Marketing Education in France

### **Introduction**

At first presenting a summary of literature on or around the topic of the philosophy and design of marketing education programmes generally, this paper then moves on to consider current practice in France, noting specific strengths emerging from a distinctive educational culture. Data is presented on programme structure and coverage from a sample of 31 French HEIs alongside limited output from a small sample of informal interviews with stakeholders. The paper concludes by assessing and comparing current offerings between the UK and France and comments on how evolutionary pressures are possibly eroding the positive distinguishing features of French Marketing Education.

### **Reflections on Marketing Education**.

*‘Overall, in both research and education, marketing academics face a challenge that can be more easily stated than solved. It is this: How can marketing academics get closer to, and contribute to, the world of marketing practice, and yet maintain sufficient independence and objectivity so as to retain the fundamental integrity that defines their unique contribution to knowledge production and dissemination? Too close, and research becomes consultancy, students become trainees. Too distant, and marketing education becomes irrelevant, students learn nothing of value to their future careers’.* (Stringfellow et al, 2006: 247)

A great deal of previous literature exists that comments upon and investigates higher education – a sector of the global economy undergoing significant changes as a result of environmental pressures (Prince and Stewart, 2000; Conway et al, 1994; Lomas, 1997). Unsurprisingly, a good proportion takes a tighter focus on business education generally (Hawawini, 2005; Narayandas et al, 1998), and marketing education specifically.

What are these environmental pressures? At the macro/sector level there are many, but recent examples of forces impacting on institutions include fees in England and Wales, order-of magnitude expansions in undergraduate capacity in China and India and the rapid improvements to perceived-quality levels of national HE brands in [for example] Australia and New Zealand (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; Danaher and Star, 1998) and of course the increasing value of accreditation by authorities such as AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA (Scherer et al., 2005) – increased value at least [at most?] in attracting students to programmes. Recent legislative changes have made student-entry to the UK more difficult for students from key markets - a significant issue for taught post-graduate programme managers, to the extent that insurance covering against visa-revocation and institutional chaos will shortly become available (Matthews, 2013).

At a tighter level of focus, there has been considerable recent discussion in respect of the tactics and strategy of marketing pedagogy. A good overview of this essentially reflective process is given by Tregear et al (2010) who investigated thoughts and opinions through a nationwide survey of UK marketing educators after a series of interviews. Foremost in this discussion has been the relevance of marketing education and literature to practice – within that key questions are: what constitutes key skills and knowledge for marketers and can marketing educators provide that (Gray et al, 2007)? Additionally, is academic research of any relevance or value (Aram and Salipante, 2003; Hodgkinson et al, 2001) to practitioners and if not is it something to worry about (Brennan, 2004; Das, 2003)? O’Driscoll and Murray (1998) believe strongly that it is.

On the former question, Tregear et al found divergent opinion about whether curricula should be driven by industry and Gibson-Sweet et al (2010) found using a small survey that marketing faculty were focused on very pragmatic/fire-fighting issues such as plagiarism and feedback rather than on grander issues such as integrated curriculum design and engagement with pedagogic-technology. For the latter Ankers and Brennan (2002) reported that the set of managers they interviewed were both ignorant of, and disinterested in research outputs placed in even the most prestigious academic journals, a finding corroborated by Crosier (2004). So, if there is a gap between marketing-practice and marketing-education, what is the latter for exactly? Perspectives on this and related issues were explored in a special issue of *Marketing Intelligence and Planning* MIP (2005, No.5). McKenzie et al., (2002) also found that very few practitioners had heard of the traditional academic marketing journals, and even fewer expected to find anything of ‘practical use’ in them. If an institution prides itself on teaching informed by such research, is that pride justified?

At the most fundamental level, is marketing a subject that *can* be taught? Some (e.g. Conway et al, 1994 and Coates, 1996) have queried the basic value of university provided business education. Whether or not business school education should be designed with a broader scope allowing of general, liberal educational aims as well as a narrow ‘employability’ agenda is a continuing debate in the USA (Narayandas, Rangan, & Zaltman, 1998; Shuptrine & Willenborg, 1998; Wilson, 1998), France (Kumar & Usunier, 2001), the UK (Garneau & Brennan, 1999), and across other countries and regions (Howard & Ryans, 1993; Howard, Savins, Howell, & Ryans, 1991).

Küster and Vila (2006) have highlighted the troubling fact that teaching and learning methods in commercial/organisational training bore little to no resemblance to business school pedagogy. Garneau and Brennan (1999) outlined the perspective of employers in respect of desired attributes of graduate-recruits, with a focus on basic literacy and numeracy and attitudes (e.g. punctuality) and little to no requirement for scientific and general knowledge. Academic staff, attempting to develop young minds emphasised and worked towards an *‘edu­ca­tion for life’,* considering an *‘education for work’* to be a very limited objective. Indeed, there has been a chorus arguing against a too narrow/vocational definition of the university marketing curriculum (Celuch and Slama, 1998; Kennedy, Lawton and Walker, 2001; Ramocki, 1996; Titus, 2000). Coates and Koerner (1996) spoke to graduates of a UK Business Studies programme, asking them to reflect upon what and how current students should study. Their respondents argued that too much time was devoted to marketing as social science, rather than marketing as practice, findings echoed in Palmer and Millier (2000), who interviewed a large sample of practitioners.

Other researchers have sounded a note of caution. Mason (1990) argued for more liberal marketing education, to include more attention to alternative ways of looking at the world, learning how to solve problems creatively, considering the theory and practice of ethics and qualitative appraisal of issues. Mason (1990, pg. 15) noted that *“as people climb the corporate ladder, qualitative analysis becomes more important while quantitative analysis remains the same”*.

