

The PGDM Programme of BIMTECH was benchmarked with equivalent programmes of the following institutes:

- a. XLRI
- b. MDI, Gurgaon
- c. TAPMI
- d. IMI, Delhi
- e. SPJIMR
- f. FORE
- g. IIM Bangalore
- h. IIM Ahmedabad

These institutes were chosen keeping in mind two factors – 1. Most of these are private business schools, and 2. Most of these represent schools of great academic repute. In any case, these eight institutes represent a fair sample of a variety of schools whose academic standards we may like to emulate.

### **Programme Goals**

While programme goals must align with the missions of the school, their identification and articulation can communicate a holistic canvas where the goals mesh with each other to create a well-rounded aspirational outcome for the students of that school. Often, together they also indicate the core thrust of the programme as also its curricular and pedagogic emphases.

Case in point:

- a. SPJIMR
  - a. Make participants aware of the facts, frameworks, and theories of management (Knowing)
  - b. Develop skills, capabilities and techniques that lie at the heart of management (Doing)
  - c. Inculcate values, attitudes and beliefs that go on to build a particular world view (Being)

The end goals of knowing, doing and being, together communicate an integrative goal and a similar approach to the design of the programme.

- b. IIM A
  - a. Equip students with the required conceptual and interpersonal skills and sense of social purpose for managerial decision making
  - b. Develop leadership capabilities to act as change agents and be a source of motivation in the organizations they work in
  - c. Nurture the desire to excel in performance without compromising integrity, honesty and fairness

Each of these goals not only communicates the specific objective but also the reason or the purpose therefor.

The programme goals of the rest of the institutes can be viewed in the Excel annexure to this report.

BIMTECH PGDM Programme Goals and my comments are given below:

Upon completion of the programme every student shall be able to:

- a. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills – *for what purpose (context)?*
- b. Evaluate and solve business problems –  
*How? Should we specify required skills – analytical, innovative, collaborative? Business problems are complex; can an individual on his/her own be expected to solve these?*
- c. Understand ethical and global business issues  
*Ethical and global issues are distinct from each other; what is the sense in combining these? Also, for what purpose? What does understanding ethical issues imply? Does it ensure ethical conduct too?*
- d. Understand global business environment – *for what purpose? How is this distinct from understanding global business issues? What about local business environment?*
- e. Demonstrate collaborative skills – *for what purpose? Doesn't collaboration require effective communication? Aren't collaborative skills key to solving global and complex business problems?*

The comments in italics can be thought of as aspects of the goals that might be implicit – should we add to these to make them more explicit and clear? These have been inserted here to make us think how we can extend/modify our PLGs to make them more explicit by adding relevant contexts and purposes, and also to somehow integrate them into a holistic (perhaps multidimensional) desired end outcome that can guide in the design of the programme, curricula, pedagogy, and assessment.

There might be some gaps in the existing PLGs as well.

1. Shrikant Datar talks about the critical MBA skills to be critical thinking, integrative thinking, and innovative thinking – should these find place in the PGDM goals as part of problem solving skills?
2. Our mission talks about entrepreneurial mind set/orientation – should this be included as a programme goal? If not, then how do we inculcate this critical attribute in our students? A person with entrepreneurial mind set does not wait for opportunities; he/she is high on initiative and ownership. As such, such people can also be expected to be lifelong learners, which is also an important objective of our programmes. Can teaching them a couple of courses on entrepreneurship lab be enough to inculcate entrepreneurial orientation?

### Programme Courses, Credits and Hours

Institute	Core Courses	Elective Courses	Total Courses	Total Hours
XLRI	21 (630 hrs)	14 (420 hrs)	35	1050 hrs
MDI, Gurgaon	22 (660 hrs)	14 (420 hrs)	36	1080 hrs
TAPMI	23 (640 hrs)	Not available		
IMI, Delhi	Not available	Not available		
SPJIMR	21 (630 hrs)	13 (390 hrs)	34	1020 hrs
FORE	18 (540 hrs)	14 (420 hrs)	32	960 hrs
IIM Bangalore	16 (480 hrs)	17 (610 hrs)	33	990 hrs
IIM Ahmedabad	16 (480 hrs)	14 (420 hrs)	30	900 hrs
BIMTECH	33 (765 hrs)	16 (400 hrs)	49	1165 hrs

Everything doesn't seem to be right when one takes a look at the table above.

