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mbaMission's Insider's Guide

INSEAD

Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires

2024–2025

presented by POETS & QUANTS

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Introduction from mbaMission

When we launched our Insider's Guide (IG) series more than a decade ago, we never imagined that more than 100,000 IGs would eventually be downloaded by business school applicants. Our humble goal was simply to create a resource that helped applicants go beyond the stereotypes about the top MBA programs and truly understand the vastness of what each program offers. Every year, we invest hundreds of hours into researching and examining the leading business schools—including speaking with students, alumni, and admissions representatives—to construct these guides.

Now, the IGs have a remarkably in-depth companion: onTrack by mbaMission, our asynchronous MBA course and application platform. Through onTrack, applicants are served a custom learning path, curated from among 80 application modules. You can identify your target programs in onTrack and review thoughtful lessons on each one's pros and cons, curricular offerings, job opportunities, and much, much more. Then, you can return to the IGs and home in on areas of interest, because the guides go into the minute details of each program's academic offerings, star professors, social calendar highlights, and more.

Of course, we have an abundance of other free resources for you, including our series of Interview Guides, Career Guides, and our *Complete Start-to-Finish MBA Admissions Guide*. In addition, we offer a robust blog, with weekly essay-writing tips, detailed analysis of the leading schools' essay questions, and MBA news and trends, as well as a YouTube channel featuring videos on every aspect of the MBA application process, and our free, 30-minute consultation for personalized, one-on-one advice.

mbaMission has already helped thousands of aspiring MBAs from around the world gain entry into elite U.S. and international business schools and been named the number-one MBA admissions consulting firm by *Poets&Quants* year after year, but we are constantly working to grow and improve in our quest to "graduate" additional classes of satisfied clients. We look forward to supporting you on your journey to business school and beyond!

Jeremy Shinewald
President/Founder
mbaMission

Introduction from *Poets&Quants*

For more than ten years, *Poets&Quants* has been the foremost authority on the top business schools. Our mission has always been to help young professionals with one of the most important—and potentially most expensive—decisions of their lives: whether to pursue an MBA.

We are pleased to offer these guides to our readers as part of our editorial partnership between *Poets&Quants* and mbaMission, the world's leading MBA admissions consulting firm. We closely evaluated all such guides currently on the market, and are confident that you will not find a more thorough analysis of an MBA program than mbaMission's. These in-depth reports are well researched and well written, offering the detail and examination applicants need to really understand a school's culture, offerings, and outcomes. We are thrilled to offer these guides to our readers for free, thanks to our partnership.

Moreover, the guides are a great complement to the daily coverage of MBA news, students, programs, and admissions practices on PoetsandQuants.com. We hope you will visit our site often to stay informed about the programs that interest you and the one you ultimately attend. We will continue to provide the most relevant and current resources on the MBA world to help you make the best possible decisions on your path from school selection to career advancement.

I wish you the best of luck on your journey to what will undoubtedly be a transformational experience.

John A. Byrne
Founder & Editor in Chief
Poets&Quants

Free Resources from mbaMission

The following guides are also available from mbaMission (online at www.mbamission.com/guides), and more are being added regularly:

Admissions Guides

- Complete Start-to-Finish MBA Admissions Guide
- Brainstorming Guide
- Essay Writing Guide
- Executive MBA Program Guide
- Fundamentals of an MBA Candidacy Guide
- HBS 2+2 and Deferred Admissions Guide
- Interview Guide
- Letters of Recommendation Guide
- Long-Term Planning Guide
- Optional Essays Guide
- Personal Statement Guide
- Resume Guide
- Selecting Your Target MBA Program E-Book
- Social Media Guide
- Waitlist Guide
- "What Matters?" and "What More?": 50 Successful Essays for the Stanford GSB and HBS (and Why They Worked)

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- ESADE Program Guide
- HEC Paris Program Guide
- HKUST Program Guide
- IE Business School Program Guide
- IESE Business School Program Guide
- IMD Program Guide
- Ivey Business School Program Guide
- London Business School Program Guide
- Rotman School of Management Program Guide
- Saïd Business School Program Guide

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- Insider's Guide to Cornell University's Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management
- Insider's Guide to Duke University's Fuqua School of Business
- Insider's Guide to the Haas School of Business at the University of California-Berkeley
- Insider's Guide to Harvard Business School
- Insider's Guide to INSEAD
- Insider's Guide to the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University
- Insider's Guide to the MIT Sloan School of Management
- Insider's Guide to New York University's Leonard N. Stern School of Business
- Insider's Guide to the Stanford Graduate School of Business
- Insider's Guide to the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan
- Insider's Guide to the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth
- Insider's Guide to the UCLA Anderson School of Management
- Insider's Guide to the University of Chicago Booth School of Business
- Insider's Guide to the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business Administration
- Insider's Guide to the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania
- Insider's Guide to the Yale School of Management

Interview Guides

- Chicago Booth School of Business Interview Guide
- Columbia Business School Interview Guide
- Cornell Johnson Graduate School of Management Interview Guide
- Dartmouth Tuck Interview Guide
- Duke Fuqua Interview Guide
- Haas School of Business Interview Guide
- Harvard Business School Interview Guide
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Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires INSEAD

Summary

INSEAD has billed itself on its website as "the business school for the world," and since its inception, its goal has been to offer students a truly international business education. Founded in France in 1957 as the Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires, from which the acronym INSEAD is derived, the school was intended to break with national outlooks and teach from a more integrated European position, educating business leaders who would then create opportunities for transnational trade. Speaking of this history in a *Financial Times* article, then Dean Ilian Mihov said of George Doriot, the French-born American who first established INSEAD, "His idea was to build an international school—an international school based in France." He succeeded. In 1960, the school graduated its first class of 52 students from 14 countries and has continued to expand its global reach ever since.

Based in picturesque Fontainebleau in France, INSEAD launched its first program on Asian business in 1974, began offering executive programs for Brazilians in 1987, welcomed its first class on its Singapore campus in 2000, and opened the INSEAD center in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in 2007. Today, with campuses in three different countries (in addition to the San Francisco Hub for Business Innovation, which is dedicated to the school's executive programs), faculty members representing more than 40 different nationalities, and a student body that *Forbes* has deemed "the most diverse of any school," INSEAD could be said to be living its mission of "creat[ing] an open-minded learning environment that brings together people, cultures and ideas from around the world, in order to transform individuals and organisations through business education."

When asked to describe INSEAD's defining characteristics, many students, alumni, and staff use the word "diversity." In a *Poets&Quants* interview, then Dean Mihov spoke about this topic, saying, "It's a key characteristic of the experience. When you talk to people who are not like you, these are the people who challenge you and make you a better person. So diversity is very important in the classroom." The school's admissions director at the time reinforced this sentiment in an exclusive interview with mbaMission, stating, "In any class, we have well over 80 nationalities represented. … Our professors come from all over the world, and in class, you can be sure that you'll have a whole number of different cultural perspectives on any situation."

Similarly, a student we interviewed noted, "You have the potential to make relationships with people from all parts of the world who are really open-minded, who have experienced different cultures, who understand how to do cross-border business." For the school's graduates, those connections remain long beyond the end of the one-year program. INSEAD's network is vast, with alumni spread throughout nearly 180 countries and with alumni association chapters in nearly 50 countries, and

> This is one of my favorite programs for applicants with international experience and interests. INSEAD is looking for those who have substantial international experience, which enhances what students learn for how to handle business challenges within a global environment.
>
> Susan Kaplan, mbaMission Senior Consultant

several students and alumni with whom we spoke commented on the sense of community they feel among those who have attended the school.

Another defining trait of the INSEAD MBA program is its length: just ten months. INSEAD was the first school to offer a one-year MBA, in fact, and did so as its initial offering in 1959. The program, split into five academic periods, requires students to complete 14 core courses in general management and allows them to tailor their education through electives, internships, and immersive international experiences. An admissions director explained to us that students "have to juggle about 80% of the course content that they would cover in a two-year program, whilst at the same time going through the job search, going through the career development process." Given all this, students can find their year at INSEAD to be a very intense, incredibly fast-paced experience. A running joke among INSEADers is that students must forfeit one of the three Ss—sleeping, socializing, or studying—because they simply do not have enough time for them all. One student we interviewed remarked, "It's like the unit of time at INSEAD is the day, and the unit of time in the rest of the world is like the week, or the month. In a matter of five days, a lot of things are happening!"

The accelerated nature of the program does have its appeal, however. For students who do not want to be out of the workforce for long or whose employers are granting only a limited amount of leave, the one-year program can be a practical option. Also, for students who must foot the bill for business school themselves, the abbreviated commitment can be significant, because it means less salary lost and a lower overall cost.

INSEAD's program is taught by an active and renowned faculty. INSEAD professors W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne were listed together in the number one spot of the Thinkers50 2019 biennial, world-wide rankings of management thinkers, having also made the top five several times (most recently in 2023), and another INSEAD professor, Erin Meyer, has been honored by Thinkers50 with the RADAR Thinker of the Month award twice and the RADAR award once. See more about Kim and Mauborgne in the Notable Professors and Unsung Heroes section.

The school's alumni are often demonstrated successes as well: a *Financial Times* article distinguished INSEAD as the business school with the second highest number of MBA graduates (eight) serving as Fortune 500 CEOs, including (now executive chairman) Andre Calantzopoulos of Philip Morris, António Horta-Osório (formerly) of Lloyds Banking Group, and Tidjane Thiam (formerly) of Credit Suisse.

From the school's global business approach to its campus-hopping international community and accelerated program, INSEAD is an MBA program with some distinctive features, one that searches for students who appreciate and will best benefit from its uniqueness. In his interview with *Poets&Quants*, then Dean Mihov stated that "INSEAD focuses on attracting and encouraging the right candidates to the school rather than focusing on application volume. As a result, we may actively discourage prospects from applying if we feel INSEAD is not the right choice for them after meeting them." The students with whom we spoke expressed strong feelings for their INSEAD experience. One said, "I think it impacts you, just impacts your life overall. It's not necessarily only about the career, or only about short-term gains. I think it gives you a lot to digest and to take forward for the long term, as well," while another remarked, "INSEAD is really a journey. It's a journey, and you start with yourself."

Class Size: Smaller Versus Larger

One element that affects the character of a school's MBA experience is class size. You might want to reflect on your high school, college, and work environments to help you determine whether you would be more comfortable in a larger class or a smaller one—or whether this is even a consideration for you at all.

> Reflect on your past academic and work environments to determine whether you would be more comfortable in a larger or smaller class—or whether this is a consideration for you at all.

Students at smaller schools (which we define as having approximately 350 students or fewer per class) tend to interact with most of their peers and professors at some point during the typical two-year MBA period. Thus, the smaller schools are generally considered more "knowable," and their communities tend to be quite closely knit. Also, consider that assuming a leadership position is easier in a smaller environment, because, for example, the Finance Club may have only one president at both a small school and a large school, but competition for such a position would obviously be greater in the larger program.

Some individuals might prefer to be at a larger school where they can better maintain their anonymity if they so choose. A student at a school with close to 900 people or more in each class will not likely get to know each and every one of their classmates by the end of the program, and some people might prefer this. Further, advocates of larger classes tout the advantage of being able to interact with more people during one's MBA experience—and to thereby develop a broader and more robust network of peers. Note that many schools divide students into smaller groups—called "sections," "clusters," "cohorts," or even "oceans"—in which approximately 60–90 students take certain classes together, and this approach can help foster a stronger sense of community within the larger programs.

On their website, INSEAD lists its "typical" class size as 1,000, including both August and the January intakes. The "typical" class size may sound large compared to other international business schools, but keep in mind that each INSEAD class is split between its two main campuses, with approximately 300 students starting the program on the Fontainebleau campus and 200 on the Singapore campus. These numbers remain generally constant throughout the first four months of the program but then tend to fluctuate as students move among the school's campuses in the latter six months.

Each class is divided into sections of approximately 70–80 students who take the program's core courses together. These sections are then divided into study groups of five to six students who work together to solve problems and complete assignments. These small study groups are considered one of the central learning experiences at INSEAD and are designed to maximize diversity, mixing students of different genders, ages, nationalities, and backgrounds. One student profiled her study group in a post on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog, noting that the six people involved collectively represented 22 countries, spoke 13 languages, and had "held 15 jobs across 9 industries." Of this level of group diversity, then Dean Ilian Mihov told the *Financial*

Year-Over-Year Class Profile Data: INSEAD	Class of 2025
Students (January and August intakes)	~1,000
Years of Work Experience Range	3–8
Average Age	29
Age Range	23–35
Female Representation	38%
Nationalities	110
Work or Home Countries	75

These data data represent "a typical MBA class" for "January and August" intakes, as listed on INSEAD's website.

***Times*, "In the beginning, they [students] don't like it, they complain, but over time, if you ask our alumni they will say this is one of the most important experiences in the school."**

Several students and alumni with whom we spoke about the study groups and sections told us that the section system in particular plays a strong role in determining how students socialize during their first few months at INSEAD. One alumnus remarked that despite the "strong clash of cultures," his section members became "some of my closest friends," "people I know I can always rely upon." Similarly, a student wrote on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog, "It is amazing how quickly your class (section) can transform from a group of highly diverse, motivated strangers ... to colleagues and friends." Even those who did not immediately bond with the members of their study group or section relayed that interacting with others from such different backgrounds helped better prepare them for the world of international business.

> One of my past clients at INSEAD said the student body is "comically diverse"—it was by far the most international community he saw in a business school.
>
> Kate Richardson, mbaMission Senior Consultant

Members of INSEAD's Class of 2023 represent 75 different nationalities. The students with whom we spoke repeatedly stressed the international nature of the program, and in an interview with *Poets&Quants*, then Dean Mihov himself said, "No other school in the world is as global as INSEAD." He went on to add, "But the most important thing about our diversity is that there is no dominant culture in the classroom. We have capped people from one nation to 10% to 12% of the intake. It makes people not feel they are a minority." One student told us, "If you look at the majority of people, there's fewer people that've lived in only one country and grown up in only one country than there are who have actually lived in one or more countries."

Another student wrote on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog, "Experiencing diversity at INSEAD is not only about putting together 90 different nationalities in a single location. It is about actively embracing the differences in opinions .... It is about being open-minded when you put yourself in the shoes of another who holds a different view point on ... [a subject]—shaped by their own cultural norms and values—in ... class and yet, still be able to entertain that thought in your mind without judgement." And yet another student we interviewed confessed, "You get addicted to this—to the conversation that you can have. ... You are constantly challenged in a good way."

"Whenever I get stuck on an issue, all I have to do is ask around, and the solution will somehow exist within the INSEAD family. The diversity is incredible, and the support is beyond amazing," wrote a student on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog. "The general theme at INSEAD is that if we all help each other, we will all benefit from it. The big belief is that our degree will only get more valuable through these collaborations, and not through competition."

Curriculum: Flexible Versus Mandatory Core

Many business schools have a "core" curriculum—a standard series of courses that all students must take. However, these core requirements can vary tremendously from one program to the next. For example, one school may teach

its required curriculum for the entire first year, meaning that students will not take any elective courses until their second year, whereas another MBA program may stipulate only one or two required courses.

The rigidity or flexibility of a school's required curriculum affects students' education and socialization. Regardless of their professional experience, students at a school with a rigid core curriculum must all take the same classes. At some schools, for example, even CPAs must take the required foundational accounting course, whereas at others, students can waive selected classes if they can prove a certain level of proficiency. Again, both approaches have pros and cons, and what those are depends on your perspective.

The rigidity or flexibility of a school's first-year curriculum affects students' education and socialization.

Proponents of a rigid core curriculum would argue that academics understand what skills students need to become true managers and that when students "overspecialize" in one area, their overall business education can ultimately suffer. A significant body of academic writing has been devoted to critiquing programs that give students a narrow view of business, notably Henry Mintzberg's *Managers Not MBAs: A Hard Look at the Soft Practice of Managing and Management Development* (Berrett-Koehler, 2004) and Rakesh Khurana's *From Higher Aims to Hired Hands: The Social Transformation of American Business Schools and the Unfulfilled Promise of Management as a Profession* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

Advocates of the core curriculum approach would also argue that having all students take the same classes creates a common language and discussion among the classmates because of the shared experience. In addition, proponents contend that a rigid core curriculum facilitates learning, because students who have applicable direct experience bring that knowledge and insight into the classroom and can thereby help teach others. Finally, schools with mandatory cores generally keep students together in their sections for several months, if not an entire academic year, and students who interact every day in this way ultimately forge strong bonds. This sustained contact and connection can create a deep sense of community among the students.