Further papers have focussed upon specific aspects or issues or levels of marketing education provision, including the curriculum at the postgraduate level, or applicable evolutions in pedagogy (Monks and Walsh, 2001; Kennedy et al, 2001). Resnick et al (2011) discuss the potential inherent in incorporating elements of practice into the teaching and learning of SME marketing. Monye (1995) debates the need for ‘specialist’ education in international marketing, and reviews the arguments for and against its separation from mainstream marketing education. Vignali and Jones (1995) examined how sales was taught, and discovered that this highly practical and relevant area was not commonly taught and where it was was often taught poorly and by staff with little to no relevant experience. Christopher et al (1998) lamented the decline of classes with a logistics/supply chain management focus and noted that such activities received more attention from programmes outwith marketing – such as Operations Research and even Economics. Harker et al (2007) considered how RM might be built into the wider curriculum.

The majority of the work that has examined these issues has been based on data collected from the US (e.g. Shuptrine and Willenborg, 1998) and other English speaking nations with academic and business school cultures and structures heavily influenced by the US and UK (Howard and Ryans, 1993; Howard, Savins, Howell, and Ryans, 1991). Research examining other contexts, or taking a strategic viewpoint, or a cross-cultural perspective is rarer (Kumar and Usunier, 2001).

### Strategic Overviews of Marketing Education Provision

Stringfellow et al (2006) took a cross-section of UG marketing programmes from a sample of UK HEIs, combining this with a series of interviews with managers. Analysis of the interviews led to several conclusions, summarised as:

1. Senior management appreciated marketing graduate knowledge of core marketing activities and processes, but expressed dissatisfaction with basic literacy and numeracy and key skills such as negotiation.
2. Managers did not believe business graduates were aware of business imperatives such as being profitable.
3. The ‘brand’ of the university was of little to no significance when compared to individual ‘fit’ into corporate culture.
4. Given a choice, managers would prefer to recruit graduates who had undergone industrial placements.

In respect of marketing programmes, Stringfellow et al (2006) found a high degree of replication between institutions. Variability was created by programmes with specific emphases [e.g. Food marketing] and/or research interests of staff. In essence, academic groups teach what they can, based on staff experience, interests and availability, rather than necessarily preparing graduates for the employment market in a deliberately and strategically constructed programme – marketing education in the UK was effectively production led.

Importantly, what of subjects that were of significant vocational relevance but are not popular with staff or students – B2B Marketing, supply-chain management or any class with a significant amount of quantitative work? Do *‘dull-but-necessary’* classes have a future in departments that need the revenues generated by ‘*bums on seats’*?

The paper concludes by raising a couple of important questions:

1. Are many marketing academic departments even attempting to meet the demands of industry?
2. Is there an inherent and/or resolvable conflict between research focussed and typically commercially inexperienced academics and attempts to provide industry relevant training?

A considerable time ago, Meidan (1977) examined twhich factors most influenced student perception of their programmes, listing them as being; practical considerations, curriculum requirements, convenience factors, institutional administrative interactions, academic performance and admission considerations whilst Lawrence (1970) looked at how post-graduate education could and should be linked with personal development. There has of course been more recent literature on postgraduate marketing education. Mason (1990) reflected on the trials and tribulations of programme managers. Okazaki-Ward (2001) looked at the impact of Japanese national and organisational culture and society on the content and style of MBA programmes offered in elite institutions. More recently, Haywood and Molesworth (2010) noted that applicants to marketing-focussed UG programmes lacked experience in all areas and were typically looking out for any signs, no matter how indecipherable [such as accrediations] to indicate quality.

Centeno et al (2008) collected data on 60 PG [but not MBA] programmes at 45 UK HEIs. This was combined with the results of a survey of business-school students at five universities to consider both institutional and student perspectives on postgraduate marketing education – indeed, the central theme of the paper presents the question, *what is postgraduate marketing education for?* They raised the concern that in many cases, PG programmes were only slightly augmented versions of UG programmes and were in a number of cases clearly and merely acting as cash cows to support the other activities of the department. Programmes mostly fell into the category of general marketing management, with a smattering of specialist programmes to reflect research strengths of the supporting department. In respect of student opinion, support and administration factors dominated the identified lists of expectations and strengths. In summing the likely outcome of over-provision and levelling-off in respect of foreign student numbers and the drag of other environmental factors, Centeno et al warned of *interesting times[[1]](#footnote-1)* to come and suggest that alumni are not sufficiently exploited in respect of evolving and improving programmes to better match commercial requirements.

We argue that strategic consideration and data-collection on and about marketing education provision is a worthwhile aim – it tests assumptions, allows comparisons and shapes current problems and opportunities whilst spotting future ones. Further, to consider marketing-educational cultures other than the US and UK would be helpful as the literature is dominated by studies from the US and the UK, with only a smattering of projects that have examined cross-cultural issues (e.g. Ulhøi, 2005). Therefore, let us consider a different marketing educational culture – that of France.

### An Appreciation of Marketing Education and Practice in France

There is perhaps an assumption that business schools and business related education is a product of Anglo-Saxon culture, that other cultures are playing catch-up, and that therefore the skills and abilities of professionals and the quality of training and education will be at best a simulacrum of the dominant business school culture – the US, considered the first and therefore naturally the best. The implicit hierarchy is North America first, US embracing cultures like the UK and Japan second, other English speaking countries in third and the rest nowhere. Consider the relative acclamation for US conferences and US-originated journals. Although rarely voiced, there are arguments to suggest that this is a case of cultural hegemony as Gramsci might define it – that US marketing practices and educational systems [and methods?] are natural, superior and inevitable. If considered objectively, do these assumptions stand up? Let us consider marketing culture and educational provision within France. Why? *Something is going right in French marketing.*

Firstly, culture and practice. A member of the G7, France has the fifth largest economy in the world. France is home to 35 of the 500 largest commercial organisations according to Fortune. The UK hosts 30. In respect of marketing outcomes, Interbrand lists 7 French brands in its latest list of the top 100 global brands. This is second only to Germany in Europe, and joint third worldwide [Japan] behind the US (Interbrand, 2012). Axa, Carrefour, Danone, France Telecom, L’Oreal, LMVH, Pergeot-Citroen, Renault, Sanofi-Aventis, Vivendi, all made the global top 100 in respect of media spend according to AdAge (2010) - 10% of the list.

