

# M.A./MBA (USA)

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- 100% Online
- 100% English
- Part-time study
- International



# M.A./MBA (USA)

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# M.A./MBA (USA)

## Management projects, competence development & master's thesis

The M.A./MBA (USA) aims to develop competent managers and leaders.

### Program Goal

In order to achieve this goal, the M.A./MBA focusses on each student's professional mid-term and long-term goals as a starting point. This means: when you begin the program, we will be asking you about your personal program goal. Why did you join the program? What is it (exactly) that you want to accomplish professionally? Where do you want to be in 2 to 5 years from now? Not only do we ask you to define some sort of goal, we will also ask you to define a program goal that is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound (SMART). Whatever your SMART program goal is, it becomes the touchstone for you and us to verify the success and value of the studies. Being this crucial, the accomplishment of your program

goal is an integral part of our program design. This means, we have created a methodology through which we hope to enable and encourage you to develop the knowledge, skills and competences that will help you to accomplish your goals. What does this mean? No one can guarantee success, but it is clear, that knowledge alone or a new academic title added to a résumé do not automatically transfer into career success. What companies and organizations are looking for in candidates are actual skills and competences, the definite ability to get a job done, proven under real-world conditions. The M.A./MBA (USA) provides you with a playing field to acquire real-world expertise, so that you can build your résumé on more than just another degree.



## Management Project and Competence Development



Given the importance of Management projects, what are these? What are the main defining criteria? Management projects are real-world business challenges, which you work on throughout the entire program. E.g., if you want to build a career in global logistics and currently work in this field, optimally your management project deals with a real, ongoing challenge that you see significantly hindering success in your work environment or industry. It is your "management project job" to develop and provide real and measurable solutions for this problem. The M.A./MBA equips you with management research methods and tools to find solutions and develop new ideas. It provides an inspiring environment of peers, instructors, knowledge, ideas and other resources so that you can develop concrete contributions that go beyond most typical capstone projects.

Management projects should be significant and relevant. This means, whatever solutions you generate during your work on the topic, should be important to someone – optimally someone with the power to hire and/or promote you. This way, the management project can help you gain management visibility and promote your career. Most organizations face a multitude of ongoing business challenges many of which have an indefinitely large scope. Therefore, it is important to identify a management project that fits the requirements of your study program. This means, as a M.A./MBA (USA) student, we will work with you on narrowing down ongoing business challenges to a scope that you can actually manage within the framework of the study program. You will identify SMART management project goal(s) and gradually, guided by your instructors and in collaboration with your peers, you will work towards these goals. The results of your work serve as concrete business contributions that you can present to your management and supervisors.

In all of this, be aware that management projects are not static, because the world is constantly changing and with it business challenges. Whatever your management project idea is in the beginning of the program it is very likely to change throughout the program. New aspects arise, new, urgent challenges appear, and you have to be able to adapt. We know this and your instructors will work with you if you have to alter, change or adapt your management project at any point in the program.

With over 20 years of experience with students and the development of management projects, we will be guiding and supporting you to achieve your goal.

## Management Project Development

In the courses 2, 8, 10, 11, your Master's Thesis, and final oral exam you will study with an emphasize on your management project. Each of the courses conclude with your writing of a paper about your management project, each time from a new managerial angle. Your Master's Thesis builds upon the management project analyses, findings and elaborations from your studies and in your final oral exam you will be defending your Thesis.

