

HEQC RE-ACCREDITATION CRITERIA AND MINIMUM STANDARDS

1. ORGANISATION SETTING: EXTERNAL

The programme is an integral part of the national higher education system and the higher education institution.

Minimum standards

- i. The linkage between the MBA programme and the institution must be clearly demonstrated.
- ii. Private providers are registered by the Department of Education (DoE) in terms of the requirements stipulated in the Higher Education Act 1997, and the Regulations of the DoE, 2002.
- iii. Public providers must ensure that the MBA programme is listed in the PQM for 2003-2006 issued by the DoE in 2002.
- iv. The MBA is registered on the NQF by SAQA.
- v. The MBA is accredited.
- vi. Adequate resource allocations have been made through financial planning for the development and sustainability of the programme.
- vii. The institution must demonstrate that the programme is part of the institution's planning processes.

2. MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The unit and programme shall have a clearly stated motivation with supporting goals and objectives.

Minimum standards

- i. The unit will have a clear mission, goals and objectives that support the MBA programme.
- ii. A unit must undertake systematic, broad-based and integrated evaluation of its activities, to determine its effectiveness in achieving its stated mission, goals and objectives.
- iii. The results of this process must be linked to, and systematically utilised to inform, the programme's planning processes.
- iv. The unit uses regular data collection mechanisms, benchmarks and user surveys to provide information needed for evaluation, planning and management.

3. ORGANISATIONAL SETTING

The internal organisation of the school/unit/faculty is conducive to teaching, learning and research.

Minimum standards

- i. The organisational structure of the unit should enhance the potential for fulfillment of its stated mission, goals and objectives and should provide for effective participation of faculty and learners in all activities of importance.
- ii. The environment should be characterised by commitment to the integrity of the institution, high ethical standards in the management of its affairs, fairness in dealing with relevant constituencies, and support for the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge and accountability.
- iii. The unit has effective communication channels, accountability frameworks and cohesive committee structures to support the work of the unit.

4. GOVERNANCE

Clearly defined policies and processes concerning programme governance and academic policies.

Minimum standards

- i. Within the framework of rules and regulations, programme administration and the faculty should have the prerogative to assure the integrity of the programme and the achievement of its stated mission, goals and objectives.
- ii. Programme faculty members should have formal opportunities for input in decisions affecting admissions, progress, resource allocation, faculty policies, curriculum design and evaluation, research and consultancies, and degree requirements.
- iii. The unit has a quality management system that is reviewed periodically.
- iv. Learners actively participate in governance structures.
- v. Administrative mechanisms permit learner involvement in programme policy formulation and review.

5. RESOURCES

The programme has resources adequate to fulfil its stated mission and goals.

Minimum standards

- i. The programme must have suitable premises at its disposal for long-term use and should provide favourable conditions for successful learning. This expectation includes the provision of comparable equipment and resources at off-campus sites.
- ii. Learners have access to comprehensive and up-to-date library facilities with access to the latest databases. Libraries should be sufficient in size and scope to complement the learning programmes offered, provide incentives for individual learning and support appropriate scholarly and professional activities of the faculty. Evidence must also be available that off-campus learners have adequate library support.
 - Full text databases from Ebsco or Proquest.
 - Emerald Library.
 - SA company information: either McGregor's Office or Inet BIS.
 - At least one reputable database such as Reuters, Bloomberg or Hoovers.
 - World Development Indicators or equivalent.
 - South African studies.
 - Archives of major South African financial publications and newspapers (*Financial Mail, Business Day, Mail & Guardian*, etc.).
 - Video collections.
- iii. Access to library, research and computing facilities should be available outside normal working hours and weekends.
- iv. Access to industry-standard hardware, software and internet access including access to appropriate e-learning platforms for all programmes, but particularly important for distance learning and mixed mode programmes.
- v. There should be a sufficient number of teaching venues and computer laboratories of an appropriate size and quality to provide a quality education environment. Full-time faculty should have suitable office space and access to computers.

6. HUMAN RESOURCES

The programme has an adequate and dedicated faculty able to support the programme's mission, goals and objectives.

Minimum standards

- i. Policies, procedures and operational guidelines relating to conditions of employment are available to all staff members.
- ii. Part-time and contractual staff members are provided with explicit responsibilities and duties.
- iii. All procedures and appointments are in line with relevant legislation and the overall policies of the institution. Policies, procedures and practices of the programme should encourage the inclusion of faculty members who contribute to the diversity of the staff complement.
- iv. Criteria for appointment, advancement or promotion must be explicit and consistently applied.
- v. The institution provides opportunities to enhance the teaching capabilities of faculty and support their professional growth and development.
- vi. The size of the teaching staff and the contractual arrangements relating to hours and workload must ensure that all teaching, research, learning support and counselling activities relevant to the programme's mission can be realised.
- vii. It must be guaranteed that all subjects, courses or modules are taught by experts in the field with adequate academic or professional qualifications. Specific motivations must be provided when employing staff without a master's qualification.
- viii. Academics and other members of the unit must undergo a formal evaluation of performance. The evaluation process should cover the areas of student advising and counselling, programme development, scholarly and professional activities, service activities, administrative activities, business and industry relations, faculty development activities, additional contributions to the academic unit and consulting activities.
- ix. Seventy five percent of the full-time faculty must have master's degrees or higher and business experience.

7. STUDENT RECRUITMENT

The programme has student recruitment policies and admissions policies designed to recruit learners who will develop competencies in the field of business management.

