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Accreditor Endorses Programs That Prepare Nonbusiness Ph.D.'s to Teach in Business Schools

By [KATHERINE MANGAN](#)

In an effort to avert a looming faculty shortage, the primary accreditor for business schools on Thursday endorsed programs at five universities to prepare doctoral faculty members from nonbusiness disciplines to teach in those schools.

The "postdoctoral bridge-to-business programs" will prepare both new and experienced doctoral faculty members to teach accounting and finance, marketing, management, supply-chain management, international business, and entrepreneurship.

The programs, which begin next summer, are being supported by AACSB International: the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. They vary from intensive summer programs to schedules that stretch over a year and include instruction by distance education.

Neal P. Mero, vice president for research for the accreditor, said even professors with years of teaching experience may need help making the transition to teaching M.B.A. students, many of whom have several years of business experience under their belts.

"A typical M.B.A. student, and classroom, is a little more competitive, and students often have a very applied intellect," Mr. Mero said. "Young faculty who don't have a lot of business experience often struggle" to keep up with the students' practical knowledge.

Some universities already offer informal programs to ease the transition of faculty members from fields like economics, sociology, and engineering into business.

"Even someone with a Ph.D. in economics might find the idea of teaching an introductory finance course to M.B.A. students intimidating," Mr. Mero said.

Four of the participating business schools are located in the United States, at Tulane University, the University of Florida, the University of Toledo, and Virginia Tech. The fifth is at the Grenoble School of Management, in France. All of the schools are accredited by the AACSB.

The programs are a response to the AACSB's 2002 [report](#) "Management Education at Risk," which warned that business schools will face a serious shortage of faculty members because too few people are earning doctorates in business fields ([The Chronicle](#), July 19, 2002).

The problem will worsen, the report cautioned, as enrollments in M.B.A. programs continue rising and baby-boom professors retire.

Last year the accreditor offered a five-day program to woo another source of new business professors: experienced business executives who have thought about switching to the classroom. Those programs, which gave the participants a crash course in topics like student learning styles, teaching methods, and creating a syllabus, were offered by the business schools at the University of California at Irvine and the University of Southern California ([The Chronicle](#), November 3, 2006). Those who successfully completed the program received certificates saying they were "professionally qualified" to teach.

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