

'Blended' MBA

SMU and Madrid business school to launch new programme

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SINGAPORE Management University (SMU) has teamed up with a business school to launch a blended Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme that combines face-to-face teaching with online interactions — the first of its kind in Asia.

Its partner, the IE Business School in Madrid, Spain, topped the world ranking in online MBA programmes by the Financial Times in March this year.

The school has extensive experience and an excellent track record in MBA, EMBA, and blended learning programmes.

It has been offering a global MBA programme for the past eight years.

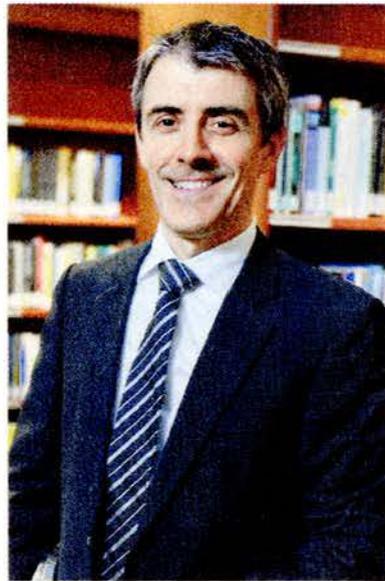
New and unique

The new IE-SMU MBA programme, which can be completed in 10 months, is unique in that it combines traditional face-to-face classes with online interaction. The programme will be taught by faculty from both universities.

Starting in September, it will include five face-to-face modules — four modules held at SMU in Singapore, and one at IE Business School's campus in Madrid.

"Throughout the 10-month programme, students will continue to learn online through video-conferencing, online forums and social media platforms, as well as case study discussions, assignments and tests," says Associate Professor Lieven Demeester, the academic director of this new MBA at SMU's Lee Kong Chian School of Business.

SMU's strength is its familiarity with and expertise in the Asian style and model of management,



Prof Demeester says the new programme is ideal for the increasingly mobile executive.

PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

and it complements IE Business School well in this aspect.

"It's a regional MBA with a blended learning format targeting business professionals in a radius of up to three hours flying distance from Singapore," he says.

"We hope to attract management talents who wish to upgrade themselves but are unable to travel to Singapore because of their work. The flexibility offered by this course will enable them to continue to stay in their jobs."

Students will spend only 17 days in the classroom in Singapore and Madrid, including five days at the start of the programme in Singapore.

As the IE-SMU MBA is a general management programme, no elective courses are available.

The programme is designed for executives with about three years of professional experience.

"The programme methodology enhances their ability to leverage online technology for cross-border collaboration in today's global business environment," says Prof Demeester, who is in charge of the development of the programme.

He stresses that the new MBA programme is ideal for the increasingly mobile executive as much of the curriculum can be accessed, attended and completed remotely. This allows executives who are operating businesses in rural and remote locations to have access to a first-tier education.

Ideal partnership

IE has a successful history of delivering blended learning, and its blended curriculum is often regarded more favourably than a complete face-to-face delivery.

Importantly, IE and SMU have teamed up to deliver a unique learning experience with more Asian-based subject matter experts.

SMU has been operating a prolific case writing centre in South-east Asia with more than 90 Asian case studies published since its launch in August 2011, and this partnership brings this practical experience into the classroom.

"As the IE-SMU MBA programme will offer insights into Asia-Pacific markets, business strategies and management cultures, it will strengthen our MBA students' competitive edge in their career development," says Prof Demeester.

About 30 students will be admitted in the first cohort. The programme costs \$74,900 plus a \$100 application fee. Applications are now open.