



Offshore, Offshore Wind

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Management Development for the Offshore Wind Industry

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The Executive Offshore Wind MBA is a new programme launched by Gdynia Maritime University, Offshore Wind Energy Centre. In addition to a globally recognised qualification, the EOW MBA will put participants on the fast track to a managerial career in the emerging offshore wind industry. We talked with Andrzej Popadiuk, the Director of the Offshore Wind Energy Centre, about the EOW MBA programme and career prospects in the OWE sector.

The first edition of the MBA Programme is already underway. Who are the participants? Are most of them already active within the maritime industry?

The Executive Offshore Wind MBA educates professional managers and leaders for the OWE sector, so naturally, applicants to the Programme have aspirations for a career in this industry. The programme is dedicated to managers with maritime and energy experience, as well as those who wish to undertake a career in offshore wind. In general, there are four categories of candidates. Firstly, professionals from large Polish and international offshore companies who will manage wind farm projects in the Baltic Sea. Secondly, representatives of smaller companies already involved in the OWE supply chain in international markets. Then there are managers and entrepreneurs with experience in onshore wind or construction industries who are looking to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the development of offshore wind in Poland. There are also those who are working in other businesses, such as legal or technological consultancy, and see the EOW MBA as a way to enter into this expanding industry.

Finally, a significant group of candidates are seafarers - captains, officers, navigators, engineers, and mechanics - serving on the North Sea, in Asia, America, practically all around the world, servicing vessels in the offshore or oil & gas sectors. These participants are world-class professionals and specialists, often graduates of our University, who are looking to enter management -and what is also important - to work closer to their families, in the Polish or European offshore industry. For these candidates, we are currently designing a special edition of the MBA programme, which will allow them to combine their work schedules with the demands of the programme. Graduation from the MBA Programme will allow them to develop the next stage of their careers.

All these individuals are excellent candidates for the EOW MBA. They contribute a great deal of professional experience, which adds outstanding value to the programme. The EOW MBA provides participants with particularly valuable opportunities in business and their professional careers. The EOW MBA graduates will certainly be among the most sought-after managers in the offshore wind energy sector.

How did you attract partners to the Programme? What will your cooperation with them involve?

The Executive Offshore Wind MBA is the first in Poland and the second MBA Programme in the world dedicated to offshore wind energy. The EOW MBA has indeed attracted significant interest from the offshore energy community. The Honorary Partners to the Programme are the British Embassy, the Embassy of the Kingdom of Denmark, and the Global Wind Energy Council. The Programme Partner is the Polish Offshore Wind Energy Society, the Corporate Partners include DNV, GE Power, Inter Marine, Kongstein, Morska Agencja Gdynia, MEWO, Orsted, the Polish Registry of Shipping, RWE, Seaway 7, Semco Maritime and Vestas. Academic Partners of EOW MBA are the University of Applied Sciences Bremerhaven, Business Academy Southwest and DOB-Academy – organisers of the first and until recently

the only Offshore MBA programme in the world.

We are very glad that the corporate partners are willing to share their experience in wind farm projects and access to their technical infrastructure. The EOW MBA goes further than a typical higher education programme. It provides practical knowledge directly from sector leaders and management experts. The programme creates an ecosystem of relations, inspirations, and opportunities to enrich participants' experience and open up new perspectives for their companies. The partnership network is expanding to ensure the unique profile of the programme – pioneering, professional and prestigious.

In the case of the MBA programme, networking is especially important to its participants.

Establishing new contacts is of course an important part of the EOW MBA programme and takes place on multiple levels. Firstly, there is networking between the participants – they represent organisations that are vital for the expansion of offshore energy. Participation in MBA often results in long-standing and profitable business and professional relations. Then there is the contact with the programme partners, who are also keen to promote their presence among sector managers. Thirdly, programme participants and their companies receive public attention as the EOW MBA programme attracts interest from the media interested in the development of the OWE sector. The natural assumption is that the investment of participants and their companies in the programme should bring multiple returns and benefits.

Who is funding participation in the EOW MBA programme - is it largely companies who are signing up their managers, or the participants themselves who invest in their future careers?

The proportion between companies sponsoring their representatives and the individual participants covering the fees from their own budgets is almost equal. There are companies that are dedicated to investing in their employees' competencies in order to secure a strong position in the OWE market. There are also participants who decided to finance their studies from their own resources, leaving themselves some flexibility as far as their future career is concerned. The needs of the offshore market are so great that any person with a qualification in offshore energy, confirmed by a prestigious MBA diploma, will find attractive employment.

The costs involved in attending an MBA programme are relatively high. Some opinions indicate that it is not always possible to get a return on that investment.

