

# Management Center Innsbruck (MCI) – The Entrepreneurial School: Strategic engagement with industry allows MCI to provide students with better pathways to employment

*Innsbruck, Austria*





# General Information

<b>Title</b>	Management Center Innsbruck (MCI) – The Entrepreneurial School										
<b>Pitch</b>	Strategic engagement with industry allows MCI to provide students with better pathways to employment										
<b>Organisation</b>	Management Center Innsbruck (MCI)										
<b>Country</b>	Austria										
<b>Author</b>	Balzhan Orazbayeva (Science-to-Business Marketing Research Centre)										
<b>Nature of interaction</b>	<table><tr><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration in R&amp;D</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Lifelong learning</td></tr><tr><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercialisation of R&amp;D results</td><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joint curriculum design and delivery</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Mobility of staff</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Mobility of students</td></tr><tr><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academic entrepreneurship</td><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student entrepreneurship</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Governance</td><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shared resources</td></tr></table>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration in R&D	<input type="checkbox"/> Lifelong learning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercialisation of R&D results	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joint curriculum design and delivery	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobility of staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobility of students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academic entrepreneurship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/> Governance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shared resources
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<b>Supporting mechanism</b>	<table><tr><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Structural</td></tr><tr><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Policy</td></tr></table>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic	<input type="checkbox"/> Structural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy						
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<b>Summary</b>	<p>The Management Centre Innsbruck (MCI) in Austria strategically engages with employers to improve teaching and learning and enhance student employability. From the top-level of the institution to the bottom, MCI embraces cooperation with industry as a means for developing graduates who possess the knowledge they need to succeed and make significant contributions in their fields and in society at large.</p> <p>For this reason, MCI approaches their business partnerships very strategically. They invite specifically-chosen members in industry into the university as partners in the development and delivery of their programmes. This has benefits for both sides. Firstly, students benefit from having curricula aligned with the needs of the industry with material being delivered directly from professionals in-practice. This generates a more direct path to employment. Businesses benefit from having graduates who are job-ready as well as being able to better scout and win top student talent.</p>										



# Introduction & Overview

## 1. BACKGROUND

The roots of the Management Center Innsbruck (MCI) go back to the early nineties with the inception of the “Innsbruck Open University concept”. Founded in 1995 as an autonomous academic spin-off of the University of Innsbruck, MCI has earned a leading position in the European landscape of higher education as a distinguished public comprehensive research university. The involvement of different stakeholders in the consortium of MCI’s owners such as the Federal State of Tyrol, the City of Innsbruck, the Tyrolean Chamber of Commerce, the Tyrolean Chamber of Labour and the Tyrolean Industrialists’ Association resulted in the establishment of the new higher education institution.

The aim of the newly established MCI was to strengthen relationships between academia and business, act entrepreneurially (be the “speed boat of the University”) and develop a flexible structure for academic innovation to complement the University of Innsbruck (which moves more like a super tanker)<sup>i</sup>.

With more than 3,200 students, 1,000 faculty members, 250 partner universities, and 9,000 graduates, MCI has become an internationally valued partner for teaching and management training. MCI currently offers 29 programmes on the undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate level, including executive education programmes in the fields of Business, Management & Social Sciences as well as Technology and Life Sciences.

MCI identifies itself as an Entrepreneurial School, combining academic competence and expertise, practice orientation, entrepreneurial culture, innovative approach and international orientation. Through its UBC driven education, business-oriented applied research, and provision of extensive support for entrepreneurial activities undertaken by its faculty members and students, MCI proves its strong entrepreneurial orientation.

Embedded in a broad network of diverse stakeholders including sponsors and both business and university partners, MCI is seen as an important player in facilitating regional and national economic vitality, innovativeness and the positioning of Innsbruck, Tyrol and Austria as a centre for academic and international encounters.<sup>ii</sup>.

## 2. OBJECTIVES AND MOTIVATIONS

Within the larger University of Innsbruck framework, MCI positions itself based on the following mission:

*‘MCI follows the concept of Entrepreneurial School. MCI provides profound academic competence within strong international networks and empowers motivated people to achieve outstanding performance’*

One of the key success factors supporting the successful implementation of all these activities is MCI's active and consistent engagement, strong network orientation and entrepreneurial focus. In particular, the collaboration with businesses is considered by MCI to be of vital importance in this context.

The cooperation between businesses and MCI systematically results in direct benefits for students such as high levels of employability and outstanding career prospects. It creates incentives for student mobility, stimulates co-design of curricula and co-delivery of courses, provides ample opportunity for integrating business problems into courses and recruiting experts from businesses as valuable faculty members and facilitates the organisation of networking events.

