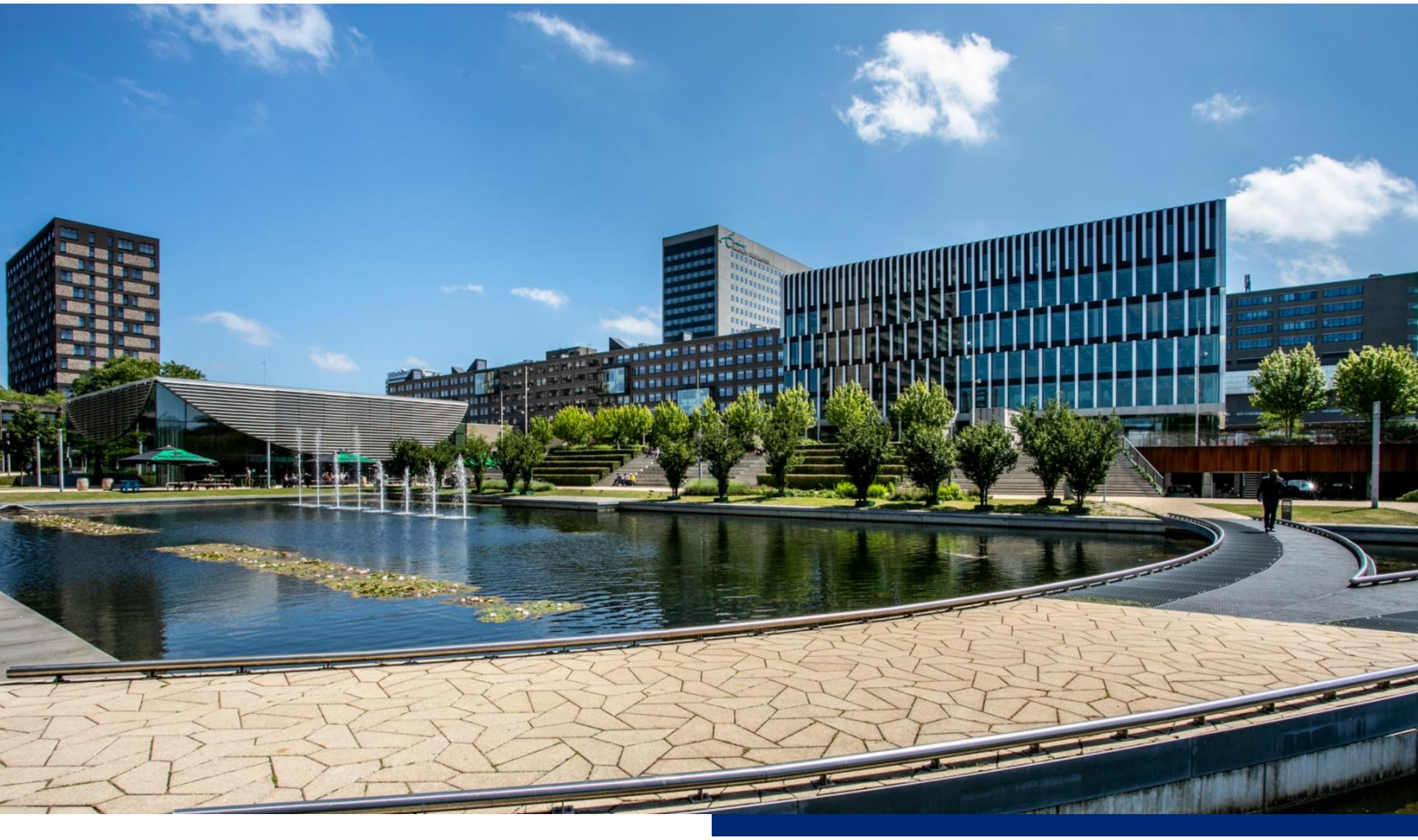
Rotterdam School of Management
Erasmus University

Building a case for employer support

How to position an Executive MBA at RSM as an investment in your organisation



RSM - a force for positive change

RSM Erasmus

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Many employers recognise that investing in leadership development delivers long-term value. When discussing sponsorship for an Executive MBA (EMBA), it can be helpful to frame the conversation around the benefits for both you and your organisation.

Rather than focusing solely on career advancement, consider how the programme will help you contribute more effectively to your organisation's goals, address business challenges, and strengthen leadership capabilities.

1 The value you bring back to your organisation

An Executive MBA develops the skills, knowledge, and perspective needed to lead teams, drive change, and make strategic decisions in complex business environments.

Throughout the programme, you will explore topics including:

- Strategy and innovation
- Financial management
- Marketing and customer value
- Decision-making and analytics
- Leadership and organisational behaviour
- Sustainability and responsible business

These insights can be applied immediately within your role, enabling you to bring new ideas, frameworks, and solutions back to your organisation throughout the programme.

