

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

NOTE: This information is subject to change, without prior notice.
Please consult the appropriate COL [Partner University](#) for the latest updates.
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Overview of CEMBA/CEMPA Programme

What is “Open and Distance Learning”? How is CEMBA/CEMPA considered an ODL programme?

Open (distance) learning describes policies and practices that permit entry to learning with no barriers or minimal barriers of age, gender or time while recognising prior learning. Distance education is the delivery of learning or training to learners who are separated, mostly by time and space, from those who are teaching and training. Conceptually distinct, yet complementary, these two phenomena come together in the term open and distance learning (ODL).

Traditional ways of delivering MBA and MPA programmes, though attractive, have in general been expensive and restrictive. In view of the physical limitations imposed by the traditional mode of delivery, i.e. face-to-face tuition, classroom setting, specific time and space, the number of students who can benefit from such a costly way of teaching has been limited. The Commonwealth of Learning (COL), as an advocate for distance education and open learning, sees open and distance education as a viable alternative which provides a flexible mode of delivery and overcomes time constraints and geographical barriers, thereby offering students a novel way of studying and of pursuing knowledge. With open and distance learning, students are given a chance to seek self-enrichment and advancement in their own time, in their own space, at their own pace and, most importantly, at an affordable price.

The special features of open learning and distance learning include:

- Provision of learning at one’s own pace, place and time
- Cost effective and cost efficient educational operations
- Provision of equal opportunity of admission
- Self-instructional learning materials, in print and non-print media
- Provision of face-to-face and distance tutor support
- Continuous and terminal evaluation.

Who developed the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme?

A Consortium of Partner Universities in the Commonwealth, facilitated by COL. COL is an intergovernmental agency established under a Memorandum of Understanding as agreed by Commonwealth Governments on Sept. 1, 1988 and subsequently amended on Oct. 31, 1995.

Why was the Programme created?

COL developed programmes such as the Commonwealth Executive MBA / MPA Programme for the purpose of creating and widening access to education for citizens of the Commonwealth’s 54 member nations. COL’s goal is to empower individuals with knowledge that enables them to become agents of economic and social development in their home regions.

COL recognises the challenge of providing affordable access to education in many Commonwealth countries, especially for those people unable to participate in conventional (face-to-face) courses on campus at universities.

The CEMBA/CEMPA Programme aims to provide access to higher education in business and public administration **for those students who cannot attend classes via the conventional programmes offered at our Partner Universities.**

As an advocate for distance education and open learning, COL sees distance education as a viable alternative which provides a flexible mode of delivery and overcomes time constraints and geographical barriers, thereby offering students a novel way of studying and of pursuing knowledge. With distance learning, students are given a chance to seek self-enrichment and advancement in their own time, in their own space, at their own pace and, most importantly, at an affordable price.

Which institutions are COL Partner Universities?

The original four [Partner Universities](#) piloted the original CEMBA/CEMPA Programme. They are located in South Asia:

Abbreviation	Full Name of Partner University	Country	Membership Date
AIOU	Allama Iqbal Open University	Pakistan	2002
BOU	Bangladesh Open University	Bangladesh	2002
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University ¹	India	2002
OUSL	Open University of Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	2002

COL continues to receive interest from other universities throughout the Commonwealth. Since October 2004, the following partner universities joined the CEMBA/CEMPA Consortium and are offering the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme:

Abbreviation	Full Name of Partner University	Country	Membership Date
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology	Ghana	2007
NOUN	National Open University of Nigeria	Nigeria	2004
OUM	Open University of Mauritius	Mauritius	2012
UCC	University College of the Caribbean	Jamaica	2007
UG	University of Guyana	Guyana	2007
WOU	Wawasan Open University	Malaysia	2006
BOCODO	Botswana College of Distance and Open	Botswana	2013

¹ Note: India's Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), which was a founding and contributing member of the CEMBA/CEMPA consortium of partner institutions, is currently not participating as a consortium member until further notice.

Abbreviation	Full Name of Partner University	Country	Membership Date
L	Learning		
UCCI	University of the Cayman Islands	Cayman Islands	2013

Please check COL's CEMBA/CEMPA webpage for the latest information – www.col.org/cemba.

