

MANAGEMENT

2009

Management may be defined as the knowledge and skills needed to organize and direct a firm. That knowledge and those skills are the domain of schools of business. No longer devoted solely to the mechanical aspects of business, commerce, and trade, today's schools of business teach management and administration in their largest sense. Most follow the model of the Grande École and are members of the Conférence des Grandes Écoles (CGE).

ORGANIZATION OF STUDIES IN FRANCE

The strong point of France's business schools is that they provide general training at a very high level, thereby ensuring that graduates are not limited to a career in any one speciality. A degree from a grande école is a passport that allows the bearer to contemplate a career with no ceiling, extending to top management or to the creation of a new company. That objective of the grandes écoles is supported by several shared characteristics:

- Selectivity. Admission is usually by examination or, less often, on the basis of the applicant's credentials.
- Small size and strong identity. The ratio of faculty to students is high, and students are intensely involved in campus life. Alumni networks are strong.
- Strong foundations. Most incoming students have 2 or more years of successful postsecondary study, making the grandes écoles essentially graduate schools.
- Ready to work, able to grow. Graduates are prepared to assume line management responsibilities but also have the potential to grow into higher management or entrepreneurship.
- From the general to the specific. Most schools emphasize general management and basic strategic management, complemented by specialized study.
- Feet on the ground. Schools cultivate close links with the business world, both in the curriculum, through required internships and periods of practical training, and in career placement.
- High standards. Most schools are members of the Conférence des Grandes Écoles and maintain international accreditation by AACSB, EQUIS, and AMBA.
- Solid academics. Schools maintain an authentic academic approach to management through research activities, international colloquia, and doctoral programs.
- A commitment to internationalism. The vast majority of students spend time abroad. Graduates find jobs in every corner of the world.
- Successful career placements. Graduates are at the top end of the scale of new employees in terms of salary and job description.

All schools have complemented their core "grande école master" program with other, specialized programs to meet the demands of specific groups—among them the MSc, *maîtrise spécialisée* (specialized master), MBA, doctorate, etc. But the identity, prestige, and quality of the schools remains rooted in their status as grandes écoles, and not from offering MBAs. In continental Europe the MBA is generally understood as a program for managers who have 3–5 years of practical experience. Graduates of grande école programs tend to be 24 to 26 years old; few MBA graduates are younger than 28 or 30. Most international students seeking an MBA in France are probably better suited for programs that match their background and experience more closely—such as a master in management or the master-level phase of a grande école program—rather than a French MBA.

Most graduates of French business schools begin their careers in one of the following broad fields: consulting, marketing, finance, and audit. But management also involves a wide variety of specializations (**external audit, banking-finance-insurance, e-commerce, communication, corporate law, labor law, entrepreneurship, tax, asset management, human resource management, financial consulting, economic intelligence, logistics, marketing, strategy, and consulting**), that can lead to a career in dozens of fields—among them **audiovisual management, international management, quality management, management of agri-food enterprises, management of cultural organizations, management of information systems, luxury brand management, health-care management, sports management, hotel and tourism management, and technological and industrial management.**

Some universities, as well as university-based institutes of business administration, offer excellent training in management, with particular distinction in banking and finance, taxation (through programs in law), and even portfolio management. But for France's independent schools of business, management is the sole focus. Several—such as HEC, ESC-EAP, Grenoble Ecole de Management, EM-Lyon, ESSEC, and EDHEC—regularly place in the top 10 of the Financial Times, which has also singled out a number of smaller institutions that have carved out a niche, including ESC Rouen, ESC Lille, Reims Management School, and ESC Toulouse.

With their marked **international orientation**, and because their programs and curricula respond to and **reflect economic change** by focusing on **actual case studies**, France's 230 schools of business and management offer international students **special access to the huge European market**.

Hundreds of different management programs are available in France, many taught in English (visit http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/b-agence/espacedoc_infos.htm#forma_en). It would be impossible to describe them all here. Instead, we hope to encourage prospective students to seek further information and then to make the most of it, just as a good manager would do. Here are a few expressions that may be useful in the search: **ESC**, or *écoles supérieures de commerce*, are business schools administered by France's chambers of commerce and industry in cooperation of regional businesses. With considerable resources at their disposal, all are **recognized by the French government**. Recognition offers assurances of faculty qualifications, quantity of teaching hours, and the content of those hours. Students are eligible for financial aid and enjoy the same status and benefits as university students. Carrying a higher level of recognition, the **diplôme visé**, or sanctioned diploma, is granted by schools that have undergone an in-depth assessment by the government and received authorization (for up to 6 years) to grant the diploma. For terminal professional programs, the old term *homologation* has been replaced by *certification*. **Certified programs** (level II = 3–4 years of postsecondary study; level I = 5 years) are widely recognized by firms and are listed in the national registry of professional certifications.

Reviewing alumni directories and contacting recent graduates are good things to do, and worth the occasional inconvenience of seeking out contacts. Most schools encourage this practice and will help you. And remember that summer programs (marked with a ♦) may make you want to return for more.

See also the profiles on economics, human resource management, banking, development economics and humanitarian assistance, and, especially, engineering. A growing number of schools of engineering provides management training. Examples include the École centrale de Paris (ECP), in technology and industrial management, <http://www.ecp.fr>; the École Internationale des Sciences du Traitement de l'Information (EISTI), for its *mastère spécialisé* in management by quality, <http://www.tasq-om.fr/>; and the École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts et Métiers (ENSAM), for quality management, <http://www.paris.ensam.fr>.