- Our number of core courses and hours for these is far greater than the average of about 20 courses (600 hrs) for all other institutes.
- Our total of 49 courses and 1165 hrs is far greater than the average of about 34 courses (1020 hrs) for all other schools.

- Our total hours are about 150 hrs greater than the average. This is equivalent to 5 full courses. However, our total courses are 15 higher than the average, instead of five. This shows that even when we have much higher total hours, our number of courses are far too high; in other words, we have too many courses of various credits (durations). Such proliferation poses a precarious burden on our students. Not only are they required to do much greater number of hours than their counterparts at other schools, the sheer number of courses is very likely to confound them. This is especially so because the average student in our PGDM programme may not be as cognitively competent as the average student at these other schools.
- There may be a common belief that rigour is somehow equivalent to increased load on students. While this is highly questionable, the increased burden is actually counterproductive. Neither does it allow students to spend adequate time to learn a subject at a deeper level (learning must be digested and it takes time to do that), nor does it allow them enough time to lead a less stressed life on campus mingling and engaging with each other or pursuing other interests.

### Core Courses – A Comparison

#### Communication

Institute	Communication I	Communication II	WAC I	WAC II	Total
XLRI	30 hrs				30 hrs
MDI, Gurgaon	30 hrs	30 hrs			60 hrs
TAPMI	20 hrs	20 hrs			40 hrs
IMI, Delhi	30 hrs				30 hrs
SPJIMR	21 hrs				21 hrs
FORE	30 hrs		30 hrs		60 hrs
IIM Bangalore	15 hrs	15 hrs			30 hrs
IIM Ahmedabad	20 hrs		20 hrs	20 hrs	60 hrs
BIMTECH	40 hrs	35 hrs			75 hrs

#### Economics

Institute	Managerial/Micro Economics	Macroeconomics	Global Business Environment	Total
XLRI	30 hrs	30 hrs		60 hrs
MDI, Gurgaon	30 hrs	30 hrs		60 hrs
TAPMI	30 hrs	20 hrs		50 hrs
IMI, Delhi	30 hrs	30 hrs		60 hrs
SPJIMR	21 hrs	31.5 hrs		52.5 hrs
FORE	30 hrs	15 hrs		45 hrs
IIM Bangalore	30 hrs	30 hrs		60 hrs
IIM Ahmedabad	20 hrs	20 hrs		40 hrs
BIMTECH	25 hrs	25 hrs	25 hrs	75 hrs

#### Finance and Accounting

Institute	Management Acc. I	Management Acc. II	FM I	FM II	Total
XLRI	30 hrs	30 hrs	30 hrs	30 hrs	120 hrs
MDI, Gurgaon	30 hrs	30 hrs	30 hrs		90 hrs

TAPMI	20 hrs	30 hrs	30 hrs	30 hrs	110 hrs
IMI, Delhi	30 hrs	30 hrs	30 hrs	30 hrs (CE)	90/120 hrs
SPJIMR	42 hrs	21 hrs	30 hrs		93 hrs
FORE	30 hrs		30 hrs		60 hrs
IIM Bangalore	30 hrs	15 hrs	30 hrs		75 hrs
IIM Ahmedabad	20 hrs	20 hrs	20 hrs	20 + 20 hrs	100 hrs
BIMTECH	40 hrs	30 hrs	30 hrs		100 hrs

### Information Technology

Institute	MIS	IT For Biz	Internet-Enabled Biz	Total
XLRI	30 hrs			30 hrs
MDI, Gurgaon	30 hrs			30 hrs
TAPMI		30 hrs		30 hrs
IMI, Delhi		30 hrs		30 hrs
SPJIMR		30 hrs		30 hrs
FORE		30 hrs		30 hrs
IIM Bangalore				00 hrs
IIM Ahmedabad	20 hrs	20 hrs	20 hrs	60 hrs
BIMTECH		25 hrs		25 hrs