In contrast, those who would argue in favor of a more flexible curriculum feel that students benefit from the opportunity to specialize immediately—that time is short, and students need power and choice in preparing for their desired careers. So if, for example, a student intended to enter the world of finance, an advocate of flexibility would argue that the student should be able to study finance in depth *throughout* the MBA program, possibly even from day one, so as to gain as much experience as possible in this area—especially before interviewing for a summer internship. Furthermore, proponents for flexible curricula caution that experienced students could end up "wasting" hours taking courses in subjects in which they already have expertise. Finally, they would assert that a flexible schedule allows students the opportunity to meet a greater number and wider variety of their classmates.

INSEAD's academic year is divided into five two-month periods, referred to as P1 through P5, which are separated by weeklong breaks. Students in the January intake portion of each class enjoy an additional two-month break over the summer. Over the course of the five periods, students take 14 core courses, 11 elective courses, and one capstone course. Students can opt out of two core business classes by taking pre-approved electives in their place. In a post on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog, one student spoke about what she wished she had known before starting the program, declaring, "There [is] tons of group work, and if you have no exemption, returning home to do the assignments [for] all six courses per period is a killer. Be smart, get

your exemptions, and reduce your stress levels." The course load, particularly in P1 and P2, can reportedly be challenging. As one student we interviewed said, "You start at like 8:30 a.m., you finish at 7:00 p.m., and you have a one-hour break in the middle. ... Obviously, it takes some time to get into, because it's quite heavy ... but you adapt quickly."

INSEAD rolled out a revised curriculum for the Class of 2018, which the school's dean of degree programs explained will "[offer] students a more personalized learning journey," creating "an exceptional MBA learning experience for our participants, cultivating all facets of their personal and professional growth to be a well-rounded, world-class business leader and entrepreneur." Among the updates were the creation of the Personal Leadership Development Programme, adjustments to core courses, and the addition of new electives, personal career advisors, a culminating capstone course, and a "digital start" content series meant to help incoming students better prepare for the rigors of the MBA program and reduce any knowledge gaps among them.

> One of my clients emailed me after he had started classes [at INSEAD] to describe the curriculum as "an intellectual fire hose"—the intensity and excitement and sheer power of the program exceeded all expectations.
>
> Jessica Shklar, mbaMission Executive Director

Period 1

- **"Financial Accounting"**
- **"Financial Markets and Valuation"**
- **"Introduction to Strategy"**
- **"Organisational Behaviour 1"**
- **"Prices and Markets"**
- **"Uncertainty, Data, and Judgement"**

Period 2

- **"Corporate Financial Policy"**
- **"Leadership Communication Foundations"**
- **"Managerial Accounting"**
- **"Managing Customer Value"**
- **"Organisational Behaviour 2"**
- **"Processes and Operations Management"**

Period 3

- **"Business in Society"**
  - **Ethics**
  - **Political Environment**
  - **Public Policy**
- **"Macroeconomics in the Global Economy"**
- **Three and a half electives**

Period 4

- **Four Electives**

Period 5

- **"Capstone: Your First 100 Days"**
- **Three Electives**

The courses in P1 are designed to give students a solid base of information on which the P2 courses build. Taught from an international perspective, they lay the groundwork in microeconomics, statistical tools, financial reporting, valuation, management, and teamwork. The P2 courses then offer the foundations of business operations and enterprise by focusing on customer value, leadership, accounting, and financial policy. The remaining two core courses are taken in P3—alongside four electives—and provide students with an understanding of interdependence in business, looking at how companies can affect society and the global economy and building on the underlying theme of "business as a force for good." Said one student we interviewed about the INSEAD core, "It's well organized. … After spending P1, you can see how the classes interact with each other, and this feeling is even stronger at the end of P2 when you understand why you have a class in each of those subjects."

The P4 and P5 periods are lighter on course work, with four classes each rather than six, and are made up almost entirely of electives. Students can select from more than 75 elective courses in the following subject areas:

- **Accounting and Control**
- **Decision Sciences**
- **Economics and Political Science**
- **Entrepreneurship and Family Enterprise**
- **Finance**
- **Marketing**
- **Organisational Behaviour**
- **Strategy**
- **Technology and Operations Management**

INSEAD has focused on offering further electives on digital initiatives and ethics in the past five years or so, including "Digital Transformation of Society, Industries and Companies," "FinTechs," and "Social Media Analytics." The courses indicate INSEAD's proactive response to a shifting business market in which newly minted MBAs are increasingly joining Silicon Valley firms rather than pursuing positions in investment banking and other more traditional career paths.

INSEAD also offers several popular "Building Businesses" courses that provide hands-on experience in places such as China, India, and Silicon Valley and take students out of the classroom on trips to visit the firms of alumni, executives, and entrepreneurs. A student who took "Building Businesses in Silicon Valley" wrote on the course's dedicated blog—*BBSV Blog*—that she found a lot of real-world meaning in the class: "One of the primary objectives behind our visit of the Valley is to understand our value, as MBAs, to this unique vibrant ecosystem." Deeming the mission worthwhile and a definite success, if "a little surreal," she shared that she

also gained a greater understanding of how and why the Silicon Valley start-up scene thrives, knowledge she can apply to future businesses and that she could only have gained on-site.

During P3, P4, and P5, students can switch campuses or take elective courses at INSEAD's partner schools, the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, Tsinghua University in China, and Sorbonne University in France.

Students are also required to participate in one culminating capstone course, during P5, in which they must work together as teams to solve a simulated business crisis. After presenting their findings and plans to INSEAD alumni, the students participate in a self-assessment exercise in which they share what they learned about themselves, their student partners, and their teams.

One final academic requirement that is central to INSEAD's history and reputation as a world-class MBA program is its exit language requisite. All enrolling students must start by being proficient in two languages. This means they must be fluent in English and have what the INSEAD Language Policy guide calls "at least a B1 'practical' level of knowledge in a second language." Then, to graduate, all students must demonstrate a basic level of proficiency in a third, linguistically different language before completing the MBA program. The aforementioned policy guide defines "basic" level as the "ability to communicate in a simple and direct exchange of information on routine matters."

Applicants can prove they possess the required incoming level of language ability by providing certification of (1) secondary or undergraduate schooling conducted exclusively in that language or (2) a completed course conducted by a state-recognized cultural or commercial body. Students can then fulfill the exit language requirement by passing a written and oral Language Evaluation Test, given by Fontainebleau Langues & Communication (FL&C) on both the Singapore and Fontainebleau campuses. These exams take place three times each year—during orientation week, in November, and in June—and are available for 17 languages, including Arabic (classic), Bahasa Indonesian, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish. Although FL&C offers training courses from P1 to P3 in ten different languages, INSEAD's course load is significant enough that the school encourages students to secure the exit language requirement during orientation week or even before MBA courses begin. One student with whom we spoke referred to meeting the language component of the program as "really a hustle" and advised, "If you can get rid of it before starting, it's a good thing to do, because it takes you a lot of time, it's on top of all the work, and it's added stress and pressure, which is not necessary."

Pedagogy: Lecture Versus Case Method

Students will likely encounter multiple styles of learning while in business school—including participating in simulations, listening to guest speakers, and partaking in hands-on projects—but the two most common MBA learning styles are case method and lecture.

Pioneered by Harvard Business School, the case method, or case-based learning, requires students to read the story (called a "case") of either a hypothetical or a real protagonist who is facing a managerial dilemma. As the student reads, the student explores the protagonist's dilemma and has access to various quantitative and qualitative data points meant to facilitate further analysis. (Cases can vary in length but are typically 10–20 pages long.) After reading and studying the entire case, the student generally understands the profundity of the problem and is typically asked a simple question: "What would *you* do?" In other words, how would the student act or react if they were in the protagonist's place? What decision(s) would the student make?

> Students will encounter many different styles of learning during their time at business school, but the two most common are case method and lecture.

After completing their independent analysis of the case, the student typically meets with the members of their study group or learning team (if the school in question assigns such teams) for further evaluation. Together, the group/team members explore and critique one another's ideas and help those students who may have had difficulty understanding particular aspects of the issue or progressing as far on their own. Often, though not always, the team will establish a consensus regarding the actions they would take in the protagonist's place. Then, in class, the professor acts as facilitator and manages a discussion of the case. Class discussions can often become quite lively, and the professor will guide students toward resolving the dilemma. Sometimes, the professor will ultimately reveal the protagonist's decision and the subsequent results—or even bring the actual protagonist into the classroom to share and discuss the case's progression and outcomes in person.

In short, the case method focuses primarily on the analytical process and illustrates that the problems presented have no clear-cut right or wrong responses. For a student to disagree with the protagonist's chosen path—even after it has proved to be successful—is not unusual. After all, another approach (or even inaction) may have produced an even better result.

Note that case-based learning is not specific to one academic discipline. Cases are available in finance, strategy, operations, accounting, marketing, and still other areas. Further, many cases are interdisciplinary, meaning that they address more than one area at a time, such as requiring students to think about how a financial decision might affect the operations of a manufacturing company or the ways in which a marketing decision might involve significant financial considerations. Importantly, students in case environments are often graded on their "contribution" to the class discussion (measured by the level of one's participation in discussions and analysis, not on the frequency with which one offers "correct" answers), so the case method is not for those who are uncomfortable speaking in class. However, it can be incredibly helpful for those who want or need to practice and build confidence speaking publicly.

Lecture is the method of learning that is familiar to most people—the professor stands in front of the class and explores a theory or event, facilitating discussion and emphasizing and explaining key learning points. Often, students have read chapters of a textbook beforehand and have come to class with a foundation in the specific area to be examined that day. Although the case method gives students a context for a problem, those who favor lecture tend to believe that the case method is too situation specific and therefore prefer a methodical exploration of theory that they feel can be broadly applied across situations. In lecture classes, the professor and their research or theory are technically paramount, though students still participate, challenge ideas, and debate issues.

Note that at some schools, professors may alternate between cases and lectures within a single semester of classes.

INSEAD does not commit to any one specific teaching method. Students can therefore expect to experience a variety of instruction techniques and styles, including group work, case studies, guest speakers, role-plays, and off-site learning. The school has stated on its website that INSEAD professors are asked, first and foremost, to structure their courses as "learner-centered environments," meaning ones in which students are required to be active and responsive participants. In the role of a facilitator, the professor structures learning around the knowledge the students have brought with them into the classroom. Of this type of teaching, one student we interviewed said, "They [the professors] encourage people to jump in, and in the end, they will give you theory, but you have a lot of discussion and learning with others." In an *INSEAD In the Know* blog post, another student lauded the concept of a teaching environment that welcomed, but did not demand, student participation: "Each professor has a different style, and most incorporate significant class participation. But there are no set rules. … I contribute when I feel like I have something valuable to add, not because I feel forced to do so."

INSEAD's student-centered pedagogy is reportedly much appreciated. A student who had studied on both campuses raved to us about the role-play aspects of his "New Business Ventures" class (which seems to be a student favorite) and the guest speakers that were brought in to teach the class some of the practicalities and principles of building a new company. The professor also engaged the class in practice pitching, even inviting venture capitalists to listen to students' pitches and provide feedback on their presentations. An alumnus with whom we spoke compared the school's general teaching style to the experience of working at a consultancy: "lots of team work and tight deadlines." Another student remarked to us how much he enjoyed learning theory and structure from cases, adding, "We have a case for every class. I mean, 99% of the classes have a case. It's most of the time really practical." And one offered the following summary on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog: "Everyone is well-informed, arguments are constructive, faculty is heavily seasoned, hence the learning experience is awesome."

Academic Specializations/Recruitment Focus: Resources and Employers

Schools' brands and reputations develop over time and tend to endure, even when the programs make efforts to change them. For example, many applicants still feel that Kellogg is only a marketing school and that Chicago Booth is only for people interested in finance, even though both programs boast strengths in many other areas. Indeed, this is the exact reason mbaMission started producing these guides in 2008—we wanted applicants to see beyond these superficial "market" perceptions. Make sure you are not merely accepting stereotypes but are truly considering the breadth and depth of resources available at each school.

> Do not merely accept stereotypes but truly consider the breadth and depth of resources available at each school.

We have dedicated the majority of this guide to exploring the principal professional specializations for which resources are available at this particular school, and we encourage you to fully consider whether the MBA program meets your personal academic needs by supplementing the information here with additional context from the school's career services office, by connecting with the heads of relevant clubs on campus, and perhaps even by reaching out to alumni in your target industry.

Top Sectors: INSEAD	Management Consulting	Corporate Sectors[2]	Financial Services	Technology, Media, and Telecommunications[1]
2023	61%	16%	14%	9%
2022	53%	13%	12%	22%
2021	52%	16%	14%	19%
2020	48%	15%	14%	23%
2019	51%	11%	12%	18%
2018	42%	16%	15%	17%
2017	49%	19%	12%	20%
2016	46%	21%	14%	19%
2015	43%	21%	15%	21%
2014	41%	42%	17%	NA
2013	34%	49%	17%	NA
2012	41%	45%	14%	NA
2011	39%	38%	23%	NA
2010	44%	36%	20%	NA
2009	39%	44%	17%	NA
2008	42%	40%	18%	NA
2007	39%	33%	28%	NA
2006	35%	36%	29%	NA
2005	35%	35%	30%	NA
2004	38%	42%	20%	NA

[1] *Before 2015, INSEAD reported data for Technology, Media, and Telecommunications as part of Corporate Sectors.*

[2] *INSEAD sometimes reports this category as "Corporate Services."*

INSEAD can be viewed as primarily a management consulting school, given that a large percentage of students tend to come from that sector (37% of the Class of 2023) and an even larger percentage tend to take jobs in it after graduation (44% of the Class of 2022, in addition to 17% that had worked in this field before their studies and returned to it after graduation). Firms in this industry recruit heavily at INSEAD. As one of the school's recent brochures states, "Our high-quality students and global reach means that we are the #1 source of talent for sector leaders McKinsey & Company, The Boston Consulting Group, and Bain & Company."

Nevertheless, the school certainly offers resources fitting for those interested in careers other than consulting. In an exclusive interview with mbaMission, INSEAD's former admissions director touted the school's strengths in the area of entrepreneurship, for example, saying, "We have a number of centers of excellence which focus on entrepreneurship in all its aspects, and a comprehensive program for our students which

begins from day one. Students don't necessarily immediately take the entrepreneurial route on graduation (about 5%–8% will do so), but later on, we estimate that about 50% of our alumni will go into some kind of entrepreneurial role."

Of the students who graduated in December 2022 and July 2023, 88% had secured employment within three months of graduating (compared to 94%, 92%, and 89%, respectively, the previous three years). Of those students, 44% reported finding their job through either INSEAD's Career Development Centre or the alumni network (that figure was 54%, 50%, and 46%, respectively, the previous three years). Such numbers may be in part attributable to recent enhancements in INSEAD's career services and resources.

In a *Poets&Quants* article, then Dean Mihov spoke about these improvements, saying, "We provide the students now with personal career advisers. So when students come to INSEAD, they have somebody who helps them during the year figure out where they want to apply, figure out what they are going to do, preparing them for interviews, preparing them for submitting CVs [curriculum vitae], recommendation letters—all of these things." He added that during his tenure, INSEAD has "invested a lot in business development—that is, relationships with employers."

Several students with whom we spoke reported that they take advantage of the school's career services regularly, even when they are not actively participating in the recruiting process, by attending cover letter workshops, case study practice sessions, one-on-one counseling sessions, and panel discussions.

The 2023 INSEAD Employment Report recognizes the following organizations as employing four December 2022 or July 2023 graduates, which we'll refer to here as the "Class of 2023" (figures in parentheses represent the number of former employees returning to the organization after graduation):

- **McKinsey & Company: 124 (43)**
- **Boston Consulting Group: 83 (25)**
- **Bain & Company: 71 (18)**
- **Strategy&: 29 (9)**
- **Kearney: 27 (5)**
- **Roland Berger: 13 (6)**
- **Ernst & Young: 10**
- **Accenture: 9**
- **Oliver Wyman: 7 (3)**
- **Samsung: 7**
- **Amazon: 6**
- **Eli Lilly & Company: 5**
- **AlixPartners: 4 (1)**
- **Alvarez & Marsal: 4 (1)**
- **Amphenol: 4**
- **Morgan Stanley: 4 (1)**
- **Restaurant Brands International: 4**

Professional Specializations

Consulting

Consulting has long been a popular career choice for INSEAD students. In 2023, 44% of the school's graduates newly entered, and another 17% returned to, positions in the management consulting industry—this figure was (in total) 53% in 2022, 52% in 2021, and 48% in 2020. By comparison, at the Stanford Graduate School of Business, only 15% of the Class of 2023 entered consulting industry positions; this number was 25% at Harvard Business School, 29% at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, and 39% at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. INSEAD has been recognized as a top feeder business school for consulting firms, with the school itself claiming to be "the #1 source of talent for sector leaders McKinsey & Company, The Boston Consulting Group, and Bain & Company" in a recent employment report.

Indeed, those companies were listed as the top three employers in 2023 of INSEAD graduates, collectively employing approximately 32% of the graduating class: McKinsey & Company hired 124 individuals, the Boston Consulting Group hired 83, and Bain & Company hired 71.

