



Draft Proposal for the Designation of Master's Degree Titles in Management Education in Europe



Launched and hosted by the Brussels-based European Foundation for Management Development (efmd), EQUAL is the international association of quality assessment and accreditation agencies in the field of European management education. The European Quality Link (EQUAL), the European association of national accrediting bodies, has as its main objective the continued improvement of quality in business schools.

Efmd and EQUAL(European Quality Link) Representing the management education profession in Europe Updated on 18-10-2000

I. Objectives

- The aim is not to impose harmonisation or standardisation of management programmes either in format or in content.
- The intention is not to dictate what degrees are called in the language of the different national systems.
- The main aim is to provide clear information to the international market regarding the nature of the programmes on offer. To the extent that in each national system there is an attempt to communicate internationally in English, there is a need to have some minimum consensus on the use of the different labels. As an international body representing the management education profession in Europe, efmd is seeking to make a positive contribution to the establishment of a European market in higher education.

- The purpose of this document is to propose a simple segmentation by major degree types and to promote agreement on the terms to be used to designate them in English.
- The system should be coherent across Europe, i.e. acceptable in all countries, and be consistent with accepted practice in the United States.
- An important outcome is (1) to facilitate the establishment of exchange programmes at the appropriate level among European institutions and between European and non-European institutions and (2) remove one of the obstacles to students' and graduates' mobility.

II. Proposal

1) Definition of the Master's level in Europe

A level achieved after 4 or 5 years of higher education.

It is usually preceded by a first university qualification, which can be considered a Bachelor's level, although sometimes this level is only marked by an intermediate stage in a long 5-year continuous programme, sometimes after 2 years, more often after 3 years.

2) Segmentation of Master's degrees in Europe by programme type

The following segmentation does not imply that these types are sequential. There is no hierarchy, no assumption that a student must graduate from one level before entering another higher level.

Type A : Generalist Master's for younger students

This segment includes the largest number of Master's programmes in Europe and accounts for by far the largest number of graduating students. Most of the mainstream university based programmes that provide European companies with their principal source of recruits in the management education field fall into this category.

These programmes are generalist in coverage. There is often a strong conceptual and theoretical emphasis in these mostly university-based programmes. Students typically graduate at 23 to 25 after a fairly long period of continuous university-level study. These programmes are thus pre-experience and designed for career preparation.

In duration they are very variable: in some cases one year, but more usually two or three years, depending on where the intermediate stage is positioned in the Continental European higher education systems. Many national systems have traditionally been organised on a 2 + 3 structure, although there may be a shift to a 3 +2 structure if the convergence movement initiated by the Bologna Declaration takes hold. The proposed degree title in English for this programme type is Master of Science in Management. Some institutions might prefer Master of Science in Business Studies.

Programme types	Definition	Suggested titles in English
Type A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generalist - After 3 years of HE - Younger students graduating at 23-25 - Pre-experience - Career preparation - Duration 1 to 3 years 	<p style="text-align: center;">Master of Science in Management MSc Management</p>
Type B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specialised - In-depth study of one area - Pre-experience - May require relevant previous qualification - Career preparation - Two sub-types: research orientation or professional orientation 	<p style="text-align: center;">Specialised Master's in ...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MSc in Finance MS in Finance Master's in Finance</p>
Type C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generalist - Professionally oriented - Significant work experience required - Career change/acceleration - Typical age range: 26-35 	<p style="text-align: center;">Master of Business Administration MBA</p>

Type B: Specialised Master's

These programmes recruit students with a previous degree that is relevant to the specialism in question. They are intended to allow in-depth study of a particular area. They do not require previous work experience, although some students enter the programmes after several years in a job. They are essentially designed for career preparation in a clearly defined type of job or profession.

Around Europe there are two main sub-categories of this type of programme. First of all, those that are professionally oriented, leading to a job in a company or an organisation, and secondly those that are more academically and research oriented, including a dissertation.

The duration of these programmes is usually one year.

Suggested titles in English for these programmes are: MSc in Finance
MS in Finance
Master's in Finance

Type C: MBA

The MBA is defined as a generalist programme with the main emphasis on management rather than on business studies. There is strong practical and professional orientation in the curriculum. Entry into these programmes requires significant work experience. Students are typically between 26 and 35 in this type of programme. The main objective is career change or career acceleration rather than career preparation. The programmes of this type are not positioned at a higher academic level than the Master of Science in Management programmes in Type A. They are, however, substantially different in their objectives, in their pedagogical processes, and in their recruitment.

Duration is between 1 and 2 years.

ANNEX: Segmentation of doctoral degrees

Segment 1 PhD

This doctoral degree is designed to prepare students for a future academic career. There may in some cases be a preliminary taught component before the doctoral candidates are admitted to the research stage. In other cases, students are admitted directly to the research and thesis process with no formal taught component beyond a few research methodology courses. The PhD thesis is intended to be a significant contribution to knowledge.

Segment 2 DBA

This type of programme is designed to allow practising managers or consultants to deepen their understanding of business and management issues by undertaking advanced study accompanied by a substantial research project. There is usually a larger taught component than in the standard Ph.D. The research itself is defined as much as a contribution to practice as a contribution to knowledge.

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