Who administers the Programme?

The CEMBA/CEMPA Programme is overseen by COL, and all academic issues are the purview of the Academic Board, which is made up of Deans and Professors from the Partner Universities and COL representatives.

It is the Academic Board's responsibility to review and maintain quality control with regard to the courses and the Programme. COL requests Partner Universities to collect student feedback and tutor/instructor reviews of the courses and the Programme.

Admissions Tests

COL has developed various Admissions Tests for our Partner Universities. We provide these Admission Tests to our Partner Universities, who in turn administer these Tests under COL Guidelines. Based on the results of these Tests, our Partner Universities determine who to admit to the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme on the basis of these Test results, and other factors.² Partner Universities are responsible for managing the enrolment and students' completion of the Programme thereafter.

Partner University Responsibilities

COL Partner Universities use the course materials (book/modules) provided by COL, as well as their own supplementary materials, such as videos and case studies.

Supplementary materials should provide a local, national and regional context to the learning environment, as well as additional opportunities for applied learning. Partner Universities administer all tests, exams, and assignments relating to the courses. Exams and tests are part of the course materials provided by COL.

Partner Universities also establish and manage their own learning centres and resources (such as libraries and computer labs), as well as tutor/instructor support. Administration and support varies from one partner institute to the next, depending on learner location and other logistical requirements, as well as the Partner University resources available.

Who benefits from taking this Programme?

The CEMBA/CEMPA Programme is designed for **busy working professionals living in one of the Commonwealth countries** of our Partner Universities. Some partners allow citizens living abroad to enrol in the Programme. Check with the COL [Partner University](#) in the country of your citizenship regarding residency requirements.

² *Other factors may include personal suitability, recognition of prior learning, essays, and references. Admissibility is at the discretion of our Partner Universities.*

Students interested in the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme might have limitations on their ability to attend face-to-face (traditional) programmes because of work and/or family constraints on their time or geographic distance from main campus of the university. For these students, the *flexible*, modular, *distance learning* model allows them to study part-time and to establish their own pace in terms of the number of courses that take each semester.

The special features of open learning and distance education include:

- Learning at one's own pace, place and time
- Cost effective and cost efficient educational operations
- Equal opportunity of admission for women and men
- Self-instructional learning materials, in print and non-print media
- Face-to-face and distance tutor support

How modular is the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme?

It is quite modular, and has three (3) exit points. The availability of each exit point may vary among COL Partner Universities.

Exit Point	Number of Course	Credits
Diploma	8 (core courses required for CEMBA/CEMPA)	48
Graduate Diploma	10 (8 core + 2 specialised compulsory)	60
CEMBA/CEMPA	15 (8 core + 2 specialised + 3 electives + 2 required courses)	90

You may choose to stop at any of the above certification points based on the credits completed by you. This is subject to availability at COL Partner Universities. Please check with your institution accordingly.

What is the duration of the Programme?

The CEMBA/CEMPA Programme duration is listed below.

Programme	Details
Duration	2 years — Full-Time Study
# of Semesters	4 semesters
# of Hours of Study	1,800 hours
Each Course in the Programme	120 study hours

Student hours include such learning activities as working through student material, preparing assignments, tutored activity and preparing for examination, etc.

What is the 'flexibility' of the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme?

Students have the flexibility to complete a Master's degree within 2 to 5 years. This involves taking one or more courses per semester. Graduation may occur more quickly if students pursue the Diploma or Graduate Diploma options.

The Programme is designed so that it may be completed in four (4) semesters but it is recognised that few students will proceed at that pace.

Students may choose up to four (4) courses per semester, in consideration of the working status of students, and the overall CEMBA/CEMPA overall study load.

If students are unable to complete the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme in five (5) years, they will have to re-register. Each Partner University is responsible for notifying students regarding the terms and conditions of re-registration.

Is there a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) or PhD (Business or Public Administration)?

No. Please contact the appropriate COL [Partner University](#) directly to enquire about their PhD programme.

Do I need a computer?