Courses 2 and 3 are the initiation of your management project and competence development. Here, the students' program goal, the management project's topic and scope are defined. MPP1 is the management project proposal, its synopsis. Its leading tasks are:

MPP1: RESEARCH (approx. 10-15 pages without annex)

Management project's definition of problem, question and goal

- Define your SMART program goal
- Derive your management project topic from your program goal(s)
- Define your SMART management project goal(s)
- Define the scope of your project
- Select and specify your research question

Course 8 of the M.A./MBA program, uses the knowledge and tools learned in the courses 4, 5, 6, and 7. It requires the scientific application of these to the previously defined management project. This is done in the form of an analysis of the management project's current situation. Leading questions are:

MPP2: ANALYSIS (approx. 15-20 pages without annex)

- What is the current situation of the chosen management project topic?
- What are its determining aspects?
- What are the framework conditions of this topic?
- What factors influence it in which way?
- What are opportunities, risks, strengths and weaknesses?
- 

In course, 10 the students research global mega trends, and factors of these, which are likely going to influence their management project in the future. Outcome is MPP3 – Influencing Factors. The underlying motive and questions of this paper are an analysis of those factors that are likely to influence the topic in the future.

MPP3: INFLUENCING FACTORS (approx. 15-20 pages without annex)

- What are the key factors that are likely to influence the management project in the future (next ten years)?
- How are these factors going to evolve?
- How may future scenarios look like?
- Which goals and strategies may be derived?



Master Thesis / Capstone Project & Final Exam	
Course 17	Quantitative Analysis & Decision Making for Managers
Course 16	Competence Development 3
Course 15	Financial Tools for Managers
Course 14	Organizational Dynamics & Effectiveness
Course 13	Competence Development 2
Course 12	Business Strategy & Planning
Course 11	Management Project: Applied Research, International Factors
Course 10	Management Project: Applied Research, Foresight Management, Influencing Factors
Course 09	Strategic Integrated Marketing Communication
Course 08	Management Project: Applied Research: Current Situation
Course 07	Business Analytics
Course 06	Organizational Creativity, Discovery & Innovation
Course 05	Law
Course 04	Project Management
Course 03	Competence Development 1
Course 02	Management Project: Methods of Empirical Social Research
Course 01	Economics



The courses 12, 14, 15, and 16 are delivered on Post University's Blackboard. In course 15 the students can, if applicable, write a paper that focuses on the financial planning of their management project.

In course 11, the students take a closer look at international factors and trends that influence their management project. Hereby the focus lies on international factors that either currently affect or assumedly are going to influence the management project in the future.

MPP4: INTERNATIONAL FACTORS (approx. 15-20 pages without annex)

- What are the determining factors of this specific international aspect?
- How is this international factor going to evolve?
- How is this international factor influencing the management project currently and/or in the future?
- What are the challenges of these international factors and how can these be overcome?

In course 13, the students evaluate their personal competence development up to this point. The professor and the students will individually talk about what competence goals were already achieved and what goals need to be redefined.

Course 16 is dedicated to the conclusion of competence development (Competence Development Paper).

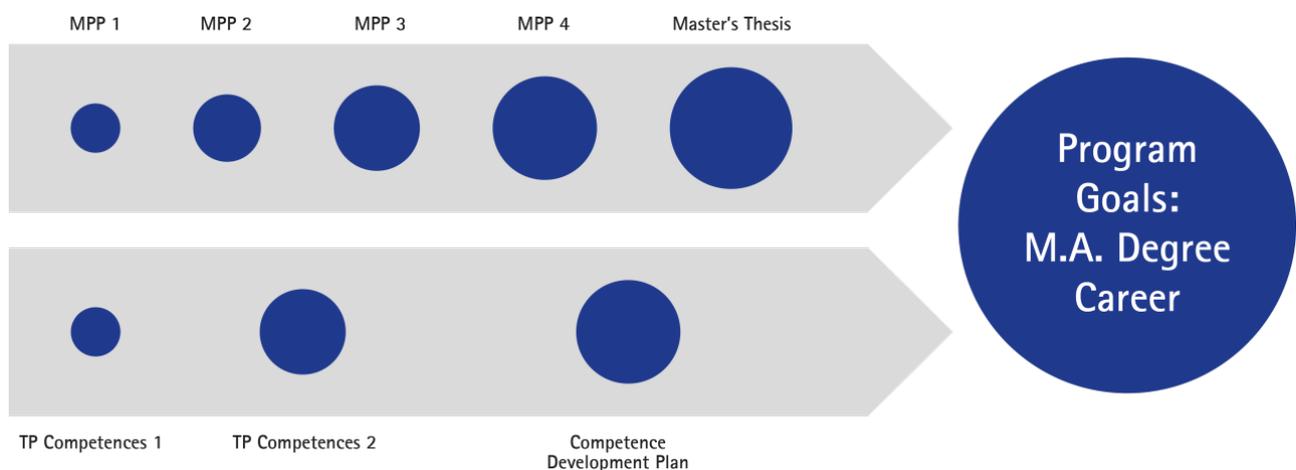
The Master's Thesis has a length of approx. 80-100 pages without annex. It is a compilation and further development of the previously elaborated management project papers. Throughout the program, these papers establish the central theme and connect all courses on SIBE's E-Campus from your starting point in the beginning of the program until your graduation. Findings and results from research conducted in all four of the management project papers are the basis of your Master's Thesis, comparable to a final cumulative project paper that covers the entire program. Because of this overarching and summarizing character, Post University transfers the Master's Thesis and recognizes it as the MBA study's "Capstone Project". This way, there is only one final paper you will have to write.