Minimum standards

- i. Acceptance criteria and processes should include a significant number of the following: letters of recommendation, written essay or personal statement, aims and objectives for undertaking the field of study, interview, copies of academic transcripts, resumé or curriculum vitae, evidence of computer literacy, work experience, admissions test such as GMAT or equivalent.
- ii. Ninety percent of any cohort must have at least an NQF level 7 (bachelors degree or equivalent) on entry. Exceptions to the rule are based on exceptional professional performance and evidence that the learner has participated in relevant courses leading to management qualifications. Not more than 10 percent of a cohort can be recruited via alternative access mechanisms and in these cases RPL policies and procedures must be applied properly. The learners must have more than two years' relevant and appropriate work experience.
- iii. Admission criteria and processes must be clearly documented. Prospectuses and other documents must adequately describe the educational offerings in terms of the academic calendar, admissions policies, degree completion requirements and academic standards.
- iv. Advertising and promotional materials, recruitment literature and other supporting material must contain accurate information.

8. DIVERSITY, ACCESS, REDRESS AND EQUITY

The programme shall address the broader issues of access, redress and equity in relation to both staff and student profiles.

Minimum standards

- i. The institution and unit have set target rates for disadvantaged groups and provide adequate support to ensure throughput rates for these target groups.
- ii. The unit encourages the inclusion of learners to reflect the diversity of the population.
- iii. The unit has measures in place to provide support in ensuring the success of learners in numeric and language skills.
- iv. The unit has set equity targets to be reached and is actively pursuing these in relation to staffing requirements.

9. LEARNING PROGRAMME

The programme reflects its mission, goals and objectives leading to the MBA or in the designated area of the specialisation and has clear learning objectives.

Minimum standards

- i. An MBA programme must display clear practical relevance and be well grounded in current theory.
- ii. The planning, administration and execution of the MBA programme are conducted within a framework of an effective programme quality management system.
- iii. There are clear systems and procedures for the design and review of the programme.
- iv. The MBA is a postgraduate degree at the master's level and must correspond to the minimum standards for such degrees.
- v. The minimum credit value of the MBA is 240 credits at Level 7/8.
- vi. The MBA has a minimum duration of one-year full-time study or two years part time.
- vii. The MBA programme provides coverage of the main functional areas of management: accounting, finance, marketing, operations management, information systems management, human resource management, economics and quantitative analysis. (European standard)
- viii. The core content should include (but not necessarily be restricted to) the following areas of major underpinning knowledge in general management:
 - 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.
 - The impact of environmental forces on organisations, including: legal systems; ethical, social, economic, and technological change issues; and the effect of international developments.
 - The ability to respond to and manage change should be covered explicitly; the concepts and applications of accounting, of quantitative methods and management information systems including IT applications; organisation theory, behaviour, human resource management issues and interpersonal communications; the processes and problems of general management at the operational and strategic level; and business policy or strategy should be a core integrative course. (AMBA standard)
- ix. Not more than 33 percent of the content is directed to a specialisation, which must include a portion of core and elective courses, and a research report in the area of specialisation. Areas of specialisation need to be justified in order to demonstrate that the graduate will function as a specialist in the designated area.
- x. The design process for the programme uses participants who are qualified in terms of expertise and experience. It takes into account trends in higher education curriculum design as well as market trends and the need for management education and development both nationally and internationally.

- xi. Clear and effective procedures are in place to evaluate the programme on a regular basis. Review findings are disseminated appropriately and utilised for staff development, curriculum improvement and increasing student access.
- xii. The methods used for review are credible and consistent and allow for the triangulation of information and data in order to produce a valid outcome.

10. TEACHING AND LEARNING

The programme ensures that each student displays an understanding of the areas of knowledge that are basic to general management, acquires skills and experience in the application of basic management principles, and demonstrates integration of this knowledge.

Minimum standards

- i. Learners are provided with clear guidance as to the means by which the integration of subjects, courses or modules is achieved.
- ii. In addition to the acquisition of knowledge, the curriculum is expected to put theory into practice by focusing on the development of learners in competencies such as decision making, team work, leadership skills, entrepreneurial potential, negotiation skills, and communication and presentation skills.
- iii. The most recent developments in teaching methods and techniques must be used, with the involvement of learners as a dominant feature.
- iv. Proactive learning is reflected in dialogue-oriented lectures, case studies, group work or interactive learning sessions in the context of management simulations and project work.
- v. Teaching and learning methods must be applicable to real-life working situations. To facilitate the transfer of theory into practice, company projects must be an essential element of the MBA programme.
- vi. An MBA programme should have a minimum of 476 teaching/contact hours. This interaction may in part be supplemented by using modern multimedia techniques. In addition, there should be a minimum of 1 000 hours of preparatory study. (FIBAA standard.)
- vii. The quality requirements for programme development and delivery take into account all delivery modes. The following must be taken into account by distance education providers:
 - The design of the programme ensures explicit coherence between, on the one hand, the aims and intended learning outcomes of the programme and, on the other, the scope of the learning materials and the strategies for teaching at a distance.
 - The institution has tested systems and technologies for materials development and delivery for distance learning.
 - Learning materials, teaching and learner support strategies, and modes of assessment are designed (and reviewed regularly) in order to give students enrolled at a distance a reasonable chance of achieving intended exit level outcomes.

- Training and development opportunities are provided for staff to be able to design, deliver and review programmes offered at a distance.
- Systems are in place to identify inactive students and support them timeously.

11. ASSESSMENT

The assessment processes are valid, reliable and transparent. The assessment practices demonstrate the integration of content, teaching methods and modes of delivery.

