

Prof. Hart concurs. She explains that Strathclyde revises its curricula regularly “to ensure that they encompass and are cognisant of new technology and emerging trends”. This could involve designing new material and content for existing programmes, or even designing a whole new programme to address a skills gap.

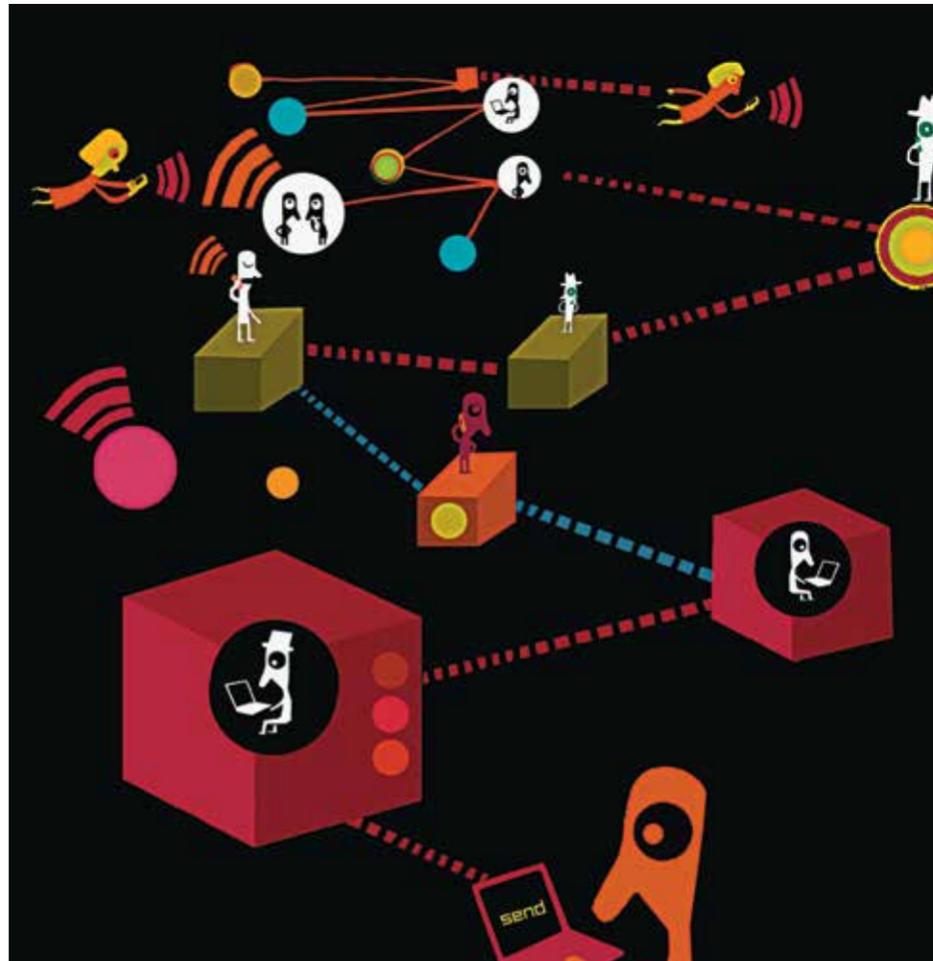
The input typically comes from industry partners and clients around the world. “Close engagement with corporates allows us crucial access to the changing needs of businesses, and this feedback informs our teaching and curricula,” she says, offering the example of the evolving energy landscape and the resulting complex challenges and uncertainties. Strathclyde started offering a Master in Global Energy Management, which includes a “relevant internship” and aims to give students “real-world knowledge of the global energy system”.

Dr Saxena observes, “Today the programme is different from 1990s and even the first decade of 2000s. The pedagogy, delivery and management have undergone a change.” It has also created new electives such as social media, analytics and communication, business intelligence and strategy, knowledge management, business analytics, big data and customer engagement.

Meanwhile, technologies including Blackboard and Moodle and social connectivity tools such as Skype, YouTube and WhatsApp are increasingly being deployed. “Video conferencing has also helped bridge the gap between different learning sources and practice, while increasing access to global learning resources,” says Dr Saxena.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Prof. Hart believes business education no longer occurs in a “sit-down-and-take-notes” environment. Students now expect a high level of industry engagement and business schools that do not offer this will not prosper. She says, “Certainly, there is traditional learning from academics in a lecture theatre environment, but [students] also learn by working on projects with



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their peers, engaging with industry contacts and the experiences we provide for them.”

Dr Saxena feels management education in most schools continues to remain faculty-centric. “Perhaps what is needed is an extensive usage of live company projects and computer-based simulations much the same way as it is done in commercial pilot training.” Dr Iyer says management education institutions have to shift their focus to the development of the individual; “to instil in the participant entrepreneurial qualities, innovative and creative thinking and emotional intelligence, which must be further built with core values under what we call the Spiritual Quotient.”

THE FUTURE

Prof. Hart emphasises they have to respond to the needs of the marketplace. “Generally, people are looking for an increased international focus in their education, and

perhaps less theory more practice,” she says, while Dr Saxena predicts two-year MBA degree programmes will become shorter, since the cost of two years for any individual is substantially high. Also, a large number of core courses such as finance and accounting, principles of marketing, statistics and economics will be offered online, requiring students to study on their own. “This will create time in the MBA programme for many non-classroom and skill-building activities,” he adds.

Internships too will become redundant. “This will be replaced by the creation of an ongoing internship in a company or an entrepreneurial start-up,” says Dr Saxena. Finally, he says classrooms will shrink or even go online. “There is perhaps no logic of having a class size of 60 and for students to be available in a geography and physical place when the faculty can reach students in virtual mode.” ■

***** Corporates offer relevant input about the industry’s needs, enabling institutions to modify their curricula with the times.



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