Independant business schools

- Audencia – Nantes, <http://www.audencia.com>
- Ceram – Sophia-Antipolis, <http://www.ceram.fr> :
- EBS, European Business School - Paris, London, Dublin, Milan, Munich, Dortmund, New York, and Riga, <http://www.ebs-paris.com> :
- EDHEC – Lille et Nice, <http://www.edhec.com>
- EM Lyon, <http://www.em-lyon.com>
- ♦ ESCP-EAP - Paris, London, Berlin, Madrid, Turin, <http://www.escp-eap.net/fr>
- Groupe Sup de Co Amiens Picardie, <http://www.supco-amiens.fr>
- BEM – Bordeaux Management School, <http://www.bordeaux-bs.edu> :
- ♦ Groupe ESC Clermont, <http://www.esc-clermont.fr>
- Groupe ESC Dijon Bourgogne, <http://www.escdijon.eu>
- ♦ Grenoble Ecole de Management, <http://www.grenoble-em.com>
- Groupe Sup de Co La Rochelle, <http://www.esc-larochelle.fr>
- ESC Lille, <http://www.esc-lille.fr>
- ♦ Euromed Marseille – Ecole de Management, <http://www.euromed-marseille.com>
- ♦ Ecole de Management de Normandie, <http://www.ecole-management-normandie.fr>
- Groupe ESC Pau, <http://www.esc-pau.fr>
- Groupe ESC Rennes, <http://www.esc-rennes.fr>
- Groupe ESC Rouen, <http://www.esc-rouen.fr>
- Groupe ESC Saint-Etienne, <http://www.esc-saint-etienne.fr>
- ESC Toulouse, <http://www.esc-toulouse.fr>
- Groupe Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Troyes, <http://www.esc-troyes.fr>
- ESCEM Tours-Poitiers, <http://www.escem.fr>
- ESSCA Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Commerciales d'Angers, <http://www.essca.asso.fr>
- ESSEC – Cergy-Pontoise, <http://www.essec.fr>
- Groupe HEC – Jouy-en-Josas, <http://www.hec.fr>
- IESEG School of Management - Lille, <http://www.ieseg.fr>
- ISC Institut Supérieur de Commerce – Paris, <http://www.iscparis.fr>
- Negocia - Paris, <http://www.negocia.fr>
- Reims Management School, <http://www.reims-ms.fr>

SCHOOLS that do not belong to the Conférence des Grandes Écoles

- Advancia – Paris, <http://www.advancia.fr>
- École de Savignac – Savignac-les-Eglises (Dordogne), <http://www.ecole-de-savignac.com/>
- EMBA Ecole de Management Bretagne Atlantique <http://www.isuga.fr>
- Groupe ESARC-CEFIRE, École Supérieure d'Action & de Recherche Commerciales – Centre de Formation et d'Inter-Recrutement des Entreprises - Paris, <http://www.esarc-cefire.fr>
- ♦ Groupe ESC Chambéry Savoie, <http://www.esc-chambery.fr>
- Groupe ESCT/EID, École Supérieure de Commerce et de Technologie/Ecole Internationale de Design - Toulon, <http://www.esct.var.cci.fr>
- Groupe ESG Ecole Supérieure de Gestion - Paris, <http://www.esg.fr>
- ESIDEC École Supérieure Internationale de Commerce - Metz, <http://www.esidec.fr>
- IDRAC, Institut de Recherche et d'Action Commerciale – Lyon, <http://www.idrac-lyon.com>
- INSEEC, Institut des Hautes Etudes Economiques et Commerciales – Paris, <http://www.inseec-france.com>

Earning a MBA

The MBA (Master of Business Administration) is the international benchmark credential in management. MBA programs, which cost around €10,000 per year, are designed for **promising young executives with an international bent who may be considering a start-up** or are headed for a career in top management. The educational approach draws on students' experience and thus is intended for those who already have **work experience**. Most MBA programs are **taught in English** to students of many nationalities. CampusFrance's Web-based catalog offers a long list of programs; see http://editions.campusfrance.org/catalogues/formations_en/mba.pdf. Some MBA programs offer remedial courses in English. Others have exchange programs with overseas institutions, enabling students to obtain a joint degree or to work and study in multiple countries. Still others insist on individualized or self-directed training. **Admission is very selective** and is based on the applicant's credentials and interviews. In addition to the schools already cited (EM-Lyon, ESCP-EAP, Grenoble École de Management, HEC, Reims Management School), INSEAD, with its universal name recognition, deserves mention. **Executive MBA programs** are designed for high-level managers who wish to advance in their firm with support from top management. Such programs are structured so as to allow students to continue to work while they study. Audencia Nantes has just established a Euro MBA (International Executive MBA) in partnership with the institute of business administration at the University of Aix-en Provence, EADA (Escuela de Alta Dirección, Spain), LKAEM (Leon Kozminski Academy of Entrepreneurship and Management, Poland), and the business school at the University of Maastricht (the Netherlands), all of which are recognized by EQUIS and AMBA.

► Websites

- CampusFrance catalog: <http://www.campusfrance.org>
- FNEGE (national foundation for business education): <http://www.fnege.net>
- SMBG (a private consulting firm): <http://www.smbg.fr>
- Conférence des Grandes Écoles: <http://www.cge.asso.fr/>
- National directory of professional certifications: <http://www.cncp.gouv.fr/>
- Accreditation and recognition: <http://www.escp-eap.eu/en/escp-eap/about-escp-eap/accreditations-escp-eap-the-school-of-management-for-europe/>