Eight of the school's top ten employers for the year were consulting firms, including Strategy&, Kearney, and Accenture. INSEAD's pre- and post-MBA career statistics for those completing INSEAD's program in December 2022 and July 2023 show that the number of students working in consulting increased significantly, from 37% pre-MBA to 61% post-MBA (note that the former figure is for the entire class and the latter is among those included in INSEAD's 2023 employment report; see the end of this guide for a full breakdown of that report).

A *Poets&Quants* article has suggested that INSEAD is converting individuals who had worked in financial services and what INSEAD broadly refers to as "Corporate Sectors" (which include energy, corporate services, health care, manufacturing/conglomerates, primary industries, public sector/impact economy, and retail consumer and luxury goods) into management consultants. Keep in mind, of course, that 17% of graduates returned to management consulting, which is to say that some pre-MBA management consultants changed career sector as well.

The program's employment data over recent years has reinforced that idea. The most recent employment figures, however, also reflect a strong showing for Technology, Media, and Telecommunications, which saw the greatest difference between returnees and new hires for the third year in a row in terms of their proportion within each group. The following table is drawn from INSEAD's most recent employment report, which, again, reflects employment data for students completing INSEAD's program in December 2022 and July 2023. Interestingly, only 1% of hires were Technology, Media, and Telecommunication returnees. Note that the data are listed in descending order of percentage points difference.

These figures normalize percentages within each sector to come out to 100%. For example, Technology, Media, and Telecommunications saw 8% of graduates newly entering that sector, with an additional 1% returning to their pre-MBA role in that sector; this amounts to approximately 88.9% and 11.1%, respectively, within that specific sector.

INSEAD boasts a strategy group comprising 33 faculty members and seven visiting faculty who work across all four campuses. This group includes such notable professors as Andrew Shipilov, the John H. Loudon Chaired Professor of

Sector Group	New Hires	Returnees	Percentage Points Difference
Technology, Media, and Telecommunications	88.9%	11.1%	77.8
Financial Services	71.4%	28.6%	42.8
Corporate Sectors	81.3%	18.8%	62.5
Management Consulting	72.1%	27.9%	44.2

These figures normalize percentages within each sector to come out to 100%. For example, Technology, Media, and Telecommunications saw 8% of graduates newly entering that sector, with an additional 1% returning to their pre-MBA role in that sector; this amounts to approximately 88.9% and 11.1%, respectively, within that specific sector.

International Management and academic director of the INSEAD Blue Ocean Strategy program; Renée Mauborgne, the INSEAD Distinguished Fellow of Strategy and International Management, co-director of the INSEAD Blue Ocean Strategy Institute, a former advisor to President Barack Obama, and a top-ranked Thinkers50 management thinker; and W. Chan Kim, recipient of the 2008 Nobel Colloquia Prize for Leadership on Business and Economic Thinking, co-director of the INSEAD Blue Ocean Strategy Institute, and, along with the aforementioned Mauborgne, one of the top management gurus in the world, as he has been ranked by Thinkers50 several times (jointly with Mauborgne).

INSEAD offers a wide selection of elective courses in strategy that encompass broad theory as well as targeted geographic and sector approaches, including "Global Strategy," "Industry and Competitive Analysis," Strategy, Structure, and Incentives," "Strategies for Asia Pacific," and "The Art of Communication." Students who choose not to take strategy electives still receive some training and education relevant to management consulting. The core courses "Uncertainty, Data, and Judgment," "Introduction to Strategy," and "Organisational Behaviour 1," all taken in P1, introduce students to interpreting analytical data, completing strategy assessments, and applying behavioral science.

INSEAD's sections and study groups are designed to prepare students to work in diverse teams, much as consultants do, teaching them how to solve problems while navigating differences in communication and culture. An alumnus with whom we spoke had worked in consulting before INSEAD and returned to it after graduation, and he saw parallels between the industry and the school's MBA education on an even larger scale, noting, "The intensity of the curriculum is similar to a working style in consultancy with lots of teamwork and tight deadlines."

INSEAD hosts several research centers and initiatives on strategy, including, perhaps most prominently, the Blue Ocean Strategy Institute. Launched in 2007, the institute was built up around the theory introduced by INSEAD professors W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne that lasting business success comes from finding open market space and not from competing in a cutthroat battle for a shrinking profit pool. The institute describes itself on its website as being dedicated to making major scientific and theoretical contributions to the fields of management and strategy, specifically with regard to making competition irrelevant. The institute offers MBA candidates two elective courses—"Blue Ocean Strategy" and "Blue Ocean Strategy Study Group"—which run twice annually on INSEAD's European and Asian campuses.

The institute states on its website that throughout 16 sessions, the "Blue Ocean Strategy" course, which alternates between theory, case discussion, and computer simulation, gives students a comprehensive overview of the frameworks, key concepts, and tools of the strategy, along with the opportunity to "systematically apply the fundamental methodology for creating and capturing blue oceans to simulated business settings." In "Blue Ocean Strategy Study

Group," students choose and conduct independent research projects to which they apply the blue ocean strategy. The knowledge students gain through these courses is often directly applicable to their careers, as one alumna remarked in the institute's brochure, saying that these electives "have been an amazing studying experience. For someone like me who's going to do strategy developments in a corporation, I find the tools I've learned invaluable in my day-to-day work."

INSEAD students also have access to several case competitions. The competitions are hosted by industry clubs and offer students the opportunity for more industry-targeted consulting challenges in spheres such as health care, technology, and media.

In terms of extracurricular support for those interested in consulting, INSEAD boasts an active Consulting Club whose current mission is to "assist students in navigating through the current turbulent times and in maximizing their chances of transitioning into consulting." To further this mission, the Consulting Club hosts a number of events on and off campus, including career treks (visits to company offices), guest lectures, consulting workshops, peer panels, and case training. Past club speakers include the global leader of the McKinsey Women's Initiative and the chairman and CEO of Accenture.

In addition, the club retains a number of former consultants in its membership, so that, as one alumnus explained to us, the student members "are really pitching each other and training each other." One Consulting Club member and McKinsey & Company employee described her role in the club on the *McKinsey Women Blog*, saying, "My involvement here has been altruistic, with the purpose of contributing to my cohort. ... We have former consultants from all the big companies here, and we all work together to make sure that our classmates are successful and gain job offers." To this end, the club also publishes a handbook providing an overview of the consulting industry, profiles of consulting firms, details about the job, and advice on how to apply and interview for positions.

INSEAD's Women in Business (IWiB) Club also provides resources for women who are considering a career in consulting. Although the group's overall mission is not tailored specifically to the consulting industry, the club does offer consulting networking events, thematic workshops on consulting, and extracurricular training by INSEAD professors. In addition, IWiB organizes a Women in Business Conference that features prominent females in the industry.

The latest Women in Business Conference took place in May 2023 with the theme "Ambition in Action." Previous conferences have included such themes as "Beyond the Title" and "Powerhouses, Disruptors, and Inspiring Women."

INSEAD's Career Development Centre employs a Global Consulting Lead whose role is to organize activities intended to provide students with the resources they need to pursue a career in consulting, including group sessions, one-on-one coaching, interview primers, and cover letter workshops. This dedicated individual also works to maintain relationships with more than 130 consulting firms globally, at least 25 of which visit campus every six months to host recruiting events—typically 30-minute formal presentations followed by 30 minutes of Q&A and a cocktail reception—and conduct face-to-face, on-campus interviews. In 2023, 44% of INSEAD's consulting recruits found positions through the Career Development Centre or the alumni network.

Entrepreneurship, Venture Capital, and Family Business

Another of INSEAD's primary academic areas is entrepreneurship and family enterprise, a focus designed to address the challenges and opportunities of new businesses, and as the school's former admissions director told us, one of the program's hidden gems. The area has 18 faculty members and four visiting professors who contribute knowledge derived from academic research and hands-on experience. From Claudia Zeisberger, senior affiliate professor and founder of the Global Private Equity Initiative, to Jason P. Davis, associate professor of entrepreneurship and family enterprise, whose research on technological innovation in dynamic market ecosystems has won numerous awards and been featured in such publications as *Forbes*, *The Atlantic*, and *Technology Review*, the school's entrepreneurship professors represent a broad range of experience and expertise.

The courses they teach, including "Entrepreneurship in Action: Scaling Start-ups," "Family Businesses and Enterprises," "Realising Entrepreneurial Potential," "Social Entrepreneurship," and "New Business Ventures," allow students to begin developing their individual entrepreneurial goals. At the same time, field trips such as "Building Businesses in China," "Building Businesses in India," and "Building Businesses in Silicon Valley" provide an opportunity for students to witness firsthand how entrepreneurs in different cultures work to overcome obstacles and discover unique opportunities for developing their businesses.

The Rudolf and Valeria Maag INSEAD Centre for Entrepreneurship (ICE) serves to "[call] upon and [enable' members of the broad INSEAD community to produce knowledge and to deliver or receive assistance with new ventures, new organizations within an existing company, or efforts to turn around and re-launch an ailing enterprise," claims its website, by providing inspiration, education, and venture development. The center hosts a number of events every year, one of which is the Startup Bootcamp, held during P1 on all campuses. Designed as an intense, interactive weekend training, the boot camp tests participants' ability to build their business from the ground up, from idea generation to pitching investors and beyond. Past participants of the program featured in testimonials on its website call it "one of life's singular experiences" and "a great way to learn a framework for what to do if you have a business idea that you're excited about."

ICE also organizes the multistage INSEAD Venture Competition, in which the school's MBA and EMBA students compete for prizes of up to €35,000 to help launch their proposed ventures. Founded in 2000 and hosted twice a year, the competition involves three phases—screening, semifinals, and finals—and allows teams of up to six people to present new business ventures to a panel of judges in Singapore and Fontainebleau. Past winners of the competition include Prodigy Finance, Knixwear, and Sight Diagnostics. The INSEAD Entrepreneurship Forum, held every year in Europe, is also hosted by ICE and features speakers, live cases, and panels on topics relevant to budding entrepreneurs.

We learned that one of the most popular resources ICE facilitates is INSEAD's Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EiR) program, which gives students direct access to a network of more than 100 entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs. "Some of these guys are really top guys," an alumnus told mbaMission, "People who build large companies from scratch. Others are entrepreneurs in the sense that they have their own company or start-up, such as consultants or VCs [venture capitalists] or angels investing in start-ups." These experienced entrepreneurs volunteer their time to meet with MBA students on campus and virtually to provide feedback, help solve problems, and share their expertise. Every student and graduate with whom we spoke said they had met with at least one EiR during their time at INSEAD and recommended the program as one of the most beneficial resources at the school. ICE also works to connect students and

alumni in the industry via INSEADAlum Ventures (an investment company offering seed funding to INSEAD entrepreneurs) and the INSEAD LaunchPad (an incubator exclusively for INSEAD students and alumni).

Other resources for entrepreneurship at the school include the Wendel International Centre for Family Enterprise, which enables INSEAD to run educational programs and events about family business around the globe. For MBA students, this includes the "Family Businesses and Enterprises" elective and the Family Enterprises for the Long Term three-day program. The center also sponsors the MBA Family Business Club at INSEAD, which brings students interested in family business together to discuss and explore the unique challenges these companies often present.

INSEAD's Entrepreneurship Club, active for approximately two decades, describes its mission on the school's website as to "foster ideas generation and start-up creation, promote entrepreneurship spirit in all business, [and] inform the INSEAD community about the business landscape and future trends." It offers a variety of activities—sometimes as many as two a week—including 3P (Pitches, Pizzas, and Pints) events, the Entrepreneurs Speakers Series, networking sessions, idea sharing, and pitch sessions. Reportedly, the club's most popular activities are treks (group trips) to various countries and cities, allowing students to visit start-ups and hear from their leadership. These are often organized in collaboration with other industry groups. For example, the INSEAD Entrepreneurship Club has partnered with the Technology, Media, and Telecom Club to plan a two-day trek to London, where the group visited as many as five different start-up and tech firms each day, networking with the founders and learning about the various company cultures.

The school's former admissions director stated in an interview with mbaMission that INSEAD's entrepreneurship program "begins from day one"; in fact, 3% of INSEAD's December 2022 and July 2023 graduates pursued entrepreneurial roles after graduation (4% in the previous three years). Of those entrepreneurs, 59% were launching start-ups; 27% were acquiring a company; and 14% were returning to their own ventures. Even though the number of INSEAD students taking up entrepreneurial roles upon graduation could be viewed as small, the admissions director shared that the school anticipates that approximately 50% of its alumni will pursue some kind of entrepreneurial position later in life.

INSEAD received a record donation of €10 million in endowed funds to promote excellence in entrepreneurship in 2017. The school's press release about the gift stated that the money "will be invested to establish several academic positions and PhD scholarships, all dedicated to strengthening research, teaching and cultivating talent in the area of entrepreneurship." The donor, an INSEAD alumnus, said, "As an entrepreneur myself, it is only natural that we support this strategic area and invest in future generations of INSEAD entrepreneurs," adding that as a result of his gift, the school will be able to "transform the entrepreneurial ecosystem at INSEAD as well as inspire and empower faculty, entrepreneurs, students and alumni around the globe."

Finance and Private Equity

Financial services remains one of INSEAD's top three industries. Of INSEAD's December 2022 and July 2023 graduates, 14% accepted positions in finance, comparable to 12% in 2022 and 14% in 2021. Of the graduates reported as entering financial services positions, 35.5% went into private equity or venture capital; 21.1% went into investment banking, banking, or sales and trading; 19.7% went into investment management or hedge funds; 14.5% went into other financial services; and 9.2% went into insurance. Top employers in the industry included Morgan Stanley.

All INSEAD students must take certain basic financial courses, including "Financial Accounting," "Financial Markets and Valuation," and "Corporate Financial Policy." They can then expand their knowledge base further through electives such as "Applied Corporate Finance," "Bank Management and FinTech," "China's Capital Market," "Hedge Funds and Alternative Investments," and "Project Finance." The finance faculty consists of 17 resident members, among them such minds as Massimo Massa, the Rothschild Chaired Professor of Banking and an associate editor of the *Review of Finance* and the *Journal of Empirical Finance*; Pierre Hillion, the de Picciotto Chaired Professor of Alternative Investments, program director for the INSEAD-Macquarie Master of Finance, and a published market microstructure scholar; and Theo Vermaelen, an emeritus professor of finance, the UBS Chair in Investment Banking, a co-editor of the *Journal of Empirical Finance*, and an associate editor of the *European Financial Review* and the *Journal of Corporate Finance*.

INSEAD's finance area runs a series of seminars in which experts in the field present their research to students in both Singapore and Fontainebleau. The seminars take place almost weekly throughout the school year, and recent participants have included faculty members from London Business School; the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; the University of Oxford's Saïd Business School; and the University of California, Berkeley.

The INSEAD Global Private Equity Initiative (GPEI) describes itself on its website as the school's "private capital think tank which works hand-in-hand with private equity and venture capital firms, institutional investors, and governments around the world to foster entrepreneurial ecosystems." The GPEI also offers a number of events throughout the year, including fireside chats, cocktail receptions, and family office days.

The INSEAD Private Equity and Venture Capital Club is reportedly one of the school's largest clubs. The group publishes a CV book each year that is sent to private equity firms and works closely with the school's career development center to develop internships and field projects for its members. INSEAD has established a reputation for placing its graduates into international PE positions, as one industry headhunter noted in an eFinancialCareers article, remarking, "It's easily the most successful business school for getting their students into European PE firms. … They also put a lot of effort into preparing their students for working in the industry."

The Private Equity and Venture Capital Club's biggest event is the two-day INSEAD Private Equity/Venture Capital Conference, which is typically offered once a year on the Fontainebleau campus. The 20th annual conference was hosted in June 2024 with the theme "How to Navigate through Macroeconomic Uncertainties." The panel discussions concentrated on such themes as "Deal-Making in a Changing Landscape" and "Operational Excellence, Strategic Initiatives, and Technological Innovation" and featured such companies as Nordic Capital, Accenture, and Bain and Company.

In previous years, the conference has carried such themes as "How Private Capital Can Contribute to the Tectonic Shift Towards Sustainability." Panels have been held on such topics as "European Venture Capital," "Careers in PE and VC," "Turnarounds," and "Large Cap/Buyouts" and keynotes have been delivered by such speakers as the managing director and co-head of the European Buyout Group at The Carlyle Group and the managing partner and head of EMEA at Hamilton Lane.

INSEAD's Investment Management Club (IMC) engages its members in experiential learning through active investment while helping them build relationships within the investment community. The IMC manages the Salamander Fund, a multi-asset portfolio; any club member is free to propose an investment idea, and all members present can participate

in the discussion of the proposal. The club meets weekly to encourage dialogue among members and hosts regular mixers with students and alumni to foster those networking connections. The IMC also organizes a number of career-development events, including networking lunches, CV review workshops, and investment treks, and works with the school's career center on recruiting. Club events in recent years have included a lunchtime talk titled "Responsible Investing" and a trek to Paris to visit such companies as Amundi and AXA Investment Managers.