# M.A./MBA (USA)

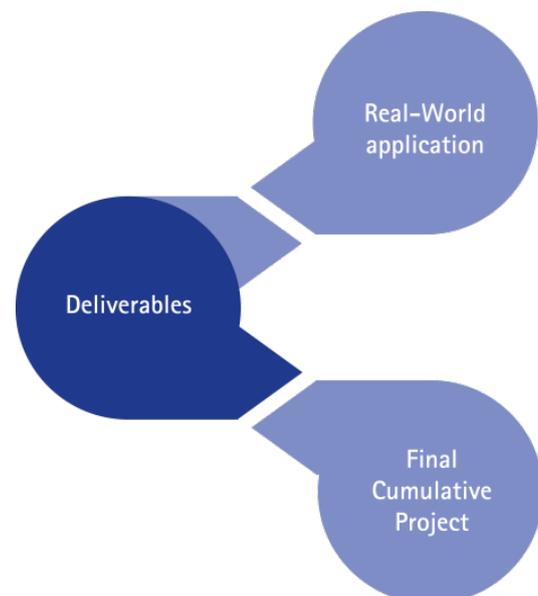
## Program content & graded assignments

### Graded Papers on SIBE's E-Campus

The M.A./MBA places the students and their program goals into the center of learning and teaching. This starts on day one, when we ask you to reflect on your personal program goal and define this in writing. In the following weeks, this program goal becomes the focal point. Each student defines a management project and reflects his/her personal competences. The chapter at hand explains how the management project and competences are developed in the program.



In the courses on SIBE's E-Campus, management projects and personal competence development are central to the students' learning. Consequently, the content taught in these courses have an applied character and revolve around applied research and analysis. In the vast majority of the graded papers of these courses, the students elaborate their management projects or competence development in the form of "Management Project Papers" (MPP), "Transfer Papers" (TP) or a Competence Development Plan (CDP). Throughout the program, these papers establish a common thread and connect all courses on SIBE's E-Campus. This applies particularly to the Master's Thesis that is based on findings and results from research conducted in the management project papers.



## Graded Assignments on post.blackboard

Each course on Post University's learning platform, post.blackboard, covers and completes one specific managerial subject in itself. Therefore, there is no connecting thread of graded assignments between the different courses taught at Post University. During each course, the students are required to apply knowledge to real-world challenges, prepare several deliverables and a final cumulative project. Deliverables can be short papers, research papers, presentations, teamwork results or similar. Frequently, deliverables deal with the application of knowledge to real-world challenges, which may but do not have to be about your management project. For some of these assignments it is actually advisable to use real-world topics other than the management project. However, in order to build your personal subject matter expertise, you will be using your management project topic for knowledge application as often as possible.