### **3. STAKEHOLDERS**

#### **Students**

The students, who are the primary target group of the teaching and learning process, are the main stakeholders of MCI. To make the learning process as effective as possible, MCI strives to provide its students with a high level of flexibility through offering not only traditional full-time courses, but also a number of part-time study programmes and a blended learning approach combining online learning with on-campus instruction.

Furthermore, the institution's strong focus on practical relevance and its commitment to having close ties with the business community helps to ensure that its graduates will become sought-after potential employees for the labour market due to their combined academic knowledge and work-oriented skills.

Additionally, students benefit from the broad portfolio of services offered by MCI's Career Center actively providing highly professional coaching and counselling services prior to their graduation.

#### **Business**

Thanks to MCI's innovative management and well-established partnerships with business partners, companies are also benefitting from the bilateral relations through accessing new recruitment opportunities and direct involvement of industry representatives in teaching and organisational processes.

#### **Teaching staff**

MCI presently employs around 300 internal faculty and staff members<sup>iii</sup> complemented by more than 800 external faculty members, with many lecturers being experts in diverse industries and consultancies<sup>iv</sup>. Through their part-time employment at MCI, external lecturers not only bring the applied knowledge into the institution and improve the teaching quality, but also facilitate student employability.

These lecturers, in turn, have the opportunity to scout for potential employees and use their personal encounters with talents to attract and recruit them. MCI's recruiting strategy for external and internal faculty is crucial because it allows a balance of the academic and the practical orientation as well as providing pathways for students to employment.





# Implementation

## 4. ACTIVITIES

Ever since MCI's establishment, interaction with industry at various levels has been an essential element of the institution's vision.

### **Curriculum design and delivery**

One of the most unique elements of MCI's approach is the level to which future employers have an influence on the design and development of study programmes. For new programmes, MCI invites representatives of relevant industries and business professionals to actively participate. In addition, MCI has committed itself to put strategic efforts into constant provision of 'demand analyses' that investigate industry and business requirement for any new study programme to ensure a high employability rate and that MCI's curricula fit current and future industry demands.

Through the involvement of company partners in the curriculum design process, MCI enables the education being offered to not just fulfil academic and accreditation standards, but also to fully prepare its students to meet the needs of the business world. Moreover, for MCI, it is of vital importance to develop and implement part-time programmes tailored not only to the requirements of the employers and the labour market, but also to students' needs so that both future graduates and their employers can benefit from the learning process and application of obtained knowledge and skills<sup>v</sup>.

The degree to which industry plays a role in the delivery of curricula extends beyond most institutions through the involvement of industry experts in the admission process for bachelor and master programmes. At MCI, curricula are designed in consultation with a "development team" to ensure that they meet formal accreditation requirements, as well as the needs of the labour market. Industry experts, often with a wealth of professional recruitment experience, are involved as members of admission committees to jointly conduct personal interviews with potential students and make a final selection of the students entering the programme.

For example, in the case of the Medical Engineering programme, MCI involves professionals from hospitals, the IT sector and medical engineering companies in course-design and delivery. These industry stakeholders are also systemically included in the student admission process: they provide, for instance, input into the entry exams, help assess student CVs, and participate in personal interviews. Their knowledge about what business is seeking in graduates enables them to strengthen the admission process. The involvement of industry stakeholders also helps MCI programmes build networks and ensure their own legitimacy and credibility in the business world.

Furthermore, throughout the semester, external experts are employed as part-time lecturers (external faculty) to teach in courses in order to bring the expertise in the business world into

the teaching. Distinguished individuals from business, policy and from the arts also give guest speeches to MCI students which allow more than 40 minutes for open discussion between students and the invited professionals.

### **Student mobility and placement**

With the aim to support student placement and mobility, a special administrative unit – the MCI Career Center – was established. This centre acts as an interface and interaction point between students or graduates and their potential future employers.

The MCI Career Center is a service platform that provides students and graduates with convenient access to internship, job and further employment opportunities<sup>vi</sup>. For students and graduates, the MCI Career Center is the first communication channel helping and assisting them with answers to their questions related to the job market and to obtain relevant guidance on their career planning. In addition to an informative function, the centre also offers individual advisory sessions and coaching.

For companies, the MCI Career Center connects employers with their potential labour force by providing them with the “MCI Career Partnership” platform for posting diverse job and internship opportunities<sup>vii</sup>. The MCI Career Center also provides recruiting networking events for students and future employers.

The very strategically and systematically selected part-time lecturers add to the employment opportunities of students. The lecturers, in turn, have the opportunity to scout for potential employees and access ‘high-potential’ acquisitions before they enter the market.

