

Top B-Schools Make Leaders Ready for Future

IIMs, ISB and others roll out experiential learning via outdoor activities, train students in AI and data analytics

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Bengaluru: Top business schools in the country are tweaking their teaching methods and curricula as they focus on shaping the next generation of leaders for whom understanding of technology and the ability to navigate a complex and dynamic business environment will be paramount.

MBA students have now started learning subjects such as blockchain, data science, and artificial intelligence.

Institutes like IIM Bangalore, IIM Indore, Indian School of Business (ISB), and MDI Gurgaon are rolling out experiential learning through outdoor activities, giving exposure to students and honing their leadership and teaching skills. Critical thinking and problem-solving are also being emphasised.

IIM Bangalore, for example,

considers exposure to global thinking to be a key aspect of building future-readiness. The institute offers study-abroad programmes for two to three weeks, terms, and dual-degree programmes with partner schools like ESCP Europe Business School in Paris, Bocconi University in Milano, Italy, and Hitotsubashi University Business School, School of International Corporate Strategy, Japan.

"Recently, we've been experimenting with course-specific custom GPTs, blending online and offline learning, and potentially flipping the classroom to create a more dynamic and interactive experience," Mukta Kul-

karni, dean of programmes at IIM Bangalore, told ET. The change in B-schools' approach reflects the change in the overall business environment.

ADAPTING TO NEW CIRCUMSTANCES

In the past, leaders operated in a relatively stable environment where change was gradual and predictable, but today's business environment is marked by rapid, unpredictable change. B-schools that ET spoke with said leaders must now navigate constant flux with agility, and embrace

ambiguity and continuous transformation. While no MBA curriculum can train students for every possible eventuality, the key is to train them to adapt

to any unforeseen circumstances, said Ramabhadran Thirumalai, deputy dean at ISB.

The institute has introduced more hands-on learning through various courses that help students understand the constantly changing face of technology and how it can be used to improve decision-making and run organisations efficiently. Some of these include courses on frontier technologies, generative AI, and machine learning, among others. Even more traditional business programmes are now including courses on digital transformation, data analytics, and emerging technologies, ensuring students understand the technological landscape and its business applications.

As the world changes at an accelerated pace, there is a requirement for young leaders to possess not just technical proficiency but also an ease with

virtual environments, a commitment to continuous learning, and strong communication skills. Companies are also increasingly prioritising a dedication to sustainability and a capability to motivate diverse teams.

In this age of AI, the workforce of the future will be required to be trilingual — with deep domain expertise, digital and technology knowledge, as well as proficiency in AI and data analytics, said Piyush Mehta, India country head at global professional services firm Genpact.

"We seek leaders that have an insatiable thirst for learning — this is the secret sauce to innovation, and thriving in a fast-evolving environment," Mehta said. Krishna Kumar, founder of edtech firm Simplilearn, said today's MBA programmes need to be more hands on and focus on practical applications.