### Exhibit 1 - European Presence in the Interbrand Top 100 Brands - 2012

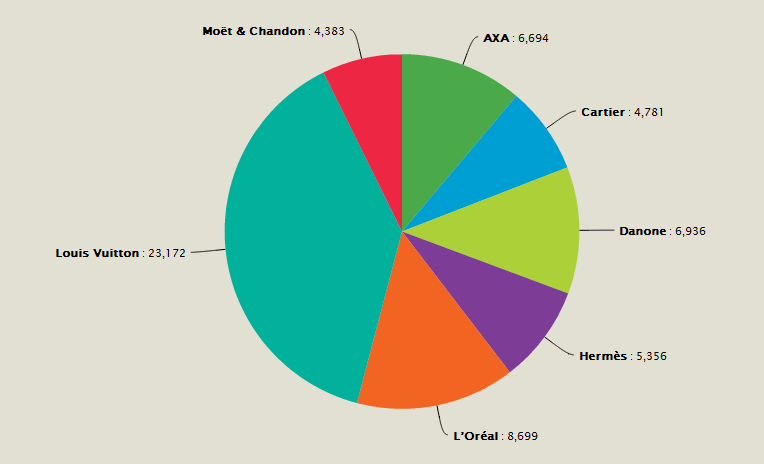
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<http://www.interbrand.com/en/best-global-brands/BGB-Interactive-Charts.aspx>

A search for papers considering aspects of marketing in France, or by French companies, or more general issues by French authors collates a significant number of publications across mainstream marketing literature. Almost all of these papers consider tactical issues with a very narrow focus. In respect of strategic contribution to the academy, the picture is less positive. Of the 95 academics listed as being associated with the editorial process [editorial duties, editorial advisory boards etc] of the *European Journal of Marketing*, not one has a French affiliation or is French themselves. There are quite a few personal and institutional representatives from North America, a generous component from Australia and New Zealand, a smattering from Africa and the Middle East and two Chinese institutions – but no French academics or universities. The *Journal of Marketing Management* has one French academic and one French institution – Professor Cova of EuroMed Marseilles. If the equivalent panels from *Marketing Intelligence and Planning* and *The European Business Review* are added to the list, then of more than 250 names associated with four mainstream and Europe-originating journals there are only two French institutions and one French business school academic present. *Bonne chance* Professor Cova.

Whilst French academic output is alive and well, this is almost exclusively published within the leading French journals such as *Décisions Marketing, Revue Internationale de Gestion* and *Recherche et Applications en Marketing.* These journals have a limited audience of francophone readers.

### Exhibit 2 - Relative Strength of French Brands



<http://www.interbrand.com/en/best-global-brands/BGB-Interactive-Charts.aspx>

### An overview of the French HE sector

While in many European countries, Universities enjoy a higher status and a more prestigious reputation than non-university institutions, such as Polytechniques and Fachhochschulen (e.g. in the UK, Germany and Netherlands), the picture is slightly more complicated in France (Witte et al., 2008). In fact, the Grande Ecoles - which are traditionally more practice oriented - have a higher status and are often referred to as elite institutions (Bourdieu, 1989). This is a reversal of the class-system in the UK, where institutions of relatively short history with a practical rather than theoretical emphasis do badly in respect of snob-value. The development of this Higher Education system, which is largely based on Grande Ecoles and public universities is grounded in the history of the country (Kaiser, 2007).

While France hosted some of the first universities in Europe in the sixteenth century, those lost some of their autonomy through the increased power of sovereigns, as well as greater political and religious integration. Research, knowledge development and exchange between institutions slowed down. As a consequence, alternative models of higher education evolved, one of them being the Grande Ecoles. The first of these institutions originated in professional engineering schools, such as the Ecole Polytechnique, dating back to the beginning of the eighteenth century. Soon further institutions emerged and diversified into different areas of study to train not only the future elite of engineers, but also the new elite for business and administrative sciences (Godelier, 2005).

In respect of business education, France has some of the oldest business schools in the world, with a serious claim on having the second ever established – even debatably the first – the *École supérieure de commerce de Paris*, founded in 1819. French business schools have performed well in recent lists of rankings for executive and post-graduate education. The FT lists three French establishments in its top ten of European schools – including the top two places, compared to just one for the UK. The current minister of higher education - Mme Valérie Pécresse – is a graduate of HEC [Hautes Études Commerciales de Paris], a Parisian business school founded in 1881.

All Grande Ecoles have strong links to industry in their respective fields. In the fairly recent past, only a few professors at the Grande Ecoles held a doctorate degree; emphasis was mainly placed on practice-oriented teaching with little involvement in academic research. Over the last few years this has changed significantly and largely as a result of accreditation pressures (such as AACSB), a higher proportion of academic staff are now required to hold PhDs from a public university and demonstrate research activity. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below. Note that the data from this and subsequent tables was collected from publicly available information and interaction with relevant programme-management.

Nonetheless, in France the general divide between a practically oriented education at the Grande Ecoles, and a more academic oriented education at the public universities remains. However, it also needs to be pointed out that a large part of the national research output stems from independent research centres (such as the CNRS or INSEE) which are not necessarily integrated into universities. Further, public universities have been criticized for their distance from potential graduate employers, whereas traditionally Grande Ecoles have cultivated good relationships with industry. Apart from this broad distinction between the two types of higher education institution, there are several other key differences that are of importance.