Combining the methodology on SIBE's E-Campus and post.blackboard you will be working on your management project and competence development consistently throughout the program. This applies particularly to the times on the E-Campus and to some degree to your time on post.blackboard.

## Overview of Graded Assignments by Courses

"Table 1 – Subjects and Graded Assignments" lists the graded assignments that you need to pass successfully in order to be awarded the degrees. Not listed but always part of your graded activities on either platform is your weekly student engagement by participating in the discussion boards. Hence, the so-called "Student Engagement" is assessed weekly.

*»Small classes give me the possibility to get speedy feedback from my instructors and fellow students. This 2-way learning experience does not only cover my professional development but adds a systematic improvement of my personal competencies. At the same time, the program is efficiently managed with an excellent organization and structure. The online interface promotes openness in discussion and enables all participants to give and take from everyone's experience and allows to see progress in a better way than conventional learning.«*

*José Antonio Romero Morales, student*

**Table 1 – Subjects and Graded Assignments**

Course #	Contents	Papers/ Exams
Course 1	Basics 1: Economics <sup>1</sup>	Several graded assignments, final cumulative project
Course 2	Methods of Empirical Social Research	MPP 1: Project Proposal <sup>2</sup>
Course 3	Competence Development 1	TP Competences 1 <sup>3</sup>
Course 4	Project Management	Several graded assignments, final cumulative project
Course 5	Law	TP Law 1   TP Law 2
Course 6	Organizational Creativity, Discovery & Innovation	Several graded assignments, final cumulative project
Course 7	Business Analytics	Several graded assignments, final cumulative project
Course 8	Applied Research: Current Situation	MPP 2: Analysis Current Situation
Course 9	Strategic Integrated Marketing Communication	Several graded assignments, final cumulative project
Course 10	Applied Research, Foresight management, Influencing Factors	MPP 3: Influencing Factors
Course 11	Applied Research, International Factors	MPP 4: International Factors
Course 12	Business Strategy & Planning	Several graded assignments, final cumulative project
Course 13	Competence Development 2	TP Competences 2
Course 14	Organizational Dynamics & Effectiveness	Several graded assignments, final cumulative project
Course 15	Financial Tools for Managers	Several graded assignments, final cumulative project
Course 16	Competence Development 3	Competence Development Paper <sup>4</sup>
Course 17	Quantitative Analysis & Decision Making for Managers	Several graded assignments, final cumulative project
	Master's Thesis / Capstone Project	Master's Thesis <sup>5</sup> = Capstone Project
	Final Exam	Final Oral Exam <sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Parallel to this course the ungraded but mandatory academic success course is scheduled

<sup>2</sup> A Management Project Paper (MPP) has a length of +/- 15 pages. In it, the students research and work on specific managerial aspects of their management projects.

<sup>3</sup> A Transfer Paper (TP) has a length of 7-10 pages. The main idea behind transfer papers is for the students to show their level of understanding of a subject matter through correct application of knowledge to a "real-world" topic, rather than repeating facts in a written test.

<sup>4</sup> Competence Development Paper (CDP) is similar to a MPP, but in it, the students elaborate their competence development during the program and not their management projects.

<sup>5</sup> See the in-text explanation about the Master's Thesis. Post University transfers the Master's Thesis as the MBA's capstone project. No additional assignment is required from the students.

<sup>6</sup> The final oral exam is conducted online. It consists of a defense of the Master's Thesis and can include other questions from any area of the study program.

## Content by Course

Each course at Post University focuses on a specific topic and is completed in itself. Each SIBE course on the other hand revolves around a certain management topic, yet the courses are connected through the management project and competence development. The following content is designed on this background and reflects each school's distinctive strength. Nine courses are organized on Post University's learning platform post.blackboard, eight courses are conducted on SIBE's E-Campus. Post University courses emphasize the transfer of knowledge under the aspect of immediate practical application. Courses at SIBE emphasize knowledge application in form of the development of research papers or competence development. Each deal with a specific aspect of the Management Project and form the basis for the Master's Thesis. Students closely collaborate in small classes. Classes and small groups are consistently and continuously guided and supported by dedicated instructors; a setting, which creates a personal learning environment for the content described below:

*»After the successful completion of my undergraduate studies in Business Informatics, I was looking for a flexible, recognized and international graduate program. The online M.A./MBA studies at SIBE in corporation with POST University not only have a truly international focus, but also allow me to incorporate the studies into my daily working schedule by leveraging the innovative online learning format. Additionally, the organization and structure of the program is excellent and addresses all topics you would expect from a highly recognized graduate program.«*

*D. Schindeldecker, M.A./MBA Student*

### Academic Success Course (Post University):

This course is a four-week long introduction to Online Learning Success. Its workload is adapted, so that learners are able to complete it parallel to the first study course. Participants will learn how to participate in online discussions, what is expected from a successful learner in this program, how to conduct research, how to use the online libraries and many more success factors of graduate online studies. This is a preparatory course specific to this program; no credits are awarded.

### Course 1: Economics (Post University)

Knowledge of the fundamental concepts of finance, financial accounting and economics, including opportunity cost, the time value of money, and financial analysis. An investigation of financial decision making as it applies to business, government, and not-for-profit organizations. Emphasis is on the application of financial and nonfinancial information to a wide range of management decisions, from product pricing and budgeting to project analysis and performance measurement. Students will learn applications for a variety of decision-making tools (such as break-even analysis, activity-based costing procedures, linear programming, discounted cash flow techniques, and the balanced scorecard. Contemporary managerial techniques will be explored such as target costing and kaizen costing as a means of improving operational efficiency and economies.

### **Course 2: Methods of Empirical Social Research (SIBE)**

This is a foundational course with great relevance for the entire program. It initiates the two major processes that run parallel throughout the entire program: the scientific elaboration of the management project on the one hand and a guided process of personal competence development on the other. The students will learn foundations of empirical social research such as qualitative and quantitative research, assessment and referencing of sources. They will apply this knowledge by establishing the most relevant aspects of a research paper reflected in the management project's definition of problem, question and goal. The parallel conducted competence development includes an individual competence profile based on online conducted assessments, personal evaluations and feedback leading to a personal goal setting.

### **Course 3: Personality & Competences 1 (SIBE)**

Competent managers and leaders are persons who are able to lead their organizations and people in times when framework conditions and circumstances become increasingly complex and intransparent. They show high levels of self-organization and self-motivation; they are able to reduce complexity and derive actions for themselves, their organizations and people that lead to a successful future. Competence development at SIBE strives to empower adult learners to understand their personal skill set and utilize their strengths to become competent managers and leaders. Upon successful completion of this first competence development course, the students will be able to: Describe what competencies „are“ in general, and differentiate between different competencies. Conduct a well-founded self-assessment and external assessment regarding relevant competencies and explain their estimation in individual feedback. Conduct consulting and/ or coaching sessions based on an adequate coaching model.

### **Course 4: Project Management (Post University)**

This course focuses on one of the major growth areas in the field of management; project management. Projects are defined as temporary endeavors undertaken to create a unique product or service. The course points out that recent interest in project management is based on recognition that many organizational tasks do not fit neatly into business-as-usual. The significant differences between project management and general management are overviewed. The three interrelated objectives of budget, schedule, and specifications are also introduced. This course will present a management perspective on the analysis and improvement of processes in both manufacturing and service operations. The course emphasizes scheduling various projects and concludes with a discussion of monitoring control and learning from projects. The course will also cover benchmarking, quantitative analysis and the voice of the customer. The design of the course involves case discussion, lectures, and problem solving as the primary vehicle for learning. In addition, various projects will be analyzed. The class will use computer tools to track projects.

### **Course 5: Law (SIBE)**

The students shall have an insight into the principles of national and international law by studying questions mainly from civil law, which is of high practical use. International law is very important for lawyers as well as economists. This is the result of globalization and the increasing cooperation between the countries in the field of economy, law, technology, culture etc. The students shall get familiar with the particular

structure of international law and the main processes in international trade law. Legal regulations will be reflected based on ongoing national and global issues and real-world cases.

