

Online MBA Vs On-campus MBA: Things To Know Before You Opt For Your Next Career Move

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The novel coronavirus has made an unimaginable impact on the global economy, making every future decision a crucial one for businesses. Every industry impacted by COVID-19 has made drastic changes to function in the new normal. The education industry, in particular, has witnessed a clear shift from class to web rooms. Both students and faculty have adapted to this disruption. The teaching faculty in particular, who were not absolutely comfortable with the online mode of teaching, have embraced the online medium. This in turn, will prove to be an extremely useful skill as the faculty returns to classroom teaching which can be made more engaging and interactive using technology.

Given the rise of digital modes of study, students and aspiring MBA students are now speculating whether a management degree on campus will offer any added value as compared to online courses. The most important question one should ask is which phase of their career are they at and what qualification or skillset is the industry looking for.

Here are a few things you should consider to make an informed decision on which MBA to choose:

Learning Environment - Online MBA courses are short, easy-going and students are able to learn at their own pace whereas on-campus MBAs have a disciplined approach with the courses designed to give students an all-round exposure. The important differentiating factor is offering a learning environment that is conducive to knowledge sharing. A structured learning environment where ideas are exchanged within the student community and with faculty members gives students an experience of teamwork and collaboration as they step into the business world. While online courses are concise and help you focus, on-campus MBA programs help students to be a part of in-person discussions that take place both in and outside the classroom. The relationship that is built through regular face-to-face interaction over two years is indispensable. The interactive skills developed in the process truly help to groom a student and their capabilities. Peer-to-peer communication is another great attribute of on-campus education as you start building relationships with future industry colleagues.

Additionally, motivation plays a great role in shaping a student who is a fresher or an experienced professional. Campus education allows the teaching faculty to identify and tap into every student's potential individually. Be it motivation from teachers or fellow students, it goes a long way in moulding the kind of professional one becomes.

Networking and Resources - One key feature of a full-time MBA program is that it helps you build a robust and extensive business network with industry experts through in-person contact. On the other hand, a digital program does give you access to professors online. Various events organised on campus with corporates and thought leaders give ample exposure to students.

This offers a learner an opportunity to receive business knowledge and developments from the professionals themselves. The resource section that physical and digital libraries offer is a benefit of on-campus education. B-Schools have spent years in building resources that are available to students for access at all times.

Soft Skill Development - Due to the lack of inter-personal interaction opportunities, online MBA programs can help students develop their soft skills that are valued in the business. A regular MBA program is an enabler to learn skills — like collaboration, adaptability, and the ability to connect the project, peers and partners. Such features in a program enable learners to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people. Inter-personal interaction helps to develop their emotional intelligence, and such skills remain in high demand. LinkedIn's annual Global Talent Trends report too affirms that the big trends fueling the future of the workplace are empathy, humility and resilience.

Revisiting Classes - With online classes, students can revisit classes and study material which helps them have quick access to review sessions. However, some concepts are difficult to understand and need real-life examples to help students clearly apply them to a business scenario. These industry examples shared by professors based on their assessment of a student's reaction is something really unique about classroom learning. Many topics and study material have micro concepts which an online MBA course might not be able to help with. On the other hand, for working executives who sought after understanding of business concepts and advance their career, an online MBA on campus is a perfect choice. These courses and trainings are extremely useful for up-skilling and adding to the knowledge base.

Groom for the future – Most industries when looking to hire freshers are more inclined to prioritize candidates with exposure to the business world through internships and more so with virtual internships. In the post COVID world, businesses would look at work from home resources. Virtual interning helps them absorb employees into the corporate culture who are acquainted to remote working. These days B-Schools are offering global exposure to their students in the industry of their choice through their virtual internships. The entire process of preparing students for internship, interviews and then finally see them as a manager or entrepreneur is what turns out to be a great tangible return for the invested effort of a teacher.

The education system is likely to see a healthy transformation where we see more of blended learning as the new emerging concept. While digital education is on the rise, it cannot replace the quality of holistic learning that a brick-and-mortar B-school provides. If you are a working professional and want to up-skill and move into the next phase in your career, a disciplined approach to an online MBA can be the perfect solution. However, if you are a fresh graduate, and want to step into the business world, a B-School is the right place to give you the confidence and the right armour. What we cannot discount is the role digital learning will play even in classroom education and how it will only enrich the learning process for faculty and students alike.

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