It depends. The expectations for use of computers at home (or through your workplace) and/or through student Study Centres **varies** among Partner Universities. Please check with the appropriate COL Partner University.

How is this Programme delivered?

The CEMBA/CEMPA Programme is delivered via printed materials, and students have access to tutors in-person or at-a-distance.

Face-to-face interaction is organised through Study Centres. Students should contact the coordinators of their Study Centre for:

- Counselling schedules
- Teleconference schedules
- Telecast and broadcast schedules

Audio, video and computing facilities are also important elements of the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme. Partner Universities may also provide other multi-media learning opportunities through TV and radio programming, videos, the Internet and student/tutor communications.

Supplementary activities and communications between students and tutors **may** require access to Internet and email. Please check with the appropriate COL Partner University.

Is the Programme Online?

Some of our Partner Universities are moving towards online delivery and quite a few have significant aspects of their learner support online. Please check with the appropriate COL Partner University.

What is the language of instruction?

English. Students must have adequate proficiency in English reading, writing and oral communications to successfully participate in the Programme. Course materials are written in English, although COL Partner Universities may supplement learning activities with activities in the local language of the host country.

What does COL mean by 'gender equality'?

Gender equality to COL means equality of access and opportunities for both men and women. COL requires that ALL course materials are free of gender bias. We also encourage COL Partner Universities to be inclusive of women in all aspects of the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme's activities.

Admissions, Registration & Fees

What are the eligibility requirements for the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme?

The admission criteria include the following:

- At least a second class Bachelor's degree from a recognised university
- A minimum of two years of relevant post-qualification experience
- A good working knowledge of the English language at postgraduate level
- Satisfactory score on the CEMBA/CEMPA Admission Test
- Some Partner Universities require citizens to be resident in the country.

Where can I register?

Please register for the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme with the relevant Partner University.

How much are the fees?

Fees are determined by each Partner University.

What is the Admission procedure?

Each Partner University has its own administration practices relating to application processing and admissions testing.

Prospective students will require copies of their work certificates, photographs and a draft/cheque (in the amount of the fees required by the COL Partner University).

Upon receiving confirmation of passing the CEMBA/CEMPA Admission Test, students are required to complete an official Admission Form, from the Partner University of their choice.

Registration for the Programme is valid for five years from the date of admission. If the student is not able to complete the Programmes within five years, he/she will be eligible for re-registration.

Each Partner University is responsible for determining the conditions of re-registration.

What is the Admission Test?

The Admission Test is designed to provide an additional means for selecting candidates for the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme. Successful completion of the test is one (1) of the eligibility criteria for admission.

The Admission Test consists of multiple choice questions designed to test applicants' capabilities in the following areas:

- General Awareness
- English Language
- Quantitative Aptitude
- Reasoning

The Admissions Test will be conducted on pre-announced dates. Please contact the COL Partner University in your country for information regarding test centres, schedules and preparation essentials.

What if I complete the Admissions Test, but cannot begin studies in that year?

Candidates who successfully complete the admission test **shall be eligible for admission in the year they pass the test or in the following year**. Additional information on the validity of the admission test score for admission for a given University may be accessed from the University directly.

What is the period for which my registration in the Programme will be valid, once I register?

Once you register for the Programme, your registration is valid for five years. This also means that the maximum duration within which you should complete the Programme is five years. The minimum duration for completing the Programme is two years.

What are the assessment policies and procedures?

Assessment in each course of the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme consists of Continuous Assessment and Term-end Examination. Course results are based on:

- Overall Continuous Assessment Score (OCAS)
- Overall Examination Score (OES)
- Overall Course Score (OCS)
- Determination of Course Result Status

Overall Continuous Assessment Score (OCAS)

Continuous assessment is based on:

- Tutor-marked assessments (TMAs) in the form of essays or short answer questions. Some courses may also require extended essays or projects.
- Projects/case studies in the form of essay or short answer questions that are used as assignments.

Course materials will indicate the number of course assignments as well as which assignments should be completed for assessment purposes and which ones are for teaching purposes only. The weighting of each assessment component (e.g., TMAs, projects, examinations) will also be promulgated.