It may indeed be true for the first-tier international universities, where tuition fees are often as much as 10 times higher than those in Poland, often exceeding \$100,000. Fortunately, although the fees for MBA programmes in Poland are relatively high, education is more easily accessible, and the investment of time, effort and resources has a decidedly positive impact on the MBA graduates' professional careers and earnings.

When choosing an MBA programme, it is important to consider both the reputation of the University and the profile of the programme itself. I have worked for many years at the intersection of business and business education and have been involved in MBA programmes in a number of countries. I am aware that the reputation of a School does not always guarantee the quality of a programme. I have seen many cases where well-respected universities have conducted programmes for many years without ever updating their content to make it relevant to current and future business needs. MBA programmes should be highly practical, dynamic, and future-oriented. They should aim at developing competencies of making independent and effective decisions in changing circumstances. The quality of an MBA programme should therefore be seen in the level of its innovativeness, the inclusion of the most recent business trends, its potential to inspire original solutions, and prepare candidates to respond creatively to the unpredictable challenges of the future.

As an MBA graduate yourself, what effect does this prestigious qualification have on the advancement of a person's career?

Having completed an MBA at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, I can say that participation in an MBA programme is an extremely interesting experience, that provides a whole new perspective on the broad context of management, business environment, organisational performance, but most importantly, on one's own potential as a manager and leader. I am fully convinced the EOW MBA Programme at Gdynia Maritime University has precisely the attributes that make an MBA professional and valuable. It combines the prestige of a renowned, one-hundred-year-old university, a rich scientific background, modern didactics, unique expertise, strategic thinking, and the experience of the team running the Offshore Wind Energy Centre. The goal of the Programme is to prepare effective managers and leaders for the offshore wind industry. I am convinced the EOW MBA graduates will find the Programme to be a unique and valuable experience, opening up entirely new career opportunities and inspiring business achievements.

What is it about the Programme that makes it practical?

Executive Offshore Wind MBA is the first MBA programme in Poland and the second in the world dedicated to the offshore wind energy industry. The prerequisite of the Programme has been the cutting-edge nature and its role in the development of this ultra-modern, dynamic, and strategically important sector. The intended learning outcomes, namely the specific skill set it develops, are continuously updated, and consulted with the EOW MBA Programme Board. The Programme Board comprises representatives of leading OWE companies, institutions, and academic partners. Their recommendations ensure the EOW MBA is continuously updated to respond to current market needs.

The EOW MBA is delivered by an international team of management practitioners, experts, and offshore wind practitioners. The four semesters of the programme include "New Developments and Business Cases" modules, where leading offshore companies present current technological solutions, legal and organisational conditions, and aspects of wind farm construction and operation, share their experiences in OWE development projects, and work with participants on specific, real-life cases. For example, one of the sessions is led by Seaway 7, whose highly specialised vessels provide services in the construction of offshore wind farms in Europe and around the world. The project which will be the subject of the session is currently ongoing and is therefore confidential. Once the project is completed, there will be the opportunity to thoroughly analyse all aspects of its implementation. During a two-day workshop, participants will be taken through the entire construction process, from the preparation phase to implementation, and finally the hand-over of the wind farm for operation.

The Programme is delivered by practitioners for practitioners.

Are the academic partners also involved in conducting the MBA sessions?

We have invited the University of Applied Sciences, Bremerhaven and Business Academy SouthWest to deliver selected, specialised modules. These modules focus on key areas of operation of OWE companies, namely strategic management and scenario planning, logistics and supply chain management, risk management, and wind farms economics. Each session is conducted by an industry expert and a practitioner.

The OWE MBA is clearly a profiled programme, but I wish to emphasise that it combines two important dimensions. On the one hand, it is focused on the offshore wind industry, but on the other, it contains all the other aspects of a strong MBA programme and provides a complete range of managerial and leadership competencies. Already during the first sessions, participants take part in a simulation game where they create their own company and face the challenges of corporate management. Each session contributes key management issues, encourages cooperation, facilitates the exchange of experience and ideas, and inspires and boosts leadership confidence.

In addition to intensive education and management training, the participants are involved in additional activities, such as visits, expert presentations, and panel discussions. They are also welcome to attend exchange sessions at international partner universities. We are committed to ensuring that the EOW MBA graduates possess unique sector knowledge and advanced management competencies for the offshore market. That is why we have recruited experts, professionals, and the most experienced universities to co-deliver the EOW MBA, and ensure the programme is up-to-date, relevant, and of exceptional value. The EOW MBA is not a typical training programme, but a process of comprehensive professional and personal development. The Executive Offshore Wind MBA diploma is a guarantee of graduates' outstanding qualifications. It is worth mentioning that the EOW MBA graduates will receive a total of six certificates confirming their achievements: a postgraduate studies diploma issued by GMU, the EOW MBA diploma issued by GMU and co-signed by partner universities from Bremerhaven and Esbjerg, as well as four certificates on completing the specialist modules, issued by these universities.