Minimum standards

- i. There is rigorous assessment that is fair, explicit and consistently applied to ensure that learning objectives are at master's level. The assessment criteria must be stipulated with a range of assessment methods used. The policies and procedures for assessment take into account the varying modes of delivery. The unit must demonstrate that the formative and summative assessment procedures for programmes are appropriate for the delivery mode and the circumstances in which the programmes are studied.
- ii. Assessment is systematically and purposefully used both to generate data for summative purposes (grading, ranking, selection, predicting) and for formative and diagnostic purposes, such as providing timely feedback to inform teaching and learning.
- iii. The unit has efficient internal and external procedures to moderate and validate its assessment procedures and results, in order to ensure their reliability and to ensure the integrity of the qualifications it awards.
- iv. Assessment is conducted rigorously within a framework of rules and regulations governing assessment. Security arrangements pertaining to recording and documenting assessment decisions are in place.
- v. The institution has a policy and effective procedures for recognising prior learning and for assessing current competence.
- vi. The programme has to be organised in such a way that it can be completed within the stipulated time frames. Staff and infrastructural resources are organised for examinations and other forms of assessment in line with the requirements of the programme.
- vii. The academic staff responsible for official decisions on assessment is appropriately trained, experienced and competent to assess. Teaching staff is provided with opportunities to improve and professionalise assessment practices.

12. RESEARCH

The programme has an active research focus through which both staff and learners contribute to the knowledge base of the field of management.

Minimum standards

- i. There are clear and efficient arrangements in place for the management of research functions and processes in a way that ensures and enhances quality, increases research participation, productivity and research funds.
- ii. The unit has effective strategies for research development, including capacity development for new researchers.
- iii. The MBA programme should contain substantial evidence of individual work undertaken as a project, providing evidence of the ability to integrate the core subjects. The research component should constitute at least one fifth of the overall pass mark.
- iv. All research projects should have a sound foundation as well as a practical base to allow learners to demonstrate an understanding of theory and its application at master's level.
- v. Cooperation of an employing organisation is desirable to enable learners to conduct action research. In the absence of this, the unit should provide alternative means for the learners to carry out action research.
- vi. Faculty members should be research active (i.e. 0.3 publications per full-time faculty member).
- vii. Appropriate and effective strategies are implemented for postgraduate education, including postgraduate supervision.
- viii. Postgraduate supervision procedures and processes must be on a par with all other postgraduate degrees. In order to achieve this, clearly structured courses must be provided to ensure that students are adequately prepared for research projects and for entry into higher qualifications.
- ix. The institution/unit has regulations governing the relationship between supervisors and postgraduate students. There are mechanisms for complaints and appeals.
- x. There are monitoring mechanisms in place to check the progress of students, codes and guidelines for supervision, and training and development opportunities for new supervisors.

13. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The unit is active in the field of management and contributes to the improvement of management in society.

Minimum standards

- i. The unit has linkages with the business environment that support and augment the programme and work of the unit.
- ii. The unit provides evidence of articulation and/or credit transfer relationships with other higher education institutions.
- iii. The unit ensures that all partnership agreements are focused on ensuring quality teaching and learning.
- iv. The unit consciously measures and monitors its relationships with external stakeholders.

CASES OF BEST PRACTICE

This appendix outlines five mini-case studies of instances of best practice in MBA provision in South Africa. They come from among those business schools that were commended by the HEQC for an aspect of their programme provision. The selection of cases is not representative of all the re-accredited business schools. The purpose of these mini-case studies, prepared by the respective business schools and edited for publication, is primarily to highlight concrete examples of best practice and to share experiences with the broader MBA community in order to stimulate improvement and innovation in the provision of excellent higher education programmes.

MINI-CASE STUDY 1: MANCOSA'S EXPANDING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Management College of Southern Africa (MANCOSA) in Durban is a private higher education institution offering since 1995 a distance-learning general MBA programme and a specialised programme in tourism. MANCOSA emerged in the post-apartheid period to address the need for affordable management education for previously disadvantaged sections of the South African population. Its mission is to provide affordable, accessible and accredited programmes through supported distance education. Currently the institution enrolls approximately 600 students on its two MBA programmes.

MANCOSA was among the business schools that were commended in relation to the HEQC's re-accreditation Criterion 5, resources. This criterion stipulates that an MBA programme must have resources adequate to fulfil its stated mission and goals. More specifically, the minimum standards are that:

- (i) The programme must have suitable premises at its disposal for long-term use and should provide favourable conditions for successful learning. This expectation includes the provision of comparable equipment and resources at off-campus sites.
- (ii) Learners have access to comprehensive and up-to-date library facilities with access to the latest databases. Libraries should be sufficient in size and scope to complement the learning programmes offered, provide incentives for individual learning and support appropriate scholarly and professional activities of the faculty. Evidence must also be available that off-campus learners have adequate library support. With respect to the MBA a library should include: full text databases from Ebsco or Proquest; Emerald Library; SA company information, either McGregor's Office or Inet BIS; at least one reputable database such as Reuters, Bloomberg or Hoovers; World Development Indicators or equivalent; South African studies; archives of major South African financial publications and newspapers (e.g. *Financial Mail*, *Business Day*, *Mail & Guardian*, etc.); and video collections.

- (iii) Access to library, research and computing facilities should be available outside normal working hours and weekends.
- (iv) There should be access to industry-standard hardware, software and internet, including access to appropriate e-learning platforms, for all programmes, but particularly for distance learning and mixed mode programmes.
- (v) There should be a sufficient number of teaching venues and computer laboratories of an appropriate size and quality to provide a quality education environment. Full-time faculty should have suitable office space and access to computers.

Physical, technological and knowledge infrastructure

MANCOSA approaches the question of resources and resource infrastructure from three angles, namely: physical infrastructure, technological infrastructure, and knowledge infrastructure. With respect to physical infrastructure, MANCOSA owns the premises within which the MBA programme is offered, and in which the learning resources are located. Its infrastructure includes two lecture theatres, a library, a computer/internet centre, two reading rooms, a recreation area, an electronic media centre, a students' boardroom, and three tutor counselling rooms. Moreover, MANCOSA has by contractual agreement access to workshop facilities at various institutions across the SADC (Southern African Development Community) region, which are used for workshops, special classes and examinations. The institutions include Wits College of Education (Johannesburg), the University of Namibia, the Natural Resources Development College in Zambia, and the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique.