Information contained herein subject to change without prior notice. Please consult the appropriate COL [Partner University](#) for the latest information, university and CEMBA/CEMPA Programme policies.

To calculate the overall score (OCAS), the prescribed number of a student's 'best' scores will be selected, including the scores for any assignments 'necessary for assessment purposes'.

Overall Examination Score (OES)

Each course has a written examination, which is held at the end of the course and normally lasts three hours. Students' performance in the examination will contribute to the OES.

Overall Course Score (OCS)

OCS will be calculated from both the OCAS and OES, which is usually the weighted average of the two scores. However, OCS alone does not automatically determine result status. When determining result status, the OCAS, OES and OCS will all be taken into account.

Determination of Course Result Status

A pass score in each course will depend on a satisfactory level of performance in both the OCAS and OES.

What are the academic requirements for assignments and testing?

The type and number of assignments varies among courses.

- Each course requires assignments and course work for 30% or more of the final course mark.
- Each course requires a final examination for up to 70% of the final mark.

Students must achieve a minimum average mark of 50% on the assignments to be eligible to write the final examination.

Programme Components

What are the components of the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme?

The CEMBA/CEMPA Programme consist of four (4) components: *Core Courses*, *Specialist Compulsory*, *Elective* and *Required Courses*.

Core Courses (CEMBA/CEMPA)

- Managing Information Systems
- Management in Organisations
- Managing Human Resources
- Operations Management
- Economic Environment of Business
- Public Systems Management
- Quantitative Techniques
- Marketing Management
- Accounting and Finance

Specialist Compulsory Courses

CEMBA Programme:

- Strategic Management
- Quality Management

CEMPA Programme:

- Public Policy
- Development Planning and Administration

Electives (CEMBA/CEMPA)

- Electronic Commerce
- Project Management
- Managerial Economics
- Policy Analysis and Implementation
- Contemporary Administrative Systems
- Disaster Management
- Corporate Finance
- International Marketing
- Business Ethics

Required Courses (2)

- Research Methods
- Research Project

What are typical learning activities?

Each course may include the following learning activities:

- Self-instructional printed course materials packages
- Assignments for assessment and feedback
- Audio-video programmes
- Face-to-face interaction with academic counsellors at Study Centres
- Tele-counselling and interaction
- Project work
- Telecast of video programmes
- Broadcast of audio programmes
- Interactive communication network based inputs (tele- and video conferencing)

NOTE: Learning activities vary from course to course and from institution to institution.

What is the Research Project?

The CEMBA/CEMPA Research Project or Project course is a requirement for completion of a Commonwealth Executive Master's degree in two streams: (1) Business Administration and, (2) Public Administration.

Students may enrol in the Research Project course (12 credits / 240 hours) *only* after enrolling for the eight (8) core courses for their respective Programmes AND the Research Methodology course.

The Research Project helps students apply their learning from critical components covered in the curriculum, to a 'real-world' issue or problem. The major objective involves students developing the ability to apply multidisciplinary concepts, tools and techniques to solve organisational problems. Moreover, students can contribute their findings and analyses to the wider body knowledge in management or public administration.

How does it work?

Students are expected to forward their Project Proposal to the Programme Coordinator. Work can begin **only** when the Proposal is approved by the Programme Coordinator. A Project Guide is an essential part of this process, and the Student can choose an appropriate individual, in consultation with the Programme Coordinator.

Students must select the Research Project in consultation with his/her Project Guide. Students are also expected to work closely with their Project Guide for the duration of their Research Project.

Topics for the Research Project may include one or more of the following:

- Comprehensive case study (covering single organisation/multi-functional area problem formulation, analysis and recommendations).
- Inter-organisational study aimed at inter-organisational comparison/validation of theory/survey of management or developmental practices.
- Field study (empirical study).

Information contained herein subject to change without prior notice. Please consult the appropriate COL [Partner University](http://www.col.org/cemba) for the latest information, university and CEMBA/CEMPA Programme policies.

Credit, Degree & Diploma Information

Does COL grant any Degrees or Diplomas?