The club has even reportedly shared internship and full-time opportunities among its members that are not available to the INSEAD community at large.

Health Care and Biotechnology

Several elective courses that span different subject areas relate to the health care and biotechnology industries, including "Creating Value in Health," "Healthcare Markets and Policy," and "Biopharmaceutical Marketing Strategy." And a number of INSEAD's faculty members either have direct experience in the industry or have produced research focused within it. For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health have funded research by the Novartis Chaired Professor of Healthcare Management Stephen E. Chick, who is also academic director of the school's Healthcare Management Initiative.

The INSEAD Healthcare Management Initiative was founded in 1996 with the mission of "inspir[ing] current and future leaders to tackle health care challenges through scientific and innovative approaches that ultimately have the potential to make health systems more efficient and sustainable around the world," as its website declares. Although the initiative states that its main goal is to build a wide body of evidence-based, multidisciplinary research, it also produces case studies and offers MBA courses such as "Pharmaceutical Marketing" and "The Body Business: Understanding Food and Well-Being." In addition, the initiative organizes industry-related campus events. Recent events include a panel discussion titled "Achieving the Goal of Universal Health Coverage by 2030: Successes and Challenges from Emerging Market Countries" and "Scaling Innovation in Genetics and Precision Medicine."

The INSEAD Healthcare Club has an active presence on both the school's campuses and works to bring together students who are interested in the industry and to provide them with opportunities to network and share their firsthand experiences. Several Healthcare Club members with whom we spoke described the group's numerous events throughout the academic year, including industry talks; treks to medical and pharmaceutical companies; networking parties; and panel discussions that, in recent years, have welcomed the CEO of Alta Flora and the CEO of Hummingbird Bioscience. One student told us about a panel he had helped organize that featured "students talking about their experiences and what they've done and how they've worked through their careers in health care, because we realized there's a lot of value in the student body as well." In 2023, the club hosted a trek to Paris to visit such companies and organizations as Eli Lilly and Company, Owkin, and Médecins Sans Frontières.

To help support students through the recruiting process, the club creates a CV book and works closely with the school's career development center. The group also maintains a connection with INSEAD's Healthcare Alumni Network, whose more than 1,300 members are active across the industry.

The club hosted its latest Healthcare Conference in May 2022 with the theme "Empowering Health Care through Digital Innovations" and with a keynote speech by a partner at HMB Partners.

The 2021 conference was themed "Innovation in Health Care" and welcomed speakers representing such companies as Alector, Roche, and Endeavour Vision. Panel discussions explored the topics "Investment Innovation in Health Care," "Business Model Innovation in Health Care," and "Technological Innovation in Health Care."

Of INSEAD's Classes of December 2022 and July 2023, 3.2% were reported as having accepted jobs in the health care industry. This figure was 1.7%, 2.7%, and 1.9%, respectively, the three previous years. Firms and organizations known to have hired INSEAD graduates for positions in this industry in recent years include the Clinton Health Access Initiative, Medtronic, Johnson & Johnson, GlaxoSmithKline, Eli Lilly and Company, Novartis, and Roche.

International Business

INSEAD's moniker is "the business school for the world," and with professors of approximately 40 nationalities and students of as many as 110 in each incoming class, one can expect to have a truly international MBA experience here. A former admissions director said to mbaMission in an interview, "It is a very international experience in the classroom. Our professors come from all over the world, and in class, [students] can be sure that [they will] have a whole number of different cultural perspectives on any situation or case the professor presents. Students learn as much from each other as they do from the professor and get some great insights into global business."

The fundamental diversity of the community contributes to the global nature of all the school's resources to some degree, but INSEAD also offers specifically targeted international business classes beyond the required core course "Macroeconomics in the Global Economy." For example, students interested in global business can choose from course options such as "Strategies for Asia Pacific," "Discover Israel Fieldtrip," "China Strategy," and "China's Capital Market." Many of the targeted electives—including "Building Businesses in China" and "Building Businesses in Silicon Valley"—involve field trips in which students travel to the given market, meet with representatives from area firms, and learn firsthand about the region's business-related challenges and opportunities. In "Building Businesses in India," for example, students spend two days in New Delhi and three days in Mumbai, speaking with members of the Indian start-up community about how the country's rich entrepreneurial tradition shapes its growth ventures and how ideas from India's business leaders could be applied elsewhere.

INSEAD's Latin America Club states on its website that it serves "as the main two-way channel linking business in Latin America with the INSEAD community." To achieve this goal, the group organizes various activities and events—both social and professional in nature—throughout the year. The club also joins forces with the London Business School and IESE each year to host the Latin America Career Fair, which brings in representatives from major Latin American firms and companies with a significant Latin American presence to network with and recruit students.

The 2023 Latin America Career Fair was hosted virtually and welcomed more than 300 students. Previous fairs have featured representatives from such companies as the Boston Consulting Group, Grupo Breca, Amazon, Bain & Company, Falconi, Walmart, and AB InBev. Students were able to take part in one-on-one coffee chats with company representatives, a career fair, and company presentations.

Similar programs are run by other groups on campus, including the Africa Club, which organizes the annual Africa Business Conference. The 2023 conference featured the theme "Africa Amplified: Redefining Leadership, Creativity, and Impact Across Industries." The keynote speech was delivered by an INSEAD board member and lawyer, while panel discussions explored such topics as "Empowering Africa's Future: Fostering Resilience in a Changing World" and "Leading with Purpose: Making an Impact Beyond the Bottom Line."

Previous conferences have included such themes as "Africa to the World: The Entrepreneurial Energy and Innovation of the Continent," "The Africa Venture: Fostering Investment, Impact, and Innovation" and "Harnessing the African Potential; From Ideas to Action."

The Africa Club focuses its efforts and activities in four specific areas, which it outlines on its website as networking, business development, MBA recruitment and support, and "dispelling the African myth," or "telling the truth about Africa." In an interview on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog, a former leader of the club remarked, "The Africa Club is a close-knit community that mirrors the diversity at INSEAD. Our Club is inclusive and focuses on creating meaningful dialogue and education regarding current opportunities in Africa."

Another club at INSEAD for students with an interest in global business is the Asia Europe Business Club, which strives to build and maintain strong relationships with Asian firms to assist INSEAD MBAs in securing careers within the region. The club hosts alumni speakers, panel discussions, and the INSEAD China Business Dialogue, which in 2020 (the most recent on record) was themed "Emerging Opportunity in China Post COVID-19."

Founded in 2001, INSEAD's Global Leadership Club brings prominent global businesspeople to campus to address and connect with INSEAD students. The group states on its website, "We believe we can learn the most from those who have made a difference" and puts this view into action via its Global Leader Series, which has featured such speakers as the chief technology officer of L'Oréal; the chairman and CEO of La Groupe Le Poste; the CEO of Aeroflot; the chairman and CEO of Atos/France's former minister for economy, finance, and industry; and the head of the World Economic Forum's Future of the Digital Economy and Society Initiative.

INSEAD's Singapore campus is home to the school's Emerging Markets Institute (EMI), which describes itself on its website as "world class think-tank for the creation and dissemination of credible and timely information on issues related to business management, economic development, and social progress in the emerging economies." Recent events include a case presentation titled "Rainforest Gold: From NGO to Social Enterprise," a Women in Leadership roundtable discussion, and a tech talk series that in recent years has featured such themes as "Customer Centricity in the Digital Age: When and Why Big Data Can Yield Big Insights" and "Organizational Development in the Age of Algorithms."

The Emerging Markets Institute hosts a usually annual conference, which has featured such themes as "Tech and Investing for Impact in Emerging Markets" and such panel discussion topics as "Starting a VC Fund in Singapore," "Bringing VC to Emerging Markets," "Impact Investing," "Leveraging Opportunities in the Fastest Growing Global Economies," and "How Technology is Enabling Financial Inclusion in Emerging Markets." Speakers have represented such companies as Canal Circle, LeapFrog, and IFC Asset Management Company.

INSEAD's commitment to international business extends beyond its courses, clubs, and centers and is ingrained in the very structure of the MBA program itself. With campuses in four different countries and partner schools in two others, INSEAD grants its students the opportunity to target their education—and their recruiting potential—to the international location in which they hope to work after graduation. Many students choose INSEAD for this reason specifically, we learned. One student told us he selected INSEAD because he "wanted to explore the European market, understand how things worked there, meet people from that place. As well as Southeast Asia, since I've never worked there before." The school provided him with the opportunity to experience both regions before selecting the one in which he wanted to pursue his career.

Members of INSEAD's Class of 2023 accepted positions in 57 countries total, with 36% entering roles in Northern/Western Europe, 22% in Asia Pacific, 18% in Africa or the Middle East, 9% in North America, 9% in Southern Europe, 5% in South America or Mexico, and 2% in Eastern Europe.

Marketing

INSEAD's marketing department comprises 24 faculty members and one visiting professor, including Klaus Wertenbroch, who has served as the editor in chief of the *Journal of Marketing Behavior* and an editorial board member for the *Journal of Consumer Research* and the *Journal of Marketing Research*; and Pierre Chandon, the L'Oréal Chaired Professor of Marketing, Innovation, and Creativity, and director of the INSEAD-Sorbonne University Behavioural Lab. Describing marketing as "a way of looking at the world through the eyes of customers to see opportunities for sustainable profitable growth for a business in an ever-changing environment," the department offers such courses as "Strategic Market Intelligence," "Customer Insights," "Salesforce Management," and "Value Creation in Luxury and Fashion."

One reportedly popular course is the "Discover Israel Fieldtrip," for which participants travel to the country for five days to visit high-tech and entrepreneurial firms, enjoy cultural activities, and even do some touristing. A student that took part in the trip wrote about the experience in an *INSEAD In the Know* blog post, saying, "For a five-day elective, we left having learned so much. The barrage of events, consisting of meetings with entrepreneurs, a tour of Jerusalem, and networking with alumni among other things, while tiring, was an unforgettable experience. For some of us, it was undoubtedly the highlight of our year at INSEAD so far."

The INSEAD eLab and the INSEAD Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT) Lab complete projects and conduct research within the marketing sphere. The eLab focuses on data analytics for business, using qualitative and quantitative research to investigate how companies can make better decisions in a number of areas, including marketing. For example, eLab collaborated with the digital marketing company Numberly to develop new ways of measuring the value of different customer types. The center has also published research on evaluating promotional activities, mapping online consumer demand, and certainty decay in consumer communications. The INSEAD RCT Lab, on the other hand, puts academic research to the test, using randomized field experiments to inform evidence-based policy and management recommendations. For example, a recent RCT Lab project was "Philanthropic Campaigns and Customer Behavior: Field Experiments in an Online Taxi Booking Company," which looked at whether charity-linked promotions truly inspire customers to participate and how such approaches compare with discount-based promotions.

The Retail, Consumer, and Luxury Goods Club is dedicated to sharing knowledge about and making connections within the consumer and luxury goods industry through peer-to-peer panels, a speaker series, career workshops, and treks. The club's biggest annual event, and the one most relevant to students interested in pursuing careers in marketing, is the Global Luxury Forum.

The May 2024 forum took place in Geneva. Speakers included the CEO and co-founder of Arianee, the founder and president of JC Biver, and the CEO of Panerai. Presentations and panel discussions included such topics as "Client Experience 2.0: New Expectations" and "New Technologies: From Blockchain to Gen.AI."

The 2023 Global Luxury Forum was hosted in Paris and welcomed more than 20 expert speakers and featured such topics for panel discussions and fireside chats as "Corporate Responsibility in Luxury," "Luxury Innovation: New Models and Technologies Shaping the Industry Landscape," and "The Future of Sustainable Fashion."

Previous years' themes have included "Changing Customers" and "L'Art du Métier — The Futur Series."

INSEAD's past five employment reports do not list graduates' positions by function. However, the 2018 report noted that 3.6% of that year's graduates accepted positions with a marketing or sales function (5.9% in 2017). Companies generally known to hire for marketing roles that have recruited INSEAD students in recent years include LVMH, Nike, Farfetch, Procter & Gamble, and Zalando.

Nonprofit/Social Entrepreneurship

The Social Entrepreneurship Programme at INSEAD is the flagship offering of the school's Social Impact Initiative and, according to the program's website, "takes INSEAD's mission of developing leaders who will shape business as a force for good to another dimension by bringing business knowledge to those who are committed to serving society through for- and non-profit organizations."

The "Social Entrepreneurship" class involves a field trip to an emerging market and examines the strategic and operational challenges of enterprises whose businesses concentrate on improving the lives of the poor in emerging markets.

Of the school's Class of 2018, 4% entered the program from a social impact or public sector role (there was no such figure listed for the past five years). "Having grown up in India where social work is such an important part of our culture, I was particularly interested in the non-for-profit space," said one student in a post on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog, adding that her charity work before business school "inspired me to gain sound business experience at INSEAD and beyond, to be able to return to the not-for-profit world in a more effective capacity later in my career." Also on the blog, a student with a background in the Peace Corps remarked, "Through an INSEAD MBA, I want to learn how to better mold my ideas into valuable services catered to overlooked segments of the population. It is my hope that by addressing the needs of those at the bottom of the social pyramid not as burdens to look after, but as an opportunity to tap into a market of customers with unique demands, I can more ingeniously pay it forward."

INDEVOR is the INSEAD Organization for Social Impact, whose mission is stated on its website as to "inspire and foster the INSEAD community to embrace an integrated perspective and drive positive social and environmental change."

Founded in 1993 and reportedly one of the school's oldest organizations, INDEVOR works to provide its members with such career resources as advising tools, internship placements, and treks to visit successful social entrepreneurship businesses. An alumna is quoted in an anniversary publication on the club's website, speaking about one of these treks, saying, "INDEVOR organized another trip to Kenya, where about 30 of us looked into different aspects in local conservancy. That was one of the most powerful and best experiences I had during my entire MBA. The experience I gained on these trips was one of the factors that allowed me to get a job in social entrepreneurship." Through the school's Entrepreneurs-in-Residence program, INDEVOR also connects students with social entrepreneurs on campus.

INSEAD's Hoffmann Global Institute for Business and Society serves as an inclusive platform encompassing education, cross-disciplinary research, projects, and engagement. The institute describes its goal as "to equip [today's leaders] to make [decisions] in ways that deliver positive outcomes for business, communities, people, and our planet in line with globally agreed sustainability goals." The institute focuses on four ways to meet this goal: knowledge, by assisting INSEAD faculty with their research; learning, by teaching the students; engagement, by maintaining alumni relations; and "walk the talk," by striving to make INSEAD a model school that "integrates societal impact into operations" in both a local and global sense.

Approximately 1.0% of INSEAD's Class of 2023 accepted full-time positions in the area of public sector/impact economy (no such figure was listed for 2022 or 2021). Candidates considering pursuing a career with a nongovernmental organization, not-for-profit organization, social investment firm, public sector organization, or for-profit social venture may be interested to know that INSEAD offers the Hugo van Berckel Award for Social Impact, in addition to several other social impact scholarships.

Real Estate

Although INSEAD does not have a dedicated focus on real estate, it does have some minor offerings that can provide students with a greater understanding of the industry. The most significant of these is the Real Estate Club, which aims to raise awareness of the industry and provide a network for interested students and aspiring real estate professionals. The club hosts such events as networking evenings, talks, and treks. With regard to academics, the strategy department offers the course "Real Estate," whose goal is to provide an overview of the industry and present an analysis of successful investment strategies within it.

From 2019 onward, the school has not reported any graduates pursuing careers in real estate proper, though 10.3% of the Class of 2020 who entered financial services positions did so within the real estate subsector (under this same category, it was noted in the Classes of 2023, 2022, and 2021 employment data that "less than five job/salaries were reported"). Of the Class of 2023 individuals who completed a summer internship or project, 0.3% did so in real estate.

Technology, Media, and Telecommunications

Of INSEAD's Class of 2023, 9% accepted new positions in the sector of Technology, Media, and Telecommunications (TMT)—down from 22% in 2022, 19% in 2021, and 23% in 2020. INSEAD further reports that, of those 9% of the class, approximately 55.6% accepted positions in information technology or telecommunications, 22.2% in e-commerce or

Internet, and 22.2% in fintech. INSEAD's top employers in 2023 in the media and technology fields include Samsung with seven newly hired graduates and Amazon with six.

INSEAD does not offer a specialization in media and technology but does offer one in technology and operations management, which focuses on value creation through innovative product and process design, project management, and supply chain management. Eighteen professors teach in this area. None of INSEAD's core courses concentrates on TMT specifically, but students can select from a number of related electives, including "Competitive Supply Chains," "Strategies for Product and Service Development," and "Management of Services."