2 Developing leadership and influence

Beyond business knowledge, the Executive MBA strengthens key leadership capabilities, including:

- Enhanced communication and stakeholder management
- Greater cross-functional business understanding
- Stronger strategic thinking and decision-making
- Increased self-awareness and leadership effectiveness
- Broader professional networks and external perspectives

These skills can help you take on greater responsibilities and contribute more effectively across teams, departments, and business units.

3 Why choose RSM

Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM) is recognised as one of Europe's leading business schools. The school consistently ranks among the top business schools in Europe and is among the select group of institutions worldwide holding Triple Crown accreditation from AACSB, EQUIS, and AMBA.

RSM is Europe's #1 business school for business research impact (Financial Times, 2025), combining academic excellence, relevant business cases and close cooperation with industry to ensure Executive MBA participants can translate learning into immediate organisational value.

4 Why the RSM Executive MBA works for working professionals

4.1 Designed around your career

The Executive MBA is delivered over 18 months in a part-time format, allowing participants to continue working while studying.

Classes take place on Fridays (18:30–21:30) and Saturdays (09:30–16:30) twice per month, minimising disruption to regular working hours.

4.2 Immediate business impact

The programme is designed to create value throughout the learning journey, not just after graduation.

Participants can immediately apply new concepts, frameworks, and insights to current business challenges, helping organisations benefit from the investment from the start of the programme.

4.3 Business Challenge Project

A key component of the programme is the Business Challenge Project, where participants work as internal consultants on a strategic challenge facing their organisation.

Participants will spend a minimum of 30 hours on this consulting project and is supported by various faculty members at RSM. It allows participants to deliver practical recommendations and measurable business value while developing their own leadership and consulting capabilities.

4.4 Key skills developed

Participants strengthen capabilities in:

- Strategic leadership
- Problem solving and decision-making
- Project and change management
- Innovation and entrepreneurship
- International business perspectives
- Personal leadership and people management

4.5 Learning from a diverse peer group

The Executive MBA brings together experienced professionals from a wide range of industries, functions, and nationalities.

The diversity of the cohort, both in terms of nationalities and professional backgrounds, creates a uniquely enriching learning environment. Students gain firsthand exposure to different business cultures, management styles, and market dynamics, broadening their understanding of how organizations operate across regions.

In addition, the wide range of industries represented within the class provides valuable insider perspectives, enabling students to approach business challenges more strategically by drawing on experiences and best practices from sectors beyond their own. This exchange of knowledge fosters deeper discussions, encourages innovative thinking, and enhances the overall learning experience.

4.6 Access to a global network

Upon graduation, participants join RSM's international alumni network of more than 55,000 professionals worldwide, creating opportunities for knowledge sharing, partnerships, recruitment, and business development.

Beyond the alumni community, RSM actively brings business into the classroom through a wide range of networking opportunities that connect students with influential executives, entrepreneurs, and industry experts. Regular guest lectures and intimate fireside chats with top business leaders provide students with direct access to the insights, experiences, and strategic perspectives of those shaping global industries.

These interactions bridge the gap between theory and practice, allowing participants to engage in meaningful discussions, gain real-world perspectives on contemporary business challenges, and build relationships that can support their professional growth long after graduation.

5 Addressing common employer concerns

5.1 Return on investment

When discussing sponsorship, focus on how the programme aligns with organisational priorities. Consider identifying:

- Specific business challenges you could address during the programme
- Strategic initiatives where enhanced leadership skills would add value
- Opportunities to apply new knowledge directly within your role
- Ways to share learning with colleagues and teams

Furthermore, the Business Challenge Project is a way for the organisation to receive high quality, research-based consulting without spending additional costs on external parties or agencies.

5.1.1 Tax considerations

When discussing Executive MBA sponsorship with your employer, it may be helpful to highlight that investment in professional education is often viewed as part of an organisation's talent development strategy.

Depending on the specific circumstances, employer-funded education may offer tax advantages and can often be provided without creating a taxable benefit for the employee when relevant conditions are met.

We recommend discussing the potential financial implications with your employer and seeking advice from a qualified financial or tax advisor where appropriate. Supporting an Executive MBA is an investment in both your professional development and your organisation's future capabilities.

5.2 Retention and commitment

Many organisations that provide financial support establish a sponsorship or retention agreement. These agreements often involve a commitment to remain with the organisation for a defined period after completing the programme.

Such arrangements can provide reassurance that the organisation will benefit from the investment over the longer term.

5.3 Time commitment

While the programme is designed to minimise time away from work, employer support can also include flexibility to attend programme activities, complete project work, or apply learning within the organisation.

Many participants find that employer engagement enhances both the learning experience and the value delivered back to the business.

6 Preparing for the conversation

Before approaching your employer, consider preparing answers to the following questions:

- How does the Executive MBA align with the organisation's strategic goals?
- What business challenges could you address through the programme?
- How will your organisation benefit during the 18 months, not just after graduation?
- How will you share your learning with colleagues and teams?
- What level of support are you seeking (financial sponsorship, study leave, flexibility, or a combination)?

By positioning the Executive MBA as an investment that delivers value to both you and your organisation, you can create a stronger and more compelling case for employer support.

Have any questions?

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