The French Education Ministry has more control over public universities than Grande Ecoles, whereas the latter may be more often affiliated with city/region specific Chambers of Commerce. Due to changes in public policies over the last two decades public universities have suffered from the *massification* of the higher education system, with more entrants on the one hand, and less public funding on the other. In general, public universities admit students after they leave secondary school with their Highers or A-levels. In contrast, the Grande Ecoles can choose the type of students as well as the student numbers for each year of intake. One result is the much lower student/staff ratio at Grande Ecoles, which may positively impact teaching outcomes. Moreover, the contact time is much lower in public universities (about 1,000 to 1,500 hours of teaching during a three year period) than at a Grande Ecoles (about 1,800 to 2,000 hours). Overall, these differences explain as well the higher costs of teaching associated with each student at the Grande Ecoles in comparison to public universities (Paul, 2007).

### Table 1. Institutional Rank and Accreditation

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Ranking - Letudiant | | | Accreditation | |
| **Institution Name** | Ranking 2010 | Ranking 2009 | Ranking 2008 | AACSB | Equis |
| HEC | 1 | 1 | 1 | yes | yes |
| ESSEC | 2 | 2 | 2 | yes | yes |
| ESCP | 3 | 3 | 3 | yes | yes |
| EM Lyon | 4 | 4 | 4 | yes | yes |
| EDHEC | 5 | 5 | 5 | yes | yes |
| Audencia | 6 | 6 | 6 | yes | yes |
| ESC Grenoble | 7 | 6 | 6 | yes | yes |
| Sup de Co Reims | 8 | 8 | 10 | no | yes |
| Rouen Business School (ESC) | 8 | 10 | 11 | no | yes |
| IESEG | 8 | 12 | 13 | no | no |
| Euromed Management | 11 | 8 | 9 | no | yes |
| ESC Toulouse | 12 | 11 | 6 | yes | yes |
| ESC Bordeaux (BEM) | 13 | 13 | 12 | yes | yes |
| EM Strasbourg | 14 | 24 | 21 | no | no |
| ESC Lille (SKEMA) | 15 | 14 | 15 | no | yes |
| CERAM (SKEMA) | 16 | 17 | 17 | no | yes |
| ESC Rennes | 17 | 22 | 23 | no | no |
| ESSCA | 18 | 15 | 13 | no | no |
| ESG | 18 | 19 | 17 | no | no |
| ESC Tours-Poitiers (ESCEM) | 20 | 15 | 17 | yes | yes |
| ESC Montpellier | 21 | 22 | 24 | no | no |
| Telecom Ecole de Management | 21 | 17 | 16 | no | no |
| ISC | 23 | 24 | 25 | no | no |
| INSEEC | 23 | 21 | 27 | no | no |
| ICN Business School | 25 | 19 | 21 | no | yes |
| ESC Dijon | 26 | 24 | 17 | no | no |
| EM Normandie | 27 | 24 | 28 | no | no |
| ESCE | 28 |  |  | no | no |
| ESC Clermont | 29 | 28 | 26 | yes | no |
| ESC La Rochelle | 30 | 30 | 28 | no | no |
| EDC | 30 |  |  | no | no |

Each Grande Ecole sets their own entry level and exams, the *concours*, and decides on that basis which applicants to accept. Depending on the Grande Ecole, admission is in most cases after a two-year preparation course, the *classe préparatoire,* that students have to pay for and attend after secondary school.

### Table 2. Student Experience

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Financial Implications | | Exchange and Placement | |
| Institution Name | Max. Salary after graduation (in K Euros) | Tuition fees p.a. (in Euros) | Obligatory study abroad period (months) | Obligatory time on industrial placement(months) |
| HEC | 41 | 8967 | 6 | 10 |
| ESSEC | 41 | 9800 | 6 | 18 |
| ESCP | 41 | 8400 | 3 | 10 |
| EM Lyon | 41 | 7833 | 12 | 18 |
| EDHEC | 39 | 8333 | 6 | 12 |
| Audencia | 37 | 7200 | 6 | 14.5 |
| ESC Grenoble | 37 | 8293 | 6 | 12 |
| Sup de Co Reims | 37 | 8155 | 6 | 6 |
| Rouen Business School (ESC) | 37 | 7850 | 4 |  |
| IESEG | 34 | 6579 | 4 | 20.5 |
| Euromed Management | 34 | 7267 | 6 | 6 |
| ESC Toulouse | 34 | 8233 | 3 | 10 |
| ESC Bordeaux (BEM) | 34 | 7640 | 6 | 8 |
| EM Strasbourg | 33 | 5100 | 12 | 9 |
| ESC Lille (SKEMA) | 34 | 8377 | 6.5 | 8 |
| CERAM (SKEMA) | 33.5 | 7700 | 6 | 9 |
| ESC Rennes | 33.5 | 7167 | 6 | 8 |
| ESSCA | 34 | 6811 | 6 | 10 |
| ESG | 33 | 6240 | 12 | 13 |
| ESC Tours-Poitiers (ESCEM) | 34 | 7700 | 6 | 8 |
| ESC Montpellier | 33.5 | 7743 | 10 | 14 |
| Telecom Ecole de Management | 37 | 1080 | 4 | 9 |
| ISC | 33.5 | 8505 | 3 | 12 |
| INSEEC | 33 | 7910 | 7 | 15.5 |
| ICN Business School | 37 | 6927 | 6 | 9 |
| ESC Dijon | 33 | 6933 | 6 | 12 |
| EM Normandie | 33.5 | 6510 | 2 | 7 |
| ESCE |  |  |  |  |
| ESC Clermont | 33.5 | 6650 | 3 | 8 |
| ESC La Rochelle | 33 | 6833 | 6 | 12 |
| EDC |  |  |  |  |

This also explains why the degree structure of both types of institutions can differ so remarkably. Whilst at public universities students can graduate after three years with a *licence* (Bachelor) and after another two years with a Masters degree, students at a Grande Ecoles will generally graduate with a Masters degree three years after entry. In addition, and emphasising the more practical side of the Grand Ecole, a student entering in Year 3 could spend as much as 24 months in placements or exchange programmes out of the 36 months prior to graduation.

