Although nationwide, applications to graduate business programs were flat from 2003 to 2004, trends vary by program type. In a recent Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) survey of business school application trends*, full-time programs experienced the greatest declines in application volume over 2003, with at least two in three programs reporting declines. Fewer (only 48%) of the part-time programs experienced declines, and half of the executive programs saw increases in applications over 2003.

The most recent data available for GMAT test-taking trends is from 2002. From 2001/02 to 2002/03 there was a 4% decline in U.S. test takers, reversing the growth trend from 1997/98 to 2001/02. This was also the trend in Illinois, with volume down 7% from 2001/02 to 2002/03.

Consistent with Illinois GMAT trends, enrollment in Illinois Master’s level business programs increased 20% from 1997 to 2002 and dropped by 4% from 2002 to 2003, with declines for both publics and privates.

As a result of the large growth from 1997—2003, over this entire period Illinois Master’s level business enrollment grew by 15%. In 1997, private non-profit institutions accounted for 71% of this enrollment, or about 13,000 students, but only 62% by 2003 due to 0% enrollment growth from 1997 to 2003. Private for-profit institutions grew 123% in enrollment and increased share from 9% to 17%, or almost 4,000 students. Public institutions grew by 11% in enrollment, holding steady at 20% share.

**Source:** The 2004 GMAC survey invited 352 programs to participate. In total, 238 programs responded representing 143 institutions. Enrollment data is from IBHE data files (EMR).