The school's Technology, Media, and Telecom (TMT) Club is another resource for students interested in working in or simply learning more about these industries. Each year, the group arranges several trips to major European cities to allow participants to meet firsthand with representatives from start-ups and more established companies in those areas. In the past, the TMT Club treks have taken groups of 20–25 students to London, Dublin, and Berlin, where they visited roughly 10–15 firms. Other activities organized by the club each year include in-house events, conferences, and coffee chats on all three campuses. One of the students with whom we spoke is an active participant in the TMT Club and shared his thoughts on the group's resources, saying, "They organize a trek in Ireland so you get to see Facebook, Google, all those companies. They have a database [and] strong links with some alumni that are in the sector, so they are a good source of information."

The Blockchain, Fintech and Web3 Club (formerly the Fintech Club) was established by students who were interested in changing careers from traditional finance to fintech. In an article on the club's dedicated blog, one of the founders explained the inspiration for the new organization by saying, "Given the magnitude of investments flowing in the sector and the number and variety of stakeholders involved (banks, insurance firms, start-ups, VCs, funds, etc.), a dedicated club was the need of the hour. We also figured that in both Europe and Asia Pacific, most high-profile fintech start-ups were founded or led by INSEAD alumni (Wise [formerly Transferwise] being a prime example) so it made sense to launch the first Fintech club outside the Americas at INSEAD. From a more philosophical point of view, there was also this dream to establish INSEAD as a fintech powerhouse in Europe and APAC [Asia Pacific] and a dedicated fintech club would be a step in that direction."

The club organizes job treks, connects with alumni in the industry, connects the INSEAD community with blockchain and fintech companies, and brings fintech entrepreneurs to campus for talks.

Location: Urban Campus Versus College Town

Pursuing an MBA can be quite intense, and the environment and community surrounding the campus can profoundly affect and even shape your MBA experience. For example, imagine stepping out of a class at New York University's (NYU's) Stern School of Business and into the energetic bustle of New York City's West Village. Now imagine walking outside after a course at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth and being surrounded by the tranquility and natural beauty of New Hampshire's Upper Valley. Neither scenario is necessarily "better" than the other, but one might appeal to you more.

An urban campus can undoubtedly offer social and cultural opportunities that a college town simply cannot match. This is not to suggest, however, that college towns are devoid of culture—indeed, intense intellectual and cultural programs exist in college towns *precisely because* the academic institution is at the core of the community.

> The environment and community surrounding your chosen school can profoundly affect and shape your MBA experience.

While schools in college towns tout their close-knit atmosphere and the tight bonds classmates form in such a setting, this environment can be welcoming for some students and overwhelming for others. In contrast, urban campuses are more decentralized, with students often living in various parts of a city and even in the surrounding suburbs. Someone who has a greater need for privacy or personal space might therefore prefer an urban environment. In addition, in major urban centers, some students—particularly those who lived in the city before enrolling in business school—may already have well-developed social groups, and this scenario may again be better for those who find an academically and socially all-encompassing environment less attractive.

One aspect of the MBA experience that candidates often fail to consider when evaluating their school options is weather. Although factoring climate into your school choice may initially seem superficial, if you know you cannot comfortably manage frigid conditions or soaring temperatures, certain programs should be stricken from your list. We encounter many applicants each year who wisely stave off a potentially miserable experience by choosing to not apply to certain schools in locations they just do not feel are "livable" for them.

In addition, housing costs are one expense that many applicants do not stop to consider before choosing a school to target. By researching real estate prices at the top programs, we found that the cost differential between renting a one-bedroom apartment in a Midwestern college town and renting one in New York City, for example, can be quite significant—adding up to tens of thousands of dollars on a cumulative basis across two years. This is an important factor to include as you weigh your options and calculate your projected budget.

In summary, a college town can be appealing for some candidates because its smaller size tends to create strong bonds within the business school's community, though for others, the lack of privacy could be undesired or overwhelming. Furthermore, some find a slower pace of life calming and comfortable, whereas others crave the energy and bustle of a city. If you strongly prefer one or the other, you should be able to quickly eliminate certain schools from your list.

The INSEAD MBA program is unique in that it runs concurrently on two separate campuses, one in Fontainebleau, France, the other in Singapore, while a third campus in Abu Dhabi is open for short-term study. In a press release, the school notes that the multicampus format was "established not simply to attract local students from each region, but to offer students worldwide a truly international education." INSEAD opened its first permanent location in the United States, the INSEAD San Francisco Hub for Business Innovation, in 2020, but so far that facility has been dedicated solely to executive programs.

Applicants to the INSEAD MBA program are given the opportunity to declare the starting campus—Singapore or Fontainebleau—they feel will best suit their goals and interests, or, if they are indifferent about this aspect of the experience, they can select "both campuses." An applicant's campus selection plays no part in whether they will be accepted to the school, however. INSEAD does not guarantee that once accepted, a

student will be placed on their campus of choice, but the school does strive to fulfill these requests whenever possible. If a student's preferred campus is full, they can choose between being placed on the waitlist for that campus or simply accepting a spot on the other campus.

Both main campuses have permanent faculty and are equally well equipped, but the environments are very different. They offer students access and exposure to two distinct spheres of global business and are set in disparate cultures, which can affect the character of day-to-day life. One student with whom mbaMission spoke had spent time on both campuses and compared the two by saying, "They are completely different. It's nothing alike. The relations are not the same; the way you network is not the same; the way you party is not the same. It's just different."

Fontainebleau

The INSEAD Europe Campus is located on the edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau in what one student described on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog as "a town so small and quaint it doesn't even really need public transportation." Having grown up around the UNESCO World Heritage Site Château de Fontainebleau, the town dates back to roughly 1137. Once the hunting grounds of kings, Fontainebleau—a name that, according to some accounts, is a portmanteau of the French for "beautiful water fountain"—was visited by at least 34 French monarchs, including Napoleon, who abdicated there. Today, with its picturesque streets and a carousel in the town square, Fontainebleau plays host mainly to tourists and to the international business community affiliated with the INSEAD MBA program.

Originally designed by Bernard de la Tour d'Auvergne, INSEAD's Fontainebleau campus sits on eight hectares adjacent to the 60,000 acres of Fontainebleau forest (which offer almost 200 miles of signposted trails for nature lovers and explorers). Just a stone's throw from the town center, the school is within walking distance of numerous cafes, pubs, and restaurants that constitute what *Lonely Planet* dubs a "cosmopolitan drinking and dining scene" and, according to a student we interviewed, offer "infinite good desserts." Another student told us that Le Shaker and Le Glasgow are popular gathering places for INSEAD MBAs, as are regular house parties, which feature inexpensive wine and lots of lively conversation. Although one might not rush to say that Fontainebleau possesses a "college town" feel, students reportedly find that its small size helps level the social playing field, fuel interaction, and build a heightened sense of community, allowing them to "really [get] to know each other personally," as one student explained on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog.

While arguably quaint, Fontainebleau combines the benefits and opportunities of a small, student-centric community and an urban hub. The school is approximately 40 minutes by train from Paris, with dozens of trains running each day. This proximity makes bringing industry speakers to the school rather easy and allows students to access the international businesses in France's capital with relative ease. The airport is likewise accessible, offering flights throughout the rest of Europe. A student we interviewed explained that many students make the most of this accessibility by planning short group trips but admitted that returning to campus on the weekend was "typically a journey."

INSEAD offers no student housing on campus, but plenty of accommodation options are available in Fontainebleau, from single rooms to whole apartments to furnished homes. These generally range in price from €400 to €1,200 per person, per month. One popular choice among students is reportedly to live together in a chateau or villa in town or in the neighboring countryside. Wrote a student on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog, "When else will we get the chance to live in a chateau in the French countryside? And when else will we get the chance to live under the same roof with ten other intelligent, fun, multilingual, and overachieving young professionals from ten different countries? For me, this is a once-in-a-life opportunity that makes the INSEAD MBA experience truly unique."

Incoming students interested in living in these grand old homes are advised to secure their accommodations as early as possible, because supply is limited, and the locations and rates can vary. For example, rooms in Le Puits Carré, an eight-bedroom home 8 km south of INSEAD, range from €790 to €1,200 per student, per month, whereas in Club 16, a 16-bedroom house in Fontainebleau proper, rooms run from €950 to €1,290 per student, per month.

We learned that transportation to and from campus can sometimes be challenging. The campus has 850 free parking spaces for staff, students, and visitors, and students who plan on driving will be given parking stickers upon arrival at campus. For those students who commute in from Paris, the school runs a daily shuttle bus from the Fontainebleau-Avon train station to the campus. Those who live closer to or within Fontainebleau proper can use the public bus service—which runs through town every 15 minutes and has several stops near INSEAD—or hire a taxi. Some students we interviewed who lived too far from campus to walk easily said they biked to school every day. Although one described this way of commuting as "an amazing experience," several noted that whenever they were running late, the limited transportation options could be problematic.

Singapore

Boasting a population of just under 5.7 million within an area of less than 300 square miles, the city-state of Singapore is a modern urban hub, offering an extensive transit system, along with numerous museums (including the National Gallery Singapore), restaurants, shopping centers, and green spaces (such as the Singapore Botanic Gardens). Students on INSEAD's Singapore campus reportedly take advantage of these urban amenities, particularly the local culinary scene—which the Singapore tourism board cites as the number one reason to visit—and the nightlife.

One student told mbaMission that the party scene in "Singy" is "high paced," while another described it by saying, "You go into town; you have dinners with a big group. Sometimes, you go clubbing." Although yet another student told us, "Alcohol is too expensive in Singapore," students have been known to gather at local cocktail bars such as 28 HongKong Street and The Olde Cuban for study group meetings, and when asked where to find INSEAD students on any given night, another student we interviewed stated, "Maybe a nightclub. … There will be always an INSEADer there."

Businesses from around the world have offices in Singapore, and a study by EY named the city-state the "preferred gateway" to the Asian market. In addition, PwC has ranked Singapore number two in the world in its

Cities of Opportunity Index, which weighs the economic and social health of the world's top business cities. Singapore performed well across the board, with its low taxes, advanced technology, and strong transport and infrastructure systems supporting its current status as a booming business hub, particularly for the finance and insurance industries.

INSEAD opened its Singapore campus in 2000, driven by the desire to "create a bridge between Asia and the rest of the world," as its website claims. Just 15 minutes from the city-state's financial center, the campus is located in the heart of the Buona Vista district, generally known as Singapore's "knowledge hub," where it is surrounded by other universities, including the National University of Singapore, Singapore Polytechnic, and the German Institute of Science and Technology. Updated in 2015 to include a six-story, 10,000 square meter building known as the Leadership Development Centre, the campus boasts a library, four amphitheaters, and several large and small breakout rooms for group study, plus a courtyard, fitness center, bar, canteen, bookshop, and even a children's playroom.

Although INSEAD's Asia campus does offer housing for visiting staff and faculty, as well as Executive Education participants, MBA students must find off-campus housing. Unfortunately, the students with whom we spoke reported that this process is, as one said, "not always easy," especially given students' penchant for switching campuses every two to four months. One student noted, "Finding short-term housing in Singapore is a challenge. It is very difficult, because the laws are pretty strict here, so to find a six-month housing lease, or two- or four-month, depending on how long people choose to move here, is pretty challenging." But doing so is certainly possible. "Usually it happens within the INSEAD community," explained a student we interviewed, saying that students moving to Singapore typically reach out to students who are planning to leave and arrange to sublet their soon-to-be-vacated housing.

For many, this means an apartment at either Heritage View or Dover Parkview, two luxury condominium complexes less than ten minutes from campus, in which a three-bedroom apartment can rent for as much as S$4,000/month. Despite the steep price tag, the condos are popular because, as one student explained in a post on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog, "Everyone wants to be all together, and make the most of the condos' swimming pools, dinner events, barbecues, pre-drinks, and so on." Still, other, less expensive options are also available, including government-built Housing Development Board flats and apartments in such areas as One-North and Holland Village, which are farther from campus. Rents there usually run closer to S$1,360 per person, per month for a three-bedroom apartment and slightly more for a one- or two-bedroom apartment.

Parking on campus is limited, but a nearby paid car park provides additional spaces. Singapore's mass rapid transit system, or MRT, is extensive and runs daily from early morning to midnight. Monthly travel cards for adults cost S$128 and allow for unlimited travel by bus and rail, making them valid options for students who live farther away from campus or who travel often. Changi Airport (which was named the World's Best Airport for the eight years in a row by Skytrax until 2020 and again in 2023, and was ranked third in 2021 and 2022 and second in 2024, in addition to winning the Best Airport in Asia and World's Best Airport Leisure Amenities awards) is just 30–45 minutes from campus by rail. Every student with whom we spoke commented on the easy and frequent travel INSEAD students enjoy while studying in Singapore. "Singapore is a lot about traveling on the weekends," commented one, while another noted that the city-state is "more accessible, in that

regard" than Fontainebleau. And a student's partner wrote on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog that during breaks between periods, students "spread all over Southeast Asia to explore the neighboring countries," adding, "The opportunities are limitless."

Abu Dhabi

INSEAD opened its Centre for Executive Education and Research in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in 2007. In a school press release announcing the new location, then Dean Frank Brown said, "Our presence in the Middle East will be a tremendous advantage to INSEAD. The knowledge we build there will contribute to enriching our teaching and research activities to the benefit of all our participants. Thanks to the centre, we have an opportunity to have a huge impact on a region that is so important to the rest of the world for many different reasons."

Six years later, the school established a module for its MBA students to study in Abu Dhabi, offering elective courses, local business engagement, company visits, case study project work, and networking. INSEAD's Deputy Dean Peter Zemsky declared in a school press release, "INSEAD is committed to developing Abu Dhabi as the innovative educational hub in the region by serving as a catalyst to bring together local government, business and education sectors. ... This collaboration not only provides the opportunity for MBA participants to gain an in-depth experience of conducting business in the region, but for local organisations to aid in the development of tomorrow's business leaders."

In 2017, the INSEAD Middle East Campus moved to the Al Khatem Tower, which is located on Al Maryah Island in Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) Square, Abu Dhabi's financial center, and is a short drive to Abu Dhabi's cultural center, Saadiyat Island. Although on-campus housing is not available, the school has negotiated special rates with local hotels, including the Rosewood, Four Seasons, Ramada, and Sofitel, all of which are in close proximity to the school. The campus is located approximately 30 minutes from the Abu Dhabi International Airport, giving students the opportunity to explore both the urban island city and the country at large.

In a past *Financial Times* article, INSEAD then Dean Ilian Mihov acknowledged that the school's Abu Dhabi campus is "very much a work in process" but noted, "Abu Dhabi can add to the diversity of INSEAD. In [the] future it will be the gateway to Africa." In a press release on the school's website announcing the inauguration of its new Abu Dhabi campus, Mihov is quoted as saying, "INSEAD aims to be the leading business school in every region where we have a presence. With the support of ADEK [Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge], and the partnership with ADGM, the new campus at ADGM Square in Al Maryah Island gives INSEAD the right platform for the next stage in our strategy to establish a global top-tier school in the UAE."

Facilities: Shaping the Academic/Social Experience

When contemplating an MBA program, do not overlook the school's facilities. Renovations, upgrades, and new construction are all regular occurrences on school campuses these days, as some programs increase their square footage while others unify disparate areas or refresh existing spaces. Some schools boast on-campus housing or elite athletic

facilities, others have established new green spaces and meeting rooms, and still others have refurbished or added classrooms, theaters, libraries, and other such resources.

Keep in mind, though, that just because a school has not updated or added to its facilities in recent years, this does not mean that its offerings are outdated or subpar; the lack of updates may simply be because no updates have been needed or the school has invested in other aspects of its program instead. A campus visit is always the best way to evaluate firsthand what a school has to offer, but we nonetheless dedicate this space to a discussion of the facilities available at this particular program.

> If a school has not updated its facilities in recent years, perhaps none were needed or the school has invested in other aspects of its program instead.

Fontainebleau

INSEAD's Fontainebleau campus encompasses eight hectares and features modern architecture set against the backdrop of the Fontainebleau forest. First opened to students in 1967, the school's buildings were officially dedicated in 1969, and the school has continued to add to its facilities ever since. The campus now boasts 29 lecture theatres, two restaurants, a bar, a bookstore, and the Mickey & Company Lifestyle Centre, a private fitness center open daily and offering group classes, personal training, a range of workout equipment, sauna facilities, and other health-focused resources. In addition, the INSEAD Research and Learning Hub library is open 24 hours a day, includes more than 50,000 books and e-books, and provides access to major online databases and thousands of electronic journals. Each of the building's three floors offers Wi-Fi connections, computers, printers, scanners, and copiers—plus, as one student we interviewed noted, "sleeping couches, or Lay-Z-Boys."

However, some students with whom we spoke commented that the campus can sometimes be "a bit overbooked in terms of locations"; as a result, students occasionally have difficulty finding areas in which to gather to work in groups.