This distinctive complexity in French higher education makes direct comparison with the UK rather difficult – the UK HEI sector distinction between UG and PG programmes is clearer but not rigid. Whilst further research degrees, such as doctorates, can be pursued at public universities, this is not the case at the Grande Ecoles. However in recent years, a group of Grand Ecoles has formed to offer a PhD programme. Here again a “Doctorat” may only be offered in a French University yet the Grand Ecoles are moving into this lucrative arena and offering either DBAs or PhDs. There is also a large divide in tuition fees, as public universities charge between 150 to 700 Euros per year, whereas Grande Ecoles between 7,000 to 10,000 Euros per year.

### Exhibit 3 - Example of French Marketing Programme Structure - ESCI

## Prime Première Année

## http://www.esci-paris.eu/programme-grande-ecole-superieure-commerce/pge-grande-ecole.html#:1

The structure of the Programme Grand Ecole is also unlike most other countries: without an interim graduation or Bachelors degree, students normally pass into the 4th and 5th years of the Programme. This is shown in Exhibit 3 below. Students commonly enter after a “prepa” course directly into the second or third year of the Programme, and increasing numbers are entering the second year with a degree from a University. Due to an additional requirement to spend a minimum of 6 months and usually 12 months overseas, many students of this programme are then able to take 1 year Masters programmes or MBAs at partner overseas Universities, at this stage perhaps only having one year at the Grande Ecole itself. In addition, a heavy emphasis on the alternate learning paths of placement, overseas learning and the use of “vacataires”, that is industry specialists to teach much of the Programme Grand Ecole results in a more practically oriented, more international but less academic programme focused on generalised business education. However this balance between practical and academic knowledge can be an uneasy alliance. Below is a quote from a programme director, one of several we present from a small series of short informal interviews with relevant stakeholders.

“*They (vacataires) don’t think they do very much when it comes to the content of education textbooks and the structure of degrees. But they influence teaching at a microlevel – i.e. in the modules they teach themselves. Otherwise, I think there is little exchange between practitioners and education institutions”*

One lecturer described the pressures the need for overseas and industry placements have on students:

“at Grandes Ecoles there are too many placements and they are too long ( many over 6 months and at various stages during the degree). Students often struggle to find appropriate placements. There is also the question of financing placements – in many countries they are not paid. So parents need to support their children who do placements abroad financially, plus paying the tuition fees”

This leads to the final distinguishing aspect between the two types of institutions: If tuition fees vary that greatly between these two types of institutions, the quality of education needs to be considered. This automatically raises the question about which type of quality indicators to use. In the main, the much higher tuition fees charged by Grande Ecoles are accepted due to the social and financial capital they equip their students with. First of all, during their studies students enter a network of existing students as well as alumni of whom the majority are in very high if not leading positions in their field of work. Their personal networks are further developed through the various placements they have to serve during their studies. The reputation and the “classement” of the Grande Ecoles is a key criteria in students applying to and selecting an institution.

While the strong vocational emphasis in education gained great reputation at a domestic level, the Grande Ecoles were struggling for a while with the international recognition of their degrees. They therefore invested gradually into the development of foreign language competencies of their students through an extension of their network of international partner higher education institutions. Studying abroad and serving international internships are now a part of each student’s curriculum (Abdessemed, 2007). Overall, these developments make students more employable and explain the head-start of graduates from the Grande Ecoles in the labour market in comparison to those from public universities. Data shows that graduates from Grande Ecoles have faster access to employment and that they are more likely to be on permanent work contracts a year after graduation. Similarly, entry salaries and subsequent salary progression are higher for Grande Ecoles alumni (Calmand et al., 2009).

To be able to deliver the desirable features that potential students entering a Grand Ecole, the schools have had to create multiple and strong exchange programmes: some based on Erasmus and others based on contacts between institutions directly. Both potential students and partner institutions put a strong emphasis on accreditation and in recent years, several French business schools have achieved AACSB accreditation. The requirements of AACSB accreditation require institutions to adhere to several standards including the need for a % of research active staff, which historically was not the case of the more practically oriented Grand Ecoles (Scherer et al., 2005).

In addition, a significant difference between Grand Ecoles and Universities in both France and other countries is the commitment to small classes and the number of hours of taught classes. During the first 3 years of the programme, or equivalent of Undergraduate level, students usually spend between 28 and 40 hours a week in class. At Masters level a typical student can spend also up to 35 hours a week in classes. All classes at all levels are taught in groups of between 25 and 40 students. This results in basic classes such as Principles of Marketing being delivered by different Instructors multiple times per week: due to the increased requirement for Instructors this leads to an increased use of Vacataires, once again increasing the difficulties for Grand Ecoles to gain accreditation. At the higher levels of the programme, this requirement to teach in small groups becomes more beneficial and allows greater specialisation:

*“The masters marketing programmes (5th year) are very intense and detailed. Students will be very specialised in one particular area, e.g. buying or communications. The hours taught are immense: as said above, there are about 20 modules each about 12 hours long. This is a lot of teaching – maybe students are slightly overtaught. At the same time, the long hours spend in the class room may help to discuss, understand and apply techniques, frameworks etc. in more detail. Modules are in the main taught by external “intervenants”, who are in most cases not academics, but practitioners. In this way, students get a wide variety of perspectives. Specialisation is good (and seems to be normal compared to other French institutions), but might narrow down chances for students to find employment. More general masters programmes (like in the UK) might be better”.*

Before moving on to present and discuss tables relating to the breadth and depth of curricula of UG and PG marketing programmes in France we summarise the apparent current strengths of the French marketing education sector:

* Developed and bilateral integration with successful industries and practitioners through placements and practitioner led classes.
* A graduate of a French marketing programme is more or less guaranteed to have a credible amount of work and international experience and to have benefitted from contact time 2-3 times that of a UK equivalent.
* Often programmes are offered in bilingual streams and all Grand Ecole students must study at least 2 languages in addition to their core subjects.

