

# Women in MBA Program (WiMBA)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



The Women in MBA Program (WiMBA) at Macquarie Graduate School of Management (MGSM) encourages gender diversity in leadership by partnering with corporate and government organisations to identify their top female employees and support them through an MBA. With Australian corporations and organisations establishing KPIs for gender diversity it is imperative that business schools are doing their part to support women to step up into senior roles.

Women outnumber men in undergraduate business programs, but make up only 35% of MBA enrolments in Australia. The MBA is a powerful tool for promotion to executive and leadership roles – if women miss out on an MBA, they miss out on opportunities.

The WiMBA Program is helping women overcome the barriers they face in Australia to completing an MBA.

### EVIDENCE-BASE FOR WIMBA

MGSM designed the WiMBA Program based on the findings of [research](#) we conducted. Women told us that time and costs are the primary barriers for women in completing MBA study. Specifically, we found certain disincentives for women to enrol in an MBA:

- Lack of female mentors or role models in business - women more often do not associate an MBA with career success when they look upwards in their organisation and see few women in leadership roles
- Persistence of a gender gap in salaries – women more often calculate that the financial investment will not reap a return
- Group work and intensive classes are a challenge for working mothers
- Work-life conflict issues are greater for women, who are often the primary care-giver – even if they are the breadwinner
- Employers have the biggest single role to play in helping women overcome their concerns and supporting them through an MBA.

### HOW DOES THE WIMBA PROGRAM WORK?

MGSM enters into a Partnership Agreement with a corporate partner whereby each commits to support sponsored employees to complete an MBA. A Partnership Agreement can cover one sponsored employee or several over the term of the Agreement. It is an agreement between the corporation or organisation and MGSM.

The WiMBA program has been strongly supported by corporate partners to date with current partner sponsored places now allocated and therefore closed to new partners at this time. MGSM will update when more positions are available.

### THERE ARE THREE KEY COMPONENTS IN THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT:

1. Financial – the corporate partner agrees to contribute an amount up to 50 per cent of the total program cost per sponsored employee. MGSM agrees to match the contribution of the corporate partner dollar for dollar (up to 50 per cent).
2. On-the-ground – the corporate partner agrees to provide practical support to enable the sponsored employee to attend class, undertake additional study and group work and complete assignments.
3. Guidance and advice – the employer pairs sponsored employees with in-house mentors/sponsors to provide them with guidance, support and advice throughout their MBA program and also help them to develop their post-MBA career pathway

### WHY STUDY AT MGSM?

Ranked as Australia's number 1 MBA program (Financial Times 2017), top 4 in Asia (The Economist 2017) and top 50 in the world (The Economist 2017), an MGSM Master of Business Administration (MBA) is a transformational experience.

The MBA program is designed to extend the knowledge, skills and experience of its students through the analysis of problems and challenges facing industries and organisations.

Covering all key aspects of business management, the MGSM MBA curriculum is grounded in industry reality which, combined with a highly practical approach, bridges the gap between theory and 'real world' application.

As flexible as it is practical, over the course of 16 units students can tailor their experience by selecting 6 elective units.

### ELIGIBILITY AND CRITERIA

#### WHAT ARE THE WIMBA PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR CORPORATE PARTNERS?

**Note:** Current WiMBA partner sponsorships are fully subscribed and are therefore closed to new partners at this time.

WiMBA corporate partners must be able to provide sponsored employees with financial backing, workplace flexibility and career planning and potential for progression within the organisation.

MGSM WiMBA partners can be from the corporate, not-for-profit and public sectors. WiMBA partners should be of a scale and size to support the requirements of sponsorship. As a guideline, WiMBA partners will have \$100m in turnover and over 100 employees. As WiMBA is a domestic program designed for Australian women working in Australian context, WiMBA partners must be located and operate in Australia and sponsored employees must be Australian citizens or permanent residents working in Australia. MGSM reserves the right to apply these guidelines flexibly in certain circumstances.

### **DO ORGANISATIONS NEED TO HAVE IDENTIFIED EMPLOYEES FOR SPONSORSHIP BEFORE STARTING THE PARTNERSHIP PROCESS?**

While some corporate partners start a WiMBA Partnership Agreement with a specific employee in mind, many others begin by signing an Agreement and then initiate the process of identifying potential employees for WiMBA sponsorship.

