable and attractive to new hires.

A key reason I joined COMPANY is that I was impressed by how you groom your high-potential employees. I believe a combination of company expertise and the rigor of an MBA program is the perfect formula to develop internal talent.

The Duke MBA Weekend Executive Program Description

Program Overview

The Duke MBA is internationally recognized and has been consistently ranked one of the top programs in the world. Weekend Executive MBAs earn the same degree as full-time students and study the same general management curriculum taught by the same faculty. They also have exposure to all extra activities and can leverage Fuqua's 18,000+ alumni network. Fortunately, because classes meet on alternating weekends, plus two extended residencies at the start and end of the program, students meet their degree requirements in less than two years without interrupting their careers.

COMPANY Benefit: I will have the benefit and experience of earning a world-class MBA without disrupting my career while simultaneously providing immediate value to COMPANY. Furthermore, a Duke MBA adds credibility to my position and provides a solid foundation on which to build future responsibilities.

Curriculum

The Duke MBA Weekend Executive program combines 14 core courses that span all functional areas of business, including technical skills like accounting and finance and soft skills like personal and organizational leadership (a course list and descriptions can be provided). In addition, four elective courses are offered to focus in a particular discipline or broaden knowledge in several functional areas. Students can also take one of five concentrations and complete an independent project. The concentration(s) in _____ is (are) of particular relevance to COMPANY and its efforts to develop a new product or implement a new process or strategy.

COMPANY Benefit: Throughout the program I will develop new tools to drive efficiency and growth within my teams and the company. Not only will I have a deeper understanding of my side of the business—applying that expertise in my day-to-day responsibilities—I will have a stronger cross-functional understanding that will help me find solutions to a broader set of company challenges.

Diversity of Experience

All Weekend MBAs must have a certain level of business experience. Therefore, students bring real scenarios into the classroom discussion, and the knowledge and perspectives gained can be immediately applied to situations at COMPANY. The close interaction between theory and practice yields immediate returns. In addition to business learnings, I will meet leaders from top companies in various industries.

COMPANY Benefit: I will have direct contact with leaders from several major companies in various industries (your Admissions Counselor can provide a list of companies represented by current students and/or alumni). And through my classmates' experience, I can gain cross-industry insight which can be used to understand our clients' needs.

Effective Leadership Training

I have benefitted and thrived working with some very successful and intelligent people at COMPANY. I view this MBA program as another opportunity to surround myself with other successful business leaders, be they students, faculty or guest lecturers. In addition to the general management curriculum and electives, I will take three leadership classes that aim to holistically improve my teamwork, teambuilding, personal and organizational leadership, and management skills. (A list of recent speakers can be provided.)

COMPANY Benefit: I will gain knowledge and leadership skills that I can immediately apply within my team and that will help me grow into a more successful leader.

An International Business Education and Global Perspective

The Duke name is recognized around the world, with a close-knit base of over 100,000 university alumni across the globe, and Fuqua has been at the forefront of recognizing a business climate that is multi-centered, dynamic and globally interdependent. I view an MBA program with a global perspective as directly relevant to our future needs. Fuqua is embedded in vital economic regions of the world, and brings hypotheses and ideas about how best to address world issues back to the classroom. My classmates will also help broaden my perspective: about 20% of Weekend MBA students are citizens of other countries, while others have lived and worked abroad in the past or

continue to do so. There is also an optional global academic travel experience to China that would expose me to international business through visits to multinational corporations, local enterprises, government agencies, exchange program partner schools, and others events in region.

COMPANY Benefit: COMPANY's future is in global collaboration and opportunities. A broader perspective will help me lead international teams within our organization as well as build relationships with international companies with which we do business.

Time Commitment

If admitted, I will be required to submit a letter of support stating that I am enrolling in the program and I have been given time off to participate in all mandatory class sessions. (A sample support letter attached). The program meets on alternate weekends, or about two Fridays per month, plus a full week at the beginning and two full weeks near the end of the 19-month program. If COMPANY prefers, I can use vacation days for the weeklong residencies and/or Friday classes.

I have considered how an MBA would impact my work performance and will plan around the dates I'm out of the office, which I can provide to you. I feel confident that I can manage all my client and work obligations and understand that my expected performance level and quotas will remain at the same level. I believe now is the perfect time for me to take on this challenge. While at COMPANY, I have strengthened my time management skills and become more efficient at balancing multiple projects.

Employment Guarantees

I understand that sponsorship from COMPANY is not an obligation. Therefore, in appreciation for your support and sponsorship, COMPANY can expect that I will not seek other employment during and for predetermined time after my MBA. I also understand that any sponsorship commitments will cease if my employment is terminated for any reason. If COMPANY provides some level of financial support for the program, I am entirely willing to formalize a commitment to pay back any tuition.

Conclusion

I appreciate your consideration in sponsoring time off and any tuition costs. Going back to school, while working, represents a considerable sacrifice of personal time and finances on my part. At this point, I want go forward because the program and degree will make me better at what I do. My commitment to COMPANY remains steadfast and I feel that Duke's dynamic learning environment will allow me to grow as a professional while at the same time add immediate value to COMPANY.

Best regards,

SIGNATURE

Additional suggestions and information:

Quantify the amount of business for which you're responsible to help support the argument of why you need the tools to better manage and grow that business responsibly.

Offer to connect your company's decision maker/s on sponsorship with one of our Directors of Admissions if they have questions.