The Alternative to an Executive MBA

As an alternative to an executive MBA program, Harvard Business School offers an accelerated learning experience that transforms the world’s most promising managers into the next generation of powerful leaders—the Program for Leadership Development (PLD).

Unlike an eMBA, PLD is tailored to your unique leadership needs and organizational challenges. One-on-one professional coaching and a personal case study, a dynamic interchange in a diverse yet intimate living group, and full-time HBS faculty who are industry thought leaders are the hallmarks of this intensive program.

PLD puts you on the fast track to leadership.

Often compared to a rapid-fire MBA, PLD is designed for managers and functional specialists with approximately 10 to 15 years of experience who are considered to be high-potential executives. Focused on leadership, change, and innovation, you will gain a broader understanding of core business functions and deeper confidence in your decision-making skills. You will emerge with an action plan for advancing your personal leadership path—and strengthening your company’s competitive advantage.

Take your leadership abilities to the next level.

Ideally suited for busy professionals who want to develop their leadership skills with minimal downtime, the rigorous PLD curriculum is tailored to achieve a singular goal—accelerate the development of high-potential leaders. Delivered via four intensive modules that take place over the course of six months, the compressed format is designed with your responsibilities in mind. The two on-campus modules require a total of four weeks away from your job.

Key Benefits:
- Accelerated four-module format that takes place over the course of six months
- Renowned case study method that examines today’s complex business issues
- Practical real-world application that can be leveraged immediately in the workplace
- Personal strategy project that addresses a specific challenge within your organization
- Global networking opportunities with peers across an array of countries and sectors
- Living groups that share living space with diverse group of accomplished executives
- Full-time HBS faculty who teach the PLD classroom and distance-learning courses
- HBS alumni status upon completion of the four modules described above and either Module 5 or 10 additional days (two credit weeks) of HBS Executive Education open enrollment or custom programs

The Sponsor Statement

When determining each PLD cohort, HBS considers the comprehensive application form and the accompanying “sponsor statement.” Prepared by either the applicant’s boss or another more senior executive of the sponsoring company, this letter of appraisal assesses the candidate’s accomplishments, potential, gaps, drive, and commitment to professional development.

Real-World Results

Due to the transformational content and collaborative structure of the program, many PLDers report that they have a broader grasp of management and approach business challenges and opportunities with greater self-awareness. Their bosses, peers, and subordinates, on the other hand, note that PLDers interact with their teams and colleagues more productively, engage with senior executives more confidently, and lead cross-functional initiatives and corporate projects more successfully.

Who Is Right for the Program

To ensure optimal peer-to-peer learning, HBS determines each PLD cohort by carefully managing the participant mix. PLD participants typically have 10 to 15 years of professional experience, are recognized as having significant leadership potential, and come from organizations with annual revenues in excess of $75 million. Most applicants have a high degree of specific functional knowledge, many are experienced in a single industry domain, and some have spent their careers in a single company.
The Alternative to an Executive MBA: Program for Leadership Development (PLD)

Four Modules. Six Months. Immediate Results.
The curriculum is composed of four educational modules—two distance-learning and two oncampus—plus a fifth optional two-week session after which you achieve HBS alumni status.

**MODULE 1 / 10 weeks off campus**
**Foundational Skill Building**
Featuring exercises and tutorials in accounting, finance, and quantitative methods, this web-based module strengthens your core skills and establishes a common level of understanding for the modules that follow. From cost accounting to financial analysis, you will gain insights into the processes that drive an organization’s budgeting, pricing, and forecasting decisions. You also will take part in an intensive, customized Leadership Learning Path Assessment designed to accelerate your personal growth.

**MODULE 2 / 2 weeks on campus**
**Cross-Functional Business Approach**
By delving deeply into key business functions—such as strategy, marketing, finance and accounting, and operations, you will learn how they interrelate and contribute to your company’s overall strategy. Your diverse network of peers will provide global perspectives on complex leadership issues, and your personal coach will help you assess your leadership style and apply new concepts to your specific professional situation.

**MODULE 3 / 14 weeks off campus**
**Strategy Formulation and Implementation**
Back at your organization, you will apply your new knowledge and continue to develop your skills through a series of highly structured online exercises, group work, and individual study. You will create a strategy statement and value proposition for your company, engage in faculty-led webinars on selected PLD topics, and explore innovative strategies that foster collaboration across globally distributed teams.

**MODULE 4 / 2 weeks on campus**
**Leading Change**
Immersed in classroom and group learning, you will examine ways to improve your leadership effectiveness and decision-making capabilities. You will present an overview of your specific business challenge and personal action plan to your coach and living group. Based on their feedback, you will refine and finalize your case. Your coach also will help you interpret and apply the results of your Leadership Learning Path Assessment. With a deeper understanding of change management processes and approaches, you will return to your company ready to drive innovation and move quickly on promising opportunities.

**MODULE 5 / 2 weeks on campus**
**Personal Leadership—Optional**
This two-week session brings all the elements of your PLD learning together in an intensive exploration of what it means to be an authentic leader. You will examine, leadership and accountability, personal leadership in business and society, and how to lead effectively at each future stage of your professional development. After completing this module, you will earn HBS alumni status. (You also can earn alumni status by completing 10 days/two credit weeks of open-enrollment or custom programs.)

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