### Marketing

Institute	MM I	MM II	MM III	FM II	Total
XLRI	30 hrs	30 hrs			60 hrs
MDI, Gurgaon	30 hrs	30 hrs			60 hrs
TAPMI	30 hrs	20 hrs			50 hrs
IMI, Delhi	30 hrs	30 hrs (CE)			30/60 hrs
SPJIMR	30 hrs				30 hrs
FORE	30 hrs	15 hrs			45 hrs
IIM Bangalore	30 hrs				30 hrs
IIM Ahmedabad	20 hrs	20 hrs	20 hrs		60 hrs
BIMTECH	30 hrs	35 hrs			65 hrs

### OB-HR

Institute	OB I	OB II	HRM	ODEz	Assessment & Dev	Total
XLRI	30 hrs	30 hrs	20 hrs			80 hrs
MDI, Gurgaon	30 hrs		30 hrs	30 hrs		90 hrs
TAPMI	30 hrs		30 hrs	20 hrs		80 hrs
IMI, Delhi	30 hrs					30 hrs
SPJIMR	21 hrs	21 hrs			63 hrs	105 hrs
FORE	30 hrs		15 hrs	15 hrs	15 hrs	75 hrs
IIM Bangalore	30 hrs			30 hrs		60 hrs
IIM Ahmedabad	20 hrs	20 + 20 hrs	20 + 20 hrs			60 hrs
BIMTECH	40 hrs		30 hrs		60 hrs	130 hrs

### Operations & Decision Sciences

Institute	QT I	QT II	OR	OM I	OM II/SCM	Res. Meth.	Total
XLRI	30 hrs	30 hrs	20 hrs	30 hrs	30 hrs	20 hrs	160 hrs
MDI, Gurgaon	30 hrs		30 hrs	30 hrs		30 hrs	120 hrs
TAPMI	30 hrs		30 hrs	30 hrs	20 hrs	30 hrs	140 hrs
IMI, Delhi	30 hrs	30 hrs		30 hrs	30 hrs (CE)		90/120 hrs
SPJIMR	21 hrs	21 hrs	21 hrs	30 hrs			93 hrs
FORE	30 hrs		30 hrs	15 hrs	15 + 15 hrs	15 hrs	120 hrs
IIM Bangalore	30 hrs	30 hrs		30 hrs			90 hrs
IIM Ahmedabad	40 hrs	20 hrs		20 hrs	20 hrs	20 hrs	120 hrs
BIMTECH	35 hrs			35 hrs		30 hrs	100 hrs

### Strategy

Institute	SM I	SM II	Sustain./ Ethics	CSR	Des Th/ Innov	Entrep.	Total
XLRI	30 hrs		20+20 hrs				70 hrs
MDI, Gurgaon	30 hrs	30 hrs	30 hrs	30 hrs			120 hrs
TAPMI	30 hrs		20 hrs	10 hrs			60 hrs
IMI, Delhi	30 hrs						30 hrs
SPJIMR	21 hrs		21 hrs		21 hrs		63 hrs
FORE	30 hrs		30 hrs			15 hrs	75 hrs
IIM Bangalore	30 hrs	30 hrs					60 hrs
IIM Ahmedabad	20 hrs	20+20 hrs	20 hrs				80 hrs
BIMTECH	40 hrs			30 hrs	25 hrs	40 hrs	135 hrs

These are comparisons of only the core courses. In summary

- We are teaching for more hours in Communications, Economics, OB-HR, and Strategy. This might need some rethinking – are these excess hours of input/engagement achieving any of the Programme Goals any better?
- We are teaching at par with the other institutes in Finance, IT, and Marketing. In Operations and Decision Sciences, we are actually teaching less. In fact, if we exclude Research Methods (since it can be taught by any Area), the average for the rest of the OM&DS courses for the other schools is over 100 hrs; we are at 70 hours in comparison.

We are teaching too many core courses at BIMTECH. If we benchmark with the others, the number of core courses should not exceed 21 (630 hrs) instead of the current number of 33 (765 hrs). This will require serious rethinking and rationalization with the involvement of the faculty from all the Areas.

