

Is management education being reshaped by new workplace realities?

Specialised and accelerated MBA programmes are gaining ground as they address keenly-felt needs in organisations

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Head of an MBA programme with specialisation in data analytics or applied data science? If you haven't already, you will hear a lot about such courses in the future.

These newer specialised MBA programmes can't replace generic MBA courses. But they do bring an element to a business and organisation that can be ignored only at the cost of effectiveness.

There are two sides to the growing demand for these specialised programmes.

One, it comes from employers who are forced by today's market realities to acknowledge that management professionals with exposure to niche fields that drive business are an asset.

Hema Date, dean, student affairs, National Institute of Industrial Engineering (NITIE) says it has become important for institutions to do a rethink about their MBA programmes as market demands have shifted.

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Representational picture only.

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NITIE started an elective on Information Systems and Artificial Intelligence last year, which was then made compulsory for all students. Similarly, e-commerce is now combined with busi-

ness analytics.

Hema says the number of electives offered as part of management programmes at NITIE has increased by 30% over the last three years, and this increase can

be linked to the demand for new specialisations in the job market.

Happy with the response to its first recruitment drive for management professionals with specialisation in

product management, Candela Labs, an IP-based firm focusing on Intelligent Automation, is planning a similar drive targeting those who have studied specialised management courses. "We

are looking for roles in business consulting, solutions engineering and design thinking," says Romil Turakhia, executive director, Candela Labs.

Flexible MBAs

Last year, Great Lakes Institute of Management launched AIMLA (Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Analytics), a specialisation added to its one-year post-graduate programme in management.

University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, which is known for its MBA programme with specialisation in Oil and Gas Management and Aviation Management, has now launched a course with specialisation in Entrepreneurship and Family Business.

Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Kozhikode is starting a one-year post-graduate management programme focussed on developing potential business leaders.

And two, as most of these courses are of shorter duration and come with the promise of attracting a good job quickly, they are popular with students. Management students also like the fact many of these programmes are flexible combining classroom with online teaching methods.

While some B-Schools offer specialised MBA pro-

grammes as executive courses, there are others offering them as short-term certificate courses spanning a few months.

To give an example, IIM-Rohtak has certificate programmes on project management and data analytics spread over three-to-four months.

Institute of Product Leadership, a B-School, offers courses on Applied Data Science, Product Development and Technology Management as specialisation.

Pinkesh Shah, co-founder, Institute of Product Leadership, says that these "accelerated courses" save time, and help those who have prior experience in a field and are seeking to upgrade their skills and competencies.

To return to the topic of where generic MBA programmes and the new set of specialised MBA programmes figure in the current scheme of things, here is what Swaminathan Subramanian, chief people officer, Reliance Capital has to say: "Industry needs both – people with general management and those with specialisation skills. As recruiters, we know where to go for what. Industry needs to bridge the gap with academia by spelling out the specialisations that will orient professionals much faster towards specific needs."