**Top Ten Tips for choosing the right MBA programme**

**Answer these questions to help you prepare for the MBA and to ensure that the MBA programme you choose will give you the best return on your investment.**

* **Be clear about your objectives**

What are you doing the MBA for? What is your long term career goal and how will the MBA help you to get there?

* **Where are your skills gaps?**

Which particular skills do you need to develop in order to achieve your career goal? Do you need to focus on a particular specialism? If so, look at specialist MBAs or consider the choice of electives offered by business schools.

* **Do you fully appreciate what you will be taking on?**

MBA programmes are tough, intense and challenging. Make sure you are fully prepared for this. Have you considered what changes you need to make to your life in order to cope with the demands of the course.

* **Have you discussed your plans with colleagues, friends and family?**

Having the support of friends and family can make studying so much easier especially when it all seems so overwhelming. Make sure they are fully on board with your decision and appreciate what lies ahead!

* **If you are considering a part-time MBA, does your employer support you?**

Ideally your employer should be involved in your decision to study for an MBA. If they are not sponsoring you they might at least agree to give you time off for study or cover some of your expenses. Why not provide them with a business case for supporting your studies?

* **Which business school is best for you?**

Your choice of business school will be determined by your budget, your chosen location, your chosen mode of study, and specialist interests. Turn these into a check list to help you to refine your search. Don’t assume the top ranked business schools are the best for you but do try to choose an accredited business school. There are many high quality MBA programmes available that will meet your criteria so shop around.

* **Have you visited your chosen business school?**

It is important to visit and to ask questions. Some business schools will let you sit in on classes and can put you in touch with alumni who will talk to you about their experiences.

* **Do you need to prepare for the GMAT?**

Many business schools will have an admissions test and GMAT is the most widely used. The GMAT is a test of verbal, mathematical, analytical and writing skills and can be tough if you have been out of study for some time. You can prepare on your own or sign up for a preparatory course. Whatever you do, leave enough time to understand and practice the test before you apply to business school. For more information go to: <http://www.mba.com/the-gmat>

* **Have you considered studying abroad?**

If it is not essential to study near to home think about the possibility of studying abroad. Across Europe and in more far flung parts of the world there are some excellent business schools offering good value MBA programmes. Studying abroad might also open up new career opportunities and improve your job prospects on graduation.

* **Are you prepared to learn and to change?**

If you are doing the MBA solely to improve your salary or to get promotion you are doing it for the wrong reasons. The MBA will challenge your thinking and your perceptions of yourself. It is a fantastic learning experience but it can be scary if you are not open to the prospect of self discovery and change.

**GOOD LUCK!**