

# U.S. MBA Hiring: Predictions vs. Reality

Corporate Recruiters Pulse Survey

October 2025



# Table of contents

## **About the Corporate Recruiters Pulse Survey**

### **Executive summary**

### **Hiring**

### **International hiring**

### **Layoffs and rescinds**

### **Salaries**

### **External influences**

- [All respondents](#)
- [Corporate recruiters](#)
- [Career services professionals](#)



# About the Corporate Recruiters Pulse Survey

For more than two decades, the [\*\*Corporate Recruiters Survey\*\*](#) from [\*\*GMAC\*\*](#) has provided the world's graduate business schools and employers with data and insights to understand current trends in skill demand, hiring, compensation, and perceptions of MBA and business master's graduates. The [\*\*latest edition\*\*](#) was fielded in January to March 2025 and published in July 2025.

To assess recent changes in the labor market, the [\*\*Corporate Recruiter Pulse Survey\*\*](#) was designed to deploy quickly and collect data on hiring and salary changes in the 2025 calendar year. In partnership with [\*\*Career Services & Employer Alliance \(CSEA\)\*\*](#), the survey was delivered to U.S. corporate recruiters of MBA graduates and career services professionals from September 17 to October 8, 2025.

Because of its speed, pulse survey findings are considered experimental data. While experimental data may not meet all of GMAC's quality standards, they provide timely and valuable insights for data users.

