

Africa's top business school addresses SA skills shortage with new course

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The University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business is launching a new Postgraduate Diploma in Management Practice to overcome the lack of qualified and skilled middle managers which is aggravating Africa's already turbulent economy.

South African business schools offer excellent top-end and lower-end business qualifications - but there is a gap in the middle of the business education ladder. It is this gap that Africa's premier business school, the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB), aims to fill with its vitally important new course - the Postgraduate Diploma in Management Practice (PgDip).

"What we don't see in South Africa, is a kind of qualification that speaks to middle managers and young senior managers and which goes beyond functional insights. At this level, people need not only knowledge of finance and accounting, but also how to go beyond this and use it in a broader framework," says director of the UCT GSB, Professor Walter Baets.

Launching with an Admissions Information Sessions in Cape Town on 15 September and in Johannesburg on 30 October, the PgDip is a pre-masters programme, which delivers a business education programme that builds vital business skills for success in uncertain economic times. It consists of a choice between three specialisation streams: Innovative Leadership, Wine Business or Business Administration.

Professor Baets believes companies need employees who are skilled at post-graduate level, who have some kind of basic management knowledge but need the expertise that comes with the deeper business and psychological insights that traditionally come with longer and more expensive courses such as an MBA. "This is where there is a lot lacking in competence in South Africa. It's not at the top, but in the management positions where people lack basic knowledge and integrative insights," he says.

Saskia Hickey, UCT GSB market intelligence and strategy manager says "the programme gives participants tools that allow meaningful reflection, challenging individuals on a personal as well as professional level."

Hickey adds that an important difference between the new PgDip course and traditional management programmes is that in the PgDip there is real integration between subjects, which allows crucial insights into how sections like marketing, accounting and finance all come together in a company or organisation.

The PgDip takes a systems thinking and action learning approach, a proven educational method developed successfully at the UCT GSB in their other business education courses. Students implement knowledge at their workplaces in between modules via action learning projects. This means companies and organisations see immediate benefits from employees participating in the course - while individuals are able to witness how theories work in practice - a valuable educational tool.

Professor Baets believes business schools in future will develop more postgraduate diplomas, as these address immediate needs and offer condensed knowledge packages in interactive formats, making them optimal for learning.

"We all like to think we are good in management practice without having had any training and of course, there are a few exceptions but there can only be so many Richard Bransons and Bill Gateses. For most people it can help enormously to get this kind of structured approach and in one year, they can obtain enough information to contribute vastly to their organisation or company."

Professor Baets says business schools have to respond to the needs of society. "We cannot keep at one kind of learning when it is clear that more people want and need another kind of education and learning approach. More people want this as it is a way in which skills can be applied very quickly and it is an extremely powerful and effective tool," he says.

[The PgDip programme](#) will launch officially on 15 September 2014 in Cape Town and on 30 September in Johannesburg. There will be a programme introduction followed by one-on-one sessions with prospective candidates to discuss the programme more in detail.

For further information phone +27 21 406 1338 or e-mail: admissions@gsb.uct.ac.za.

Website: www.gsb.uct.ac.za/pgdip

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