As discussed earlier in this guide, INSEAD does not offer on-campus housing for its students, though two hotels are located on-site. These are primarily in place for use by seminar and conference participants and students enrolled in the school's shorter programs. A number of longer-term options are available throughout the city of Fontainebleau and its neighboring districts, and INSEAD provides contact information on its website for several housing services to help incoming students locate appropriate accommodations. Four dedicated parking areas are available around campus, providing 850 spaces for program students and visitors, which they can use free of charge with a parking sticker provided by the school.

Singapore

With the establishment of its Singapore campus in 1999, INSEAD became the first international MBA program with two complete and fully functioning campuses, both with permanent faculty members on-site. Not long after, in 2005, the school began work to augment its Asia facilities, and in 2015, the Leadership Development Centre officially opened. A S$55 million development project, the center increased campus capacity by 50%. Funded in part by S$5 million gifts from INSEAD alumnus André Hoffmann ('90D), the vice chairman of Roche Holding Ltd., and from Indonesia's Soeryadjaya family, the 10,000 square meter facility was designed to meet

Singapore's most stringent green building standards and boasts four amphitheaters in addition to meeting and breakout rooms—both large and small—for group study. Nevertheless, one student we interviewed reported that on a few occasions, company events and case study sessions had been held in rooms that were not large enough to accommodate all the participants.

The Tanoto Research and Learning Hub library is open until midnight every day (and until 2AM before exam days) and is accessible only with an INSEAD ID. Although smaller than the Fontainebleau campus library, the Tanoto library offers the same research services, along with high-speed Internet, cloud printing services, 16 open-access computers, and almost 100 workstations. In a post on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog, one student noted that a staircase to the main campus building's second floor is actually located within the library, so that "It can at times be hard to concentrate on studies when there are recruiting events or other happenings on the second floor." The campus also encompasses a courtyard, bar, canteen, bookshop, and children's playroom. In addition, a well-equipped fitness center offers strength and cardiovascular machines and regular group exercise classes.

Although INSEAD does not provide housing for MBA students, an on-campus hotel called the Residences has 126 rooms available for Executive Education students and visiting professors and staff (note that the Residences is closed at the time of this writing due to the novel coronavirus outbreak). The school suggests student accommodation options on its website, including hotels, serviced apartments, and longer-term rentals, and incoming students can find useful tips about how to secure housing and where other students have stayed in the past on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog. Parking spaces are limited on the INSEAD Asia campus, but students who cannot or prefer not to drive themselves have access to the Mass Rapid Transit system, buses, and taxis.

Abu Dhabi

In 2007, INSEAD announced that it would be opening a location in the United Arab Emirates. The school received from an upfront endowment contribution of between $65.8 million and $72.4 million from the UAE government to establish a presence in Abu Dhabi. The resulting Middle East Campus was inaugurated under the patronage of His Highness Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. In 2017, the Middle East Campus moved to its current location in the Al Khalem Tower on Al Maryah Island. The new campus is located between the Abu Dhabi downtown area and the Saadiyat Island cultural district.

As with INSEAD's other campuses, on-site student housing is not provided, but the school has negotiated special rates with local hotels, including the Four Seasons, the Rosewood, the Sofitel, and the Ramadan, all of which are in close proximity to campus. Although the school is located in central Abu Dhabi, the INSEAD website suggests that the best way to reach campus is via taxi.

Alumni Base: Opportunities to Engage

The size and depth of a school's alumni base may be important to you as you seek to break into a specific field or region/country. Some MBA programs have had large classes for many years and can therefore boast sizeable alumni networks, whereas other schools may have pockets of strength in particular parts of the world or in certain industries—or can claim a smaller but tighter-knit and more dedicated alumni network overall. For example, Dartmouth Tuck has a smaller absolute number of alumni than most top U.S. schools but has repeatedly been touted as having the highest rate of annual alumni giving, thanks to its very dedicated graduates.

> Some schools boast sizeable alumni networks, while others have pockets of strength in particular regions or industries.

Although acquiring detailed breakdowns of a school's alumni base is sometimes difficult, you may want to consider whether the school you are targeting has alumni clubs in your chosen professional area (i.e., some schools have industry-specific alumni groups) or preferred post-MBA location. Furthermore, if you are determined to live in a particular city/country/region after graduating, then earning your MBA in or near that area, if possible, may be a good idea, so that you can more easily connect with local alumni while you are in school—particularly if you want to pursue a niche professional area and do not expect to participate in on-grounds recruiting. Of course, technological developments have greatly facilitated outreach, meaning that alumni are no longer a flight or long drive away, but are now just a phone call, email, text, or even Zoom session away.

INSEAD's entire alumni network includes nearly 69,000 individuals who represent 179 nationalities. More than 4,000 MBA alumni stay directly connected and active with the program by volunteering with the admissions department (often as applicant interviewers), promoting the school to prospective students, hiring graduates, and working directly with students in the classroom, in clubs, and as alumni-in-residence.

One example of alumni involvement is the INSEAD Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EiR) program, run by the INSEAD Centre for Entrepreneurship. Designed to help students interested in pursuing entrepreneurial ventures, the program brings graduates who have been successful in this area to campus as experts who can answer students' questions, help them resolve problems, and provide support and guidance. About the program—which includes more than 140 EiRs across both campuses—one alumnus told mbaMission, "You can get so much good feedback. You present to them your ideas, you tell them this is what I am thinking about and they're very open. They can shoot it down. They can help you identify the most crucial aspects that you need to work on. They can give you some very good contacts."

With a global network of nearly 50 national associations, the school's graduates interact and continue to learn and gain from one another via hundreds of alumni-focused events and activities every year. "As global citizens, [INSEAD alumni] build relationships across borders, embrace diverse perspectives and advance diversity, equity, and inclusion," says the school's website, which features a variety of career resources for alumni as well as numerous news stories and videos about INSEAD alumni achievements.

Global and local interest groups—including the INSEAD Private Equity Club, the Women in Business Club, and the Healthcare Network—as well as regular alumni forums, Global INSEAD Day (held every September 12 to commemorate the school's very first Opening Ceremony for MBA students), and annual class reunions give

the school's former students a myriad of opportunities and avenues through which to connect. The 2024 Global INSEAD Day was hosted with the theme "Learn, Connect, Impact." The school's website describes the aim of the event as to "[capture] the thrill and excitement that our alumni experienced when they first began their journey at INSEAD, channeling that energy into a global celebration across continents."

Several students with whom mbaMission spoke expressed their appreciation for the contributions the school's alumni make to the program, its students, and even its applicants, but we felt this story from a student's post on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog offered a nice snapshot of the dynamic: "During my preparation for INSEAD admission, a mentor's friend and INSEAD alumna voluntarily proofread my essays 14 times before revealing her professional background. When I discovered that she works for the world's top strategy consultancy, I asked how I could possibly repay her for her unconditional kindness .... All she asked of me instead was that I pay it *forward*."

Rankings and Reputation: Important Metrics or Arbitrary Measures?

MBA rankings should always be viewed with a healthy dose of skepticism, given that they can fluctuate dramatically from year to year and from publication to publication. For example, if you had relied on the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings to choose the NYU Stern School of Business as your business school in 2016 because of the program's position at number 11, you probably would have been disappointed to see the school then slide down to 20th place just one year later. Similarly, if you had selected UC Berkeley Haas in 2014, when it was number 19 in *Bloomberg Businessweek*'s ranking, you would have been delighted to see the program rise to number six in 2018.

> The various surveys should and will provide some context for your decision, but resist the temptation to choose a school based on rankings alone.

Can an MBA program—which is made up of *so* many moving parts—really change so much in just one or two years? And how can one reconcile that, in the most recent rankings, UPenn Wharton is ranked first by the *Financial Times* (after not being included the previous year) but 31st by *Poets&Quants* (after being ranked first the previous year)? Or that Stanford GSB is ranked 15th by the *Financial Times* but first by the other three lists we report on below? Or that Northwestern Kellogg is ranked third on the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings but 12th on the *Poets&Quants* list?

Of course, the various surveys should and likely will provide some context for your decision, but resist the temptation to choose a school based on rankings alone, because rankings may ultimately betray you—possibly even before you graduate.

One thing to keep in mind, particularly for international students, is that a school's reputation domestically can be quite different from its reputation abroad. Years ago, mbaMission worked with an international candidate who was accepted into the MBA programs at Cornell Johnson and Dartmouth Tuck. When this individual shared the good news with his manager, his manager said, "I thought you would have gone to an Ivy League school like Princeton!" Of course, Dartmouth and Cornell *are* in fact Ivy League institutions, and Princeton does not even have an MBA program—the manager's reaction illustrates how misconceptions can arise. So, after considering an MBA program's strengths, you might

factor in that some schools have greater brand power in certain parts of the world, especially if you plan to live and work abroad after you complete your studies.

We advise you to consider your MBA a long-term investment that will pay dividends throughout your life, and such an investment should be based on more than a one-time ranking. In fact, most MBAs who are five to ten years out of school are not even aware of what their school is now ranked. Perhaps more importantly, if you were to ask one whether the school's position in the rankings has any effect on their career, the response would certainly be an impassioned "No!"

International Rankings: INSEAD[1]	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Financial Times	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bloomberg Businessweek	NA	4	2	4	Not Numbered[2]	2	3

[1] *For comparison's sake, the ranking shown in this table for this publication includes only international programs (i.e., after the exclusion of U.S. schools from the list).*

[2] *In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic,* Bloomberg Businessweek *did not assign schools a numerical value but rather listed them in alphabetical order.*

Although international MBA programs are not generally as well known as U.S. business schools are, INSEAD has managed to develop a high level of recognition and a very positive reputation around the globe. Several of the most prominent MBA rankings rate INSEAD as among the best programs in the world.

The school has stood at or near the top of the *Financial Times* global MBA ranking for years and is currently number two on that list overall and first of the international programs on that list. *Bloomberg Businessweek*, widely considered the premiere MBA ranking, ranks U.S.-based and non-U.S.-based business schools separately. *Bloomberg*'s 2023–2024 list of European full-time MBA programs ranks INSEAD in fourth place, down two spots from the previous year.

The following international rankings are presented as each outlet reports them and go up to the school(s) ranked 20th by each outlet.

Bloomberg Businessweek (2023)	
1	SDA Bocconi SOM
2	IESE Business School
3	IMD Business School
4	**INSEAD**
5	London Business School
6	IE Business School
7	Mannheim Business School
8	St. Gallen
9	Cambridge Judge
10	Oxford Saïd
11	ESADE
12	Cranfield SOM
13	EDHEC
14	ESIC
15	Alliance Manchester
16	ESMT Berlin
17	Copenhagen Business School
18	EADA
19	POLIMI GSM
20	EAE

Financial Times (2024)	
1	UPenn Wharton
2	**INSEAD**
3	SDA Bocconi SOM
3	Columbia Business School
5	IESE Business School
6	MIT Sloan
6	Northwestern Kellogg
8	London Business School
9	Cornell Johnson
10	Chicago Booth
11	Harvard Business School
12	HEC Paris
12	Dartmouth Tuck
14	Duke Fuqua
15	Yale SOM
16	UVA Darden
17	ESADE
18	UCLA Anderson
19	UC Berkeley Haas
20	IE Business School

The Dean: Francisco Veloso

In April 2023, following an extensive search, INSEAD announced that Francisco Veloso had been chosen as the new dean of the school and would step into his position in September. Veloso joined INSEAD after having served as the dean of the London-based Imperial College Business School since 2017. Prior to that position, Veloso was the dean of the Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics in Lisbon. The chairman of the INSEAD board said in the announcement of the appointment, "[Veloso's] inclusive leadership approach, encompassing INSEAD's values, combined with his remarkable academic achievements, make him an ideal choice to guide our school into the next era." Veloso's predecessor Ilian Mihov spoke similarly of the new dean, stating, "It is my great pleasure to hand over INSEAD's deanship to Francisco, a distinguished professor and an outstanding leader. With his academic strengths and strong connections with business and governments, I am confident that INSEAD will achieve further success under Professor Veloso and his leadership team."

In September 2023, as he entered the role of dean, Veloso said in an INSEAD Newsroom article:

> *"It is a privilege for me to begin my journey as the new Dean at this outstanding institution which truly brings together people, cultures and ideas to develop responsible leaders. Throughout my career, I have deeply appreciated INSEAD's rigor and relevance in teaching and research, as well as the unrivalled diversity and entrepreneurial spirit, which have forged a global community who transform business and society. I am joining a school that already has an incredible legacy and I am confident that we will take it to even greater heights, continuing to extend our global reach and impact."*

Dean Veloso's predecessor Ilian Mihov was appointed dean of INSEAD in 2013, having been a professor at the school for 17 years and having previously served as interim dean and deputy dean for faculty and research. Mihov is the first person holding the position of dean to serve on the school's Asia campus, giving his appointment some particular import—all previous deans had been based in Fontainebleau. At the time of his appointment, this shift signaled a reinforced dedication to the school's Singapore location, and Mihov acknowledged in a *Financial Times* article his intention to "explore the expansion in Singapore," raising funds and acquiring resources that have since firmly cemented the Asia campus on equal footing with the program's first campus in Europe.

Dean Mihov won the school's Outstanding Teacher award three times and the fact that over 95% of INSEAD's professors voted to make him dean of the MBA program attests to his popularity among his colleagues. One alumnus with whom mbaMission spoke praised Mihov for "making the hard decisions" and enhancing the school's reputation around the globe. And the students we interviewed shared that Dean Mihov remained an active member of the school's greater community, one noting that he made himself "very accessible" to any students and alumni who wished to connect with him.

When Mihov announced that he would step down from the role of dean, he reflected on his decade on the job as "a privilege," noting as some of the proudest accomplishments of his tenure the Force for Good Campaign that has raised €309M, expanding the campus to Abu Dhabi and San Francisco, and the creation of the iLITE online learning program. "With my colleagues, we have changed a lot in the school over the past ten years. And throughout we have focused on business as a force for good," Mihov told *Forbes*. He took a research sabbatical at Stanford following his departure from INSEAD.

Notable Professors and Unsung Heroes

W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne (www.insead.edu/faculty-research/faculty/w-chan-kim and www.insead.edu/faculty/renee-mauborgne): W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne are household names at INSEAD. The two colleagues co-direct the INSEAD Blue Ocean Strategy Institute, whose dual mission is "to make significant theoretical and scientific contributions to the strategy, management, and innovation fields and to contribute to the practice and high performance of companies, governments, and non-profit organisations through practical application of these research outputs," the institute's website explains. The duo cowrote the bestselling book *Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make the Competition Irrelevant* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2005), which has sold more than four million copies to date. Kim and Mauborgne have also cowritten the books *Blue Ocean Shift: Beyond Competing – Proven Steps to Inspire Confidence and Seize New Growth* (Hachette Books, 2017) and *Beyond Disruption: Innovate and Achieve Growth Without Displacing Industries, Companies, or Jobs* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2023).

Together, the two have been recognized for their work with such accolades as the Harvard Business School Carl S. Sloane Award. In 2023, *Harvard Business Review* named Kim and Mauborgne as two of the four leading thinkers in the last 100 years. They have also been included in every installation of the biannual Thinkers50 Ranking since 2003, claiming the top spot in 2019. The ranking is described as "the definitive list of the most influential management thinkers in the world" on the Thinkers50 website.

Gianpiero Petriglieri (www.insead.edu/faculty/gianpiero-petriglieri): Gianpiero Petriglieri holds numerous positions at INSEAD: in addition to serving as an associate professor of organizational behavior, he directs the Management Acceleration Programme and the INSEAD Initiative for Learning Innovation and Teaching Excellence. Petriglieri's research on leadership has been featured in such publications as the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *The Economist*.

Petriglieri teaches the core course "Ethics: Value-Based Leadership for Cosmopolitans." In previous years, he taught the course "Leading People and Groups," for which he was awarded by student vote the INSEAD Outstanding Teacher Award. He is also the recipient of several Teaching Excellence in MBA and Executive Education awards from the dean. Petriglieri has been featured on every instance of the biannual Thinkers50 list of influential management thinkers since 2017.

Antonio Fatás (www.insead.edu/faculty-research/faculty/antonio-fatas): The Portuguese Council Chaired Professor of European Studies, Antonio Fatás teaches macroeconomics on INSEAD's Singapore campus. Fatás has served as a consultant for numerous international financial organizations, including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the OECD, and the European Commission, as well as for the U.S. Federal Reserve and even the government of the United Kingdom. A recognized global expert on fiscal policy, business cycles, and the economics of European integration, Fatás has published pieces in the *Journal of Economic Growth*, *Credit and Banking*, the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, the *Journal of Money*, the *Journal of Public Economics*, and the *European Economic Review*, among other outlets, and has been featured regularly on CNBC and BBC World News as well as in the *Financial Times*, *Forbes*, the *Huffington Post*, the *New York Times*, and *The Economist*. One student we interviewed who had taken his macroeconomics class observed, "It was an incredible learning experience, and I enjoyed the course a lot. It's one of those courses where you say, okay, the fee is worth this course, because I got so much from it that I feel very well rewarded." And another student with whom we spoke described class with Fatás as "actually amazing."