### Some Suggestions (based on best practices):

- The durations of our core courses are too many – 15 hrs, 20 hrs, 25 hrs, 30 hrs, 35 hrs, and 40 hrs. Universally, a full credit course is of 30 hrs of classroom/teaching/engagement hours. Courses should be either full credit (30 hrs) or half credit (15 hrs).
- Core courses, by definition, comprise those fundamental inputs that are absolutely required for all students to gain sufficient understanding of how businesses function. Clearly, if others think that these comprise 21 full courses, there must be some credible explanation as to why we think otherwise. The argument that our students may be weaker and hence require more intensive inputs does not stand to any rationale. In fact, “weaker” students take more time to

learn something and hence should be spending more time per course that they undertake. What we can do is to classify our core courses into core essentials and core electives. Core essentials can be the minimum courses that form the essential requirement of the curricula. These must cover Economics, Finance & Accounting, Quantitative Methods, Marketing, OB, and Operations courses. The rest of the courses can be core electives and can be offered as choice based courses out of which a student can be asked to opt for a certain number. This will also be aligned to the global trend of making the MBA programme more flexible and choice-based for participants.

3. It is often felt that there may be significant overlap in the content of some of the courses we teach. There is some evidence of this. It is suggested that we take up an extensive exercise of identifying such overlaps among courses from different Areas as well as those offered within the Area. This will free up some time.
4. Every good school has a registration process at the start of the trimester when students select the courses and the total credits for that trimester. We must initiate this practice at BIMTECH.

### **Elective Courses and Specializations**

Since every Area is benchmarking its elective courses, a comparison of the latter has not been taken up in this report. However, comparison of the number of electives and the specializations is useful and has been taken up, as shown the table at the beginning.

- a. In addition to the four functional specializations offered by us, the following schools offer additional specializations:
  - a. XLRI, MDI Gurgaon – Economics, Information Systems, Strategic Management
  - b. IMI Delhi – Information Systems, Strategy, Analytics (minor specialization)
  - c. SPJIMR – Analytics, Consulting – minor specializations
  - d. Fore – Information Technology, Strategy
- b. The IIMs don't have the concept of specialization – their students can choose up to a required number of credits from a range of elective courses from different Areas. If they do five or more courses from an Area, they can say they have concentrated in that Area.
- c. BIMTECH is the only school in the comparison set which offers a single choice of functional specialization. Also, its requirement of eight such courses for qualifying as a specialization is far in excess of the minimum five required by all other schools in the comparison set.
- d. XLRI, MDI, IMI and FORE give a choice of two specializations, with 15 credits from an Area as minimum requirement for a specialization. SPJIMR has the concept of major and minor specializations.

### **Some Suggestions (based on best practices):**

1. If the recruiters at BIMTECH do not insist on the requirement of minimum 8 courses for specialization, we may wish to follow the other schools in this matter. A minimum of 15 credits can be made as required for a functional specialization. This will account for a minimum of 150 hrs.
2. If the total credit requirement for elective courses is 420 hrs, then for the remaining 270 hrs (or 9 full courses), the student should be free to choose any of the offered electives based on her career choice and planning. This means, the student could select three more functional electives from the same function (thus a total of 8 electives), or could select five (or less, or more) electives from another Area. He/she could also select up to 9 electives from the vertical specializations on offer.

3. What is being recommended here is that we bring down the artificial functional boundaries that the present students encounter in choosing their electives. The same goes for the verticals. We have four of these so far. In all likelihood this number will increase with time. Many of the courses that are offered within different verticals are actually interrelated; it may make more sense for a student to take different sets of courses from different verticals to enhance his/her overall capabilities/competencies in following a certain career path.

### **Some Additional Comments**

Acquisition of knowledge and skills through courses, without a mastery of the real contexts, for our students in the PGDM programmes is of limited use. This is especially true for students who have very little prior work experience.

Learning business knowledge and skills is a complex process and is unlikely to be accomplished by a simple transaction between the teacher and the learners through powerpoint slides and lectures. It requires assimilation by learners, which in turn happens when learners engage in learning by doing, or in applying course content to real world problems. The best methods that are proven are a) hands on projects that require learners to do research, collect data, make sense of the data and facts, and analyse these to arrive at meaningful decisions, and b) the case method, which brings a slice of the real world into the classroom and requires students to singly and collectively assimilate the provided information and data to identify the core issues/problems and come up with well-reasoned solutions.

It is my humble opinion that we need to strengthen these two aspects of our pedagogy. A few years after passing out, our students will not remember the content of the courses they had taken but will remember their experience in a project or the analysis of a case.