## **5. OUTPUTS**

One of the ultimate objectives of MCI is to ensure student employability and provide professional recruitment opportunities for businesses by providing undergraduate and graduate students with a broad base of skills and knowledge needed for a successful career. They meet the demands of the fast-changing business environment and labour market through their intimate relationship with industry. Through its network with numerous partners from both business and academia, MCI facilitates the teaching and learning process, enabling students to obtain hands-on knowledge and develop work-oriented competences strategically contributing to their future professional occupation.

## **6. IMPACTS**

### **Placement**

The first indication that MCI education creates an impact on graduates’ careers is that the average graduate receives 2.15 job offers at the time of his or her graduation. The placement of MCI graduates in the labour market is very high with 92.1% of bachelor-level graduates finding a job within three months, whilst at the Master-level, the figure is 88%. Amongst the graduates who had a job and changed the job after graduation, only 6.8% searched longer

than three months for a new job. Overall, 91.6% of MCI graduates have a job within three months after graduation.

### **Salary increase**

MCI undertakes a graduate survey approximately 3,5 years after graduation. During this time, an alumnus of an undergraduate programme experiences an average salary increase of 132% in respect to their starting salary. For the average MCI alumnus of a master programme, the salary increases over this time span by 70%. Graduates, who already had a job but changed it around the time of graduation generate a salary increase of 60%.

Graduates of the executive education programmes increase their salary by 20% 4.5 years after graduation relative to the salary at the beginning of their programmes. During this time, the number of those in top management positions increases by 56%.

For a more standard measure, all observations in the sample that are three years after graduation are included: graduates of BA programmes experience a salary increase of 113% and graduates with a graduate degree yield a salary increase of 41% in the three years after graduation.

Substantial salary increases and remarkable career progression for MCI graduates highlight the impact of MCI's BA and MA education on successful career paths.





# Support & Influencing factors

## 7. BARRIERS AND DRIVERS

One of the primary barriers that MCI faces are the accreditation processes which can have the effect of hindering innovation in education. With accreditation based on the principle of standardisation, deviations from the norm, or innovation and an entrepreneurial approach to education are discouraged.

For the higher education system, this means the focus on inputs such as full-time vs. part-time faculty, volumes in the library, space of classrooms, labs etc. rather than on relevant outputs (i.e. research output, impact of research, of teaching and learning, career prospects, patents, start-ups, community projects). Ideally, accreditation processes should actively involve innovative approaches and new developed strategies.

As for drivers, one of the key factors enabling successful operation of MCI is its entrepreneurial focus. Active and consistent engagement with well trusted partners supported by institution's entrepreneurial nature can be also reflected in MCI's active participation and facilitation of UBC, which ultimately results in a number of direct gains for students in the form of increasing employability and provision of new careers chances. As a consequence of MCI's innovative management and well-established partnerships with business partners, companies also benefit from the bilateral relations through accessing new recruitment opportunities and direct involvement of industry representatives in teaching and organisational processes.

Programme. With regards to the internationalisation of companies, initiatives under the 'Go International' programme include providing guidance and defining agendas to international companies that visit Tecnocampus, including a gateway to the Spanish market programme available for incoming businesses. Foreign market training is also available for Park companies that want to open new international markets. To promote the culture of internationalisation, the International Business Club holds periodic meetings and networking events, among other initiatives.

the entrepreneurial school®

“  
The complex business environment of our times calls for a rapid exchange of information and decisions – and therewith for horizontal leadership. For this challenging task the MCI's academic programs exactly hit the spot.

Janina Kugel, Member of the Managing Board, Siemens AG, Munich  
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# Further Information

## 8. AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

### AACSB Accreditation

In summer 2016, the executive board of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)<sup>viii</sup>, the worldwide AACSB accreditation based in Tampa (USA), recognised MCI as a first-class business school.

### Double FIBAA Premium Seal

In September 2015, MCI was awarded with the double FIBAA Premium Seals<sup>ix</sup>. FIBAA grants the awards only for the universities with high standards of excellence in research, teaching, management and services.

### 2016 rankings: MCI best Austrian university

In 2016, the Universum Ranking<sup>x</sup> identified MCI as a winner among Austria's universities: 1st place for Best Career Service, 1st place for Strongest Focus on Employability, 2nd place for Most Satisfied Students. MCI was the only Austrian university to achieve a place in the top 3 in all categories.

In the prestigious Trendence Graduate Barometer Europe 2016<sup>xi</sup>, MCI's score of 2.1 was well above the Austrian average of 2.5 and the European average of 2.9.

## 9. LINKS

Management Center Innsbruck (MCI) – The Entrepreneurial School® [www.mci.edu/en/university](http://www.mci.edu/en/university)

## 10. CONTACT PERSONS



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- <sup>viii</sup> <http://bestbizschools.aacsb.edu/aacsb-accredited>
- <sup>ix</sup> <http://www.fibaa.org/en/welcome-page.html>
- <sup>x</sup> <http://universumglobal.com/rankings/>
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