## About the Sample

**152**

**Total respondents**

**87**

**Corporate recruiters**

**55%**

From organizations  
with 10K+ employees

**46%**

From consulting,  
finance, or tech  
sectors

**65**

**Career services professionals**

**65%**

From business  
schools ranked 1-50  
by FT or USNWR

**60%**

From public  
institutions

# Executive summary

Since the Corporate Recruiters Survey was fielded in early 2025, there have been marked changes in economic policy and outlook shaping the U.S. labor market. To identify how those changes influenced actual employer decision-making in 2025, the Corporate Recruiters Pulse Survey asked employers and career services professionals about their perspectives on the recent and upcoming hiring environment.

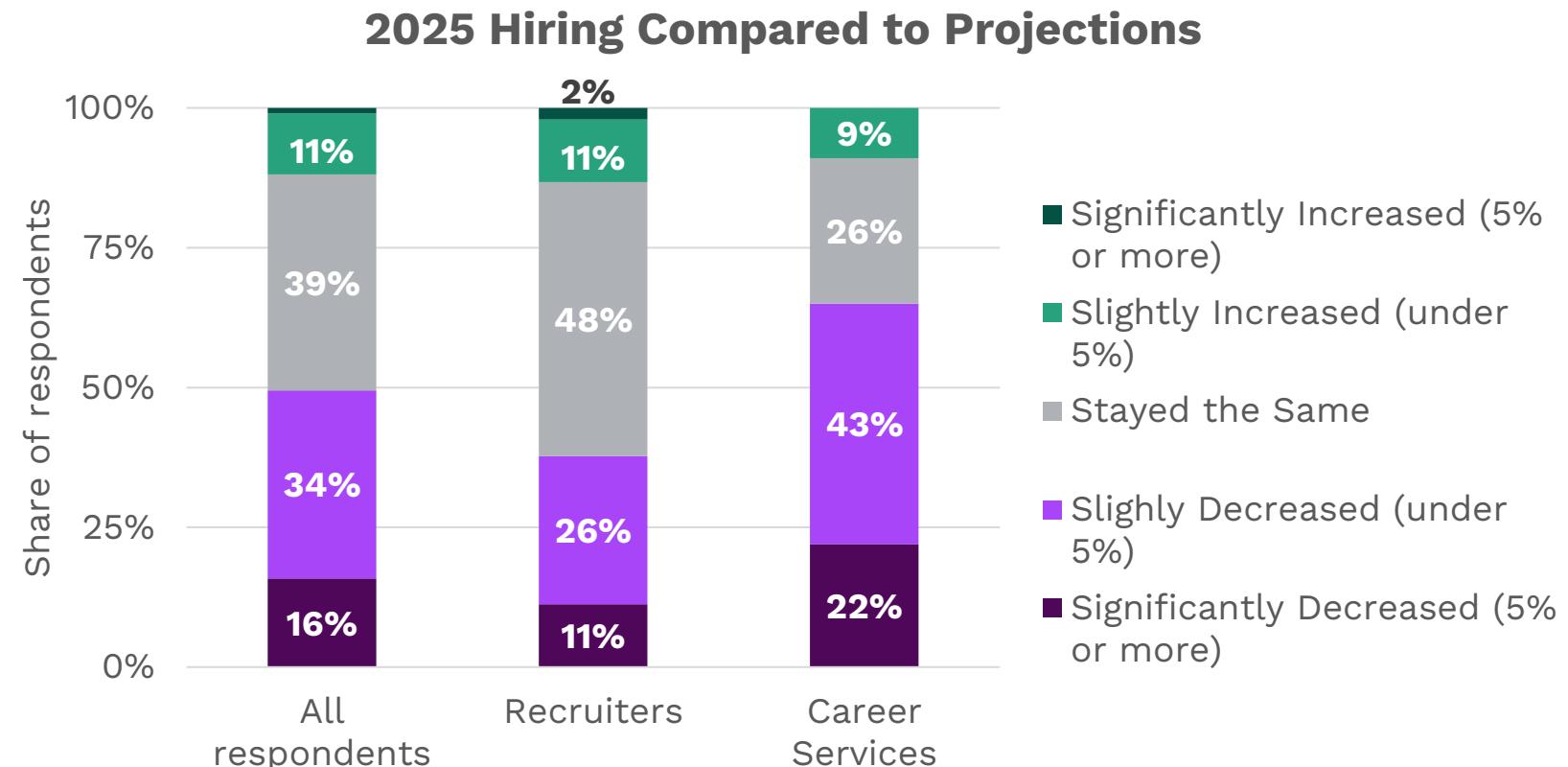
Overall, the results indicate actual 2025 hiring has been less favorable than corporate recruiters and career services professionals were anticipating when compared to their projections at the beginning of the year. Half of respondents reported a decrease in the hiring of domestic and international MBA talent in the United States compared to expectations—though career services professionals were significantly more cautious than employers, perhaps related to their more holistic look at hiring across industries rather than within companies. Likewise, career services professionals had a less favorable view of 2025 salaries when compared to recruiters, but a plurality of both groups signaled salaries aligned with their predictions from January 2025.

