

The 5 Best US Business Schools For Blockchain Courses

US Business Schools are tapping into Blockchain's potential, incorporating it into their MBA curriculum

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©AndréFrançois - Blockchain is consolidating itself as a staple on the MBA curriculum

After last year's drastic surge, the value of Bitcoin, Ethereum, and other similar assets has proven to be volatile in early 2018. Both because, and in spite of this, the emerging cryptocurrency market remains a controversial and exciting topic.

For the uninitiated, blockchain—cryptocurrency's underlying distributed ledger architecture—may still be regarded as esoteric, but it's certainly acquired a strong foothold within leading MBA curricula.

Here are the five best US business schools for blockchain courses:

1. NYU's Stern School of Business

Stern was an institutional early adopter, providing the first major university course devoted to cryptocurrency and blockchains—a joint offering between Stern and NYU Law.

Professor David Yermack, who taught this fledgling course with Geoffrey Miller of NYU Law, has witnessed the dramatic increase in academic interest for this field firsthand over the last two years. Their original course now boasts an enrollment of roughly 200 students with enough momentum to crystallize into a robust FinTech MBA specialization.

For David, Stern's strength is also in its proximity: "Much of the industry is located in Silicon Alley, which is the neighborhood just south of our Greenwich Village campus," he notes.

Citing preeminent nearby firms such as Union Square Ventures, IBM Blockchain Garage, the Digital Currency Group, he adds that “the main financial markets of the world and many of the important regulators are also in New York. It would be inexcusable for us not to tap into all the expertise and innovation that is occurring on our doorstep.”



2. Haas School of Business, UC Berkeley

For professor Gregory LaBlanc of Haas, the best way to respond to the myriad questions posed by cryptocurrency is with a chorus of voices from across a spectrum of different expertise. The spring 2018 course, Blockchain, CryptoEconomics, and the Future Directions of Technology, Business, and Law (for which he is one of three instructors) is cross-listed between business, engineering, and law faculties to spark integrated and multi-faceted conversations.

“Berkeley offers an opportunity for students to be truly interdisciplinary [...] not only in the classroom, but also in clubs, meet-ups, and startups,” Gregory enthuses.

“In my view, there are a lot of projects and startups, especially in the blockchain space, that will struggle because the founding team has inadequate breadth. By bringing all three groups together, we hope to increase lateral learning, accelerate the development of new ideas and increase the likelihood of success.”



3. MIT Sloan School of Management

MIT's legacy looms large in the tech world, so it should come as no surprise that it has been a blockchain leader since 2013, when it launched the **MIT Digital Currency Research Study** (<http://blockchain.mit.edu/>).

Christian Catalini, who co-designed the Study with Catherine Tucker, has since offered a number of three-day intensives on cryptocurrency—the last of which, he says, captured an attendance of over 100 MBA students. This year, the school is unveiling a new interdisciplinary **Cryptoeconomics research lab** (<http://ce.mit.edu/>) which will synthesize research in economics, business, and computer science.



4. UCLA Anderson School of Management

Anderson was also swift to jump aboard the blockchain bandwagon. Its particular outlook is shaped by professor Bhagwan Chowdhry, a leading FinTech figure with an intriguing read on blockchain's versatility.

“Our focus is to understand how blockchain can be used in business,” he says, “in industries such as finance, law, supply chain, identity management, and even social impact.”

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This final element is key to Bhagwan's innovative vision. "I am on the board of Stellar.org which is trying to bring financial inclusion to the poorest people around the world. I am also working on developing an Oceancoin, the goal of which is to create a system of incentives that will reward businesses that commit to cleaning the oceans without the use of government and other centralized institutions."



5. Fuqua School of Business, Duke University

With five years of blockchain instruction under its belt, Duke is already a stalwart given FinTech's newness as an academic stream. Professor Campbell Harvey is quick to point out that Fuqua doesn't relegate blockchain to some "boutique course." Rather, it's a cornerstone of the curriculum. The proof? According to him, over half of its graduating class this year will have taken his blockchain course.

"MBAs want to be disruptors, not disruptees. I would say blockchain is the largest disruption to business that I have seen in my career—besides the Internet," Campbell asserts. While the program prioritizes innovation, he aims to ground the lofty novelty around these technologies with a solid foundation encompassing longterm viability, implementation, and a firm technical grasp.

"It is the wild west right now," he states. "Many want to be associated with a hot trend. I try to cut through the hype and deliver enough for my students to separate the people are truly skilled in this space from those just in it to make a quick buck."



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