### **Course 6: Entrepreneurial Innovation – Creativity, Discovery and Innovation (Post University)**

This is a multi-disciplinary course focusing on the creative process as it affects the managing and leading of knowledge workers. The course will examine the processes involved in creativity, discovery, and innovation and explore the motivations involved in innovation both internal to the individual and external to the organization. Course content will draw on psychology, marketing, management, general business, fine arts, philosophy, and leadership disciplines with the intent to expose students to the varied approaches and results of the creative process. Students will learn strategies for enhancing creativity and innovation skills through activities and virtual team projects and experiences. Students will study creative minds and organizations and the impact they have on new value creation. This course serves as the program's cornerstone course and as such is designed to be the introductory course in the program.

### **Course 7: Business Analytics (Post University)**

Though it was once only required of academics, quants and PhDs, the ability to understand, analyze and make decisions based on data has become an imperative skill across all industries and careers. This class has been designed to give the students a base knowledge of Business Analytics through real world application. At the end of the course, students will understand the processes and skills needed by managers to develop Business Requirements, analyze and display data for decision making, and drive organizations toward data centric processes.

### **Course 8: Applied Research1 – Analysis (SIBE)**

After defining the question, scope and SMART goal of their management project in course 2, the students now use the learnings from the courses at Post University to refine their management project expertise. Central to this course is an analysis of the management project's internal and external current situation. While the management methods and tools taught during Post University's courses were conveyed on the background of their relevance in management practice and application to daily business, course 8 leads its students to the application of these instruments under the aspect of management research. Leading research questions are:

- What is the current situation of the chosen management project topic?
- What are its determining aspects?
- What are the framework conditions of this topic?
- What factors influence it in which way?
- What are opportunities, risks, strengths and weaknesses?

### **Course 9: Strategic Integrated Marketing (Post University)**

The marketing mix strategies will be addressed in the context of meeting the business strategy goals. The students will explore the portfolio of marketing mix strategies and learn how to balance them to achieve a long-term differentiation and growth. Product, Place, Promotion and Price strategies will be associated

with the various stages of a product life cycle. At the end of the course, each student should be able to formulate the appropriate marketing mix strategies for their choice of a product/service and a specific product life cycle stage. The course will benefit marketing managers and practitioners, as well as others wishing to understand the advantages and use of integrated approach to selecting Marketing Mix Strategies.

### **Course 10: Applied Research 2 – Influencing Factors (SIBE)**

After evaluating the management project's current situation in course 8, this course is an analysis of those factors that are likely to influence the topic in the future. While the management methods and tools taught during the Post University courses were conveyed on the background of their relevance in management practice, this course leads students to the application of these and more instruments under the aspect of management research. Leading research questions are:

- What are the key factors that are likely to influence the management project in the future (next ten years)?
- How are these factors going to evolve?
- How may future scenarios look like?
- Which goals and strategies may be derived?

By adding the perspective of mega trends and their impact on the future of the management project, a new research challenge is introduced. Scientific research is based on findings that can be reproduced and thus verified. Predicting the future leaves this realm of (relative) certainty and leads to the question of how to found "guesstimated opinions".

### **Course 11: Applied Research 2 – Influencing Factors (SIBE)**

Contemporary management and leadership cannot be thought or taught responsibly with an exclusively national focus. While evaluating those factors, which are likely to influence the management project's current situation and its future in MPP2 and MPP3, at least one but most likely several global or international factors must have come up, which are brought about by the ongoing process of globalization. At the core of this module is the leading question: What does globalization mean for leadership and management now and in the near to long-term future? The key questions of this module are:

- What challenges are leadership and management facing in the light of a globalized world?
- Which competencies are required in a leadership position in a globalized world?
- Which personal consequences result for leadership and management in the face of a globalized world?

