

France's ranking in international scoreboards: schools and universities

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF) global competitiveness report 2008-2009, France is ranked in 1st place for the quality of its management schools.

Overwhelming approval of french management and business schools

The WEF report is primarily based on a global competitiveness index, which is itself based both on statistics (e.g. university fees, inflation, public finances, etc.) and opinion surveys.



The Financial Times, in its "European business school ranking 2007", ranks some 14 French academic establishments among the 60 European schools in its study. This ranking represents a synthesis of all the academic business program scoreboards – Masters in Management, MBA, EMBA, executive education. The French HEC business school is ranked in 1st place in Europe. Overall, five French schools are ranked among the Top-15.

The City economic daily newspaper also publishes a scoreboard of the best Masters in Management programs in Europe. Once again, French business schools perform very well. The results are as follows: 18 French schools ranked among the 50 schools included in the study, 6 French schools in the Top-10, and 10 French schools in the Top-20. The study also ranks HEC in 1st place. ESCP-EAP is ranked in 2nd position and performs particularly well on an international level: diversity of student population, study paths, academic body and alumni. This scoreboard is based in particular on the rates of recruitment uptake of graduates and their levels of remuneration.

Another example of an international scoreboard in which French schools perform well is the Ecole des Mines de Paris scoreboard. Overall, France has 27 academic establishments ranked among the 350 included in the scoreboard in 2008: HEC (7th place), ENA (10th place), Sciences-Po Paris (11th place), Polytechnique (15th place), etc. The Ecoles de Mines scoreboard is based on the number of graduates that are now part of executive staff of the 500 biggest companies worldwide. The companies in question are those included in the 2007 edition of the "Fortune Global 500" scoreboard.

These various results are a testimony to the fact that French academic establishments, and business schools in particular, perform extremely well in international scoreboards. " *The decision to set up the Harvard Business School research center in Paris was based on a variety of factors and, primarily, the existence of a pool of talent. The quality of the teaching is really very high in France. Being located in the Paris area, the Harvard Business School is situated at the heart of Europe, close to major multi-national groups, large cities and numerous academic establishments. In addition, universities and businesses in the area are increasingly working together, enabling new ideas to be developed.* " Vincent Dessain, CEO of the Harvard Business School in Europe research center

French universities geared towards the future

In its 2008 scoreboard of the best universities worldwide, the British monthly Times Higher Education – QS introduced a new type of index: the capacity of a country to offer a high quality and internationally recognized system of university education. France performs well in this index: it is ranked in 7th place behind the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, Canada and Japan.

In the Shanghai 2008 scoreboard, France is ranked in 7th place among the leading countries. A total of 23 French academic establishments are ranked among the Top-500, and 3 are in the TOP-100. The Shanghai scoreboard is an international comparison tool which compares the performances of different systems of further education. It has been scrutinized by the media and has generated very different reactions on the part of the directors of academic establishments both in France and abroad. It has been particularly criticized for the fact that it only takes into consideration the hard sciences and is mainly based on the global performance of universities in terms of scientific production.

France remains committed to developing an excellent system of further education. French universities are not going to be left behind, since the French government is committed to an objective of at least 10 French universities being ranked among the 100 best universities worldwide. The law on the independence and responsibilities of French universities dated August 10, 2007, greatly reformed the management and organization of universities in order to make them more attractive and more open to the business environment. The legislation gives universities both the means and the independence that are essential to compete in the worldwide knowledge economy : to recruit the best talents more quickly, create new courses and adapt them to the needs of students and society, create partnerships and attract funding by means of university foundations. Universities are therefore more independent: they manage their own budget, their human resources policies and their assets. The authority conferred on the President of a university is increased, universities are given the capacity to set up a foundation, and the law requires universities to take an active role in assisting students with career advice and insertion into professional life.

Set up in 1996 in Paris, the Sony Computer Science Laboratory brings together internationally recognized research scientists. The computer science research programs that are developed at the Sony Computer Science Laboratory cover a wide variety of fields such as: artificial intelligence, new programming language, man-machine interface. Why did Sony choose to set up its activity in Paris ? *"The decision to set up our research laboratory in the center of Paris was mainly based on the fact that we could access a real network of expertise locally: on an institutional as well as an academic level, with access to world-renowned public and private laboratories and research centers, as well as the most prestigious universities and engineering schools in France (Normale Sup, Paris VI...)... and all this in the center of Paris!"* François Pachet, Director of research at the Sony Computer Science Laboratory

Further education in France: a good investment

According to the OECD "Education at a Glance 2008" report, a graduate qualification is always a good investment in France: providing access to employment and higher levels of revenue.

In France, the level of correlation between higher education graduates and the highly qualified jobs market is particularly high: approximately 50% of CITE 5B level graduates practice a profession ranked in this group, whereas in Germany and Spain, approximately 20% of these practice a profession in the "artisans and workers in the artisan-type professions".

A better level of education provides a significant advantage in terms of penetrating the labor market: the rate of unemployment of secondary or post-secondary education graduates dropped 3 points in France between 1997 and 2006 (compared to an average of 1.3 points in the OECD).

France attracts 8.5% of global foreign students in higher education. Higher education is becoming increasingly globalized: between the years 2000 to 2006, France and New Zealand both registered the biggest increases in the number of foreign students (1.2% in France) "which means that they remain key players in the international education market".