

MBA ACCREDITATION CRITERIA



OVERARCHING THEMES

Since its inception, AMBA's mission has been to promote and protect postgraduate management education internationally, with the MBA as the flagship programme. AMBA aims to encourage students to enrol on international quality programmes in reputable business schools and employers to recruit from such schools.

AMBA's accreditation scheme is designed to provide a quality assurance and quality enhancement mechanism for business schools and MBA programmes worldwide, in order to ensure the value of this qualification for potential students, graduates, employers and society. With many competing programmes, accreditation informs prospective students and employers about schools and programmes that meet the Association's international quality standards.

Accreditation is holistic in nature, using the criteria as a benchmark for assessing the overall quality of an institution and its MBA programmes. Accreditation assessments seek to balance the requirements for comparable international standards with the need to recognise local legislative and cultural differences; in particular, where the extensive two-year full time MBA is the prevailing norm, there may be some allowable deviations from criteria. AMBA will not necessarily rule out for consideration any such deviations where the Institution and its MBA programmes are of genuine international quality, with career outcomes demonstrably equivalent to those seen at other accredited institutions.

MBA Definition

The MBA is a generalist, postgraduate, post-experience degree designed to develop holistic, innovative and socially responsible business leaders for high performance organisations in the global market, through the development of knowledge, skills and values required to succeed in complex environments.

MBA Attributes

MBA graduates will have built on their prior professional experience and academic background to acquire a broad base of management knowledge and skills that enables them to:

- Lead themselves and others in the achievement of organisational goals, contributing effectively to a team environment.
- Think critically and make decisions based on complex information.
- Maximise resources for the benefit of organisations and society.
- Know and understand organisations and their stakeholders.
- Integrate functional knowledge and apply strategic management skills at a senior level in changing business environments.
- Operate effectively in cross-cultural settings, understanding the nature of globalisation.
- Understand the complexities of business ethics in a global environment and act with integrity.
- Analyse complex data, understanding the financial implications of managerial decision-making.
- Enhance their careers and their commitment to lifelong learning.

Key Principles

1. The MBA Portfolio – In order to ensure clarity and transparency in the marketplace, all programmes awarded by the institution bearing the designation MBA must be submitted for accreditation.
2. Institutional Integrity, Sustainability & Distinctiveness – The Institution offering an MBA must be sustainable, financially viable, and committed to quality and continuous improvement. It should possess a distinctive market identity which provides the basis for a high quality and successful MBA portfolio.
3. Faculty Quality and Sufficiency – The Institution must be able to provide the MBA portfolio with sufficient and balanced expertise in teaching, research and consultancy that guides the MBA learning experience in a cohesive and integrated way.
4. Programme Design & Leadership – Each MBA programme must be supported and periodically reviewed in a systematic way, with sufficient academic oversight and operational support. The MBA should be designed to represent best practice in management education, taking into account market trends and practices.
5. The Student Cohort Experience – The MBA is designed to be a postgraduate, post-experience qualification for high potential leaders; the admissions process must be rigorous in ensuring that an appropriate, sustainable and diverse cohort is recruited and maintained.
6. Competences, Graduate Attributes & Learning Outcomes – The MBA should have clearly articulated learning outcomes which can be measured and mapped through to course learning outcomes and assessment. Outcomes should broadly reflect AMBA MBA attributes and be aligned to the mission of the Institution.
7. Curriculum Breadth & Depth – The MBA curriculum should be comprehensive and integrative, and clearly delivered at the Masters level.
8. Assessment Rigour & Relevance – The MBA assessment strategy must be robust, varied and to standards that are consistently applied at the Masters level.
9. Delivery & Interaction – In order to develop sufficient generalist management knowledge, skills and values, the MBA programme requires substantial interaction between faculty and the cohort group, in addition to providing appropriate space for private study and reflection.
10. Impact & Lifelong Learning – Graduates should be able to demonstrate significant career enhancement as a result of their MBA and should be supported in their continual development by the Institution.

CRITERIA

Framework & Eligibility

This document sets out the criteria for MBA programme accreditation. While setting the standards that accredited provision is expected to meet, these criteria are not intended to be so prescriptive as to stifle innovation or to preclude other measures by which quality may be assessed.

