

MBA SPECIAL

CONTINUING EDUCATION

MBAs in increasing demand in Japan

ter of Business Administration degrees are becoming increasingly popular with young, career-minded Japanese.

The rise of the MBA in Japan is attributable to changing attitudes at Japanese companies. During the bubble economy, when Japanese companies were considered confident that their life-employment system had protected them from economic downturns, they were confident that their life-employment system had protected them from economic downturns. Now that they have lost international competitiveness, they are rethinking their strategies.

Many companies have

started to look for MBA holders to fill managerial positions, rather than hiring graduates right out of university and training them — at a considerable expenditure of time and money — to become future leaders.

Due to the strong demand from companies wanting to hire people with such qualifications, an increasing number of schools have started offering MBA programs in Japan.

Keio University in 1970 became the first graduate school to launch an MBA program.

One of the most important aspects of the school's program is the case-study method, which is used in two-thirds of all classes.

The method, developed by Harvard University over 70 years ago, presents students with 20- to 30-page reports on actual management problems that students analyze and discuss.

Students are initially required to examine the case on their own, identify the problems involved and formulate recommendations. Then, in groups of eight or nine, the students compare their analyses and discuss their findings at length. In the final stage, several groups engage in further classroom discussions.

Since students look at some 700 to 800 cases during the two-year course, they develop strong problem-solving skills and receive intensive preparation for managerial posts.

Waseda University, another big-name private institution, established its Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies (GSAPS) and started an MBA course in 1998.

The Waseda MBA program was developed on the basis of the experience of the university's business school, which has a 25-year history.

The program was established not only to train future leaders in Japan, but also those in other Asian countries. Reflecting that policy, a large number of foreign students from around Asia study at GSAPS.

One of the features of the program is that it places importance on the so-called triangle method, which highlights problem-solving via student interaction with faculty and members of organizations outside the university,

including companies, central and local governments, research institutes and nongovernmental organizations.

The program also provides opportunities for students to participate in research projects requested by companies, dispatches students to those companies and develops business-education tie-ups. A large number of students take advantage of the many internships, fieldwork and study-abroad opportunities available at GSAPS to broaden their perspectives and deepen their knowledge gained in the classroom.

Although Waseda's MBA program has a short history, it has already gained a good reputation. Last spring, an

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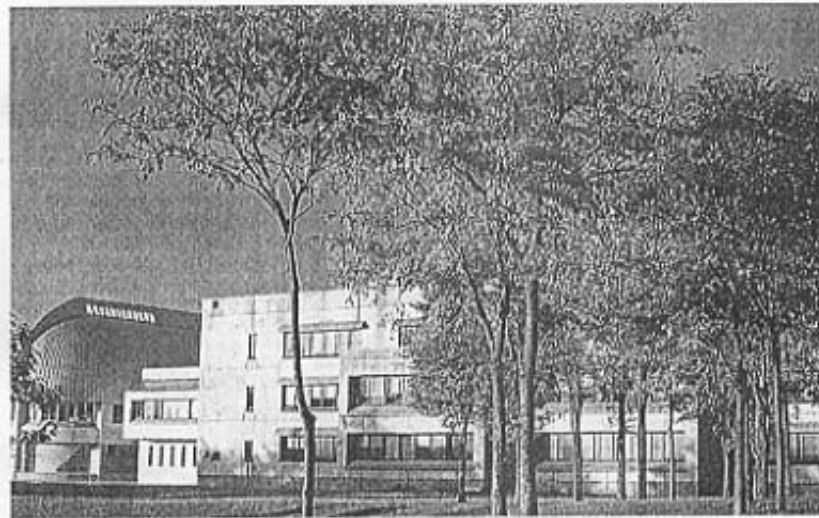
MBA team from GSAPS took the top prizes in the Best Business Plan and Best Presentation categories, while placing second overall at the NASDAQ Asia Moot Corp. 2001 held in Hong Kong. Sponsored by NASDAQ, Motorola and other multinational corporations, this competition has developed an excellent reputation for bringing together aspiring entrepreneurs from top business schools around Asia to present the most original and effective business plan.

The International University of Japan, a private post-

graduate institution in Niigata Prefecture, also offers a two-year MBA course that is conducted entirely in English and is the first one of its kind accredited by the Japanese Ministry of Education.

The Graduate School of International Management was originally opened in 1988 in collaboration with the Amos Tuck School of Business Administration at Dartmouth College, an Ivy League school.

GSIM students come from about 40 different countries.



WASEDA UNIVERSITY

MBA



早稲田大学

come to Open School
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◆ Application period for September 2002 entrance: April 9-22, 2002
www.waseda.ac.jp/gsaps/en



Nearly half come from other parts of Asia and Japanese students account for 38 percent. Students get the chance to live and work with many classmates who have already accumulated experience at private companies or public sectors. The school believes that a multinational environ-

ment enhances cross-functional knowledge and integrated problem-solving skills. IUJ graduates will eventually have a powerful business network in Japan, as well as in foreign countries where IUJ alumni work.

Foreign institutions also offer MBA programs in Japan.

They are intended for experienced businesspeople. Classes are held on weekends to allow students to continue working full time.

Unlike many MBA courses offered overseas, programs in Japan have a very international focus, with many nationalities represented in the

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF JAPAN (above), a post-graduate institution in Niigata Prefecture, offers a two-year MBA program conducted entirely in English. An MBA team from Waseda University places second at the NASDAQ Asia Moot Corp. 2001.

student body, and Japanese usually make up less than half of the participants.

Philadelphia-based Temple University, for example, a pioneer, having started courses in Tokyo in 1990. The program provides an opportunity for experienced m-

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