In terms of its technological infrastructure, MANCOSA's student support system is based on an information technology system which includes the recruitment office, registry, finance department, quality assurance, library services, media centre, the computer/internet centre, and the examinations office. Computers and printers are linked through a server onto an integrated and shared office network. Over the past four years MANCOSA has maintained its learner records on an integrated software programme called the Universal Student Admissions Programme (USAP). Recently, MANCOSA replaced this system with a more comprehensive management system called ISMS, in order to meet its growing needs. The confidentiality and security of student records is maintained. There is a large staff complement to support the activities at each of these units, as well as a full-time IT person.

For the use of students, MANCOSA has a computer and internet centre on its premises. The information technology infrastructure consists of computer hardware, printers, fax machines, photocopiers, a laminator and a scanner. Computers and overhead projectors are available to academic staff. Data projectors, televisions, VCRs and other hardware are also available. Additional equipment is hired on a needs basis. Students are encouraged to use these facilities throughout the week as well as on weekends and holidays and after hours. Assistance from qualified IT personnel is available on the premises. When students need to study late, the lecturing staff stays on at night to keep the learning facilities open. Students are satisfied with the flexibility in the use of the learning resources.

As its knowledge infrastructure, MANCOSA identifies two key resource centres, the library and the media centre. The institution has a well-equipped library on its premises which has about 4 000 books and subscribes to 18 journals both national and international. The library also has a collection of past dissertations, research publications and newspapers. In addition, off-campus students have access to library facilities located in regions in which they live. Contractual agreements with external libraries allow students to use the libraries of nearby higher education institutions. MANCOSA has arrangements with the libraries of the following institutions so as to facilitate learning and research for its dispersed student base: the new University of South Africa, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the University of Stellenbosch, the University of the Free State, Rand Afrikaans University, Port Elizabeth Technikon, and the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane.

MANCOSA's agreement with the former Technikon SA enables its students to register with the Goldfields Library and Information Centre of Technikon SA; this agreement cost MANCOSA R19 685. Registered library users are provided with a library card that allows MANCOSA students access to the TSA library for a one-year duration. MANCOSA students are bound by the rules and regulations pertaining to the library facility of Infobridge. The services include access to the Goldfields Library and Information Centre, use of the reference collection, journal collection and internet, a postal service to MANCOSA students who register with the library, and loan privileges. These allow students to borrow up to six books and two audio-visual items at a time. The loan period is 30 days for books and seven days for audio-visual items.

In order to ensure that MANCOSA's students have access to all required books, MANCOSA has donated about 1 000 books to university libraries within the SADC region to improve their library holdings and to provide access to these books for its MBA students in those areas.

In keeping with technological developments in distance education, MANCOSA has an electronic media centre on its premises. This centre gives students access to a wide range of electronic media facilities. Electronic communication between tutors and students is conducted through email and chat facilities. Discussion rooms and real-time chat rooms are available for students. Currently the media centre has the following resources related to management programmes: personal computers equipped with CD-Rom, internet, scanner, laser printer, sound kit and CD writer, floppy disks, compact disk-journals, tutorials, encyclopaedia, television set, VCR, DVD player, video camera, video cassettes, overhead projectors, transparencies, etc.

As a distance learning institution, MANCOSA conducts the bulk of learning through the electronic learning platform for all its programmes. Multimedia resources for the MBA include a video and CD Rom collection. MANCOSA students have free access to the latest online journals through the EBSCO web-site. Access to the EBSCO website is via the MANCOSA website. MANCOSA's in-house Management Journal is also available on the website. Online access to weekly business publications also includes *The Economist* and *Financial Mail*. Additional support services offered online include an academic calendar, tutorial letters, workshop handouts, assignment guidelines, assignment submissions, result

statements, account status, and past examination papers. In short, the MANCOSA campus in Durban has a state-of-the-art physical, technological and knowledge infrastructure to meet learner needs. At the same time, the institution has found effective ways to deliver a quality infrastructure to a widely-dispersed student body across the SADC region.

In order to keep up with technological developments and with its growing student numbers, MANCOSA has taken some strategic decisions including the following: (1) budgetary provisions are regularly revised and increased; (2) student feedback is continuously and consistently taken into account and acted upon; (3) service delivery is student-focused; and (4) MANCOSA's infrastructure provision has been continuously benchmarked against provision by other institutions in the country offering similar programmes.

MINI-CASE STUDY 2: THE LEARNING PROGRAMME OF THE UCT GSB

The Graduate School of Business (GSB) of the University of Cape Town (UCT) has offered an MBA programme since 1964. The GSB aims to be 'the international business school in Africa' and thus actively recruits students from other parts of the world and from Africa in particular to contribute to the diversity of its student population. The GSB MBA programme is offered full-time and part-time. The average number of students is 75 on the full-time programme and 40 on the part-time programme.

