Let's talk business

The biannual 30-city worldwide Access MBA tour hit Dubai recently. It brought together elite international business schools and qualified candidates. The Access MBA has been touring Europe and the Middle East since 2004. It has grown to be the region's leading MBA event, with pre-stops in Jordan and Abu Dhabi and post-stops scheduled for Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

The day-long event in Dubai began with pre-booked one-to-one meetings with admissions directors of various colleges. This was followed by a panel discussion with representatives from Cass Business School, Hult International Business School, IE Business School and Melbourne Business School addressing the question: 'Is this the Right Time to do an MBA?'

In the afternoon the tour turned into an open fair. Visitors interested in pursuing a masters in business administration came and scoped out the quality of programmes on offer, while institutions sussed out suitable candidates.

Notes was at the fair to bring you what's on offer and to find out how wise it is to do an MBA considering the troubled financial market, and the prospects of online learning.

International study

The University of Melbourne Business School was at the fair hoping to recruit students for its MBA programme. The programme is listed number 26 in The Economist global rankings.

Speaking to Notes, Anna Parkin, director of Global Development at the institution, said they were at the fair for two main reasons the first being that their classrooms are high on diversity. The student body for the MBA programme consists of 80 per cent international students, with quotas of no more than 10 per cent from each country.

"We don't have large numbers from the Middle East and think they can add value to the classroom," said Parkin.

The second reason was to announce their new partnership with the Al Maktoum Foundation. "We now have a partnership with the Al Maktoum Foundation where students from any of the Arab-speaking countries once they've been accepted into our programmes, can apply for a full scholarship from the Al Maktoum Foundation," she said.

There was an array of universities from all over the world at the fair, including institutions from the UK, France, Portugal and Spain. However, given the current financial situation, professionals and fresh graduates on the brink of beginning their careers may be sceptical to give up new or established jobs in pursuit of an MBA. For the doubters there are local options available.

Local study

National institution, Zayed University (ZU) introduced its MBA programmes. Dr Chet Jablonski, Assistant Provost of Research and Graduate Studies, ZU, took part in the panel discussion during the Abu Dhabi leg of the tour. He told Notes that during a big economic downturn such as the one the world is now facing, it is the right time for professionals to enhance their qualifications and experience in order to compete with what is coming.