At the core of the accreditation scheme is full recognition of the autonomy of individual degree-awarding institutions to offer MBA programmes and of the need for individuals and employers to have an internationally recognised accreditation process based on external and peer review of MBA provision.

Accreditation assesses the current standards of postgraduate management education offered at an institution while promoting a developmental philosophy and a commitment to continuous improvement and quality enhancement. Institutions gaining accreditation are expected to maintain and demonstrate this commitment to regular improvement within their own programmes over the duration of each accreditation period.

Assessors will base their recommendation on the overall context of the MBA provision under assessment, taking into account the quality of the institution offering the MBA.

An institution must have been graduating MBA students for a minimum of three years in order to be eligible for accreditation. Only one programme needs to meet this requirement and any additional or new programmes must be submitted as part of the portfolio. As an assurance of continuity and sustainability of quality provision, an institution and its MBA provision will have conformed to the majority of the Association's criteria for a minimum period of three years prior to its first assessment.

Principle 1: The MBA Portfolio

In order to ensure clarity and transparency in the marketplace, all programmes awarded by the institution bearing the designation MBA must be submitted for accreditation.

1.1 An institution's MBA provision in its entirety must be tabled for assessment and meet the accreditation criteria. This includes any programmes that are offered and awarded which bear the name 'MBA'. All MBAs in the portfolio should meet the criteria below although with a different emphasis considering the target market. The School is responsible for fully identifying and communicating its MBA portfolio to AMBA, as well as to other stakeholders.

1.2 Portfolio assessment will include all programmes delivered at the institution, outreach programmes, franchises, and programmes delivered in conjunction with partner institutions. Programmes offered at multiple campuses should each undergo an on-site assessment to ensure the equivalence of experience for students at each site. All institutions involved in the delivery of collaborative provision should normally expect an on-site assessment visit to assess the quality and equivalence of experience offered on the specific programmes, and partner institutions with unaccredited MBA provision will be expected to apply for accreditation within the current review cycle of the multi-centre programme.

1.3 The awarding institution must assume full responsibility for the quality of collaborative delivery, and is expected to make the initial application for AMBA accreditation.

1.4 Where an MBA programme is to be awarded jointly by more than one institution, one (accredited) institution is to be designated the lead provider and will be responsible for delivery by the partner institution(s). This also applies to programmes which allow students to undertake exchanges or modules delivered by other institutions.

Principle 2: Institutional Integrity, Sustainability & Distinctiveness

The Institution offering an MBA must be sustainable, financially viable, and committed to quality and continuous improvement. It should possess a distinctive market identity which provides the basis for a high quality and successful MBA portfolio.

2.1 The assessment of MBA provision will take account of the institution offering the programmes. The institution is generally expected to be the business school or equivalent unit that offers degree programmes, including the MBA portfolio. Institutions offering accredited MBA programmes should have:

(i) an appropriate mission, explicitly expressed and regularly reviewed, which reflects its key strengths and underpins the design of the MBA portfolio;

(ii) a well-defined, credible and coherent strategy, realistically reflecting its resources and constraints as well as its stated mission, with specific reference to the MBA;

(iii) an effective and integrated organisation for the management and leadership of activities, with a significant degree of autonomy and control over its future;

(iv) a commitment to sustainability, good governance and continuous improvement which impact on the MBA, underpinned by well-defined and implemented policies. The institution should therefore be able to demonstrate satisfactory outcomes from its own internal, national and possibly international audit processes, and should provide evidence that it has responded successfully to any recommendations resulting from these processes;

(v) market legitimacy, secured financial viability and institutional continuity;

(vi) a discrete identity and an appropriate degree of autonomy (e.g. from the wider University) for decision-making on issues such as strategic development and resourcing with respect to educational provision and management of educational resources, particularly with regards to the MBA;

(vii) identified its target population and have a developed sense of the market for its products, understanding the particular nuances required for an MBA;

(viii) a clearly articulated and effective policy with regards to its relations with the organisational and managerial world, with demonstrable impact on the MBA, including means of regular access to employer opinion and a well-developed customer orientation. Executive Education activity is expected in order to enhance the relationship between academia and business which will benefit MBA teaching; and

(ix) a clearly articulated strategy for partnerships with other academic institutions, which enhances a range of opportunities for the benefit of the MBA portfolio.