Most employers and career services professionals anticipate inflation and recession fears will have at least some impact on hiring decisions in the next quarter. A majority of career services professionals also predict major influence of country leaders, while nearly half of employers are most concerned about the financial status of their own organization on their hiring decisions. Though the sample size does not allow for deeper examination of the results by industry or company size, responses indicate that big picture and organization-level factors will play a role in how MBA graduates fare in the labor market in the months to come.



# Half of all respondents report **hiring** decreased in 2025 compared to their January projections

- A plurality of corporate recruiters report that 2025 hiring stayed the same compared to their expectations at the beginning of the year.
- A higher percentage of career services professionals reported that hiring decreased compared to corporate recruiters, perhaps reflecting career services professionals' more holistic view of the hiring market.



**Question:** Compared to your estimated hiring projections in January of 2025, has actual 2025 hiring of MBA graduates:

# Half of all respondents say **international hiring\*** decreased in 2025 compared to their January projections

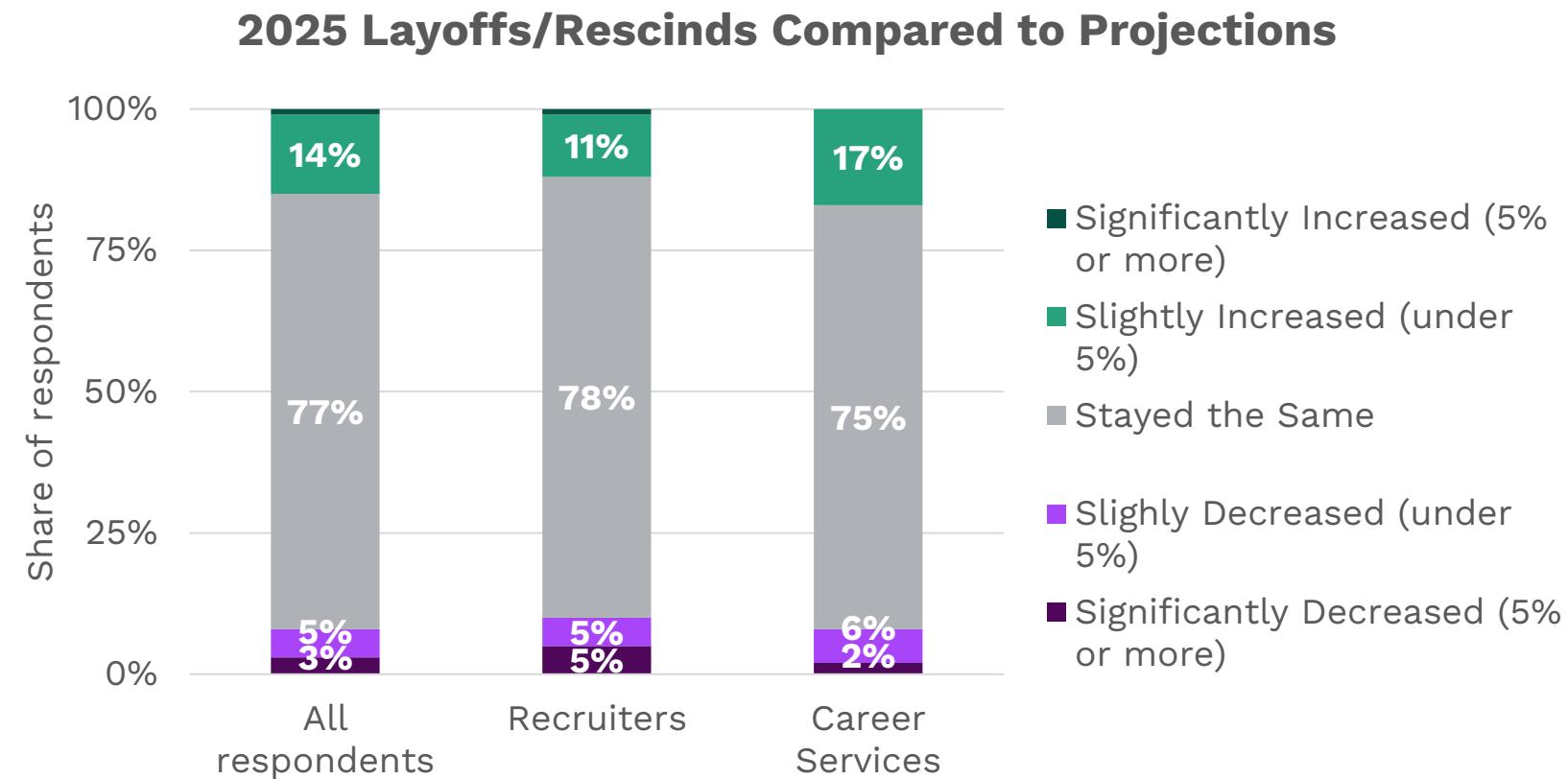
- Most corporate recruiters report that 2025 international hiring stayed the same compared to their expectations at the beginning of the year.
- Career services professionals are significantly more likely than recruiters to say international hiring decreased compared to January projections, perhaps because the organizations surveyed do not typically hire a large number of international students.



**\*Question:** Compared to your projections in January 2025, has hiring of **MBA graduates who require additional legal documentation** due to them being from foreign countries (such as temporary work visas, or other documentation):

# Three-quarters of respondents report **layoffs** and **offer rescinds** matched their expectations

- Corporate recruiters were asked how layoffs compared to their January expectations, with roughly similar rates reporting increases in layoffs as reductions.
- Career services professionals were asked about job offers being rescinded, with twice as many respondents reporting increases in rescinds than decreases.