### Table 3. Networks and Connections

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Staff | | Partnerships | |
| Institution Name | Academic - Total stars of publications | Proportion of international professors (%) | Partner institutions in other countries with AACSB or Equis | Contribution from Industry (in K Euros) |
| HEC | 226 | 33 | 60 | 5343 |
| ESSEC | 176 | 32 | 54 | 3698 |
| ESCP | 112 | 5 | 39 | 2638 |
| EM Lyon | 138 | 19 | 67 | 4148 |
| EDHEC | 103 | 11 | 62 | 6195 |
| Audencia | 76 | 14 | 42 | 1006 |
| ESC Grenoble | 96 | 13 | 60 | 1475 |
| Sup de Co Reims | 43 | 3 | 50 | 1453 |
| Rouen Business School (ESC) | 30 | 5 | 57 | 358 |
| IESEG | 92 | 19 | 41 | 768 |
| Euromed Management | 57 | 8 | 41 | 1377 |
| ESC Toulouse | 55 | 6 | 33 | 802 |
| ESC Bordeaux (BEM) | 38 | 5 | 31 | 254 |
| EM Strasbourg | 33 | 0 | 35 | 480 |
| ESC Lille (SKEMA) | 59 | 4 | 14 | 253 |
| CERAM (SKEMA) | 38 | 6 | 26 | 523 |
| ESC Rennes | 21 | 16 | 39 | 574 |
| ESSCA | 27 | 2 | 24 | 991 |
| ESG | 34 | 0 | 14 | 468 |
| ESC Tours-Poitiers (ESCEM) | 16 | 7 | 24 | 195 |
| ESC Montpellier | 45 | 2 | 24 | 282 |
| Telecom Ecole de Management | 30 | 9 | 16 | 89 |
| ISC | 20 | 2 | 19 | 158 |
| INSEEC | 16 | 2 | 33 | 348 |
| ICN Business School | 3 | 2 | 26 | 1050 |
| ESC Dijon | 20 | 2 | 27 | 221 |
| EM Normandie | 6 | 7 | 12 | 318 |
| ESCE |  |  |  |  |
| ESC Clermont | 4 | 2 | 13 | 97 |
| ESC La Rochelle | 12 | 3 | 11 | 95 |
| EDC |  |  |  |  |

Tables 4 and 5 below summarise the classes contained in UG and PG marketing programmes at our sample of institutions. We note once more than the distinction between UG and PG programmes in France is far more fluid and subjective than the UK. Again, the data was obtained from publicly available sources and where necessary by further communication with programme managing staff. We note that a good number of these classes already had English-language titles, but where necessary translations have been made. In order to rationalise the tables a pragmatic decision was made to cluster similar but uniquely titled classes together into macro-groups as per Centeno et al (2008) and Stringfellow et al (2006).

As examples, the UG table incorporates Digital Marketing and Social Media classes into the E-Marketing set and the PG table collates one instance of Marketing Industry into the larger B2B grouping. An outline of this reconciliation is given in Appendix 1, but an important point to note is that our table shows if an institution provides at least one class in that area. The colour coding breaks prevalence down into quartiles.

Table 6 combines the data from our sample with selected excerpts of the corresponding tables from Stringfellow et al and Centeno et al. For tables 4-6 the key is Green = 75-100 presence,

yellow = 50-75% presence, red= 25-50% presence and blue = 0-25% presence.

### Table 4. PG Classes by Prevalence

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | HEC | ESSEC | ESCP | EM Lyon | EDHEC | Audencia | ESC Grenoble | Sup de Co Reims | Rouen Business School (ESC) | IESEG | Euromed Management | ESC Toulouse | ESC Bordeaux (BEM) | EM Strasbourg | ESC Lille (SKEMA) | CERAM (SKEMA) | ESC Rennes | ESSCA | ESG | ESC Tours-Poitiers (ESCEM) | ESC Montpellier | Telecom Ecole de Management | ISC | INSEEC | ICN Business School | ESC Dijon | EM Normandie | ESCE | ESC Clermont | ESC La Rochelle | EDC | Total in Class Category |
| MarComs | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* |  | \* | \* |  | \* | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* |  | \* | 20 |
| Supply Chain/Logistics | \* |  |  | \* |  |  | \* | \* | \* | \* |  | \* | \* | \* | \* |  | \* | \* | \* | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  | \* | \* |  | \* | \* | 19 |
| International MKT |  |  | \* | \* | \* |  | \* | \* | \* | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  | \* |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | 17 |
| Strategic Marketing | \* |  | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* |  |  | \* |  |  | \* |  |  |  | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | 16 |
| E-Marketing | \* |  | \* | \* | \* |  | \* |  | \* | \* |  | \* |  |  | \* |  | \* | \* | \* |  | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* | 16 |
| Marketing Research | \* |  | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* |  | \* |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  | \* | 14 |
| Product/Brand | \* |  | \* | \* |  | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* |  |  | \* |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  | 13 |
| Sales Management | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* | \* |  | \* | 13 |
| Services Marketing |  | \* |  | \* |  |  | \* | \* |  | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  | 11 |
| B2B/Industrial | \* | \* |  | \* |  |  | \* | \* |  | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* |  |  | 11 |
| Innovation/NPD | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* |  | \* |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 11 |
| Purchasing |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* |  | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* | 9 |
| CB | \* |  | \* | \* | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 8 |
| RM/CRM |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  | \* | 7 |
| MKT Management |  | \* |  | \* |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  |  | 7 |
| Event Marketing |  | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  | 7 |
| Luxury Marketing |  | \* |  | \* | \* |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 6 |
| Principles of MKT | \* | \* |  |  |  | \* |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 5 |
| Retail Marketing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  | 5 |
| Public Relations |  |  |  | \* | \* |  | \* |  | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 5 |
| Misc/Speciality |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 4 |
| Direct Marketing | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 4 |
| Creativity |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | 4 |
| Marketing Ethics |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 3 |
| Pricing Policy |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 2 |
| Institution Total | 12 | 9 | 10 | 18 | 11 | 7 | 15 | 10 | 10 | 16 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 17 | 9 | 15 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 10 |  |