Pierre Hillion (www.insead.edu/faculty-research/faculty/pierre-hillion): Pierre Hillion teaches finance at INSEAD, where he is the de Picciotto Chaired Professor of Alternative Investments and program director of the INSEAD-Macquarie Master of Finance. He has published broadly on the topics of asset and option pricing models and market microstructure and was co-editor of *European Capital Markets with a Single Currency* (Oxford University Press, 1999). Hillion is an associate editor for two financial journals—the *Journal of Financial Markets* and the *Journal of Empirical Finance*—and has had his own work featured in the *Journal of Finance*, the *Journal of Mathematical Finance*, the *Review of Financial Studies*, the *Journal of Econometrics*, and the *Journal of Political Economy*. He also directs INSEAD's Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein and Société Générale programs and has co-directed the school's Advanced Asset Management program.

An alumnus with whom we spoke originally summarized his impression of Hillion as simply "French guy, extremely good, fantastic learning experience" but then added, "I think I took up to six courses with him, a lot of electives, because I just found that this guy was amazing." Another alumnus we interviewed praised his ability to "poke holes in any financial model you show him." And a student on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog wrote, "What I really appreciate about Prof. Hillion (aside from his trademark wisecracks and very distinct French accent) is that he highlights the importance of knowing your finance even if you don't want to enter the industry."

Henning Piezunka (www.insead.edu/faculty-research/faculty/henning-piezunka): Henning Piezunka is an associate professor of entrepreneurship and family enterprise at INSEAD and an entrepreneur himself, having founded the web design firm CPS-IT in 1998. He teaches the course "New Business Ventures," reportedly a student favorite, on the school's Fontainebleau campus. Piezunka applies his real-world experiences in fulfilling his professional mission, which he has described on his personal website as "help[ing] people and companies (small and large) to transform their ideas into business."

An alumna described Piezunka in a *Poets&Quants* article about favorite business school professors, saying he "took the time to help us learn about the process and challenges of building a new venture, but also reflect on why, personally, we seek to do so. His teaching style was interactive, but also extremely direct. ... He brought out our vulnerability as learners, to highlight our knowledge gaps, while stimulating our curiosity." And a student we interviewed told us that to keep his classroom engaging, Piezunka regularly brings in entrepreneurs and venture capitalists as guest speakers and asks students to participate in new business pitches. At INSEAD, students have rated him as outstanding, he has been included on the dean's list for teaching excellence, and on several occasions, he has been recognized with the program's Best Teacher Award. Piezunka has been featured in The Economist and publishes regularly on the ideas of competition and innovation in such arenas as Formula One racing and video games. Poets&Quants has named Piezunka as one of their Best 40 Under 40 Professors.

Social/Community Life

Dash: A beloved INSEAD tradition that happens during P2, the Dash is rumored to have begun in 2001 in Singapore as a kind of frantic race from an area where a high percentage of students live to the school's main campus, with participants attempting to cover this typical ten-minute-walk distance in just three minutes and with any and all forms of transport allowed. Explained a student on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog, "Legend says that after some very competitive

editions, it was decided to turn it into something safer and more inclusive by transforming it into a fancy dress event and not a competition to get to class on time (which honestly we do every single day)."

The Dash has since made its way to the Fontainebleau campus as well and sees both students and professors dressing up in costumes—usually themed by study group—and walking to class together. Although the first student to arrive on campus does receive a prize, the best part is reportedly that everyone wears their costume for the full day of classes, lending a bit of levity to everyone's course work. As the aforementioned blogger noted, "Classes ran as normal, with the exception that sometimes the professor would call for Iceman or Popeye or the Angry Granny." The student bonding that occurs is clearly an important facet of the tradition, as one student we interviewed confirmed, saying, "It's an incredible memory. … It's so fun, and you really feel like you're part of the same school." Another student described the day on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog as "arguably the most memorable day of [the] INSEAD year."

Yet another student described the takeaways of the day in a blog post: "I learnt a key lesson at INSEAD during the past four months, and this lesson was emphasized again on Dash Day: do not take yourself too seriously, and people will take you seriously. The 'work hard, play hard' philosophy is truly practical in our environment. We strive to create meaningful value and at the same time deeply love what we are doing."

INSEAD Partners: Approximately 30% of INSEAD students come to campus with a significant other, and the school works to make this move and experience beneficial for everyone involved. A student with whom we spoke shared that the MBA program can be "tough if you have a partner" but that the school does "take a lot of care" to keep partners involved and engaged. Partners are welcomed from the beginning, with dedicated staff ready to assist in the transition and numerous benefits available within the school system, including fitness club memberships, library access, involvement opportunities with some student clubs, career workshops, free French and Mandarin language classes, and rooms reserved for partners and children on campus.

Referencing the school's "strong support network for partners," a student wrote on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog, "What I appreciate is how welcoming INSEAD is. A little thing like giving partners their own INSEAD badge, which allows them to use the library or pay for drinks at the café, means a lot." This network includes the INSEAD Partner's Club, which plans social, cultural, personal, and professional development events, such as a visit to Fontainebleau Castle, wine tastings, a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator workshop, and an Austerlitz Memorial lecture. Both the Singapore and Fontainebleau campuses feature playrooms for kids and provide "future MBA" security badges for the little ones, offering them the opportunity for, as the INSEAD website states, "a network of international friends, just like mum and dad."

National Weeks: Throughout the academic year, INSEAD sets aside ten specific periods—called National Weeks—to celebrate and highlight the school's diversity. Teams of students from various countries compete for the opportunity to showcase their culture and traditions through a variety of events that, while reportedly fun, exciting, and full of free food, are also taken extremely seriously. The selected groups spend months preparing, recruiting sponsors, securing speakers, and organizing catered activities for hundreds of their classmates and fellow community members, essentially planning what an alumnus described to us as "a crash course on the social and professional aspects of their countries."

Admitting that the process "required a lot more time and energy than I expected," a student who helped organize Japan Week wrote about the experience on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog, saying, "I believe it was a big success as many of

our classmates enjoyed the week very much. The whole experience of getting involved in the Japan National Week enriched my INSEAD experience even more!" A member of the China team wrote in a blog post: "From this experience, I learned how to communicate effectively, organize marketing campaigns, develop a branding strategy and enhance a brand image." Each National Week opens with what INSEADers call "amphi storming," in which the organizing student group offers a short rundown of the upcoming events, which typically include several traditional meals, presentations from national businesses, company visits, cultural events like dance classes and movie nights, and at least one massive theme party.

OUTSEAD: OUTSEAD is a (cleverly named, we would say) student club at INSEAD for members of the school's LGBTQ+ community. The group, which describes itself on its website as "fun-loving and inclusive," works to create a welcoming social environment and activities for its members and their allies. Active on both campuses and among alumni, OUTSEAD organizes events such as Pride Day cocktail receptions, a Colour Run benefitting charity (in collaboration with INDEVOR), EurOut (an LGBTQ+ networking conference in Europe), breakfast with Bain & Company's LGBTQ+ group, and a cocktail event with members of McKinsey & Company's LGBTQ+ network. OUTSEAD has also worked to establish an interschool network by partnering with London Business School's Out in Business organization, and the club has supported INSEAD in joining the Reaching Out MBA Fellowship, which provides scholarship funds for LGBTQ+ students.

Splash: During orientation in both Fontainebleau and Singapore, INSEAD students can opt to take part in Splash, a community service project organized in conjunction with the U.K. company Splash Projects. INSEAD's incoming students participate hands-on in a construction project designed to serve the local community. Two recent France Splash projects concentrated on repairing the facilities of the Centre Hospitalier du Sud Seine-et-Marne's pediatric ward, and a Singapore Splash project involved improving the facilities of a residential program hosted by the local Centre for Domestic Employees. Each student intake is divided into sections that are then asked to set and meet specific goals, with the idea that over the course of a few days, each team will have planned and completed a series of social impact construction projects. More than 4,500 students have taken part in Splash to date. "The first lesson we learnt at INSEAD was not finance, macroeconomics, [or] strategy," a student said of his Splash experience on the *INSEAD In the Know* blog, continuing, "Instead, INSEAD taught us what business really is. It is not only about earning revenue or increasing profit—business is a force for good."

A student on the same blog called Splash "a wonderfully rewarding experience," adding, "We built a bike-track for a charity that works with differently abled children in a village about 30 mins from Fontainebleau. It was a cold day. We were a bunch of business students. And we built a proper bridge—from sawing wood, to digging the ground for posts, to setting concrete… even we couldn't believe how much we'd achieved, but I guess that's the power of teams." An alumnus also recalled his Splash project for the blog, saying it "was physically and mentally challenging, but it served as a crash course on how to communicate with a group of people from different backgrounds and work together on a tangible project."

Summer Ball: INSEAD's Summer ball takes place just a few weeks before graduation on both the school's campuses. The event brings together hundreds of students, partners, professors, alumni, and staff for a dressy evening of dancing, dining, and socializing. Summer Ball events in recent years were held at the Château de Fontainebleau. Recent themes have included "Light Out, Stars On" and "Midnight at the Oasis." "The INSEAD Summer Ball is one of the oldest INSEAD traditions. Expect DJs, performances, and music to suit all tastes," the 2023 invite stated. A student we

interviewed described the balls as "a bit pricey" (tickets for the 2023 event ranged from 344 to 429 euros) but "a good opportunity to just have fun, mingle."

Academic Summary

Curriculum: INSEAD has a 14-course required curriculum that comprises the whole of student course work during the first two periods and extends into the third. Students are also required to complete 11 electives and a capstone course in P5 that integrates the core teachings by having students tackle a real-world general management challenge. Students must also prove that they meet the school's language requirement of proficiency in two languages, one of which must be English, and basic competency in a third. The school's ten-month curriculum is as follows:

Period 1

- "Financial Accounting"
- "Financial Markets and Valuation"
- "Introduction to Strategy"
- "Organisational Behaviour 1"
- "Prices and Markets"
- "Uncertainty, Data, and Judgement"

Period 2

- "Corporate Financial Policy"
- "Leadership Communication Foundations"
- "Managerial Accounting"
- "Managing Customer Value"
- "Organisational Behaviour 2"
- "Process and Operations Management"

Period 3

- "Business in Society"
    - Ethics
    - Political Environment
    - Public Policy
- "Macroeconomics in the Global Economy"
- Three and a Half Electives

Period 4

- Four Electives

Period 5

- "Capstone: Your First 100 Days"
- Three Electives

Grade Disclosure Policy: INSEAD will not disclose student grades to recruiters, one's classmates, or anyone outside the INSEAD community. In fact, during on-campus interviews, recruiters are forbidden to ask about grades, and students are forbidden from volunteering them. The school notes that this policy is in place so that students can feel free to take electives in areas outside their core knowledge spheres without having to fear that their grades will affect their job prospects.

Majors: Although INSEAD does not offer official majors, students are able to concentrate on the courses they feel best fit their particular needs outside the core curriculum. Students can select from electives in the following academic areas:

- Accounting and Control
- Decision Sciences
- Economics and Political Science
- Entrepreneurship and Family Enterprise
- Finance
- Marketing
- Organisational Behaviour
- Strategy
- Technology and Operations Management

Teaching Method: INSEAD does not mandate a single teaching method but instead emphasizes teaching effectiveness. Professors are free to adopt whatever method they see fit—including lecture, case method, exercises, simulations, and blended learning—as long as their course design places student learning at its core.

Total Full-Time Faculty (excludes visiting faculty and researcher): 239

Research Centers and Initiatives:

- Africa Initiative
- Blue Ocean Strategy Institute
- Centre for Organisational Research
- Corporate Governance Center
- Economics of Innovation Lab
- Ethics and Social Responsibility Initiative
- Gender Initiative
- Global Private Equity Initiative
- Healthcare Management Initiative
- The Hoffman Global Institute for Business and Society
- Humanitarian Research Group
- Initiative for Learning Innovation and Teaching Excellence
- INSEAD-Sorbonne University Behavioural Lab
- INSEAD-Wharton Center for Global Research and Education
- James M. and Cathleen D. Stone Centre for the Study of Wealth Inequality

- Marketing and Sales Excellence Initiative
- Negotiation and Conflict Management Collaborative
- The Rudolf and Valeria Maag INSEAD Centre for Entrepreneurship
- Sustainable Business Initiative
- Wendel International Centre for Family Enterprise

Admissions Basics

Note: Unless otherwise noted, the admissions and application information presented in this section is based on what is presented on the school's website and in its marketing materials. This kind of information can change over time, so always check with the school directly to confirm any details before acting upon them.

Application Process: The application process at INSEAD has five stages, outlined on the school's website as follows:

- Stage 1: Submit online application, supporting documents, and online interviews—Complete the INSEAD MBA online application and attach the required supporting documentation to your application.
- Stage 2: Pre-selection decision—Your admissions officer will be in contact with you within one week of submitting your application.
- Stage 3: Interviews with alumni—Interviews are conducted by INSEAD Alumni interviewers, normally in your country of residence. In most cases, two separate interviews are required.
- Stage 4: Admissions committee evaluation—Once the Admissions Office receives feedback from the alumni interviewers, your application will be reevaluated and then presented to the Admissions Committee. The Admissions Committee, comprised of faculty and alumni, decides whether to accept or reject each candidate.
- Stage 5: Final decision—You will be advised by email of the final decision. The entire admissions process (from the Application Deadline) will take up to ten weeks.

Admissions Rounds: INSEAD has four deadlines for each of its two intakes each year (January and September). To be considered within a specific round, candidates must submit all elements of their application, including the online form, all necessary test scores, two letters of reference, all supporting documents, and the application fee, by midnight French time the day of the deadline. The video interview component must then be completed within 48 hours of that deadline. Deadlines for the individual rounds tend be approximately a month and a half apart, with first-round applications due more than eight months before the school year begins, and final-round applications due five months before classes start.

INSEAD explains that competition in each round—and each intake—is equal, with acceptance ratios consistent for all. More spots are typically assigned in the first three rounds, but this is said to be because the school receives more applications in those rounds than in the fourth. INSEAD recommends that applicants who are targeting scholarships or expect to need more time to relocate to campus consider applying in the first or second round.

GMAT/GRE: INSEAD does not stipulate a minimum GMAT score needed to apply or be accepted. The school also accepts GRE scores. GRE scores that exceed 80% on both sections (Verbal and Quantitative) are considered competitive.

However, INSEAD reminds applicants that GMAT/GRE scores alone—high or low—are not enough to either qualify or disqualify a candidate for admission.

GPA: Given that GPAs are not consistent internationally, INSEAD considers applicants' past course work, academic performance, and individual grades for specific classes rather than requiring a minimum GPA.

English Proficiency: To be accepted, an applicant must be fluent in English and may be asked to provide certification of that proficiency. The school accepts the following methods of certification:

- A university degree conducted exclusively in English
- TOEFL Internet-based test (Recommended minimum score: 105)
- PTE Academic (Recommended minimum score: 72)
- IELTS Academic (Recommended minimum score: 7.5)

Language Requirements: In addition to fluency in English, candidates must possess and prove proficiency in at least one other language to be admitted. At a minimum, an applicant must have what the school calls a "practical level" of knowledge in this second language, defined as the "ability to understand and communicate on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc."

Unemployment/Layoffs: INSEAD's application includes an optional job question that reads: "If you are currently not working or if you plan to leave your current employer more than two months before the programme starts, please explain your activities and occupations between leaving your job and the start of the programme." The inclusion of this prompt appears to indicate that the admissions committee will not necessarily view a candidate's unemployment negatively, as long as they demonstrate an ability or willingness to take advantage of the situation in a positive way, such as by volunteering, traveling, interning, or taking classes. Essentially, INSEAD is looking for signs of an applicant's interest in self-improvement, experience collection, and/or giving back.

International Quotas: INSEAD has no set quotas for students of any particular nationality. In a *Poets&Quants* interview, though, then Dean Mihov noted, "the most important thing about our diversity is that there is no dominant culture in the classroom. We have capped people from one nation to 10% to 12% of the intake. It makes people not feel they are a minority."

Recommendations: Each applicant must submit two professional recommendation letters—written in English—ideally from individuals in their workplace. Although accepted, academic recommendations are not preferred because they are not believed to provide the same level of insight into a candidate's capacity to manage and collaborate with others.

Recommendations may be submitted up to 48 hours after the application deadline for the round in which the candidate is applying. Applicants are encouraged to enter their recommenders' credentials as soon as possible into the INSEAD system to allow these individuals plenty of time in which to draft their letters. Individuals interested in providing a third letter of recommendation may upload the submission as a "supporting document."

