

Rice University's Tech Club Amazon MBA Interview Guide (2017)

Overview

This guide will only cover MBA development programs and internships. I only have experience specifically with the Pathway Operations Manager full-time role. However, the general process should be relatively similar across different departments.

There are 7 different roles that Amazon hires MBA students for:

Retail Leadership Development Program (RLD)

Sr. Product Manager (PM)

Pathways Operations Management (Ops)

Sr. Program Manager (PGM)

Sr. Financial Analyst (SFA)

HR Leadership Development Program (HRLDP)

CloudPath Infrastructure Manager (CP)

The description of each of the roles can be easily found on the amazon website.

<https://www.amazon.jobs/team/university-mba-graduate>

Timeline for interview process

Application	There is one general form that is filled out for all MBA internships or full-time roles. You can access this application on the Rice University's Job Posting Board. You will simply upload your resume, rank the roles that you want, and answer some standard questions about job eligibility. For international students at Rice, the only way Amazon will hire you for a full-time job is if you already had an internship & return offer from the first year. Make sure you apply online as early as possible (September-Early October). There is no benefit in "networking" with amazon recruiters, or waiting for information sessions. Recruiters don't even look at your application until after the online assessment stage. It might take a couple weeks to few months before you move onto the next stage.
Online Assessment	One lucky day, you will get an email from Amazon stating you have 1 week to complete the Online Assessment. The online assessment is composed of two parts: 4-5 online modules of multiple choice/ranking questions that assess your data analysis skills and "fit" with the 14 Amazon leadership principles. This part is timed. You will essentially role play different positions such as product manager, operations manager, etc and answer questions. The second part is the essay. You will be given a choice between two questions, and expected to write a 2-page paper (1000 words). This part is not timed, but due before the end of the week. It is extremely

	<p>important to “stand out” from the rest of the candidates and have your answer incorporate Amazon leadership principles. Only after this is all done, does a recruiter look at your information. I’m not sure of exact statistics but Amazon screens about 200 candidates for every interview given. You should hear a yes/no response from Amazon after two weeks.</p>
Round 1 Interview	<p>The specific logistics may be different for other roles, so I will specifically talk about Pathway Operations. You will do two 30-minute virtual interviews. Each interviewer will specifically target 1-2 leadership principles, and ask questions based on those sections. I got the interview offer on a Monday, and my interview was scheduled for Tuesday or Wednesday. Turnaround is extremely quick, so you need to prep beforehand. (extensively prep before you take online assessment). During this short timespan, I interview prepped with a Rice MBA friend, CDO, and close Amazon friend.</p>
Round 2 Interview	<p>The day after my interview, I heard back with the results. My final round interview was going to be on the Friday. Once again, you will only have an extremely short timespan, so you need to prepare beforehand. I focused on interview prepping with three more people. You will have two 45-minute interviews with senior leadership. They will drill heavily into different leadership principles, and possible give you case based questions (depends on role).</p>
Offer	<p>You will hear back anywhere from 2-6 business days via email.</p>
Compensation	<p>The salary and benefits across all MBA roles is relatively standardized.</p> <p>These are the figures from my 2017 experience.</p> <p>Full-Time: 130K Base + 40,000 sign on (1st year) + 30,000 sign on (2nd year) + Stocks (95K) vested across 4-years (5%,15%,40%,40%). Total compensation per year equals around 175-180K.</p> <p>Interns: Probably around \$8000+ a month.</p> <p>Other details: Rice is considered a Tier II school for Amazon, so although base is the same for all MBA, other compensation is only slightly higher for Harvard + other tier I schools. There is no negotiation of salary/benefits. There is no cost of living adjustments. It’s the same salary if you choose Seattle site, or other site. There is no overtime pay, but expect to work anywhere from 50-60 hours.</p> <p>Movement costs: If you have to relocate more than 50+ miles, you can choose between Lump Sum (\$15K) or they pay for everything (house closing fee, moving stuff, temporary housing assistance, flights, pets, etc).</p> <p>Health insurance + 401K: Standard stuff.</p> <p>Additional Benefit: 10% off Amazon purchases up to (\$1000 spent)</p>

Interview Prep Guide- Amazon Leadership Principles

The majority of your interviews will all be based on answering amazon leadership principles and exhibiting those traits in your past behaviors/actions. Amazon wants the STAR format when you answer. Make sure you have two specific examples/stories for each of the leadership principles. A good book to read to learn more is called the “Amazon Way” by John Rossman. (If you don’t want to read it all, there are websites online that summarize the chapters).

Customer Obsession

Leaders start with the customer and work backwards. They work vigorously to earn and keep customer trust. Although leaders pay attention to competitors, they obsess over customers.

Situation	
Task	
Action	
Results	

Ownership

Leaders are owners. They think long term and don’t sacrifice long-term value for short-term results. They act on behalf of the entire company, beyond just their own team. They never say “that’s not my job”.

Situation	
Task	
Action	
Results	

Invent and Simplify

Leaders expect and require innovation and invention from their teams and always find ways to simplify. They are externally aware, look for new ideas from everywhere, and are not limited by “not invented here”. As we do new things, we accept that we may be misunderstood for long periods of time.

Situation	
Task	
Action	
Results	

Are Right, A Lot

Leaders are right a lot. They have strong judgment and good instincts. They seek diverse perspectives and work to disconfirm their beliefs.