Often corporate partners offer the WiMBA sponsorship opportunities to their employees as a way to demonstrate their commitment to gender diversity and supporting women in leadership roles.

### **WHAT ARE THE WIMBA ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR STUDENTS?**

In order to be eligible for WiMBA sponsorship, recipients must:

- Be female;
- Be nominated by their employer;
- Have demonstrated to their employer potential for a senior leadership role;
- Have demonstrated to their employer that they would not otherwise be able to undertake MBA studies without the WiMBA Program; and
- Be able to meet the MGSM MBA admission criteria. Direct entry [requirements](#) include an undergraduate degree and 2 years of managerial/professional work experience.

### **CAN PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS APPLY DIRECTLY TO THE WIMBA PROGRAM?**

Before applying to the WiMBA Program it is essential for students to have a conversation with their employer about whether they are willing to participate in the WiMBA Program. This [FAQ](#) sheet and the [WiMBA White Paper](#) can help explain the Program to employers.

The **first step** is for employers to have entered into a WiMBA Partnership Agreement with MGSM before a student applies to MGSM as a WiMBA student.

Prospective students are encouraged to contact their Human Resources department or [MGSM](#) to find out if an employer is already a WiMBA partner.

The **second step** is for an employer to nominate a particular student as a sponsored employee under the WiMBA Program and identify its level of financial support.

The **third step** is for sponsored students to apply to MGSM as a WiMBA student. Academic and professional admissions criteria are identical to all other students.

As part of the WiMBA application we also ask employers to complete a Sponsorship Confirmation Form and a Sponsorship Guarantee Form.

### **CAN STUDENTS APPLY FOR THE MBA AND CONVERT TO A WIMBA SPONSORSHIP IF AN EMPLOYER ENTERS INTO A PARTNERSHIP WITH MGSM AT A LATER DATE?**

No. Once enrolled, MBA students are not eligible to convert to WiMBA sponsorship.

### **CAN CURRENT MBA STUDENTS APPLY FOR THE WIMBA PROGRAM?**

No. The WiMBA Program is designed to support women who would not have otherwise enrolled in an MBA course. Current MBA students are not eligible to apply.

### **CAN PEOPLE LIVING OUTSIDE OF SYDNEY STUDY AS WIMBA STUDENTS AT MGSM?**

Yes. WiMBA students have all the study options available to all other MBA students at MGSM.

Students can select from weekly lectures, block classes or online interactive classes. Course content and structure, assignments and group work requirements are the same for all three options.

Students are required to attend one face-to-face class each week, per course unit, if they choose to attend weekly lectures. Part-time students find our weekly evening classes from 6.00PM to 10.00PM convenient, while full-time students attend morning classes held from 9.00AM to 1.00PM, Monday to Thursday. If students have a varied weekly timetable, travel often or work unpredictable hours, they may benefit from block classes. The block classes enable students to complete the required face-to-face hours intensively over five days or two weekends over the ten week term.

[Online interactive classes](#) can be studied from the comfort of a student's own home, interstate or even overseas. The classes will be delivered by the same lecturing staff, will be equally as interactive as our face-to-face classes and will deliver the same high quality learning outcomes to our students. *Please note however:* only a select number of core units are delivered online - it will be necessary for students to attend the majority of the program on campus; in most cases this can be done by weekly classes or block units.

A popular study option for part-time students taking two units per term is to enrol in one weekly class and one block unit (depending on timetable availability).

### **DOES MGSM OFFER THE WIMBA PROGRAM AT OTHER CAMPUSES BESIDES SYDNEY? WHAT IS THE WIMBA NETWORK?**

MGSM has joined with 4 other Australian business schools to create a "WiMBA Network," which aims to address the inequality at MBA enrolment level and impact the numbers of women working in senior management, executive ranks and on the boards of our leading companies.

The WiMBA Network will make the WiMBA Program available to women in South Australia, Wollongong, Melbourne, Sydney and Western Australia for the first time.

The WiMBA Programs at these schools are individually operated by each institution and may have slightly different settings to MGSM. MGSM can provide referral information to our WiMBA Network partners at:

- Curtin University, Perth
- Sydney Business School, University of Wollongong
- Monash Business School, Melbourne
- University of South Australia, Adelaide

Contact Marie Byrne, Program Manager Gender Inclusion, for more information on the WiMBA Network.