Interviews: INSEAD requires that all candidates complete a brief, four-question video interview after submitting their application. A unique link to do so is emailed to the applicant by Kira Talent and posted to the candidate's dashboard within the application system. The video interviews must be completed no later than 48 hours after the deadline for the round in which the candidate is applying. No application will be considered ready for review until the video interviews have been received.

The four questions vary from candidate to candidate, and applicants have 45 seconds in which to prepare their answer to each one and then 60 seconds in which to record it. Candidates who are especially nervous about the process can access practice questions with which they can rehearse an unlimited number of times before proceeding to the official video submissions. INSEAD offers advice on preparing for this aspect of the application process here: www.insead.edu/master-programmes/mba/admissions. The school says that candidates should see the video interviews as an opportunity to share their motivations, passions, and personalities with the admissions team.

Candidates who advance in the evaluation process will be invited to complete two in-person interviews with INSEAD alumni. These interviews are mandatory for admission and arranged by invitation only. An applicant who is invited to interview will receive the invitation within approximately six weeks of submitting their application. Typically, interviews last 45–90 minutes and are conducted off-campus in the applicant's country of residence. A former INSEAD admissions director explained to us at mbaMission that INSEAD alumni administer the school's admissions interviews because "the graduates from INSEAD are probably in the best place to be able to judge, by meeting the person, whether they really would fit with the INSEAD community."

Interviews are comprehensive, meaning that interviewers will have had a chance to review a candidate's entire application at least once before the interview, and applicants can expect some targeted questions as a result. The primary goal of the interviews, though, is to gain an understanding of an individual's personality, communication skills, and level of interest in INSEAD. A former INSEAD admissions director remarked to us that one of the key assessments interviewers are required to make is whether they would be happy to have the person as a classmate in the INSEAD program.

Waitlist: INSEAD provides very little public information about its waitlist and related procedures, but a former INSEAD admissions director told us that the school strives to respond to waitlisted applicants "as soon as possible, either to make an offer or to let them know that there are no longer any spots available," and encouraged candidates on the waitlist to "be patient." Based on what we have gleaned from reading various blogs and discussion boards, waitlisted candidates could hear from the school as early as a few days after first being notified of being added to the waitlist or as late as two weeks before the program is set to begin. Individuals on the waitlist are still encouraged to apply for scholarships.

Financial Aid: Candidates are encouraged to apply to no more than five INSEAD scholarships and may ultimately be awarded one. Two types are available: need-based, which are awarded based on demonstrated financial need, and non-need based, which are awarded based on merit and with attention to such factors as gender, nationality, and professional background. Access a complete list of available scholarships and their application details here: www.insead.edu/master-programmes/mba/financing/scholarships.

Candidates in the first three admissions rounds may begin applying for financial aid once they have reached the interview stage. Applicants who require financial assistance are encouraged to apply during Rounds 1 and 2 so they are considered when the greatest amount of possible funding is available. Applicants in the third round are eligible for only five need-based scholarships. Note that individuals applying in Round 4 are not eligible to apply for need-based scholarship funds. However, a small number of merit scholarships are typically awarded to Round 4 applicants upon admission.

All INSEAD applicants who are accepted into the MBA program are also eligible for the International Loan Programme, which is provided by Prodigy Finance—a firm established by three INSEAD alumni who wanted to offer a new way for international business school students to fund their graduate education. The company has supported more than 1,170 applicants in recent classes. In addition, INSEAD maintains a partnership with CFA Institute, through which students may be able to procure scholarship funds.

For more details on all funding options available at and through INSEAD, visit the school's financing page here: www.insead.edu/master-programmes/mba/financing.

Reapplicants: INSEAD does not discourage previously unsuccessful candidates from reapplying but cautions that those who consider doing so should first give some honest thought to whether significant change is evident in their profile and candidacy. In most cases, reapplicants must complete a new online application.

INSEAD Essay Tips, 2024–2025

INSEAD candidates must respond to four short career-focused queries (a fifth one is optional) and provide two motivation essays (with an optional third). Applicants are also tasked with completing a video component for which they answer four questions as four separate video recordings. Given the total number of prompts, tasks, and questions involved, some candidates could find INSEAD's essay gauntlet a bit intimidating and likely arduous as well. Read on for our full analysis, which we hope will make the process a little easier to manage.

Job Description 1: Briefly summarise your current (or most recent) job, including the nature of work, major responsibilities, and where relevant, employees under your supervision, size of budget, clients/products and results achieved. (200 words maximum)

Job Description 2: What would be your next step in terms of position if you were to remain in the same company instead of going to business school? (200 words maximum)

Job Description 3: Please give a full description of your career since graduating from university. Describe your career path with the rationale behind your choices. (300 words maximum)

Job Description 4: Discuss your short and long term career aspirations with an MBA from INSEAD. (100 words maximum)

For the school's job-related mini essays, we encourage you to start by very carefully parsing exactly what data the school requests for each. Together, these four prompts address many of the elements seen in a traditional personal statement essay, including info about one's career to date, interest in the school, and professional goals. However, the topics are clearly separated among individual submissions rather than covered in a cohesive single essay, and INSEAD also asks applicants to comment on their expected progression within their current firm were they to remain there rather than entering business school.

The first prompt requires that you outline roughly six different aspects of your current or most recent position. Be sure that you address each of the elements the school lists, and do not skip any just because you would rather write more about some than others. You might also want to consider providing a very brief description of your company or industry, if the nature of either might not be readily clear to an admissions reader. For the second question, your response should be fairly straightforward. If your firm has a clearly defined management hierarchy in which one position leads directly to a higher one—and you would be interested in adhering to that system—you simply need to explain this and perhaps offer a short description of the new responsibilities your next position would entail. If your company does not have such an arrangement or you would want to move in a different direction, simply explain what your preferred next role would be and the duties involved.

The third prompt is rather self-explanatory with respect to detailing the various stages of your career to date, but do not be remiss in responding to the "rationale" and "choices" aspects of the query. The school wants to know that your progression has not been passive, with you simply accepting the next good thing to come along, but rather that you have made thoughtful decisions with clear motivations and intentions behind them. For the fourth question, you will need to present your professional goals within the context of an INSEAD MBA education. Do your research on the school to identify specific resources it offers that relate directly to the skills and experiences you need to be successful in your career, thereby illustrating how INSEAD would help you achieve your aims. Above all, be sure to show determination and direction—that you are focused firmly on your intended end points and will not be easily deterred.

For *all* your job description responses, avoid using any acronyms or abbreviations that would not be easily recognizable to most people. Using shortcuts (in the form of abbreviations/acronyms) and skipping basic contextual information could make your answers less understandable and therefore less compelling and useful to an admissions reader, so do yourself a favor by depicting your situation as clearly as possible.

As we have noted, these questions cover many elements of a traditional personal statement, so we encourage you to download a *free* copy of our **mbaMission Personal Statement Guide**. In this complimentary publication, we provide a detailed discussion of how to approach such queries and craft effective responses, along with multiple illustrative examples. Download your copy today at https://shop.mbamission.com/products/personal-statement-guide.

Optional Job Essay: If you are currently not working or if you plan to leave your current employer more than 2 months before the programme starts, please explain your activities and occupations between leaving your job and the start of the programme.

With this essay, INSEAD hopes to see signs of your interest in ongoing self-improvement, knowledge or experience collection, and/or giving back. Whether you are choosing to leave your job a few months before the beginning of the MBA

program or are asked to do so by your employer, simply explain what you expect do and gain in the interim. The admissions committee wants to know that you are the kind of person who takes advantage of opportunities and to understand what kinds of opportunities appeal to you. For example, perhaps you plan to complete a few quantitative courses to be better equipped to hit the ground running in your related MBA classes, or perhaps you want to spend some time with family members or volunteering in your community because you know that your availability to do so will be limited when you are in school, and you want to maintain those important connections. Maybe you want to focus on improving your foreign language ability before coming to INSEAD, given the importance of this skill in the school's program. Or you might arrange informational interviews, job-shadowing opportunities, and/or unpaid internships, which could help in various ways with recruiting and job selection. Whatever your goals and plans, clearly convey how you anticipate that your experience(s) will add to or change your character, enhance your skill set, and/or increase your understanding of yourself or others—all of which are valuable in business school.

Motivation Essay 1: Give a candid description of yourself (who are you as a person), stressing the personal characteristics you feel to be your strengths and weaknesses and the main factors which have influenced your personal development, giving examples when necessary (maximum 500 words).

Although INSEAD's request for "main factors which have influenced your development" comes in the latter half of this essay prompt, we feel you should actually provide this context for your formative experiences before discussing the strengths and weaknesses you derived from them, because showing a clear cause-and-effect relationship between the two is important. The school asks that you offer examples "when necessary," but your essay will be strongest if you present anecdotes to illustrate and support all your statements. Still, your essay should not end up being a hodgepodge of unconnected anecdotes that reveal strengths. Instead, focus on two or three strengths and one or two weaknesses in the mere 500 words allotted.

As always, be honest about your strengths (do not try to tell the committee what you think it wants to hear; truthfully describe who you legitimately are) and especially about your weaknesses—this is vital. Transparent or disingenuous statements will not fool or convince anyone and will only reveal you as someone incapable of critical self-evaluation.

Motivation Essay 2: Consider a situation where you failed to achieve your objective(s). How did you handle failure? What did you learn about yourself and/or your interactions with others from this situation? (maximum 400 words)

For this essay, you will need to offer an anecdote that reveals a different side of you than is likely presented in the rest of your application—which we assume includes a fair number of achievements and generally highlights your strengths. This essay allows you to present a more rounded impression of yourself to the admissions committee by sharing a low moment from your life. Because the school also asks you to address how the incident subsequently influenced your interactions with others *and* what lessons it taught you, you must identify a story that not only involves a significant incident but also affected you personally in a meaningful and long-lasting way. These elements of your essay are just as important as the specific failure you choose to share; your unique thoughts can differentiate you from other applicants, and showing that you recognize how the incident changed you and your relations with others demonstrates your self-awareness and capacity for growth. Steer clear of trite and clichéd statements about your takeaways, and really reflect on the situation to uncover your deeper reactions and impressions. For example, everyone gains some level of resiliency from a failure, so you must offer something less common and more compelling and personal.

Be aware that the best failure essays are often those that show reasoned optimism and tremendous momentum toward a goal—a goal that is ultimately derailed. In most cases, you will need to show that you were emotionally invested in your project/experience, which will enable the reader to connect with your story and vicariously experience your disappointment. If you were not invested at all, presenting the experience as a failure or learning experience will be less credible.

Optional Essay: Is there anything else that was not covered in your application that you would like to share with the Admissions Committee? (maximum 300 words)

We tend to believe that the best use of the optional essay is to explain confusing or problematic issues in your candidacy, and this prompt offers an opportunity to do just that. So, if you need to, this is your chance to address any questions an admissions officer might have about your profile—a poor grade or overall GPA, a low GMAT or GRE score, a gap in your work experience, etc. We suggest downloading your *free* copy of the **mbaMission Optional Essays Guide**, in which we offer detailed advice on deciding whether to take advantage of the optional essay and how best to do so (with multiple sample essays), if needed: https://shop.mbamission.com/products/mbamission-optional-essays-guide.

INSEAD does not stipulate that you can only discuss a problem area in this essay, however, so you have some leeway to share anything you think might be pivotal or particularly compelling. We caution you against trying to fill this space simply because you fear that not doing so would somehow count against you. Remember, by submitting an additional essay, you are asking the admissions committee to do extra work on your behalf, so you need to make sure that time is warranted. If you are using the essay to emphasize something that if omitted would render your application incomplete, take this opportunity to write a very brief narrative that reveals this key new aspect of your candidacy.

Video

After submitting your INSEAD application, you will need to complete a video interview consisting of four questions. You will be given 45 seconds in which to consider your answer to each one and then 60 seconds in which to deliver it. You have until 48 hours after the deadline for the round in which you apply to complete this element of the process, but we strongly recommend doing so sooner rather than later while your mind is still in application mode and to ensure you do not somehow forget this task or have to rush through it at the end of the allotted time period.

Because all INSEAD admissions interviews are conducted by the school's alumni, these video questions provide a way for the members of the school's admissions committee to virtually "meet" candidates and supplement the information provided in the written portions of the application. The videos give the committee direct and dynamic insight into applicants' character and personality, as well as another angle on their language abilities. About the videos, INSEAD says on its site, "The MBA Admissions Committee is interested in obtaining an authentic view of you as a person, to see how you think on your feet and how you convey your ideas." So when the time comes for you to record your responses, do your best to relax, answer genuinely, and let your true self shine through!

The Next Step–Mastering Your INSEAD Interview: Many MBA candidates find admissions interviews stressful and intimidating, but mastering this important element of the application process is definitely possible—the key is informed preparation. We therefore offer our free Interview Guides to spur you along! Download your *free* copy of the **INSEAD Interview Guide** today at https://shop.mbamission.com/products/insead-interview-guide.

Appendix:
INSEAD Facts and Figures

Note: Facts and figures in this section are prone to change. Occasionally, conflicts may exist between the school's publications and its web pages. Applicants are urged to recheck facts and figures for the most up-to-date information.

Basics

Year Established: 1957

Location: Fontainebleau, France; Singapore; Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; San Francisco, United States

Dean: Francisco Veloso (2023)

Global Director of Admissions and Financial Aid: Virginie Fougea (2019; at the school since 1996)

Programs:

- Full-Time MBA
- Global Executive MBA
- Executive Master in Change
- Executive Master in Finance
- Executive Education
- Master in Management
- PhD in Management
- Tsinghua-INSEAD Executive MBA

Joint Degrees:

- Joint Degrees:
- INSEAD-Columbia University Teacher's College MBA/MA
- INSEAD-SAIS MBA/MA

Alumni: More than 68,000

Class Profile (Class of 2025)

These data represent a "a typical MBA class," as listed on INSEAD's website and in their program brochure. Specific data for the Class of 2025 were not provided.

Students (January and August intakes): ~1,000

Years of Work Experience Range: 3–8

Average Age: 29

Age Range: 23–35

Women: 38%

Nationalities: 110

Work or Home Countries: 75

Employment Statistics (Class of 2023)

Note that these employment statistics include students who completed INSEAD's MBA program in December 2022 and July 2023.

Mean Graduating Salary: €113,400

Median Graduating Salary: €109,600

Median Sign-On Bonus: €28,500

Median Performance Bonus: €25,100

Graduates accepted positions in the following sectors:

Note that INSEAD only shares detailed data relating to those sub-categories for which graduates reported at least five salaries or bonuses; sub-category percentages are drawn only from those data and reflect percentages within the given category, rather than of the class overall. Category percentages combine new hires and those returning to their pre-INSEAD employer (e.g., Management Consulting is comprised of 44% New Hires and 17% Returnees).

- Management Consulting (44% New Hires and 17% Returnees): 61%
- Corporate Sectors (13% and 3%): 16%
    - Manufacturing/Conglomerates: 25.3%
    - Health Care: 20.3%
    - Retail Consumer and Luxury Goods: 19.0%
    - Energy: 15.2%
    - Corporate Services: 7.6%
    - Primary Industries: 6.3%
    - Public Sector/Impact Economy: 6.3%
- Financial Services (10% and 4%): 14%
    - Private Equity/Venture Capital: 35.5%
    - Investment Banking/Banking/Sales and Trading: 21.1%
    - Investment Management/Hedge Funds: 19.7%
    - Other Financial Services: 14.5%
    - Insurance: 9.2%
- Technology, Media, and Telecommunications (8% and 1%): 9%
    - Information Technology/Telecommunications: 55.6%
    - E-Commerce/Internet: 22.2%
    - Fintech: 22.2%

Graduates accepted positions in 57 countries in the following regions:

- Northern/Western Europe: 36%
- Asia Pacific: 22%
- Africa/Middle East: 18%
- North America: 9%
- Southern Europe: 9%
- South America (including Mexico): 5%
- Eastern Europe: 2%

Top Employers: (Figures in parentheses represent the number of former employees, as a subset of the total, returning to the organization after graduation):

- McKinsey & Company: 124 (43)
- Boston Consulting Group: 83 (25)
- Bain & Company: 71 (18)
- Strategy&: 29 (9)
- Kearney: 27 (5)
- Roland Berger: 13 (6)
- Ernst & Young: 10
- Accenture: 9
- Oliver Wyman: 7 (3)
- Samsung: 7
- Amazon: 6
- Eli Lilly & Company: 5
- AlixPartners: 4 (1)
- Alvarez & Marsal: 4 (1)
- Amphenol: 4
- Morgan Stanley: 4 (1)
- Restaurant Brands International: 4

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- Official GMAT prep materials
- True-to-life practice exams

UNPARALLELED INSTRUCTION

- All teachers scored in the 99th-percentile
- Every teacher boasts a proven track record of student success
- Instructors undergo rigorous training (100+ hours)

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