

## **How the Financial Times Online MBA ranking of 2019 is compiled**

This is the sixth annual edition of the Financial Times ranking of the best online MBA programmes worldwide. A total of 22 schools took part in the 2019 edition.

All participating business schools must meet the FT's strict entry criteria. The school must be internationally accredited and programmes must have run for four consecutive years. At least 70 per cent of the content must be delivered online. The participants must also pass a selection process before enrolling and an examination process before graduating.

Data were collected through two online surveys — the first was completed by participating schools and the second by their alumni who graduated in 2015. Some 584 of them completed our questionnaire — a response rate of about 18 per cent.

The ranking has 18 criteria. Alumni responses inform nine criteria that together contribute 65 per cent of the total weight. Another eight criteria are based on the school data, accounting for 25 per cent. The remaining criterion, the research rank, counts for 10 per cent.

Alumni-informed criteria are based on data collected in the past three years. Responses from the 2019 survey carry 50 per cent of the total weight and those from 2018 and 2017 account for 25 per cent each. Excluding salary criteria, if only two years' data are available, the weighting is split 60:40, if data are from 2019 and 2018, or 70:30, if data are from 2019 and 2017. For salary figures, the weighting is 50:50 for two years' data.

The first two alumni criteria are average income three years after graduation and the salary increase compared with their pay on graduation, with respective weights of 20 per cent and 10 per cent. For the latter, half of the weight applies to the absolute increase and half to the percentage increase (the published figure). Salaries are converted to US dollars using the International Monetary Fund purchasing power parity rates published in October 2018.

The salaries of non-profit and public sector workers and full-time students are removed, as are the highest and lowest salaries for each school, in order to calculate a normalised average. Finally, salaries are weighted to reflect differences between industry sectors.

"Value for money" for each school is calculated by dividing average alumni salary three years after graduation by the programme's total cost, including tuition fees and other expenses. Any financial help given to alumni is subtracted from the total cost.

School criteria include the diversity of staff, board members and students by gender, nationality and the online MBA's international reach. For gender criteria, schools with a 50:50 composition score highest.

The FT has removed the PhD graduates category from the criteria and replaced it with a new criterion: corporate social responsibility. It is based on the proportion of credits from core courses dedicated to CSR, ethics, social and environmental issues. It carries a weight of three per cent and additional weightings have been placed in the female faculty and female students categories.

The research rank is based on the number of articles by full-time faculty in 50 internationally recognised academic and practitioner journals. The rank combines the number of publications from January 2016 to December 2018, with the figure weighted relative to the size of the faculty.

The Online MBA ranking is a relative listing. Schools are ranked against each other by calculating a Z-score for each criterion. The Z-score is a statistic that shows where a score lies in relation to the mean. These scores are then weighted as outlined in the ranking key and added together for a final score.

After removing the schools that did not meet the response rate threshold from the alumni survey, a first version is calculated using all remaining schools. The school at the bottom is removed and a second version is calculated, and so on until the top 10 have been identified. The top 10 schools are ranked accordingly to produce the 2019 list.

*Judith Pizer of Jeff Head Associates acted as the FT's database consultant. The FT research rank was calculated using Clarivate Analytics data from the Web of Science, an abstract and citation database of research literature.*

### **Key to the FT Online MBA Ranking 2019**

(Weighting % in brackets)

**Salary today US\$ (20):** average alumnus salary three years after graduation, \$ PPP equivalent (See methodology). †

**Salary increase (10):** percentage increase in alumnus salary in the current job versus three years ago on graduation.

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**Value for money (3):** calculated according to alumni's salary, fees and other costs. †

**Career progress (4):** progression in the alumni's level of seniority and the size of company they now work for, versus three years ago on graduation. †

**Aims achieved (4):** the extent to which alumni fulfilled their goals for taking an online MBA. †

**Careers service (4):** effectiveness of the school careers service in terms of career counselling, personal development, networking events and recruitment, as rated by their alumni. †

**Programme delivery (5):** how alumni rate the online delivery of live teaching sessions, other teaching materials and online exams. †

**Online interaction (10):** how alumni rate the interaction between students, teamwork and the availability of faculty. †

**Female faculty (3):** percentage of female members of faculty.

**Female students (3):** percentage of female students on the MBA programme.

**Women on board (1):** percentage of female members of the school advisory board.

**International faculty (4):** percentage of faculty whose citizenship differs from their country of employment.

**International students (4):** percentage of current students whose citizenship differs from the country the school is located in.

**International board (2):** percentage of the board whose citizenship differs from the country in which the business school is situated.

**International mobility (5):** based on alumni citizenship and the countries where they worked before their MBA, on graduation and three years after. †

**Faculty with doctorates (5):** percentage of full-time faculty with a doctoral degree.

**Corporate social responsibility rank (3):** proportion of credits from core courses dedicated to CSR, ethics, social and environmental issues.

**FT research rank (10):** calculated according to the number of articles published by a school's current full-time faculty members in 50 academic and practitioner journals between January 2016 and December 2018. The rank combines the absolute number of publications with the number weighted relative to the faculty's size.

For the three gender-related criteria, schools that have 50:50 (male: female) composition receive the highest score.

† Includes data for the class of 2015 and one or two preceding classes where available.

### **Additional notes**

The following data are for information only and do not enter into the ranking calculations.

**Course tuition and fees (local currency):** Programme tuition and fees paid by the most recently enrolled class, in the currency of the country where the school is situated. Figure shows weighted average.

**Average completion time (years):** The average amount of time students take to complete the programme.

**Online teaching materials (%):** Percentage of programme teaching materials that is delivered online.