The GSB of UCT was commended for the quality of its learning programme (Criterion 9). This means that the GSB's programme reflects the school's mission, goals and objectives leading to the MBA and has clear learning objectives. The applicable HEQC minimum standards include:

- (i) An MBA programme must display clear practical relevance and be well grounded in current theory.
- (ii) The planning, administration and execution of the MBA programme are conducted within the framework of an effective programme quality management system.
- (iii) There are clear systems and procedures for the design and review of the programme.
- (iv) The MBA is a postgraduate degree at the master's level and must correspond to the minimum standards for such degrees.
- (v) The minimum credit value of the MBA is 240 credits at Level 7/8.
- (vi) The MBA has a minimum duration of one-year full-time study or two years part-time.
- (vii) The MBA programme provides coverage of the main functional areas of management: accounting, finance, marketing, operations management, information systems management, human resource management, economics and quantitative analysis. (European standard)
- (viii) The core content should include (but not necessarily be restricted to) the following areas of major underpinning knowledge in general management: the concepts, processes and institutions in the production and marketing of goods and/or services and the financing of business enterprises or other forms of organisation; the impact of environmental forces on organisations, including legal systems and ethical, social, economic, and technological change issues, and the effect of international developments; the ability to respond to and manage change, covered explicitly; the

concepts and applications of accounting, quantitative methods and management information systems, including IT applications; organisation theory, behaviour, human resource management issues and interpersonal communications; the processes and problems of general management at the operational and strategic level; and business policy or strategy as a core integrative course. (AMBA standard)

- (ix) Not more than 33 percent of the content is directed to a specialisation, which must include a portion of core and elective courses, and a research report in the area of specialisation. Areas of specialisation need to be justified in order to demonstrate that the graduate will function as a specialist in the designated area.
- (x) The design process for the programme uses participants who are qualified in terms of expertise and experience and takes into account trends in higher education curriculum design as well as market trends and the need for management education and development both nationally and internationally.
- (xi) Clear and effective procedures are in place to evaluate the programme on a regular basis. Review findings are disseminated appropriately and utilised for staff development, curriculum improvement and increasing student access.
- (xii) The methods used for review are credible and consistent and allow for the triangulation of information and data in order to produce a valid outcome.

Design and key features of the GSB curriculum

The GSB full-time MBA is delivered over 11 months with four blocks of ten weeks. The part-time MBA option is offered over 22 months and is comprised of eight blocks of ten weeks, with attendance in class on Monday nights from 5.30pm to 10pm and on Saturday mornings from 8.30am to 1.30pm.

The GSB designed its MBA programme with the purpose of developing students' managerial, leadership and entrepreneurial skills, and to facilitate access to specialist knowledge and new ways of thinking. Thus its core curriculum is both local and international in orientation and the material is specifically contextualised in relation to emerging economies and transitional societies and of course to South Africa in particular. The curriculum is structured around 11 core courses, which are designed to ground students in the fundamentals of management and to integrate this learning into a holistic framework that is sensitive to the key challenges facing business today. In addition, electives enable the students to explore areas of interest in more depth, and the final research report and company analysis projects are designed to help students integrate what they have learned and apply it to real management problems and contexts.

A key feature of the GSB curriculum is its practical emphasis, as it is designed to challenge students to apply the knowledge and skills gained on the programme to situations in actual companies and organisations. Exposure to real-world issues occurs through site visits, company-based projects of various kinds, and other mechanisms, and concludes with the company analysis project.

Two core courses on the MBA, Business, Government and Society, and Communication, Leadership and Learning, are seen as key to the integration of the curriculum and to the students' understanding of their and business's role in society. The two core courses are also integral to the success of the company analysis project, which is a group-based project.

Business, Government and Society

The core course, Business, Government and Society, is divided into three related sections. The first section is dedicated to developing several highly topical issues that impinge upon the relationship between government, society and the business community. These topics include for example the HIV/Aids pandemic, the state of the organised labour movement, the state of political party competition and the state of race relations, while foreign relations are also highlighted. The second section of the course deals very specifically with the incentives set for the business community when dealing with the forces of globalisation. In the final section of the course there is a series of discussions on the concept of sustainable development and the significant strategic implications and potential business opportunities associated with implementing the triple bottom line.

Communication, Leadership and Learning

During the first part of the Communication, Leadership and Learning course, students are exposed to a variety of leadership, communication and learning perspectives and are invited to develop a language for thinking and dialoguing on critical issues. They spend time developing insight into personal strengths and weaknesses while learning about the notion of 'leadership from within'. The course builds on the strengths and diversity in the class and promotes personal and group challenges within a questioning framework. It also lays the foundation for life-long learning.

The second part of the course seeks to develop students' ability to manage change. The course looks at the need for clear understanding of the key strategic drivers of change, and considers the need for finding an appropriate breadth, depth and form of intervention appropriate to the system. Students examine the importance of process in managing change, looking in particular at what can be termed the 'uncertainty – containment paradox'. They also focus on the change agent and related issues of leadership, credibility and sustainability.

Company Analysis

Company Analysis is a capstone course at the UCT business school in which students combine what they have learnt during the course of the year with their own work experience and apply this to a real consulting assignment. The school invites businesses to put themselves forward to be analysed by teams of MBA students. Each participating business receives a thorough assessment of both the internal and external drivers and strategic issues of their business. Using leading-edge methodologies and models, a group of up to six students analyses the

company history and culture, operations, production, human resources, sales, marketing, suppliers, customers and more. The local, national and global context of business is also evaluated and issues around corporate governance, corporate social responsibility, HIV policy and black economic empowerment are specifically addressed.

Students work under close supervision both from lecturers and external business mentors. All material is confidential and, to preserve the integrity of its interaction with businesses, the school signs a confidentiality agreement with participating companies. The outcome of the assignment is a presentation to the company and a consolidated report. The objectives of the Company Analysis programme are to:

- Provide an opportunity to apply theoretical concepts learned over the course of the MBA.
- Learn the project management skills necessary in order to successfully manage and produce a project of this size and complexity.
- Provide an opportunity to work with the company as if the students were a team of consultants.
- Fully analyse all internal operations of a company: the effectiveness and efficiency of each operation and/or function is measured and evaluated and then the effectiveness and efficiency of the interrelation between these operations/functions is also evaluated – i.e. both hard and soft issues are evaluated.
- Gain experience in the design, administering, collection and evaluation of surveys in order to collect information. Interviews and surveys are conducted where applicable on employees, suppliers, customers, competitors and sometimes even substitutes. All other stakeholders are required to be considered via either survey, interview or desk research.
- Perform an extensive external analysis for the organisation. Students are required to consider both the general, overall external environment (global, national, regional) and then they are expected to zoom in on the industry itself. A comprehensive industry analysis and industry positioning is required. This is part of the assessment for the Business, Government and Society course.