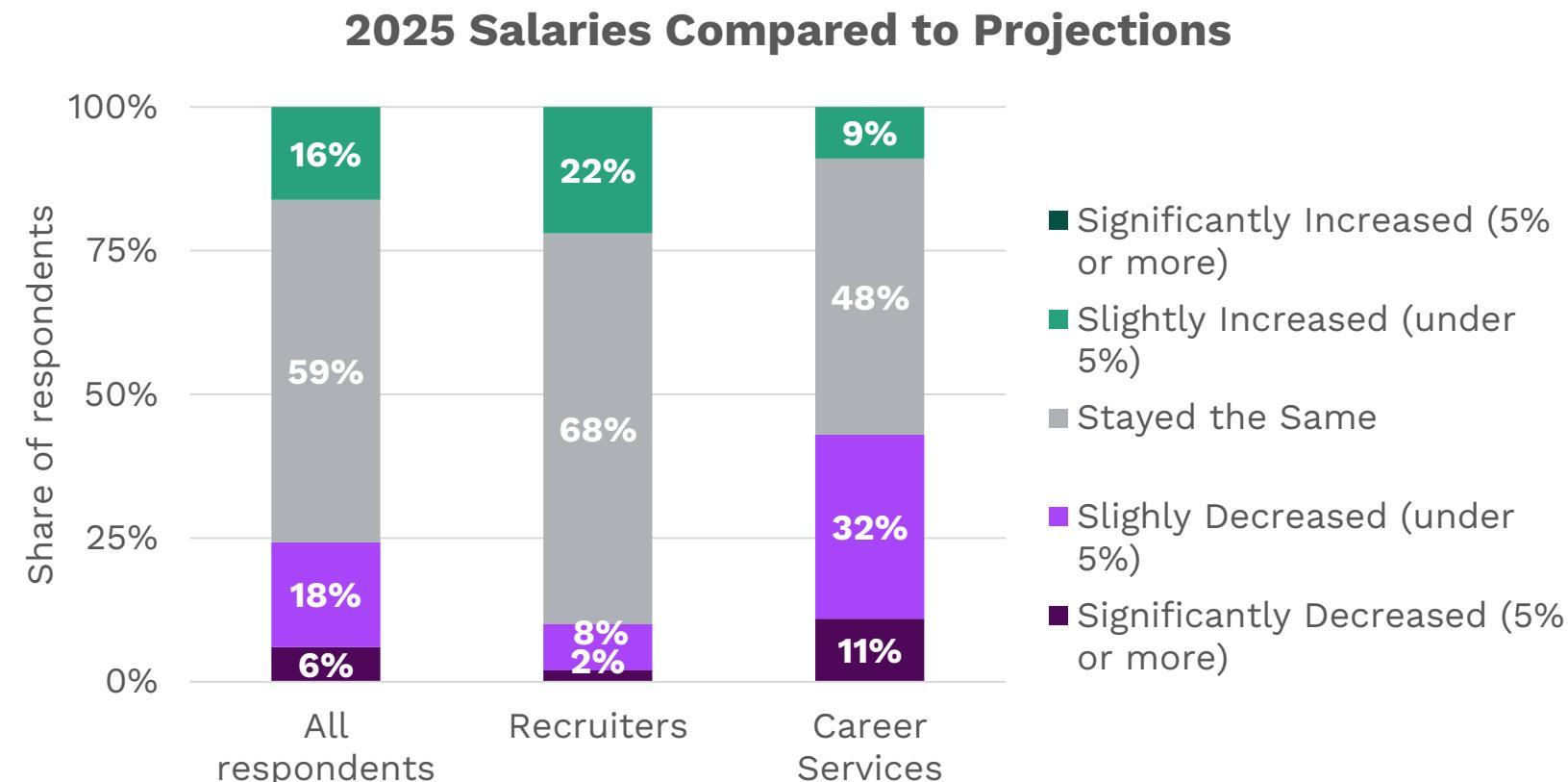


**Question (Recruiters):** Compared to your projections in January 2025, have separations/layoffs of MBA graduates:

**Question (Career Services):** Since January 2025, have offer rescinds of MBA graduates:

# Most respondents signaled 2025 salaries matched their expectations

- Career services professionals were much more likely than corporate recruiters to report a decline in base salaries compared to their January projections, perhaps reflecting their more holistic view on multiple industries.
- More corporate recruiters reported increases in salaries than decreases compared to their January estimates.