### Table 5. UG Class Prevalence

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | HEC | ESSEC | ESCP | EM Lyon | EDHEC | Audencia | ESC Grenoble | Sup de Co Reims | Rouen Business School (ESC) | IESEG | Euromed Management | ESC Toulouse | ESC Bordeaux (BEM) | EM Strasbourg | ESC Lille (SKEMA) | CERAM (SKEMA) | ESC Rennes | ESSCA | ESG | ESC Tours-Poitiers (ESCEM) | ESC Montpellier | Telecom Ecole de Management | ISC | INSEEC | ICN Business School | ESC Dijon | EM Normandie | ESCE | ESC Clermont | ESC La Rochelle | EDC | **Class Total** |
| Principles |  | \* |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | 22 |
| MarComs |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  | \* | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  | \* | \* | \* |  |  | \* | \* | \* |  | 12 |
| Marketing Research |  | \* |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* | \* |  | \* | \* |  | 11 |
| Strategic Marketing |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* |  |  |  | \* | \* |  | \* |  | \* |  | \* |  | 11 |
| International Marketing |  | \* |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  | \* | \* | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  | 10 |
| Supply Chain/Logistics |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* |  |  | \* |  |  |  | 10 |
| Operational Marketing |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | 7 |
| Consumer Behaviour |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | 5 |
| E-Marketing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* | \* |  |  | \* |  |  |  | 5 |
| Direct Marketing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* |  |  |  |  | \* |  | 5 |
| Sales Management |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | 5 |
| Product/Brand Marketing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  | 4 |
| B2B |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  | 4 |
| Luxury Marketing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 4 |
| Purchasing |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 4 |
| RM/CRM |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | 3 |
| Misc |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 3 |
| Services Marketing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 2 |
| Retail Marketing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 2 |
| Marketing Management |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  |  |  |  |  |  | \* |  | 2 |
| **Institution Total** | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 16 | 16 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 2 |  |

### Table 6. Collated UK and French Marketing Programme Class Prevalence

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **UK UG** | **French UG** | **French PG** | **UK PG - MSc MKT Comp** | **UG PG - MSc Int MKT Comp** |
| Strategic Marketing | Principles of Marketing | MarComs | Mktg. Commun. | Int'l. Mktg. Strategy/Mgmt. |
| Principles of Marketing | MarComs | Supply Chain/Logistics | Core Mktg. | Finance/Acctg. Decision Making |
| Marketing Research | Marketing Research | International MKT | Mktg. Research | Int'l. Mktg. Research |
| Marketing Communications | Strategic Marketing | Strategic Marketing | Research Methods | Research Methods/stats |
| International Marketing | International Marketing | E-Marketing | Strategic Mktg. | Marketing |
| Consumer Behaviour | Supply Chain/Logistics | Marketing Research | Strategy | Mktg. Communications |
| Product/Brand Marketing | Operational Marketing | Product/Brand | Finance for Mktg. | Relationship & Direct Mktg. |
| Services Marketing | Consumer Behaviour | Sales Management | Consumer Behaviour | Int'l Business Mgmt. |
| Retail Marketing | E-Marketing | Services Marketing | RM | e-Business/Internet Mktg. |
| B2B Marketing | Direct Marketing | B2B/Industrial | Mktg. Mgmt. | Entrepreneurial Mktg & Innovation/ Innovation |
| E-Marketing | Sales Management | Innovation/NPD | Int’l Mktg. | Int'l. Buyer Behaviour |
| Contemporary Marketing Issues | Product/Brand Marketing | Purchasing | Internet Mktg |  |
| Small Business Marketing | B2B | CB | B-to-B Mktg. |  |
| Supply Chain/Logistics | Luxury Marketing | RM/CRM | NPD |  |
| Simulation/Project/Consultancy | Purchasing | MKT Management | Channels |  |
| Direct Marketing | RM/CRM | Event Marketing | Services |  |
| Relationship Marketing/CRM | Misc | Luxury Marketing | Perform. Mgmt. |  |
| Public Relations | Services Marketing | Principles of MKT | Critical Mktg./Mgmt. | Key |
| Sales Management | Retail Marketing | Retail Marketing | Product & Service Mgmt. | Green = 75-100 presence |
| Marketing Ethics | Marketing Management | Public Relations | Reflexive/Reflective Mktg. | Yellow = 50-75% presence |
| Creativity |  | Misc/Speciality | HRM | Red= 25-50% presence |
|  |  | Direct Marketing | Knowledge Mgmt. | Blue = 0-25% presence |
|  |  | Creativity |  |  |
|  |  | Marketing Ethics |  |  |
|  |  | Pricing Policy |  |  |

### Interpretation and Discussion

In respect of the mix of PG classes, we have a core of 6 taught at half or more of our sample institutions [discounting those 3 with no PG offering at]. Marketing Communications, Supply Chains, International Marketing, Strategic Marketing and Market Research offer no surprises by their high-ranking. E-Marketing does well, perhaps as a still fashionable choice refreshed by the rise of social media and digital products and services. The mean number of PG classes offered is 8.5.