## Course 12: Objectives & Strategy –

### Business Strategy & Planning (Post University)

This course focuses on application of key steps undertaken in implementing a strategy planning process in an ever-changing world. It examines and discusses the process, tools and skills that organizations develop and employ throughout the business strategy cycle. Working on their own selected business objects, students will apply the following business strategy planning steps: formulate vision, understand the stakeholder roles, analyze internal assets and market competitiveness, generate, evaluate and select winning strategies, integrate action plans and, implement, learn and adopt as necessary. Students will exercise the use of various tools and skills common to this field: Mental Models, Surveying/Auditing, System Thinking, SWOT analysis, Gap Analysis and others.

*»At first, I have been sceptical concerning the quantity and more than that the quality of online discussions. But after 3 weeks of participating in discussion boards (the online forum for M.A./MBA students) I can say, the online discussions are of top quality and depth. They go far beyond what I've expected.« says Georg Laqua, the professor working with the students on the topic of competency development. «*

*Georg Laqua,  
Instructor M.A./MBA study program*

### Course 13: Personality & Competences 2 (SIBE)

Picking-up the thread from course 3, students re-evaluate their competence profiles based on structured assessments, personal evaluations and feedback. The focus lies on changes and further developed competencies in relation to earlier assessments and the personal goals previously defined.

### Course 14: Organizational Dynamics & Effectiveness (Post University)

This course focuses on managing organizations for high performance in a rapidly changing business environment. The course explores key dynamics impacting organizational effectiveness from both the internal and external perspective. The student will develop an understanding of essential human resource management (HRM) functions that drive and support the changing world of work, as well as other elements key to organizational performance. Topics include organizational structuring, acquiring talent, developing/rewarding/retaining employees, leading and managing dynamics for performance. Additional organizational dynamics to be explored include decision-making, external influences, and multiculturalism.

### Course 15: Financial Tools for Managers (Post University)

This course examines the fundamental principles of corporate finance and introduces practical tools for financial decision making in both entrepreneurial and innovative business environments. Students will use flexible financial models, which allow in-depth analysis to evaluate options and make informed recommendations. The class sessions will include exercises utilizing models and modeling techniques that cover financial items from basic financial statements to budgets to leverage and more. Assignments will require students to evaluate a business situation and make and support their decision based on their analysis. Because of the hands-on nature of the course, it is assumed that participants have a general knowledge of finance and accounting as well as a basic knowledge of spreadsheets.

### Course 16: Personality & Competences (SIBE)

Building upon previous courses and the process of competence development, in this course, the students discuss their learnings from competence development and leadership. A final competence assessment is conducted, which is complemented by a personal evaluation and feedback from others. Leading questions are:

- How did my competencies develop throughout the program?
- Where am I standing in relation to my career goal and program goal?
- What are my future competence goals?

Results are documented in the "Competence-Development-Paper" (CDP).

### Course 17 Qualitative Analysis & Decision Making for Managers (Post University)

This course builds on what students learned in the course Financial Tools for Managers by taking the tools and exploring ways the tools are used in decision making in organizations. The students will explore the challenge of using financial tools to make financial and economic decisions that have a lasting impact. Topics covered include managing operations, assessing the performance of a business, the dynamics of growth, cash flow and investment decisions, financing and shareholder value. The students will be evaluating Shark Tank projects as well as other businesses, making decisions and justifying their decisions.

### Master's Thesis (SIBE)

During this last course, the students also start to work self-organized on the M.A. program Master's Thesis, which at the same time serves as the MBA's Capstone Project. Understanding gained across the totality of all courses is applied to the management project topic; findings from the MPP1-4 are reflected, up-dated, and compiled; the management project's goals are re-evaluated, strategies derived, management recommendations discussed and implementations elaborated.

### Final Oral Exam

Approximately 4 weeks after submission of the Master's Thesis, each student undergoes a final oral exam, in which he/she defends his/her Master's Thesis individually. The exam is conducted online and takes about 60 minutes.