Students interact intensively with the organisation over two semesters in order to be able to deliver the information required. The interactions need to be focused and well managed in order to deliver the desired results.

Company Analysis is greatly valued by the students in terms of its integrative value in rounding off their steep learning curves on the MBA programme. It is also valued by the targeted organisations that benefit not only from the content of the reports but also from the insights they gain from working with the students. Many organisations, though existing relationships with the GSB, apply to be part of this process.

The use of course material that is well grounded in current theory and knowledge, a curriculum that covers the main functional areas of general management, including integrative core courses such as Company Analysis, and the use of diverse teaching

methodologies centred on the learner, make the UCT MBA a commendable learning programme that is reflective of the mission and goals of the business school.

MINI-CASE STUDY 3: GIBS APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE

The Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) was established in Johannesburg by the University of Pretoria in 1999. GIBS commenced classes in 2000 with a first intake of 55 MBA students. The establishment of GIBS required the working out of systems and procedures of governance by which the business school would relate to its mother institution.

Governance is Criterion 4 of the HEQC review and refers to the policies and processes concerning programme governance and academic policies. The applicable minimum standards are:

- (i) Within the framework of rules and regulations, programme administration and the faculty should have the prerogative to assure the integrity of the programme and the achievement of its stated mission, goals and objectives.
- (ii) Programme faculty members should have formal opportunities for input in decisions affecting admissions, progress, resource allocation, faculty policies, curriculum design and evaluation, research and consultancies, and degree requirements.
- (iii) The unit has a quality management system that is reviewed periodically.
- (iv) Learners actively participate in governance structures.
- (v) Administrative mechanisms permit learner involvement in programme policy formulation and review.

GIBS Board and internal governance structures

The GIBS operates as a Section 21 company not for gain, acting as an agent for the university. The director of the school reports and is directly accountable to the vice-chancellor of the university and to the GIBS board of directors. The board of directors was established in 1999. GIBS is represented on the Board by the director of GIBS, the director of company specific programmes and the director of administration of GIBS. It is significant that the university is represented on the Board by the vice-chancellor of the university, the deputy vice-chancellor, the executive director (finance) and the dean of the Faculty of Management and Economic Sciences.

The GIBS Board meets three times per annum for a formal review of the progress of the school. The director of the school and all leaders of operational areas supply written reports to the Board. This includes reports on all programmes offered by the school and on the operational and financial performance of the school. The Board approves all major initiatives prior to implementation.

On a day-to-day basis, the school is primarily managed by the executive committee, which is chaired by the director. Among others represented on the executive committee is the

director of administration, responsible for academic programmes. In addition, a functioning and cohesive committee structure enhances and supports the delivery of the programme, covering the full spectrum, including governance, planning, budget and resources, etc.

The director chairs an academic programmes committee on a fortnightly basis. This committee considers and evaluates all aspects of the MBA programme, including the quality of the content of the programme as well as the processes in place to ensure the quality is maintained. The academic programme committee also considers all the student evaluations as well as recommendations and suggestions from the academics on the programme. Some of the criteria which are used in this process are the frequency and use of dynamic, complex and contemporary case studies, the level of class debate and the calibre of guest speakers, modes of delivery that encourage group and individual engagement, the flow and integration of the course material and the linkage between the course content and design and the material covered.

Members of the academic programmes committee meet with the student representatives of the MBA class on a monthly basis. The purpose of these meetings is to receive input from the students on the programme quality and processes and suggestions for future improvements to the programme.

Participation in university governance structures

GIBS is required to process all curriculum changes of its MBA programme through the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Management and Economic Sciences of the University of Pretoria for approval ultimately by the University's Senate. The school is represented on the faculty board by the director of administration: academic programmes. Apart from processing curriculum changes, the faculty board also ensures that all academic processes, such as the appointment of external examiners and the marking processes, are in line with the processes prescribed by the university.

In addition to the quality assurance prescriptions of the university, GIBS has developed its own policy document that details the quality assurance mechanisms for the MBA and focuses on materials, examinations and controls. These processes collectively ensure that the quality of the academic programmes offered by GIBS is always of exceptional standard.

MINI-CASE STUDY 4: GIBS APPROACH TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

Each year GIBS admits between 70 and 75 students to its MBA programme. GIBS's primary aim is 'to significantly improve the competitive performance of individuals and organisations through world-class business education'. GIBS was among the business schools commended for the quality of teaching and learning on their programme. This means that 'each student displays an understanding of the areas of knowledge that are basic to general management,

acquires skills and experience in the application of basic management principles and demonstrates integration of this knowledge'. The HEQC's minimum standards for this criterion (Criterion 10) are:

- (i) Learners are provided with clear guidance as to the means by which the integration of subjects, courses or modules is achieved.
- (ii) In addition to the acquisition of knowledge, the curriculum is expected to put theory into practice by focusing on the development of learners in competencies such as decision-making, team work, leadership skills, entrepreneurial potential, negotiation skills, communication and presentation skills.
- (iii) The most recent developments in teaching methods and techniques must be used, with the involvement of learners as a dominant feature.
- (iv) Proactive learning is reflected in dialogue-oriented lectures, case studies, group work or interactive learning sessions in the context of management simulations and project work.
- (v) Teaching and learning methods must be applicable to real-life working situations. To facilitate the transfer of theory into practice, company projects must be an essential element of the MBA programme.
- (vi) An MBA programme should have a minimum of 476 teaching/contact hours. This interaction may in part be supplemented by using modern multimedia techniques. In addition, there should be a minimum of 1 000 hours of preparatory study. (FIBAA standard.)
- (vii) The quality requirements for programme development and delivery take into account all delivery modes. The following must be taken into account by distance education providers: the design of the programme ensures explicit coherence between, on the one hand, the aims and intended learning outcomes of the programme and, on the other, the scope of the learning materials and the strategies for teaching at a distance; the institution has tested systems and technologies for materials development and delivery for distance learning; learning materials, teaching and learner support strategies, and modes of assessment are designed (and reviewed regularly) in order to give students enrolled at a distance a reasonable chance of achieving the intended exit level outcomes; training and development opportunities are provided for staff to be able to design, deliver and review programmes offered at a distance; and systems are in place to identify inactive students and support them timeously.

