

Evaluation of the LISBONMBA

An external review committee consisting of Dr. Hubert Gatignon (INSEAD), Dr. Dipak C. Jain (Northwestern University), and Dr. Robert A. Peterson (The University of Texas at Austin) conducted a site evaluation of the LISBONMBA program May 3-6, 2010. The evaluation incorporated a detailed examination of documents provided by program administrators and personal interviews with nearly four dozen individuals. These individuals included the rectors and business school deans of Universidade Catolica Portuguesa (Catolica) and Universidade Nova de Lisboa (NOVA), representatives of corporations supporting the program, present and past students, faculty members from the two business schools who teach in the program, representatives of program partner MIT, and program directors.

Subsequent to the evaluation the committee reached five major conclusions. These conclusions take into account the fact that the program has only been operational for slightly more than one year. Consequently, this document focuses more on strategic issues as opposed to tactical or operational issues.

Innovative Program

The LISBONMBA program has been carefully conceived and is generally well executed. The one-year length of the program and components such as the “Friday Forums,” the MIT immersion program, the internship program, the mentoring program, and the Portuguese language program for nonPortuguese speakers collectively contribute to a positive, high quality educational experience.

Program Sustainability

However, even though the program has not yet completely “unfolded,” the committee is concerned about its long-term sustainability. The size of each student cohort must be substantially increased to provide both a strong financial base and a more diverse (international) student body to maximize the impact of the program.

MIT Collaboration

The contributions of MIT to the LISBONMBA program have constituted a critical factor in the success of the program to-date, and the long-term sustainability of the program likely requires continued collaboration. MIT-originated best practices including admissions processes, marketing, and curriculum development have been essential in creating a high-quality, seamless program. Indeed, there needs to be more collaboration between the program and MIT. This collaboration could take the form of additional program faculty members spending time at MIT as visiting international fellows, more MIT faculty members spending (extended) time in Portugal interacting with program faculty members, more joint research projects between program faculty members and MIT faculty members (including more jointly-held research conferences and workshops), and perhaps MIT assistance in creating a common Catolica-NOVA doctoral program.

Apart from the LISBONMBA program, consideration should be given to collaborations between MIT and other Portuguese universities or even to collaborations between other world-class universities and Portuguese universities in the area of business education.

Corporate Sponsor Support

The LISBONMBA program would not have been possible without the strong commitment and investment of corporate sponsors. The investment, especially as it pertains to financial support, mentoring, and internships and placement of program students, must be maintained and, if possible, expanded in the future. Without this foundational investment, the long-term viability of the program will be in jeopardy. Enhanced and extended cooperation between the private sector and the program is necessary for the program to reach its goal of academic excellence.

Government Support

The LISBONMBA program would not be in existence without the financial and catalytic support of the Portuguese Government. This support must be continued until the program reaches maturity; it is essential for success in the foreseeable future. In particular, long-term program success requires a fully institutionalized relationship between Catolica and NOVA. The committee believes that such a relationship can only be achieved through the continuing support of the government.