Does this mean that graduates of the Executive Offshore Wind MBA will be ready to join the management teams of companies in the developing offshore wind energy sector?

Yes, graduates of the Programme will be among the most valued managers in the offshore market. They will possess an excellent understanding of the OWE market operations, supply chain management, investment project implementation, wind farm economics, and risk mitigation, alongside managerial and leadership skills, and a network of professional and business contacts.

What's the ratio of male to female participants in the first edition of the Programme?

In the first group of 20 participants two are females. One of them has been elected as the cohort representative and plays an important role in the Programme. In the second edition starting in October 2022 there will also be two female participants. The third edition starting in March 2023, for which enrolment is now open, will hopefully see more female candidates.

How do you ensure that the Programme meets the expectations of participants? How do you collect feedback?

The Executive Offshore Wind MBA programme should meet both the expectations of participants and the requirements of employers. This is an exceptionally dynamic industry, with changes taking place every month, and the programme trains its future leaders. An important element of the studies is the quality system which involves regular revisions and updating of the programme to maintain its dynamic nature. The programme benefits from the recommendations of the Programme Council – which consists of the CEOs of leading

companies and prominent figures from the industry – our business and institutional partners, and from the suggestions of the participants. The Executive Offshore Wind MBA is co-created with and for the OWE industry and we all care about the success of its graduates and their companies.

There is currently a tendency to reduce the length of MBA programmes. Nevertheless, the Executive Offshore Wind MBA at GMU lasts 2 years. Is there a reason for this?

When we designed the Executive Offshore Wind MBA, we decided that it should be as rich with content and activities as possible. We did not take any shortcuts. We want our graduates to be highly competent managers and respected leaders. Getting the most out of the programme requires time to experiment with newly acquired competencies, test and implement new ideas, and put knowledge into practice. The EOW MBA is much more than a management programme - it is a comprehensive professional and personal development process. Participants take part in the MBA programme at a time when their professional, family, and private lives are at their busiest. What is more, the rhythm and intensity of a Programme make the two years fly by very quickly and when the time comes to graduate, graduates often comment on how intensive and rewarding these two years have been for them. Because the MBA is a lifetime experience, really strong bonds are formed within each group of participants and some groups continue to meet many years after they graduate. I believe that for these reasons the duration of the programme is appropriate. And so is its timing – the first EOW MBA alumni will be instrumental in the offshore wind transformation in Poland.

Candidates taking part in the first edition of the Programme are exclusively from Poland. Are there plans to attract individuals from abroad in the future?

The Executive Offshore Wind MBA is an international programme - it is delivered by an international faculty, in cooperation with international companies and universities, and teaches international business cases. All the participants of the first edition are Polish, however future editions of the programme will progressively include more participants from an international background. It is the intention of Gdynia Maritime University to become a competence centre for the offshore wind energy industry not only in Poland but throughout the Baltic region, as well as an important educational institution for offshore wind in Europe.

Today we are discussing the Executive Offshore Wind MBA, but what about the future? Does the Offshore Wind Energy Centre plan to introduce other education programmes and initiatives?

The EOW MBA is the most comprehensive and sophisticated programme, the flagship GMU Offshore Wind Energy Centre programme. However, the Centre will provide a range of programmes and courses that cater to the sector's various needs. They will be available for those who wish to learn about the fundamentals of the OWE industry as well as experienced professionals. We have created a very strong international partnership network of companies, organisations, institutions, experts, and practitioners around the Offshore Wind Energy Centre. This is an exceptional pool of expertise and experience that we wish to make available for our clients and in this way support the development of the offshore wind sector.



Andrzej Popadiuk, director of the Offshore Wind Energy Center at the Gdynia Maritime University. President of the FORUM Management Education Association. Vice-president of the European Quality Link (EQUAL), which sets the quality standards for management education. Member of the board of the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD & EFMD Global), the largest European organization of business universities. Member of the board of the Baltic Management Development Association (BMDA), promoting cooperation between the business and academic community. Member of the board and chairman of the Awards Committee at Alliance of Management Development Associations in Rising Economies. Secretary General of the European League for Economic Cooperation. Experienced business education manager, consultant and management lecturer. Certified ICC coach and Expert MindSonar Polska. Graduated from MBA studies at Strathclyde University in Glasgow.

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