No. All Diplomas, Graduate Diplomas or Master's Degrees earned by students completing the CEMBA or CEMBA Programme are granted by COL Partner Universities. Your degree certification will be granted by you University where you have enrolled for the Programme.

The Commonwealth of Learning is NOT a degree-granting institution.

Is this degree recognised internationally for credit transfers?

Yes, in some cases. Students may transfer credits to another COL Partner University offering the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme.

Transfer of credits to universities external to COL Partner Universities is the student's responsibility. He/she can negotiate directly with each individual university or college.

What is the credit system used in the CEMBA/CEMPA Programmes?

The CEMBA/CEMPA Programme is based on the accumulation of credits.

Each CEMBA/CEMPA credit is defined as 20 hours of study load. This comprises all learning activities such as working through student materials, preparing assignments, tutored activity and preparing for examinations.

All CEMBA/CEMPA courses carry a credit weighting of six (6) (i.e., 6 x 20 = 120 study hours). This credit and study load information can help students determine the level of effort required for successful completion of courses and the Programme, as well as the work required per semester (given work demands and family responsibilities).

How many hours of study are required?

Students can complete the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme at their own pace taking one or more courses per semester.

Programme	Details
Duration	2 years — Full-Time Study
# of Semesters	4 semesters
# of Hours of Study	1,800 hours
Each Course in the Programme	120 study hours

Information contained herein subject to change without prior notice. Please consult the appropriate COL [Partner University](#) for the latest information, university and CEMBA/CEMPA Programme policies.

Student hours include such learning activities as working through student material, preparing assignments, tutored activity and preparing for examination, etc.

How many credits / courses are required to complete the Commonwealth Executive MBA?

Ninety (90) credits are required to complete the Commonwealth Executive MBA. This includes 15 courses (8 core, 2 specialised, 3 electives, 2 required courses).

How many credits / courses are required to complete the Commonwealth Executive MPA?

Ninety (90) credits are required to complete the Commonwealth Executive MPA. This includes 15 courses (8 core, 2 specialised, 3 electives, 2 required courses).

CEMBA/CEMPA Comparison

	CEMBA	CEMPA
Core Courses	8 courses from the Core Courses List	6 courses from the Core Courses List + <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Systems Management • Management in Organisations
Specialist Compulsory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Management • Quality Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Policy • Development Planning and Administration
Electives	3 courses from the Electives List	3 courses from the Electives List
Required Courses	2 courses from the Required courses list	2 courses from the Required courses list

In terms of study hours, the Programme has the equivalent of two years of full-time study (i.e. four semesters or approximately 1,800 hours of study). Each course of the Programme is assigned a nominal 120 study hours. Student hours include such learning activities as working through student material, preparing assignments, tutored activity and preparing for exams, etc.

How many credits / courses are required for a Graduate Diploma (Business Administration OR Public Administration)?

Sixty (60) credits are required to complete a CEMBA/CEMPA Graduate Diploma. This includes ten (10) courses (8 core + 2 specialised compulsory).

How many credits / courses are required for a Diploma (Business OR Public Administration)?

Forty-eight (48) credits are required to complete a CEMBA/CEMPA Diploma. This includes eight (8) courses.

Can I switch to the Master's — if I enrol in the Diploma Programmes?

Yes. The CEMBA/CEMPA Programme is flexible. If you decide to pursue a Master's degree, in addition to the four core courses completed for the Diploma, you will be required to complete three electives in your area of specialisation (business administration or public administration), as well as the Research Method course and Project. You should always discuss your decisions with the Partner Universities administering your Programme to let them know your intentions.

Can I switch to the Diploma / Graduate Diploma Programmes — if I enrol in the Master's Degree?

You should always discuss your decisions with a COL Partner University administering your Programme to let them know your intentions. The core courses are the same regardless of whether you are pursuing the Diploma, Graduate Diploma or Master's degree.

If you choose to exit before completing the Master degree requirements, you may earn a Diploma or Graduate Diploma in your discipline (business administration or public administration) as long as you complete the courses required for one or the other of those Diplomas.

Can I obtain both MBA and MPA degrees?