Situation	
Task	

Action	
Results	

Learn and Be Curious

Leaders are never done learning and always seek to improve themselves. They are curious about new possibilities and act to explore them.

Situation	
Task	
Action	
Results	

Hire and Develop the Best

Leaders raise the performance bar with every hire and promotion. They recognize exceptional talent, and willingly move them throughout the organization. Leaders develop leaders and take seriously their role in coaching others. We work on behalf of our people to invent mechanisms for development like Career Choice.

Situation	
Task	
Action	
Results	

Insist on the Highest Standards

Leaders have relentlessly high standards - many people may think these standards are unreasonably high. Leaders are continually raising the bar and driving their teams to deliver high quality products, services and processes. Leaders ensure that defects do not get sent down the line and that problems are fixed so they stay fixed.

Situation	
Task	
Action	
Results	

Think Big

Thinking small is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Leaders create and communicate a bold direction that inspires results. They think differently and look around corners for ways to serve customers.

Situation	
Task	
Action	

Results	
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Bias for Action

Speed matters in business. Many decisions and actions are reversible and do not need extensive study. We value calculated risk taking.

Situation	
Task	
Action	
Results	

Frugality

Accomplish more with less. Constraints breed resourcefulness, self-sufficiency and invention. There are no extra points for growing headcount, budget size or fixed expense.

Situation	
Task	
Action	
Results	

Earn Trust

Leaders listen attentively, speak candidly, and treat others respectfully. They are vocally self-critical, even when doing so is awkward or embarrassing. Leaders do not believe their or their team's body odor smells of perfume. They benchmark themselves and their teams against the best.

Situation	
Task	
Action	
Results	

Dive Deep

Leaders operate at all levels, stay connected to the details, audit frequently, and are skeptical when metrics and anecdote differ. No task is beneath them.

Situation	
Task	
Action	
Results	

Have Backbone; Disagree and Commit

Leaders are obligated to respectfully challenge decisions when they disagree, even when doing so is uncomfortable or exhausting. Leaders have conviction and are tenacious. They do not compromise for the sake of social cohesion. Once a decision is determined, they commit wholly.

Situation	
Task	
Action	
Results	

Deliver Results

Leaders focus on the key inputs for their business and deliver them with the right quality and in a timely fashion. Despite setbacks, they rise to the occasion and never settle.

Situation	
Task	
Action	
Results	

Interview Prep Guide- Essential Amazon Questions

Make sure you answer **ALL** of the questions thoroughly and carefully before your online assessments or interviews. I got these questions from glassdoor (search for the specific role). Have others interview prep you with this list of questions. Once again make sure to answer in a STAR format. This only covers the behavioral questions. For specific case questions regarding the role, you are on your own. Look at glassdoor, or perhaps talk to other employees or students who went through that specific process. However it is important to note that these Amazon questions will probably take up (85%+) of the interview.

1. Tell us something about yourself, share an instance which showed your bias towards action.
2. Tell me about a time you used big data analytics to change your supervisor's opinion on a decision.
3. Last time you solved a problem using analytical skills and outside your area of expertise.
4. What are the Amazon core values you connect to the most?
5. Tell me a time you did something without telling your supervisor.
6. Tell me about a time you adjusted your priority due to change of circumstances
7. Tell me about a time when you improved an existing process in the organization.
8. Tell me about a time you faced adversity in the workplace and what did you do to overcome it?
9. Tell me about a time you used 5 whys to solve a problem
10. Tell me about a time when you failed.
11. Tell me about a time when you had to overcome challenge.
12. Tell me about a time when you had to operate outside of your designated function.
13. How do you deal with conflict?
14. Time when you used analytics / data to solve a problem?
15. Major achievement?

16. Team Conflict ?
17. Tell me about your self.
18. Tell me a time when you have to take calculated risk.
19. Tell me a time you have take initiative to solve a problem.
20. Why are you interested in Amazon?
21. When was the time you had a problem and solved it creatively?
22. Tell me about a time you had to quickly make a decision that you could not speak to your supervisor about. How did it go? If good, then asked tell me about a time it did not go well.
23. Tell me about the time when you influenced someone's opinion.
24. Tell me about a time when you took a decision under pressure.
25. Tell me about a time when you committed to a team member but could not live up to their expectations. How did you earn their trust again.
26. Tell me about a time when you had to analyze large amount of data to solve a problem.
27. Tell me about a time when you had multiple tasks at hand and how did you go about prioritizing them.
28. Tell me about a time when you gave up short term gain for long term benefit.
29. Tell me about a time when you took the ownership of a project/work to improve processes.
30. Tell me about a time when you planned something, and it failed.
31. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with ambiguous data to complete a task.
32. Tell me about a time when you improved an existing process in the organization.
33. Tell me a time when you took initiative but didn't have the complete picture.

34. Tell me a time you had a passion, but lost it. How did you regain it again?
35. Tell me about how you manage teams.
36. Tell me a time when you had to sacrifice short term benefit for long term gain.
37. Tell me a time a project/plan didn't go according to plan, and how did you adjust?
38. Mini operations case: Suppose you are in charge of the packing department. Associates working for you are not packing the products in the correct size of box indicated by the system (100% correct). The error rate is high. What will you do?
39. Bonus Tip: Make sure with every number you have on your resume or say in interview, you can back that up with the specific breakdown of how you got to that valuation/cost savings/ % process improvement. They will dive **very deep** into data, and how to you create tests/measures etc. (Basically know your napkin calculations).