2.2 Institutions should demonstrate that the level of overall resourcing is appropriate for postgraduate/post-experience students, which may include exclusive MBA facilities. Library, computing and research facilities must be of a high standard and should be accessible, at least electronically, out of normal working hours and at weekends. Access to industry-standard hardware and software is important, as is the availability of business databases and literature search facilities. Sufficient resources should be dedicated to innovation, improvement and the development of the MBA.

Principle 3: Faculty Quality & Sufficiency

The Institution must be able to provide the MBA portfolio with sufficient and balanced expertise in teaching, research and consultancy that guides the MBA learning experience in a cohesive and integrated way.

3.1 In order to provide suitably resourced and high quality faculty available for the MBA, it is expected that the Institution will have an explicit, mission-led faculty strategy as well as an efficient organisational structure.

3.2 The MBA teaching faculty should be of a size which can, with regard to the overall supervision and number of participants, fully resource the provision to the required standard for which accreditation is being sought.

3.3 The institution should have a thorough and inclusive faculty development and recruitment policy to ensure that staff are suitably diverse, innovative, reflect the institution's commitment to continuous improvement and continue to meet high standards.

3.4 Faculty teaching at MBA level must be appropriately qualified and credible. Therefore at least 75% of the institution's teaching staff should have a relevant postgraduate degree. It is expected that the majority of faculty will hold a Doctorate. The institution must also be able to provide relevant evidence of the quality of teaching from within its faculty, and that those teaching on the MBA possess the highest teaching standards. The Institution must demonstrate that high quality faculty are selected for the MBA in a balanced manner.

3.5 The institution should be able to demonstrate high levels of quality across its faculty as evidenced by relevant management research, scholarship and consultancy. The majority of the MBA teaching team should be actively involved in all three activities, and the institution should be able to demonstrate that there are effective mechanisms by which results from research, consultancy and contact with the corporate world are regularly incorporated into the MBA provision.

3.6 To ensure that MBA learning is cutting-edge and innovative, research quality should be of a high standard in some areas of activity and show evidence of an international dimension. It is expected that a significant proportion of research output is relevant and demonstrably contributes to organisations and to society.

3.7 The institution should formally address the issues of collegiality and integration of staff into the total teaching and learning environment of the school, including part time faculty, faculty from another part of the institution, staff from other institutions and practitioners. All members of the MBA teaching team, irrespective of origin, should be fully integrated and subject to the institution's quality assurance policy.

Principle 4: Programme Design & Leadership

Each MBA programme must be supported and periodically reviewed in a systematic way, with sufficient academic oversight and operational support. The MBA should be designed to represent best practice in management education, taking into account market trends and practices.

4.1 Sustainable academic leadership is essential for a high quality MBA, regardless of the primary faculty teaching model. There should be clearly defined roles relating to the academic leadership and administrative responsibilities for the MBA programmes with individuals identified for each. Those assigned roles of academic leadership should be credible and committed to the programme.

4.2 The institution should be able to demonstrate a level and quality of professional leadership and support appropriate to the size of the MBA provision.

4.3 Mechanisms must exist to ensure sufficient feedback and response to student reactions to course delivery and content on the MBA.

4.4 MBA programmes must be regularly reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the market, taking into account input from all stakeholders. The design and content of the programme should embrace a range of relevant theory firmly linked to the practical world of sustainable leadership, business and management. Formal programme re-design is expected to take place on a cycle approximately every five years, based on a re-evaluation of the currency and achievement of learning outcomes.

Principle 5: The Student Cohort Experience

The MBA is designed to be a postgraduate, post-experience qualification for high potential leaders; the admissions process must be rigorous in ensuring that an appropriate, sustainable and diverse cohort is recruited and maintained.

5.1 There should be an expectation on the part of the provider that the student will be able to fulfil the objectives of the programme and achieve the standard required for the award. Evidence will be required to show rigour in procedures and standards for admission, for example, standard testing and interviewing. Interviews are expected to form an important component of the admissions process.