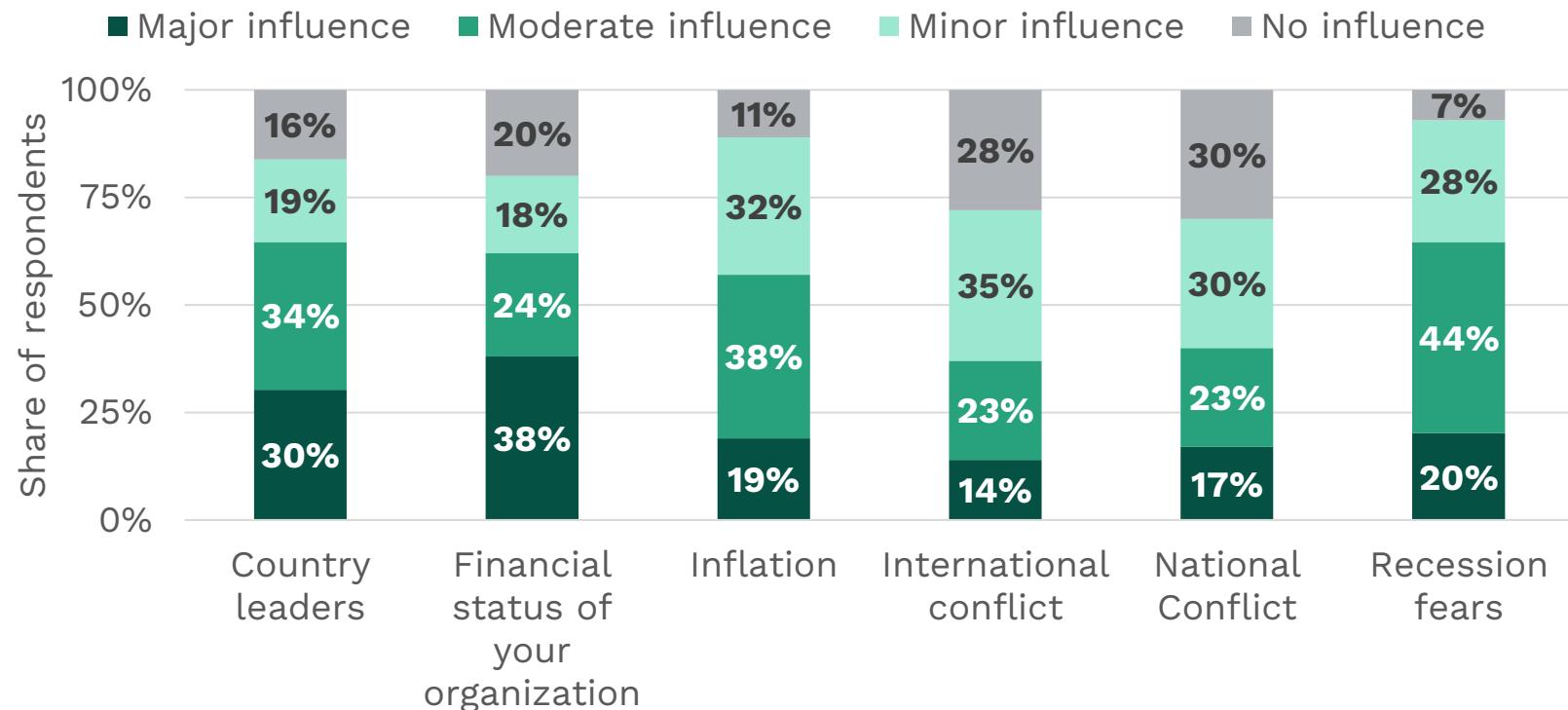


**Question:** Compared to your estimated salary projections in January of 2025, has actual 2025 base salaries of MBA graduates:

# Country leaders, recession, and individual organizations' financial status are most likely to have major or moderate influence on hiring