### **IS THE WIMBA PROGRAM AVAILABLE AT MGSM'S HONG KONG CAMPUS?**

The MGSM WiMBA Program is designed to address the particular challenges women in Australia face in undertaking MBA study. WiMBA sponsorships are only available for study at the Sydney campuses. The WiMBA Program is not available at the Hong Kong campus.

## **OTHER QUESTIONS**

### **ARE WIMBA STUDENTS TREATED DIFFERENTLY TO OTHER MGSM MBA STUDENTS?**

WiMBA students are indistinguishable in the classroom or courses from all other MBA students.

The difference for a WiMBA student is that her employer has entered into a Partnership Agreement with MGSM to provide her with financial assistance as well as the workplace flexibility to undertake the MBA and career planning and mentoring to reap the most benefit from the MBA.

WiMBA students will occasionally be invited to speaker or networking opportunities and be able to connect with other WiMBA students through events or online networks.

### **HOW DOES THE PAYMENT OF FEES WORK FOR WIMBA STUDENTS?**

Each term MGSM will invoice the employer for the sponsorship amount for the units in which each nominated WiMBA student is enrolled. The invoiced amount must be paid on or before the due date for each term.

If the employer's sponsorship amount and MGSM contribution combined are insufficient to pay a nominated WiMBA student's fees in any term, the balance must be paid by the student prior to the due date for that term. If the balance is not paid MGSM may cancel the student's enrolment.

WiMBA students who meet the FEE-HELP eligibility criteria can use the scheme to defer payment of any tuition fees not covered by their WiMBA agreement.

All other fees and expenses such as late fees, library fines, textbooks and study tour supplements must be paid by the WiMBA student.

### **HOW MANY HOURS A WEEK DOES AN EMPLOYER HAVE TO PROVIDE ITS WIMBA STUDENT FOR STUDY? WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MENTORING AND CAREER PLANNING?**

The WiMBA Partnership Agreement commits the corporate partner to providing flexibility in the work place to enable the WiMBA student to undertake MBA coursework. The Agreement does not specify how that is to happen as each student and each workplace presents different demands and obligations.

Similarly, the Partnership Agreement does not specify how mentoring and career planning is to be structured. Rather, it requires the corporate partner to commit to mentoring and career progression discussions with the WiMBA student.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF A WIMBA STUDENT FAILS A UNIT?**

MGSM may discontinue the MGSM Contribution for a particular WiMBA student if she fails a unit and is unable to satisfy MGSM that there was just cause for that failure; for example, under MGSM's special consideration requirements as per the MGSM Student Handbook. A failed unit must be retaken by the student at their own cost, preferably the term following, before they may continue in the program.

WiMBA students are also subject to all other governance requirements and codes of conduct of MGSM and Macquarie University.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF A WIMBA STUDENT LEAVES HER EMPLOYER?**

The WiMBA partner must notify MGSM in writing within 7 days if a WiMBA student ceases to be employed by that partner.

If an employer ceases to provide a WiMBA sponsorship for an employee for any reason, the MGSM contribution will cease. In such cases, full responsibility for the fees will be assumed by the enrolled student.

### **WHAT ARE THE COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MGSM MBA PROGRAM?**

The program is comprised of 16 units - 10 core and 6 electives - and is usually completed in 2 years of full-time study or 2.5-4 years of part-time study.

Admissions Information and Course Unit Guide Directory provide further information about our programs and application process and can be found on our [website](#).

### **WHAT ARE THE COURSE TERMS AT MGSM?**

There are four terms per year at MGSM. Each term is 10 weeks in duration, with week 11 being exam week and week 12 a week of leave, followed by the commencement of the next term. Each unit at MGSM is conducted over a term, involving 40 hours of face-to-face teaching.

MGSM Term [Dates](#) can be found on our website.

## **WHAT ARE THE COURSE FEES FOR THE MGSM MBA PROGRAM?**

The fee per course unit for 2018 is \$5,000 (total tuition cost is \$80,000, based on 2018 fee). *[Note: MGSM reviews its fees annually resulting in increases in the fee per unit. Under normal circumstances these increases would be constrained to 5-10% p.a.]*

Textbooks are not included in the WiMBA sponsorship.

## **WHAT ARE THE DEADLINES FOR WIMBA STUDENT APPLICATIONS?**

WiMBA specific forms for student applications are received and processed on the same timeline as all other applications for the MGSM MBA. The application process can be found on our website.

## **CONTACT US**

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