5.2 The MBA is intended for a variety of able candidates, primarily graduates from any discipline; and/or, holders of an equivalent professional qualification. Exceptionally, mature and experienced managers with the potential to meet the learning requirements of the MBA may also be considered as candidates.

5.3 Students are expected to have a minimum of three years appropriate and relevant postgraduate work experience upon entry and the student body as a whole should average at least five years of such experience.

5.4 Evidence of language proficiency will be required to a suitable standard for Masters-level learning and for meaningful cohort interaction. Where teaching is in English, standardised evaluation of students for whom English is not a first language will be expected.

5.5 Cohesion and integrity of the student cohort is a key component of the MBA in order to maximise the learning experience. As such, admission with credit, advanced standing and / or exemptions in any form is not encouraged, and, exceptionally, should be limited to no more than 20 percent of the course of study. This can be increased to 33 percent for students from an accredited MBM programme. Additionally, no more than 20 percent of a student cohort may be admitted with any level of credit, advanced standing and exemptions. Where credit, advanced standing and exemptions are awarded, the institution must be able to demonstrate that any learning undertaken prior to enrolment on an MBA programme, either within the institution or elsewhere, is at Masters level and is comparable to that offered to students admitted directly onto the programme. Any prior learning for which credit, advanced standing and exemptions are awarded must have been acquired no later than five years before enrolment to an MBA programme.

5.6 In order to promote mutual learning among peers, students should be selected on the basis of the contribution they may be expected to make as well as the benefit they may gain. Given the important role members of the cohort play in enriching the learning process, student diversity across a range of metrics (such as nationality, gender, academic and work background) is essential. To achieve adequate group interaction and diversity, the expected intake on each accredited programme would be a cohort size (distinct learning group) of at least 20 students. Due regard will be given to the following factors: the need for a critical mass of participants; geographical factors which may serve to constrain a local market; and, the combination of cohorts from different entry points (carousel) and modes of delivery – providing that cohort cohesion and integrity is maintained and managed above the 20 minimum threshold in each core class.

5.7 In order to ensure programme diversity and sustainability, individual cohorts should be internationally diverse and balanced where possible. This is especially important for full-time programmes where the international experience offered by the MBA is an industry standard.

5.8 Single Company and Consortia MBA programmes should ensure that final decisions on admissions, student progress, curriculum, assessment and award of the MBA remain under the control of the institution. Since a major source of learning flows from the interaction between managers from a variety of backgrounds, it is essential that the profile of the student cohort conforms to criterion 5.6.

5.9 Mechanisms must be in place to ensure that students, especially international students, receive adequate pastoral care and support throughout their course of study. The Institution should also have a formal policy to support students with disabilities. All student policies should be clearly articulated.

5.10 Where students have been away from formal education for an extended period of time, explicit help in learning skills should be provided.

Principle 6: Competences, Graduate Attributes & Learning Outcomes

The MBA should have clearly articulated learning outcomes which can be measured and mapped through to course learning outcomes and assessment. Outcomes should broadly reflect AMBA MBA attributes and be aligned to the mission of the Institution.

6.1 Each individual MBA programme must have clearly stated aims, objectives and learning outcomes, which reflect the mission and strengths of the institution. Learning outcomes should be clear and explicit in describing what participants are expected to know and be able to do as a result of the programme. They should make clear the ways in which the institution recognises and assesses intellectual, analytical, personal and enterprise qualities as well as the specific knowledge developed by the programme.

6.2 Learning outcomes should be mapped and measured against curriculum design and assessment, to ensure that the programme is cohesive and that all intended graduate outputs are achieved.

6.3 Evidence must be provided that the MBA programme enables its participants to build on their prior professional experience and academic background to acquire a broad base of management knowledge and skills that enables them to:

- (i) lead themselves and others in the achievement of organisational goals, contributing effectively to a team environment;
- (ii) think critically and make decisions based on complex information;
- (iii) maximise resources for the benefit of organisations and society;
- (iv) know and understand organisations and their stakeholders;
- (v) integrate functional knowledge and apply strategic management skills at a senior level in changing business environments;
- (vi) operate effectively in cross-cultural settings, understanding the importance of globalisation;
- (vii) understand the complexities of business ethics in a global environment and act with integrity;
- (viii) analyse complex data, understanding the financial implications of managerial decision-making; and
- (ix) enhance their careers and their commitment to lifelong learning.

