

RATINGS

Business Organization and Administration

Online MBA course
Ellis College of New York
Institute of Technology
<http://ellis.nyit.edu/ellis/mba>
800.405.5844
US\$1995 for course,
\$150 for books and materials

Recommendation

I strongly urge any professional who wants to complete his or her graduate or undergraduate degree to seriously consider Ellis College's online programs.

Reviewed by
Donna Walsh

Online and As-Good

When I initially considered taking an online graduate course, I was both thrilled and terrified—thrilled because I truly love to learn, terrified because it's been a long time since I was a student in a classroom, not counting the "Back to School" nights I've attended as a parent.

I've always envied my colleagues and clients who have earned advanced degrees. For me that seemed like an impossible dream. With the time I dedicate to my family and my business, there's no time left for me to attend a classroom-based program. And, frankly, the thought of attending school several evenings a week or on weekends doesn't appeal to me. Of course, I'd heard about online courses, but I thought they wouldn't provide a challenging, in-depth learning opportunity. Was I wrong!

Top business schools—such as those at Columbia, Stanford, and the University of Chicago—helped develop the Ellis online courses. The six-week Business Organization and Administration course is one of the core requirements for an Ellis MBA. Each week the course focuses on one of the six parts of the required textbook (*Management* by Richard L. Daft): Introduction to Management, The Environment of Management, Planning, Organizing, Leading, and Controlling.

Online, students become part of the management team in an organization that's about to undergo a merger with another company. We traveled the maze that emerged, following unexpected twists and turns—just like real life.

The course includes weekly assignments and supplemental learning resources. In addition, students meet in the online classroom to discuss each other's weekly challenge question as well as other topics related to that week's materials.

Each student, as well as the instructor, has the option to create an online profile. We were able to include as much information as we liked, including a photo, link to our Website, professional background, and so forth. I liked this element; it provided a human touch and helped me get to know my classmates and instructor. Ellis also provides an online "café" where we could further socialize with other students.

Assignments

Three written assignments must be completed for each part of the course.

Weekly challenge question. This is an easy yet effective way to begin exploring the key points for each chapter. The textbook provides a brief Management Challenge, a mini case study from a real organization that puts students in the role of a manager. In addition to answering the challenge question, we were required to comment on a fellow student's challenge question.

Weekly task. The weekly task focuses on key points from the chapters covered that week. The task requirements are clearly defined. For example, we were asked to list six elements of a situation or define a specific term and then give examples.

Weekly report. Each week this assignment ties key lessons from the textbook and online discussions with the weekly scenario highlighted in the virtual classroom. As an executive member of the management team, we submitted the weekly report to the president of the merging company.

This course, just like a traditional college class, requires students to spend several hours each week reading the textbook and online information, as well as completing the written assignments. In addition, we needed to participate in the virtual classroom discussions. There's no set time for doing so: We could pop into class when it was convenient for us, including at odd hours and on weekends. That offered us tremendous flexibility to be part of the class, whether we were in a different part of the world, traveling on business, and so forth.

We liked...

- the flexibility of learning online
- the case studies and real-life examples
- elements that added a personal touch, such as student profiles and a virtual café
- the diversity of students.

Quality

Of the faculty. Our instructor was excellent. He was well versed in the course material and established a good balance of interacting with us during the six weeks without monopolizing the discussion. He provided specific, genuine feedback and praise when warranted.

Of the course. The Business Organization and Administration online course is designed with the business professional in mind. It blends case studies and real-life examples with current research and data. Although this topic can be dry and tedious at times, the designers of the course did a fine job of engaging the students.

Of technical and administrative support. My initial interaction with the administrative support was somewhat lacking. My login ID was misspelled, and it took numerous phone calls over a period of time to get that corrected. Also, I would've appreciated some instruction on how to obtain my textbook. Through trial and error, I found the textbook on Amazon and paid a premium to have it shipped overnight.

In addition, our virtual classroom link was accidentally locked down before our class officially ended. After several of us contacted the instructor, Ellis promptly fixed the problem, and our instructor graciously allowed us extra time to finish our last assignment.

Of the student body. The people who made up our class roster were a diverse blend, mostly experienced business professionals along with a few traditional students. That assortment of perspectives and knowledge made our classroom discussions both interesting and valuable.


Value for the money

With 12 required courses, the Ellis MBA costs about US\$25,740. Specialized MBA degrees (for example, in Marketing or Information Systems) require three additional elective courses that cost a total of just over \$3000. The program offers great value, considering its rigor, personal attention, and flexibility.

Ellis can help students continue their education while working full-time and living their life. Not only is this a convenient option for those of us who don't have the luxury or desire to attend classes in person, but also it provides an opportunity to learn with and from other

business professionals from around the world, with topnotch instructors and courses. Completing or complementing an education online isn't "settling." It's a viable way to pursue a dream, which is what I plan to do.

Donna Walsh is a consultant, coach, and trainer focused on organizational development initiatives for healthcare clients. She is the principal and founder of RedShoes Solutions, a company committed to helping individuals and teams maximize potential, overcome obstacles, and achieve goals using the Appreciative Inquiry model; donna@redshoes.biz.

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Could be better...

- There were a few administrative and technical glitches.

Business Organization and Administration Rating

Educational experience 

Market value  .5

Quality of faculty 

Quality of course  .5

Technical and admin support 

Quality of student body 

Value of peer-to-peer learning  .5

Value for the money  .5

Overall rating 

KEY  **poor**  **satisfactory**  **good**  **excellent**

