

Thunderbird at ASU launches reimagined hybrid master's degree

The new program aims to create new global experiences for students

By Nicole Almond Anderson, ASU News
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Thunderbird School of Global Management at Arizona State University recently launched the [Master of Leadership and Management \(MLM\) – Global Experience](#), a 30-credit-hour hybrid graduate program that combines the flexibility of online learning with immersive, global experiences in Dubai.

Widely recognized as a premier global trade hub, Dubai connects Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe, serving as a living laboratory for global business, innovation, artificial intelligence and digital transformation. By anchoring the program in Dubai, Thunderbird builds on its global recognition as the world leader in international trade, as reflected in its repeated [No. 1 ranking in the QS International Trade Rankings](#) (2023–2026).

Students in the MLM – Global Experience degree program will develop expertise in cross-cultural communication, finance, data analytics, marketing and leading diverse global teams.

“Global leadership today demands more than functional expertise — it requires the ability to lead responsibly across borders, cultures, technologies and systems,” said [Charla Griffy-Brown](#), director general and dean of Thunderbird.

“The curriculum is future-ready by design, and will equip our graduates to navigate rapid technological and societal change with confidence. This also comes at a time when the need for agile, ethical and visionary leadership has never been greater.”

The MLM – Global Experience is offered in an accelerated eight-month format with live weekend classes, providing flexibility and convenience for working professionals. Students may also choose a part-time option, completing the program over 16 months. The program is well-suited for leaders who want to drive growth and proactively navigate the social, political, regulatory and environmental forces shaping today's organizations and workplaces.

It is also ideal for mid-level managers preparing for promotion and expanded leadership responsibility; functional managers in areas such as finance, marketing, human resources, AI,

supply chain and operations who want deeper involvement in global strategy; and professionals from government and nonprofit sectors seeking advanced global business and leadership development.

The curriculum is delivered through [ASU Sync](#), combining live online classes via Zoom, asynchronous coursework and two immersive in-person modules (residential weeks). These in-person experiences take place at the beginning and conclusion of the degree and are intentionally designed to extend learning beyond the classroom.

“Our reimagined MLM degree meets learners where they are, rooted in their home communities, yet driven by a vision to make meaningful impact both locally and globally,” said Griffy-Brown. “By incorporating a residential learning experience in the MENA¹ region, we are proud to offer immersive engagement with regional and global organizations, executive dialogues with industry leaders and meaningful connections with T-birds across the region.”

Students in the program are encouraged to pursue Thunderbird’s new specialization in artificial intelligence and global leadership. This specialization is leadership focused rather than technical or coding based, and is designed to equip leaders with the ability to understand, govern and strategically apply artificial intelligence regardless of prior technical experience. A variety of other specializations are also available.

“Our in-person workshops, leadership labs and curated site visits give students a chance to learn in real-world settings and meaningfully connect with their cohort,” said [Lena Booth](#), deputy dean of Thunderbird Academic Enterprise and finance professor.

“Between those sessions, students continue online with interactive classes, collaborative projects and hands-on consulting experiences, applying what they’ve learned to real AI-driven challenges across different organizations and cultures,” Booth added.

To support global access, scholarships covering up to 50% of total tuition are available for students from emerging economies.

Prospective students eager to join this spring’s inaugural cohort are encouraged to [apply by March 1](#). For more information, [connect with an enrollment specialist](#).

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

¹ The Middle East and North Africa

Main image



Thunderbird School of Global Management at Arizona State University recently launched the Master of Leadership and Management (MLM) – Global Experience, a 30-credit-hour hybrid graduate program that combines the flexibility of online learning with immersive, global experiences in Dubai. Photo courtesy of Thunderbird School of Global Management