Principle 7: Curriculum Breadth & Depth

The MBA curriculum should be comprehensive and integrative, and clearly delivered at the Masters level.

7.1 An MBA is a Masters-level programme of study and is postgraduate in nature. Institutions should be able to demonstrate that Masters-level learning is achieved across the programme, which should be embedded in either national or international definitions. The design of an MBA programme is based on the utilisation of significant relevant previous experience of the participants.

7.2 While all programmes should reflect the general character of the MBA, individual courses may be designed to meet the needs of a specific business function or sector. While it is encouraged that a programme includes some specialisation appropriate to the institution's resources and strengths, the MBA should retain its generalist, broad character. Where an institution offers the MBA designation for a programme which is recognisably functional, or specialist in nature, the institution is expected to provide an explicit rationale for the MBA designation.

7.3 An MBA programme should encompass relevant knowledge and understanding of organisations, the external context in which they operate, their stakeholders and how they are managed. While a specific module is not expected for each of the below, all programmes should demonstrate that students acquire a significant understanding of the major areas of knowledge which underpin general management, including:

- (i) the concepts, processes and institutions in the production and marketing of goods and/or services and the financing of business enterprise or other forms of organisation;
- (ii) the concepts and applications of accounting, of quantitative methods and analytics, and management information systems including digital innovations;
- (iii) organisation theory, behaviour, HRM issues and interpersonal communications;
- (iv) the processes and problems of general management at the operational and strategic level;
- (v) Macro and micro economics;
- (vi) business research methods and consultancy skills;
- (vii) the impact of environmental forces on organisations, including: legal systems; demographics; ethical, social, and technological change issues and risks;
- (viii) explicit coverage of the ability to respond to and manage change;
- (ix) business policy and strategy;
- (x) leadership and entrepreneurship;
- (xi) an understanding of the impact of sustainability, ethics and risk management on business decisions and performance, and on society as a whole;
- (xii) further contemporary and pervasive issues, such as creativity, enterprise, innovation, e-commerce, and knowledge management; and
- (xiii) the international dimension to the above, including political risk and contemporary processes of regionalisation, emerging markets, global governance and globalisation.

7.4 To ensure an international dimension to the programme, the curriculum should take care to incorporate an understanding of management styles and practices from different regions and cultures, and to include diversity in examples and / or case studies. Examples should encompass a range from prevalent international business standards to local norms and expectations. International study opportunities are to be encouraged where they enhance the student learning experience.

7.5 An MBA should contain substantial evidence of programme integration. In many cases this is achieved primarily as an in-company project, which demonstrates each individual student's ability to integrate the functional areas of management. Where included, such a project should be practically based and allow candidates to demonstrate an understanding of theory and its application at Masters level. The expectations, learning outcomes and assessment criteria should be made explicit. Research and consultancy skills training should be provided in preparation for the above. Any other methods of integration are acceptable but evidence that such methods are effective and substantial is expected. Where programmes are designed on a modular basis, the design should, given the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach to management problems, clearly provide means by which the integration of individual subjects is achieved.

7.6 Evidence will be sought that programme design and review has incorporated an understanding of the balance between theory and practice, and between functional and integrative teaching.

7.7 Personal growth is an important element of an MBA, and should be a key and integrated element of an accredited programme. The programme must be explicit about the means by which transferable

management skills are developed throughout the programme. Such skills include, but are not restricted to: ability to manage change and risk; communication; leadership; teamwork; dealing with ambiguity; negotiation; problem solving; critical thinking; ethical values.

7.8 Innovation in MBA programme design and delivery is strongly encouraged, particularly in the ways in which such developments enhance integration, sustainability, personal growth, and the sharing of cohort experiences.

Principle 8: Assessment Rigour & Relevance

The MBA assessment strategy must be robust, varied and to standards that are consistently applied at the Masters level.

