Guidelines for Designing and Teaching Q&A and Live Sessions in Flex EMBA and International Flex EMBA

April 2017

Introduction

- The objective of this document is **to provide MIP Faculty with suggestions** that we hope will be useful **to design and teach the Q&A and Live Sessions** – in the MIP programs Flex EMBA and International Flex EMBA – that are held synchronously on our digital platform, using Skype For Business.

- In this document we have summarized the elements gathered on the basis of:

  - the **experience we have gained by managing the 5 intakes** of the Flex EMBA and International Flex EMBA programs, which have been activated since October 2014 to date
  - the **discussions we had with colleagues from the LISP - Laboratorio Informatico di Sperimentazione Pedagogica - of the University degli Studi di Milano - Bicocca** who have been involved in a project for the quality assessment of the Flex EMBA educational format.

- The document contains **general suggestions** that apply to the design and the teaching of both Q&A and Live sessions, and **specific suggestions** for each of the two teaching tools.

General Suggestions

- Take into account that the space of interaction during the Q&A and Live Sessions is different from the one of physical classrooms: it is therefore necessary to **design the session using teaching methods and support materials other than those of a physical classroom**.

- **Pay special attention to designing the Q&A or Live Session**, both in terms of content and timing: this is important in order to ensure that the Q&A or the Live Session meet the objectives that the professor is aiming to achieve.

- **Contextualize the Q&A or the Session Live in the course the participants are attending**, emphasizing the connections and implicit links with the activities carried out up to that point in the course, and with those that will be provided afterwards, with the clips the students have seen and other material provided.

- **Stimulate fruitful interaction between the participants and with the participants**, by fostering discussion during the Q&A or the Live session and possibly using informal language.

- Use any initial "downtime", before the beginning of the session, **to interact with the participants already connected.**

General Suggestions

- **Present the agenda of the lecture at the beginning of the Q&A or Live session**, with an indication of the topics that will be covered and the objectives that the session aims to achieve.

- **Remind participants at the beginning of the Q&A or Live Session the rules for intervening and actively participating in the activities planned**, such as specifying whether you prefer them to use the chat to ask for the permission to speak or they directly intervene with the microphone.

- **Dedicate the final minutes of the Q&A and Live Session to summarize the contents and the lesson learnt of the lecture**, reflecting on learning objectives and sharing the essential takeaway. It may be helpful, if possible, to give to participants at the end of the Q&A or the Live Session some questions to stimulate them to think critically on the applicability and usefulness of the concepts seen to the context of their work.

- Make sure that your **camera is always on.**

- **Use the slides in support of the explanation**, slide on which you can write or take notes with the Skype For Business tool.

- Invite students to **upload on the platform**, particularly on the Yammer Forum of the course, **the notes** that they have taken during the Q&A and Live Session.

Specific Suggestions for the Q&A

- The objective of the Q&A is twofold: (i) **to allow students to interact with the professor, to whom they can ask questions** for clarification on clips that have been seen up to that point of the course, besides sharing with him/her in-depth insights and discussion; (Ii) **to allow the professor to summarize the main key messages and essential take aways** that students should have assimilated from the clips provided in the course program.

- Students should be encouraged, through the class coordinator or content tutors, to **submit to the coordinator questions or clarifications they would like to ask the professor during the Q&A**. The coordinator shall send to the teacher these questions before the Q&A.

- **The professor should prepares a presentation in support of the Q&A**. The presentation consists of about 5-6 slide that summarizes the key concepts, the main messages and key takeaways that students should have learned by studying the provided clips and the consultation of additional material. This presentation can be used to report the questions that the students ask during or before the lecture.

- **The presentation should be enriched by examples taken from real experience** and anecdotes that help students understand in practice each essential concept synthesized in the presentation

- The teacher **discusses the key messages and take aways** during the Q&A, engaging students in short sessions of Q&A to ensure that the concepts are understood, answering questions in the presentation or asking students to ask new questions

- In preparation for the Q&A, **teachers may want to review the clips**. The clips are available on the platform in the section called "clip" of each unit or can be requested to the class coordinator. Each clip lasts 15 minutes.
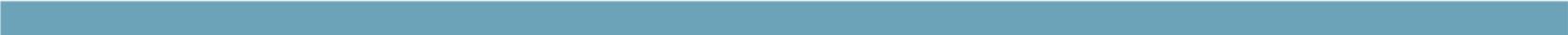
Specific Suggestions for the Live Session

- The Live session aims to engage students in the **application, in practical decision making situations, of the key concepts and analytical tools learned** by studying the provided clips, through **interactive group activities**. It is therefore the time when students apply what they have learnt to solve real/plausible business problems.

- It should be **sent well in advance (if possible when the syllabus of the course is defined) the text of the case study or the article or the material** on which the group work, in which students will be involved, will be focused.

- At the opening of the Live Session (for a total duration of 15-20 minutes) **the professor should summarize the key concepts** that will be exemplified and applied during the session. The professor should **shows the objective of the team work and the type of output that is expected** by the teams should be clearly written. To facilitate students please write the mandate of the team work on a slide.

- At this point (approximately after 30 minutes from the starting the session Live) the team work starts. **Students will "move" in virtual work rooms** created in advance by the coordinator. During the team work, the teacher enters in turn in the virtual work rooms, listening to what they do and discuss, and giving support and suggestions if necessary. Teamwork should be designed so take about 30-45 minutes.

- After the teamwork, the professor and the students will **go back to the plenary session**, in which **a representative from each group (or a subset groups) illustrates the work done.** The presentation is discussed by the professor and other students. In the final part of the Live Session, **the professor summarizes the main points of the team work and identifies the most important takeaways.**

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