External Influences on Future Hiring – All Respondents

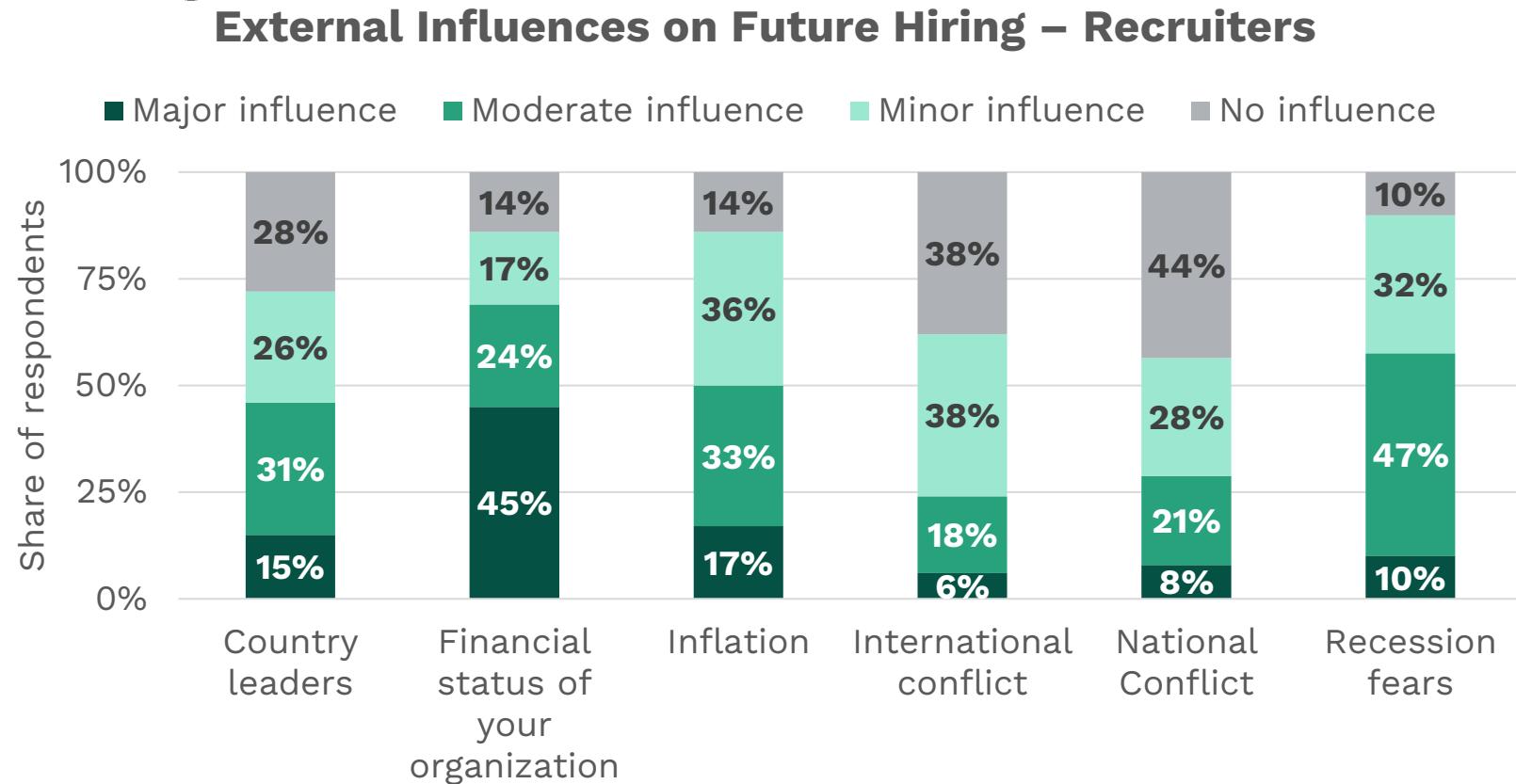
- Country leaders and the financial status of individual organizations are the factors all respondents anticipate will have the most “major influence” on hiring in the next quarter.



