

# Are You MBA Material?

It's arguably the world's best known and most widely recognised postgraduate degree, but is an MBA right for you? EX spoke with an alumnus and a teacher from the Singapore Centre of the **Manchester Business School** for the inside scoop.



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## #2 Teaching the degree

Frank Siegfried, German, 20 years in Singapore

### // Who enrolls in an MBA at Manchester Business School?

Most participants are between 29 and 39 years old, with very different professional and geographical backgrounds. Across the three Asian centres where I teach, we have gender equality and I'm proud to see that our female students are doing very well. Most participants are doing the part-time MBA and I'm always amazed at how they successfully balance work, family and academic requirements, especially as some of them hold senior positions in their companies or are business owners.

### // Give us an example of one course you teach, and why you think it's effective.

One course I teach is Business Simulation. Participants come to us to broaden their skill sets and develop from a specialised role into a more general managerial or leadership role. I can't think of a better learning scenario than confronting them with the challenges of

managing an organisation in a competitive market, which requires them to work in inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural teams – the typical setting in a globalised economy.

Participants learn about the interdependencies between different functional roles and, at the same time, they can see whether they have what it takes to operate in an ambiguous environment and to develop convincing arguments, without the fear of creating damage to their careers. Even our most experienced participants tend to realise that some of their basic assumptions and practices require an occasional update. This "Eureka" moment makes all the difference for their future development.

### // What's the main strength of Manchester Business School's MBA programme?

Without a doubt, the established and experienced teaching staff. Not only do they lead high-quality research projects in their respective fields, they also engage with the business community and address concerns of the general public on a daily basis. Most of them were practitioners in businesses or government before they became academics, so their work is viewed as relevant, valuable and trustworthy.

Another strength is MBS's international ecosystem, which allows participants to study across seven campuses, as well as its international accreditation credentials, laying the foundation for an academically rigorous MBA programme that is recognised and respected globally. ■

## #1 Doing the degree

Jason Major, American, 25 years in Singapore

### // Why did you decide to do the MBA at Manchester Business School?

Approaching 50 years of age, I was interested in "sharpening the saw" – that is, updating my knowledge of current business management theory and practice as it applies to my work in the energy infrastructure industry. I was introduced to the Manchester Business School MBA programme by a business acquaintance who was enrolled at the time.

### // Tell us a bit about the course.

It's structured to accommodate working professionals, including those who travel frequently, and covers everything from finance and accounting to risk management and game theory. The course module workshops typically start on a Friday or end on a Monday to minimise disruption of the working week, and there is flexibility in the number of modules you take per semester.

I attended most of my workshops at the Market Street facility in Singapore, but I also attended

excellent workshops at the Dubai Knowledge Village and at Tongji University, Shanghai. Instruction was provided by experienced, well-qualified, up-to-date educators from the Manchester faculty, with additional evening review sessions throughout the semester presented by Singapore-based lecturers.

### // What was one positive thing you gained from the course?

After decades of work in management, it was humbling to join a group of young professionals as a peer rather than a superior. I had a lot to contribute to the group as a result of my work experience, but learned as much or more from those in my classes that were far younger than me, especially in the art and skill of working as a group with technology to identify and apply the appropriate models for the assigned work. This was a wonderful, unexpected learning experience.

### // How do you hope to use your qualification in your career?

My MBA was self-funded and intended for personal enrichment, but I found myself applying new skills to routine problems in my work. I'm also more confident with interaction with the other department heads in my business as a result of my deeper understanding of their areas of expertise.



I'm amazed at how well the students balance work, family and academic requirements

The Manchester Business School is at 55 Market Street #05-01, Singapore. For more information, call 6538 4454 or visit [singapore.portals.mbs.ac.uk](http://singapore.portals.mbs.ac.uk).