HEC Paris and LBS once again top Masters in Finance rankings

HEC Paris showed a strong performance throughout the Masters in Finance rankings

HEC Paris and London Business School have tightened their grip on the top of the Financial Times rankings of pre-experience and post-experience Masters in Finance programmes respectively, having dominated the finance rankings since they were first published in 2011.

The Financial Times Global Masters in Finance rankings rate the best 50 full-time finance programmes for students with little or no experience of the financial industry, and the top five full-time programmes for experienced participants. The rankings are based on a survey of business schools as well as students who graduated in 2012. The data measure how successful alumni have been in their career in terms of salary, seniority and achievements in the three years since graduating.

HEC Paris is not ranked first in any of the individual criteria but registered a strong performance throughout. Its alumni have the fifth-highest salaries three years after graduation at $93,000 and the programme is ranked third for value for money and the international mobility of its alumni. The school also shares the highest score — 93 per cent — for aims achieved.

“The course was delivered by top-notch practitioners,” says one HEC Paris graduate. “The programme is perfectly designed for young professionals having limited finance experience and allows them to be immediately operational upon graduation.”

In the post-experience ranking, alumni from LBS enjoyed the highest salaries on average three years after graduation at around $130,000 and the highest score for aims achieved (87 per cent). The programme was also ranked first for placement success and for international course experience. Its alumni were also ranked second for international mobility and career progress.

Five programmes feature in the pre-experience ranking for the first time. The highest new entrant is Lee Kong Chian School of Business at Singapore Management University. The school came
second in terms of the international mobility of its graduates, and is the first school to feature in both pre-experience and post-experience rankings.

ESCP Europe and MIT Sloan School of Management in the US also performed well. Both schools climbed five places into third and fifth place respectively.

While French and Spanish institutions dominate the top of the pre-experience ranking, UK business schools are the real powerhouses in this category accounting for 17 schools out of 50, ahead of the US (eight) and France (six). Two UK institutions, LBS and Judge Business School at the University of Cambridge, top the post-experience ranking.

UK schools account for more than a third of all graduates from the top 50 pre-experience programmes and not only attracted nearly half of all female students but also almost half of all international students. Indeed, 94 per cent of students enrolled in a UK MiF pre-experience programme in 2014 were from overseas. About 85 per cent of these students were from outside the European Economic Area, including 55 per cent of the overall number from mainland China.

The difficulty of arranging visas for the large contingent of students from outside the EEA partly explains why UK schools performed disproportionally poorly in terms of international course experience, with 14 schools ranked in the bottom half of this criterion.

Quite a few students were disillusioned by UK visa regulations. “A lot of people saw the programme as a gateway to employment in Europe,” says one. “If this was the objective, then a lot of them would have gone away unfulfilled.”