An international report on what students want from a business school and why.

Competition in the business education market continues to accelerate. More business schools from more countries alongside a host of private technology-led markets now provide degrees and other qualifications. The need for a clearly defined and differentiated offer is greater than ever.

The Business of Branding asks students where they want to study, what they want from business schools and how they think about themselves; to help schools better position their offer in this competitive marketplace.

Run since 2004, and working with EFMD as partners, this year’s study draws on survey responses from 3004 students in more than 20 countries.

Here are some of the key findings from the study and if you want to know more, click here.

Research Matters

Students also associate a reputation for high quality research with their business school. Indeed, students consider high quality research to be the most important element to be included in school rankings.

Just under a third (31%) of the respondents believe the number of high quality research papers published by school faculty is the most important element in rankings.

Never forget careers, but see the bigger picture

Students expect a business education to deliver more than just better career prospects. A focus on technology, social responsibility, degrees that include arts, and science, and being involved in projects that tackle society’s grand challenges are all valued by students.

27% wanted a business school that embraces digital transformation, bringing together technology and management skills. Just over a quarter (26%) sought a business school that challenges world views by combining innovative and critical thinking.

The Business of Branding

THREE OUT OF TEN RESPONDENTS INDICATE THAT INTERNATIONAL STUDY OPPORTUNITIES WERE THE MOST VALUABLE ITEM THEY SOUGHT IN THEIR BUSINESS EDUCATION.

For the first time, the UK is ahead of the USA when students are asked where they would study internationally. The return of the two-year post-study work visa and a strong vaccination programme to reduce the impact of COVID have given positive perceptions of study in the UK.

Who do you think you are?

Prospective students see themselves as creative, challenging and analytical. Just over 4 in 10 (44%) consider themselves to be creative. One third describe themselves as liking to challenge assumptions and seek alternatives as well as being highly analytical.

CAREERS ARE ONE PIECE OF THE JIGSAW, BUT STUDENTS WANT MUCH MORE AS THEY BUILD A PICTURE OF THEIR IDEA BUSINESS SCHOOL.

Thinking about you

Asked what they associated with their business school, international recognition and rankings were key, but also the campus facilities, a positive location and inevitably availability of good careers advice and strong connections with business and industry. Creatives are one piece of the puzzle, but students want much more as they build a picture of their ideal business school.

Research partner

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