

EUROPEAN MBA GUIDELINES

Preamble

The European Quality Link (EQUAL), the European association of national accrediting bodies, has as its main objective the continued improvement of quality in business schools. As part of this activity, EQUAL aims to agree common standards for programmes, where appropriate, and to establish benchmarks.

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) is the first widely accepted international degree, but there are variable interpretations of the nature of this degree. The members of EQUAL have therefore agreed on a European MBA framework. The following guidelines are intended to assist business schools, inform participants and employers, and also contribute to the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) process. They reflect a common interest in creating transparency in the market and encouraging the convergence of such degrees. In addition, these guidelines may be used to influence governmental regulatory initiatives.

Guidelines



- 1 The MBA is a postgraduate degree at the Master's level and must correspond to minimum intellectual and academic standards for such degrees. Admission to an MBA programme will normally require a first degree or equivalent. This requirement can only be lowered exceptionally in the case of candidates with substantial and proven professional experience.
- 2 The MBA is a postexperience degree seen as a career accelerator or a means to make a career shift after a minimum of 2 or 3 years' professional experience. Programmes designed to help young graduates prepare for their entry into professional life should normally carry an alternative title.



3 The MBA is a generalist degree in business administration. In line with the previous guideline it is a broadening programme. As a result a specialized Master's degree should not be called an MBA.

4 It is important that the MBA be clearly identified with a certain type of content. The MBA curriculum provides broad coverage of the main functional areas in management, namely accounting, finance, marketing and sales, operations management, information systems management, law, human resource management. It is also expected to provide basic instruction in economics and quantitative analysis. The curriculum will normally be highly integrative and will include courses in business policy and strategy. Beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge and technical skills the curriculum is expected to put theory into practice by focusing on the personal development of participants through such competencies as decision-making, team work, leadership skills, entrepreneurial potential, negotiation skills, communication and presentation skills. The later part of the programme should make provision for electives and may include the possibility for participants to choose a major area of study.



5 The MBA has a minimum length of one academic year of full-time study or the equivalent when the programme is offered on a part-time basis.





6 The MBA will require a minimum of 400 hours of classroom study or structured contact. In all the programme should require a minimum of 1200 hours of personal work.

7 An MBA programme should be intellectually demanding and require a substantial personal investment in terms of commitment and effort

8 Admission to an MBA programme should be through a rigorous process of selection to ensure that only qualified participants are given access to the degree.



9 Participants in an MBA programme should be rigorously assessed through a regime of examinations and graded work in order to ensure that learning objectives are being met up to Master's degree standards.

Implementation

It should be stressed that these are merely guidelines and have no formal basis in law. However, the supporting national associations' aim is that they become widely used across Europe over time as a minimum standard. It is anticipated that schools and countries that do not yet meet these guidelines will evolve towards them, thus resulting in a common European understanding of the MBA.





Appendix One - Current Membership of EQUAL

ABS (Association of Business Schools), UK

AEDE (Asociación Española de Representantes de Escuelas de Dirección de Empresa), E

ASFOR (Associazione per la Formazione alla Direzione Aziendale), I

CEEMAN (Central and Eastern European Management Development Association)

efmd (European Foundation for Management Development)

FIBAA (Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation), D,A, CH

FORUM (Association for Management Education), PL

RABE (Russian Association for Business Education), RUSS

VSN (Vereniging van Samenwerkende Nederlandse Universiteiten), NL

For more information, please contact the EQUAL Secretariat (Nicola Hijlkema) at efmd:
rue Gachard 88, B-1050 Brussels, tel. +32-2-6290810, fax +32-2-6290811
e-mail: hijlkema@efmd.be

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