Modular MBA programme and the International Global Elective

Since its inception, GIBS has offered an MBA programme on a two-year modular basis. The GIBS MBA is primarily delivered through a series of interactive classroom-based lectures on a modular block-release basis over the two-year period, starting in January each year. The first module commences with a compulsory three-day group dynamics session followed by four days of the first teaching block. Ten days later, block two of the teaching session commences. Thereafter, the programme is delivered through three- and four-day full-time study blocks per module.

The modular structure of delivery allows the students the maximum opportunity to apply theory and concepts that they learn in individual study, lectures and group work. It also allows for the completion of the practical application projects within the student's own company during the periods between each study block. This structure enhances the total learning experience and hones the business leadership capacity of the students.

In addition to the 19 core courses offered in years one and two and the range of electives offered in year two of the programme, the element of the GIBS MBA programme provision which illustrates effective best practice in the teaching and learning criterion is the compulsory International Global Elective.

The GIBS approach to teaching and learning takes cognisance of South African business's need to operate increasingly in the global arena and recognises that international competencies are therefore critical for all senior managers. To this end, towards the end of the second year of the programme, students are required to participate in a ten-day international elective that focuses on global business.

Each year, the global destinations are carefully chosen in order to provide students with a greater global perspective and to show them new contexts in which to apply the knowledge gained on the MBA programme. For the 2005/6 MBA intake, five destinations will be offered. Potential destinations include Boston, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, China, southern Africa and India. These electives will allow students to focus on the unique business opportunities and challenges of each international destination and each destination will be linked to global best practice. Faculty will be drawn from local business schools and speakers will be drawn from leading companies in the area. The programme also includes company visits to globally competitive industries. Some study tour time may be made available to students to do individual visits to leading organisations in their own particular industry. Students are required to participate in syndicate tasks and projects prior to their departure for each destination. In order to prepare adequately, students receive course packs which contain the relevant case studies and articles for lecture sessions or material pertaining to the various company visits at least three weeks prior to the departure date.

As stated by Prof. Binedell, director of GIBS, 'the questions facing executives are timeless and universal' hence the International Global Elective is an opportunity for GIBS MBA students to appreciate the universality of competitive pressures and opportunities and view first-hand the 'concepts and practices adopted by successful organisations', not only locally but internationally as well.

GIBS's approach to teaching and learning, and the International Global Elective in particular, serve as an example to illustrate the application of the most recent developments in teaching and learning methods and techniques and of innovative ways for students to integrate knowledge and put theory into practice. In this respect, the GIBS MBA is, as advertised by

the school, designed to 'provide students with the knowledge and experience that is necessary to develop their future to their best advantage', and a case of best practice of teaching and learning.

MINI-CASE STUDY 5: THE GSM'S MBA SELECTION MODEL

The University of Pretoria's Graduate School of Management (GSM) has been in existence for 55 years. Founded in 1949, the GSM was the first business school outside the USA to offer an MBA degree. The GSM offers its MBA programme as a part-time programme. Only two classes (one modular and one after-hours) of 50 students each are admitted per year. This is in line with the GSM's teaching philosophy of high intensity interaction between lecturer and students. The MBA degree of the GSM gained full accreditation status with the HEQC and, among others, the GSM was commended for its approach to student recruitment.

The HEQC's MBA re-accreditation criterion for student recruitment (Criterion 7) requires that an MBA programme has student recruitment policies and admissions policies designed to recruit learners who will develop competencies in the field of business management. The minimum standards associated with this criterion are as follows:

- (i) Acceptance criteria and processes should include a significant number of the following: letters of recommendation, written essay or personal statement, aims and objectives for undertaking the field of study, interview, copies of academic transcripts, resumé or curriculum vitae, evidence of computer literacy, work experience, admissions test such as GMAT or equivalent.
- (ii) Ninety percent of any cohort must have at least an NQF level 7 (bachelor's degree or equivalent) on entry. Exceptions to the rule are based on exceptional professional performance and evidence that the learner has participated in relevant courses leading to management qualifications. Not more than 10 percent of a cohort can be recruited via alternative access mechanisms and in these cases RPL policies and procedures must be applied properly. The learners must have more than two years' relevant and appropriate work experience.
- (iii) Admission criteria and processes must be clearly documented. Prospectuses and other documents must adequately describe the educational offerings in terms of the academic calendar, admissions policies, degree completion requirements and academic standards.
- (iv) Advertising and promotional materials, recruitment literature and other supporting material must contain accurate information.

The MBA re-accreditation process driven by the HEQC caused many institutions offering MBA programmes to re-evaluate their admission systems. Some business schools require applicants to comply with stated admission requirements and subsequently use the GMAT or similar tests. The GMAT primarily evaluates the numeracy and verbal skills of the applicant. However, a number of concerns militate against the uncritical use of the GMAT

by South African business schools. One is that for a South African applicant, the GMAT is relatively expensive. Another is that the test is contextualised for American applicants to graduate programmes and tends to be culturally biased. Experience has also shown that South African schools making use of the GMAT rarely apply the same strict admission principles as those in the USA using the GMAT. Evidence exists that applicants with scores well below accepted norms for admission to US MBA programmes are admitted to some South African MBA programmes, although these schools use their insistence on applicants having taken the GMAT in their marketing.