**Question:** To what extent do you believe the factors listed below will influence hiring in the next quarter?

# Recruiters are especially sensitive to the financial status of their own organization

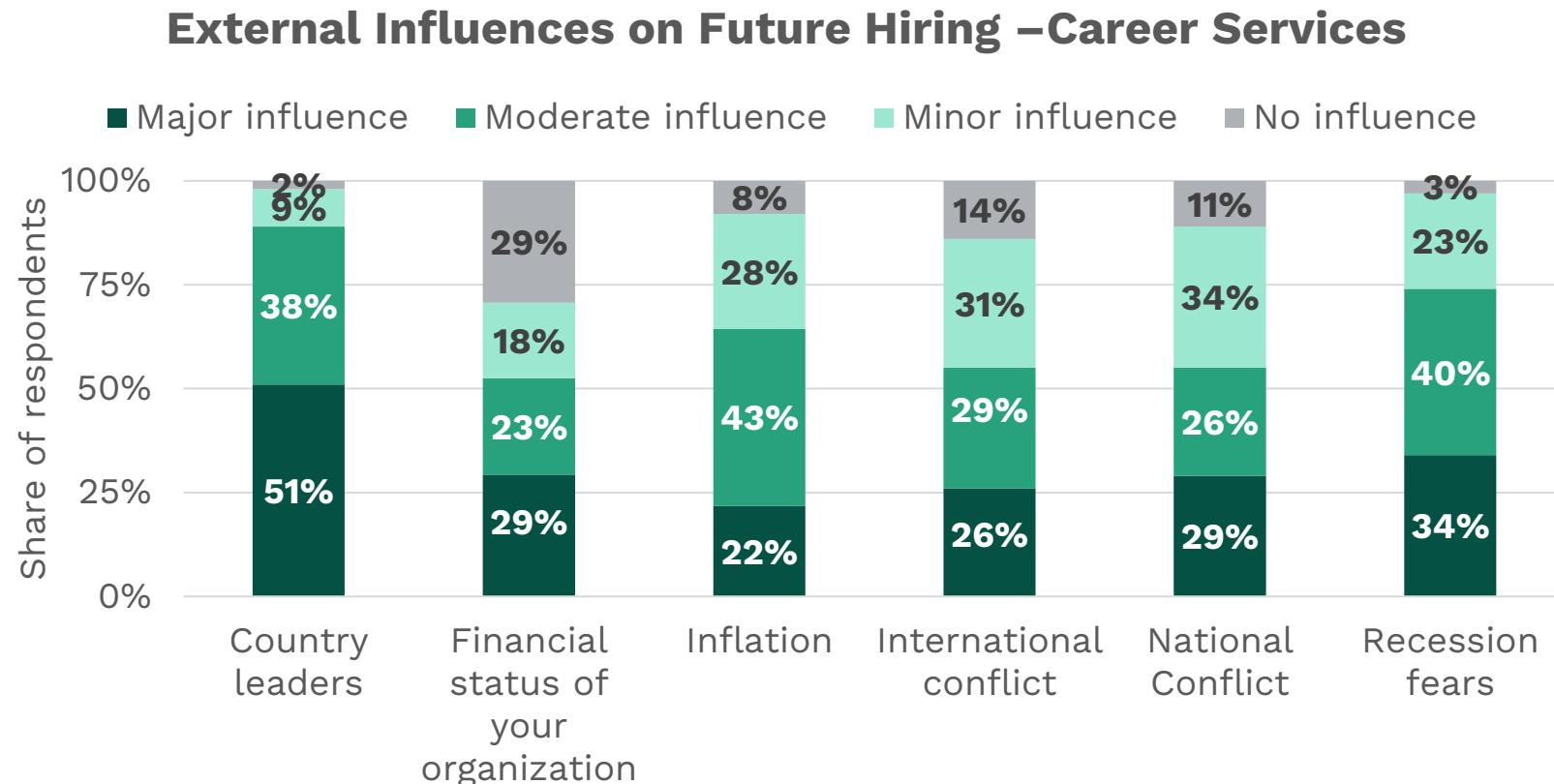
- At least half of corporate recruiters anticipate major or moderate influence of inflation, recession, and their organization's financial status on their next quarter of hiring.



**Question:** To what extent do you believe the factors listed below will influence hiring in the next quarter?

# Most career services professionals anticipate major influence of country leaders on hiring

- Nearly all career services professionals anticipate at least some influence of country leaders and recession on the next quarter of hiring.
- More than half of career services professionals report major or moderate influence of every category on hiring decisions.



**Question:** To what extent do you believe the factors listed below will influence hiring in the next quarter?

*U.S. MBA Hiring: Predictions vs. Reality* is a product of GMAC, a global nonprofit association of leading graduate business schools committed to connecting future business leaders with educational opportunities and advancing graduate management education worldwide. Through assessments, research, events, and recruitment solutions, GMAC provides the tools and information necessary for schools and candidates to discover and evaluate each other. With offices in China, India, the United Kingdom, and the United States, GMAC serves more than 17 million visitors each year across its digital platforms [gmac.com](http://gmac.com), [mba.com](http://mba.com), and [BusinessBecause](http://BusinessBecause.com).

The survey was conducted in collaboration with Career Services & Employer Alliance, a global association of business school career services professionals and employers. CSEA hosts events and collaborative opportunities for career centers and employers to network, learn, and grow together. CSEA also authors the Standards for Reporting Employment Data, which business schools use to capture and analyze data in a consistent and comparable way.

## Contact Information

For questions or comments regarding the data or analysis presented in this report, please contact the GMAC Research & Data Science Team at [research@gmac.com](mailto:research@gmac.com).

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