

WTO dictates B-school syllabus

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TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: With World Trade Organisation (WTO) implications on higher education soon to become a reality, business schools are witnessing frenzied activity to meet the challenges. Taking the lead is the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, which has drawn up a strategy and is currently involved in entering into collaborations with international institutions.

IIMB Director Prof. P.G. Aapte said: "As part of our five-year vision strategy, we're looking at horizontal expansion and also collaboration with international universities. Collaborations will involve opening campuses abroad to offer executive management and MBA programmes."

Negotiations to set up campuses abroad are reaching final stages, except for minor obstacles. Issues such as degree granting powers, entry requirements, students and faculty induction are being ironed out. For collaborations, the exact role of intellectual and physical inputs of the respective host institution abroad is being worked out. "We are confident of overcoming these minor and routine issues and come out with solid partnerships. As we require the approval of the central government and the board of governors, these would soon be placed before the authorities," he said.

Other business schools like KLS

What WTO regime means

- A curriculum with a global perspective on business and management.
- International exposure — be it Indian students spending a summer abroad or foreign students completing a term here — as many business schools would opt for exchange programmes to attract the best talent.
- Higher fee structure. Given the earning prospects, students need not despair.
- Exposure to different business cultures which will prove to be most vital for management graduates.
- A global business mindset ingrained with local business culture.

Institute of Management Education and Research, Belgaum; SDM Institute of Management Development, Mysore; T.A. Pai Institute of Management, Manipal; and Xavier Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship, Bangalore, are looking at better institute-industry interaction as one of the strategies to improve the quality of MBA graduates in the backdrop of WTO regime.

The WTO regime allow academic institutions or other education providers to set up branches in any country, export degree programmes, award degrees and certificates with minimal restriction, invest in overseas

educational institutions, employ instructors for their foreign venture set up educational and training programmes through distance technologies without controls. Can business schools maintain their academic independence in a world in which they will have minimal practical or legal control over the import or export of higher education? "The only way out is to internationalise the syllabi and the degree. Most of the business schools are evolving specific strategies towards this end. Others, who lack infrastructural and financial resources, will suffer," Prof. Aapte said.

A few business schools, spearheaded by XIME, Bangalore, have in fact, prepared a blueprint to achieve optimum institute-industry interaction with a few distinct areas for improvement:

- Development of context-based knowledge through high-quality research, case studies and discussions.
- Development of faculty through intra-industry training.
- Development of skill and competence of students by providing them opportunity for hands-on experience in industry through meaningful summer training and internships.
- Development of relevant programmes and curricula in management institutions through close collaborations, involvement and feedback from industry.