In a recent article by George F Dreher and Katherine C Ryan, 'A suspect MBA selection model: The case against the standard work experience requirement', an interesting argument on MBA admission systems is made: 'MBA admission systems should be of the same high quality as the best systems used by the organizations hiring their graduates'.¹ This statement echoes the approach developed by the GSM in 2001 for the selection of suitable candidates for the MBA programme.

GSM ideal student profile

The GSM follows a competitive admissions policy for the MBA programme. A competitive admission policy ensures (1) compliance with the admission criteria; (2) identification of the most suitable candidates for contributing to and completing the programme successfully; and (3) a balanced student body in terms of race, gender, undergraduate discipline, industry and nationality.

GSM's admission policy requires an applicant to comply with the following to be considered for admission to the GSM MBA:

- Matriculation exemption with a minimum of a D symbol in mathematics (HG).
- A relevant bachelor's degree from a recognised institution demonstrating above-average academic performance.
- Learning of a required standard in a number of defined management foundation areas assumed to be in place.
- At least three years of relevant post-degree experience.
- Current employment in an appropriate position.
- Management potential.
- Intellectual capability and emotional intelligence to complete the programme and derive value.
- Information literacy (including the necessary level of English language proficiency).
- Employer support and recommendation to undertake and complete the programme.
- Regular and effective access to the internet.

¹ G.F. Dreher and K.C. Ryan, A suspect MBA selection model: The case against the standard work experience requirement. *Academy of Management Learning and Education Journal*, Vol. 3, 2004.

- Successful completion of all preparatory work, if required.
- An original evaluation certificate issued by SAQA in the case of a foreign qualification.

Compliance with these criteria does not guarantee admission, only admissibility. The GSM selection board may use their discretion for selection.

The rationale behind the selection approach of the GSM was instrumental in determining the first profile of the MBA graduate that could be delivered to the market. This was achieved by consulting with various stakeholders of the GSM. The MBA programme design was derived from the profile of the ideal graduate. Again stakeholder involvement was basic to the design process. Subsequently, the ideal profile of entrants to the programme was compiled. The profile included competencies such as management potential, information literacy, language proficiency, idea fluency and emotional intelligence. The challenge was to design an admission process and instruments that would select for these competencies.

Admissions tests and interviews

In order to develop an assessment strategy for the MBA admissions process, the GSM consulted with SHL, a well-established company engaged in objective people assessment based on the science of occupational assessment. The GSM ideal MBA competence profile was mapped onto the personality characteristics measured by the SHL occupational personality questionnaire (OPQ32i). The ipsative version of the instrument is used for the MBA selection process. The mapping is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: GSM ideal MBA competency profile

Management potential	Leadership
Aspects of information literacy	Planning & organising
Aspects of emotional intelligence	Persuasiveness
Aspects of information literacy	Problem solving & analysis
Aspects of language proficiency	Oral communication
Aspects of language proficiency	Written communication
Idea fluency	Creativity & innovation
Aspects of emotional intelligence	Interpersonal sensitivity
Aspects emotional intelligence	Flexibility
Aspects of emotional intelligence	Resilience

Although the GSM profile meant that only 10 of the 16 competencies assessed by the OPQ32i were deemed to be crucial, a decision was made to take all 16 competencies into consideration when evaluating an applicant. This decision was based on the relevancy of the other competencies from a business perspective - for example competencies such as strategic thinking, a quality orientation and personal motivation. In addition to the OPQ32i instrument, two other SHL(r) instruments were included in the selection tests: a numerical critical reasoning

instrument (NMG3) and a verbal critical reasoning test (VMG3). The former measures the applicant's ability to make correct decisions or inferences from numerical data, whereas the latter measures the applicant's ability to evaluate the logic of various kinds of argument.

Furthermore, the GSM took the decision to develop an in-house in-tray type test to be used as part of the selection process. The test was designed to give an indication of the applicant's English language proficiency (including writing skills), idea fluency and aspects of information literacy. The test is administered as part of the battery of tests and is graded in-house by an information specialist.

The final step in the selection process is a personal interview conducted with each applicant by an admissions panel. The panel consists of two to three panel members, typically a staff member of the GSM, a lecturer on the MBA and/or an alumnus of the school. The decision on whether to admit an applicant is based on the weighted average of the scores achieved by the candidate.

The GSM has conducted studies to determine the correlation between the scores on the admission tests taken by successful applicants and their subsequent academic performance on the MBA. To date, only a limited sample of students (50) has completed the full MBA programme since the introduction of the selection process. Nevertheless, the ability of the selection process to predict success on the MBA seems to be impressive. Anecdotal evidence obtained from lecturers who have taught on the GSM MBA for many years points to vast improvement in the quality of students admitted to the programme. In the same vein, lecturers teaching on the GSM MBA as well as other highly regarded MBA programmes in South Africa and internationally, have commented on the quality of the GSM MBA students. One comment from one of the itinerant professors teaching on the GSM MBA, refers to 'the willingness and ability of the GSM MBA students to explore the fuzzy boundaries of new management thinking'. This correlates well with what has been described in information science literature as typical behaviour of information-literate people.

Using stringent criteria and a rigorous admission process, the GSM has a situation where the admission process acts as the filter between those who have the potential to succeed on the MBA programme and those who do not. In addition, the school has an equity profile of students that shows a diverse range of students characteristic of the demographics of South Africa, several international students from the SADC region and other African countries. The GSM's approach to student recruitment is comprehensive and fair and thus represents a case of good practice.