If we add the supplementary set of classes offered by at least a quarter of institutions –Product and Brand Management, Sales, Services, B2B and Innovation/NPD - we have a fairly coherent spread of subjects, one with a credible case of being practice-orientated. What is missing? Retailing is well down the list, and Pricing and Ethics based classes barely make it onto the roster at all. No class is taught at more than 75% of institutions. In comparing French PG data with UK PG data from Centeno et al (2008) we see that an initial impression of similarity is exposed as at least partially false beyond the first few classes. France has a core of practical sector/specific skill-set classes towards the top of the list [e.g. logistics, B2B], whilst the UK sector seems to have a preference for more generally themed classes like RM connected at least as much to theory as practice. This allows a tentative claim of evidence in support of greater French emphasis on practical teaching and learning. Certainly there seems to be just as much of a lack of standardisation between individual institutions in France as there is in the UK at the PG level.

Turning to the UG classes, it is significant that of our sample, 9 offered no UG marketing classes at all - but we remind readers of our previous comments in respect of relatively fuzzy boundaries between French UG and PG programmes. The mean is 6 classes. Discounting these nine, only one class is offered at three-quarters or more of institutions and unsurprisingly this is an introductory principles class. The further three offered at a majority are Marketing Communications, Market Research and Strategic Marketing and the top four together form a respectable basic curriculum. When compared to the equivalent UK data from Stringfellow et al (2006) there is a distinct similarity with the majority of classes being ranked at the same or similar levels in the hit-parade. Retailing is much lower ranked in France and Supply Chains much higher [but similar in prevalence]. The imbalance in popularity of B2B classes at the PG level is reversed at the UG level, and it is more than twice as widely available in the UK as France. Here there is nothing to support a claim that France has a greater practical focus, but this is a strategic overview, and of course classes with similar names may have radically different pedagogic tactics. There is however a 6-year gap between the samples, but nothing leaps out as benefitting or suffering from fashion and whim.

As sets, France has a much narrower range of widely available UG classes and a lengthy tail – nearly 2/3 of our identified class categories are available at a quarter or less of the institutions. For the UK, more than half the classes are available at more than half the institutions. Both PG sets have fairly similar shapes.

In considering the current state of play of the French sector and the environmental pressures acting upon it, we are reminded of the UK sector immediately prior to 1992. Prior to that, it had been divided into two very clear sub-sectors, a set of traditional institutions – traditional enough to already have the title of University with strong research traditions and a focus on arts and sciences and a second sub-sector of polytechnics which were heavily focused on practical and vocational subjects. This focus was reflected in programme design and orientation, faculty background and experience and integration with respective professional sectors. 1992 saw polytechnics entirely rebranded as universities. To the permanent loss of the sector, many of the strengths associated with the polytechnic concept were thrown away as ambitious senior managers attempted to reshape their institutions into clones of the established universities. By and large, this has only been partially successful. Twenty years later, it is bitterly ironic that the UK sector has created a situation in which many of the ex-polytechnics are held in open contempt by the ignorant and snobbish (Gove, passim) whilst simultaneously many of the ‘ancient’ universities are trying to re-orientate themselves along lines abandoned by those self-same institutions two decades prior.

Pressure on the French education system is similar: the Government is under pressure to better fund the Universities whilst maintaining the fee levels. Rising numbers of students in public universities are debasing the currency, and hence increasing the value of the programmes offered by Grand Ecoles. Rising costs of staff employment due to the need to achieve accreditation and the model offered by the Grand Ecoles of small classes suggests an inherently unsustainable model of education even with reasonably high fee levels. This is reflected in the increasing number of mergers between schools: the creation of France Business School from some of the mid-range Grand Ecoles, the merger of Bordeaux and Euromed, Rouen and Reims; and rumours of Audencia and Rennes merging the actual number of Grand Ecoles is reducing each year. These mergers increase the pressure on the smaller Grand Ecoles to maintain student numbers, which are largely driven by *“classement”* and are becoming a very clear second or third tier. Will France continue with its overcrowded public universities competing with expensive Grand Ecoles or will there ever be cooperation between the two sets of institutions?

It is necessary to ask though, whether such adaptations – accreditation, publication-fixation - are improvements to what and how things are done, or merely acts to conform to global [i.e US-centric] standards and methods and in so doing to lose the inherent, traditional strengths they currently have, all without gaining replacement quality or reputation. Without care, this could be a case of throwing *bébé avec l'eau du bain*.

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### Appendix 1 – Notes on Reconciliation of Class Titles.

Reconciliation of classes – PG – notes:

Culture [1] moved to sport [5]

Marketing ethics [2] combined with Marketing Controversies [1 – overlap] and CSR [1]

Export Development [1] combined with International Marketing [17]

Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty [1] combined with RM/CRM [6]

Corporate Reputation Management [1] combined with Public Relations [4]

Marketing Industry [1] combined with B2B [10]

On the basis of just one overlap, Distribution Policy[8] was combined with Supply Chain Management [12]

Digital Marketing and Social Media [3] was combined with E-Marketing [14] – one overlap

Misc/Speciality incorporates Contemporary Issues [1] Healthcare marketing [1] – 1 overlap -and Small Business Marketing [1] and Crisis Management [2]

Operational Marketing [3] combined into Marketing Management [4]

Reconciliation of classes – UG – notes:

Digital Marketing and Social Media [1] into E-marketing [5] with overlap

Export Development [1] into International Marketing [10] with overlap

Tourism [1] into Misc/Speciality with Creativity and Contemporary no overlap

Innovation/New Product Development [1] into Product/Brand [4] with overlap]

Distribution Policy [6] into Supply Chain [8] with overlap of 4

Marketing Management [2] folds into Strategic Marketing [10] with overlap 1

1. London Metropolitan has suffered very recently from interesting times. It won’t be the last UK HEI to do so: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/oct/18/less-than-half-of-london-metropolitan-universitys-students-choose-to-stay-on> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)