8.1 The key purpose of student assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have met the objectives and achieved the learning outcomes of the programme at the standard required for the award of an MBA degree. The assessment scheme should have detailed criteria and specify the range and relative weights of the various assessment methods used; it should be comprehensive and consistent across the various subject areas, and underpinned by a suitable assessment strategy.

8.2 The assessment scheme should reflect the particular aims and characteristics of the course. A diverse approach to assessment methods is expected, and individual examinations should play a balanced role in any such scheme since they are seen as testing intellectual rigour under controlled conditions. While innovation in assessment methods is encouraged, particularly where new teaching and learning methods are being used, detailed evaluation by the school of such innovations will also be looked for.

8.3 Assessment should also be used to provide feedback to students in a consistent and timely manner and assist in the subsequent individual and group learning.

8.4 Evidence is required that steps are taken to ensure that the individual's own work is being assessed, with an explicit policy with regards to plagiarism.

8.5 Assessment standards should be consistently reviewed and applied at Masters level across the programme and the portfolio. This includes instances where delivery and assessment is undertaken at partner sites and on student exchanges.

Principle 9: Delivery & Interaction

In order to develop sufficient generalist management knowledge, skills and values, the MBA programme requires substantial interaction between faculty and the cohort group, in addition to providing appropriate space for private study and reflection.

9.1 The applied nature of much of the MBA demands a variety of teaching and learning methods, including lectures, seminars, workshops, action learning, reading, individual and group projects, distance learning, computer-based training and in-company training. Cooperation of employers is to be encouraged and it is expected that much of the learning will be practically based.

9.2 The duration of an MBA programme is expected to be equivalent to at least one year's full time study and normally at least two years' part-time study. More flexible modes of delivery should be expected to take between two to three years to complete, with a clear and managed progression rate and an upper limit in exceptional circumstances of not more than seven years.

9.3 An MBA programme will correspond to the equivalent of at least 1,800 hours learning effort, which should incorporate suitable time for faculty – cohort interaction (contact time), group work, individual reading and preparation, and reflection. The design of the programme must ensure that this can be achieved within the standard set duration, accounting for other responsibilities that students will have outside of the study environment.

9.4 The total number of contact hours is expected to be at least 500. Contact hours are defined as compulsory interaction between the learning group and faculty, which in traditional delivery modes would be delivered completely synchronously. The minimum requirement for any synchronous element is expected to be 120 hours, usually reserved for online delivery, which can include the use of demonstrably effective technologies that enable synchronous interaction between the student cohort and faculty. In all cases the balance of 500 contact hours must be mandatory interactive student-faculty learning, although this can be delivered asynchronously.

9.5 Acceptable delivery modes range across a spectrum from traditional face-to-face through to fully online, with many blended variations in-between. Innovative approaches to design and delivery are welcomed if they enhance learning opportunities and can maintain the coherence and integrity of the course, while meeting the general standards outlined in this document. It is expected that cohort integration is achieved through programme and delivery design even on the most flexible of delivery modes.

9.6 Much of the learning in an MBA is expected to take place between members of the learning group, and opportunities for collaborative learning should be provided. Such interaction can be face-to-face and/or through the application of a virtual learning environment, as long as this encourages and supports substantial synchronous interaction.

9.7 It is expected that all programmes will contain some element of support through an online platform which students can access off-campus and out-of-hours.

9.8 Some programmes may be designed to deliver a significant part – or indeed all - of the learning experience at a distance, ranging along a spectrum from offering one section or module of the course online, to 'blended learning', to 'distance learning' in its purest sense. In such cases, it is expected that all standards outlined in this document will continue to be met. Programmes delivered by such modes must ensure that students receive an equivalent learning experience to that of students studying on a face-to-face basis. Flexibility is an important feature but should not be to the detriment of the student cohort learning experience, which is a cornerstone of the MBA. Within this framework, the criteria may be adapted to account for a significant evolution in technology-assisted learning that may occur throughout the lifecycle of this document. Accreditation will therefore focus particularly on examining evidence that there is:

(i) a physical base from which the programme operates, which provides an effective logistical and administrative infrastructure that ensures that all participants engage with the programme as intended, that monitors this engagement, and that consistency is maintained year on year. This should also extend to include local teaching and support facilities where appropriate;

(ii) a specifically designed quality assurance system to ensure the continued quality and currency of all staff, systems and teaching materials, with a systematic process of periodic quality review;

(iii) remote out-of-hours access for all students to the necessary study materials, library resources and software, with dedicated technical support available and readily accessible;

(iv) consistent and accessible academic leadership which provides cohesion for the programme underpinned by appropriate research and scholarly activity, and with responsibility for the review of course content, delivery and academic standards;

(v) a tailored system of programme management and support, ensuring transparent coordination and regular communication between the various departments involved in the delivery of the programme;

(vi) a customised system for regular and responsive student engagement with the institution, to include access to academic and support staff, student feedback and pastoral care;

(vii) a means to ensure that students studying at a distance receive appropriate career development opportunities, in addition to evidence that the development of transferable skills are addressed explicitly;

(viii) a transparent system to regularly monitor student interaction and progression on the programme, with effective means to remedy any issues that arise as a result of this monitoring;

(ix) a structured, effective and interactive platform to provide, encourage and monitor interaction between the peer group/cohort, and with faculty / tutors, both synchronously and asynchronously, across key elements of the course. This should provide an effective means for group work as well as an opportunity for networking and peer support; and

(x) a robust and secure assessment system, which guards against plagiarism, ensures the correct identity of submitted work, and allows for appropriate feedback to students, both formative and summative.

Principle 10: Impact and Lifelong Learning

Graduates should be able to demonstrate significant career enhancement as a result of their MBA and should be supported in their continual development by the Institution.

10.1 Facilities should exist to assist in employment for students at the conclusion of their studies, with career development opportunities available irrespective of delivery mode and employment status. Employment services should be cognisant of the specific requirements and career aspirations demanded by MBA students.

10.2 A well-established and active association of MBA alumni is expected, which provides tangible networking and lifelong learning opportunities for its members.

10.3 An accredited MBA should be able to provide evidence of significant impact and return on investment for its graduates and other stakeholders. When assessing the overall quality of the programme, consideration will be given to the value added by the MBA programme to work experience and career development. The views and experiences of appropriate alumni, employers and sponsors will also be sought. The transfer of learning from the programme to the place of work will be evaluated, and evidence that these outcomes are being met by graduates in the workplace is expected. An inclusive view of the measurement and articulation of impact and the return on investment of the MBA is encouraged, taking into account the contribution to society and value creation.

10.4 The institution should have appropriate mechanisms to regularly review the long term success and impact of graduates, and to evaluate the currency and achievement of programme learning outcomes.

GLOSSARY

- **Asynchronous:** interaction that is not in real time. This can be enabled through effectively managed and monitored interaction through discussion boards, for example.
- **Contact Hours:** compulsory interaction between the learning group and faculty. This does not normally include one-to-one interaction, or student group work without faculty support. One contact hour is expected to be 60 minutes.
- **Franchise:** an institution offering another institution's programme and degree award, but delivering the majority of teaching.
- **Institution:** the business school, or equivalent organisational unit offering the MBA programmes. AMBA will also consider the relationship between the institution and any parent body, particularly where any other MBA programmes are offered that may require inclusion into the institutional portfolio on the basis of market clarity.
- **Masters-level learning:** many academic institutions refer to the Dublin Descriptors for the requirements of Masters-level learning.
- **Portfolio:** all programmes bearing the designation 'MBA' awarded by the Institution must be submitted for assessment and pass accreditation standards. In the interest of market clarity, any programmes offered outside of the institution but bearing the same degree award is also expected to be included in the portfolio, unless agreed by AMBA on the basis of market separation.
- **Student Learning Hours:** total student activity required to complete the programme. While in many respects a notional figure, due to the fact that students learn at different speed and in different ways, this would include contact hours, group work, one-to-one student / faculty sessions (supervision), private study and reflection.
- **Synchronous:** real time interaction, traditionally face-to-face but can be enabled through the use of appropriate technology.

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