Double credit for the same core courses principally cannot be allowed. However, degree rules are determined by the Partner University senate. Some institutions, for example, have awarded students a Degree under the CEMBA Programme, and then awarded a Diploma to recognise courses completed under the CEMPA Programme (or vice versa). Please consult your desired university for details.

What is meant by “inter-institutional credit transfer”?

COL Partner Universities will approve credit transfer for transferring students from within the CEMBA/CEMPA Consortium. Please refer to the COL website at www.col.org/cemba for an up-to-date list of consortium members.

Programme Governance

What is the Executive Governing Board?

The CEMBA/CEMPA Programme is overseen by the Executive Governing Board. It is comprised of the Vice Chancellors of each COL Partner University and senior representatives from COL.

What is the Academic Board?

The CEMBA/CEMPA Academic Board is comprised of Deans and Professors from COL Partner Universities, along with senior COL representatives.

All academic issues (including curriculum design, content and delivery and quality) are the responsibility of the COL Academic Board.

How is feedback submitted?

COL's Partner Universities collect student feedback and tutor/instructor reviews of the courses and the Programme to maintain and increase quality.

How can Students Provide Feedback (Anonymously)?

For students who wish to contribute specific feedback course quality, instruction or testing, please submit your review and COL will disseminate this feedback to the appropriate Board.

If you would like remain anonymous, please email Dr Godson Gatsha, Education Specialist, Higher Education, Commonwealth of Learning – ggatsha@col.org.

Support & Post-Graduation

What support is available to complete the Programme?

Partner Universities provide support to the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme through Study Centres and/or their learning management systems.

These Study Centres house a basic library for reference purposes; counseling facilities on pre-determined schedules; and information and examination centres for the Programme. Tele-counseling (if it forms part of the student support package) is also accessible at the Study Centre. For partner institutions using learner support systems, significant support in the form of faculty and tutor interaction, discussion forums and dynamic content is provided online.

After admission to the CEMBA/CEMPA Programme, each student is assigned a Study Centre where he/she also submits the tutor-marked assignments for evaluation and feedback. Some partner institutions offer these services online instead of hosting them in the study centre.

Are scholarships available?

Please contact the COL Partner University in your home country to enquire about any scholarship opportunities through that institution.

COL does **not** offer scholarship support at this time.

Does the Programme have an international focus?

Yes. The Programme has an international perspective, as it has been developed by curriculum developers and professors from universities around the Commonwealth. Moreover, we encourage COL Partner Universities to share resources and supplementary materials to broaden student perspectives. Tutors also bring a relevant regional and national focus.

Are there opportunities for international travel or study visits?

Currently, each university administers its own student enrolment and accepts students **only** from their country. Please check with each COL Partner University for information about opportunities for student study visits.

Does COL consult with companies to hire/recruit graduates?

No. Please direct any enquiries for recruitment or job placement assistance to COL's Partner Universities that you are enrolled with. All placement activity is directly managed by partner institutions.

Is this degree recognised for immigration purposes (i.e., to Canada)?

No. The CEMBA/CEMPA Programme will enhance (NOT guarantee) your chances for successful immigration. Please review the Government of Canada's Immigration website and take the Skilled Worker Self-Assessment. For more information, click on this link:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/index.asp>.

In terms of applying for jobs, we encourage you to network with your colleagues and begin researching companies and organisations of interest to identify the contacts and opportunities of interest to you. Certainly, the CEMBA/CEMPA designation will be an important qualification, but you must also have the relationships to secure a well-paying and interesting job.

Is there an Alumni Association?

Currently, alumni association development and networking are done through each Partner University. Several partner institutions have vibrant and active Alumni associations for the CEMBA/CEMPA students.

Is there a CEMBA/CEMPA Alumni Network for All Partner University Graduates?

Not at this time — however, depending on the interest of our Partner Universities and Students, this is something that the CEMBA/CEMPA Consortia may consider at a future date.

Is there a contact CEMBA/CEMPA — Email Address

CEMBA/CEMPA Programme – Email: info@col.org

Please put a descriptive and meaningful heading in the Subject Line of your email. This will make it easier for us to keep track of your correspondence and get back to you.