

Executive MBA

FT Executive MBA ranking 2017: a new challenger at number two



Top duo: the EMBA partnership of HKUST Business School in Hong Kong and the Kellogg School of Management in Illinois is number one © Seonweb/Dreamstime, Nancy Stone/Chicago Tribune/TNS/Alamy

Laurent Ortman OCTOBER 16, 2017

It is the first time in the history of FT business education rankings that a programme has been placed so high on its first participation. The [EMBA-Global Asia](#), delivered jointly by Columbia Business School, London Business School and the University of Hong Kong, enters [the FT Executive MBA Ranking of 2017](#) in second place in the first year it was submitted.

Only the joint programme delivered by [Kellogg/HKUST](#) managed to hold off the new entry, retaining the top place it regained last year. In total, this is the eighth time that this programme has been ranked number one. The [Tsinghua University/Insead](#) programme that came top in 2015 drops one place to third.

Two other intercontinental joint-programmes complete the top five, underlining the strong performance of programmes taught in partnerships in more than one country. In fourth place is [EMBA-Global Americas & Europe](#), the sister programme of EMBA-Global Asia but delivered by Columbia and LBS only; and in fifth place is [Trium](#), delivered by HEC Paris, LSE and NYU Stern School of Business, which was number one in 2014.

[Sloan School of Management](#) at MIT also did well on its first participation, entering the ranking in 11th place. This is one of the best performances by a new single-school programme since Insead was ranked ninth in 2007.

This is the [17th edition of the FT global executive MBA ranking of the best 100 programmes worldwide](#) for working senior executives. EMBA programmes are typically modular where participants keep a full-time job while attending classes once a month or every other month. The

[ranking is based on data collected from the business schools and their alumni who graduated in 2014.](#)

Alumni of the EMBA-Global Asia programme, which was launched in 2008, have one of the highest average salaries at \$319,000, an increase of 78 per cent on their pre-EMBA pay. Its alumni are in the top 20 for their career experience before enrolling, as well as for career progress. More than 80 per cent of graduates from the class of 2014 held senior positions from the level of department head upwards. They also have one of the highest satisfaction rates, at 83 per cent.

The programme's alumni also value the global perspective they gained from studying on three continents. The school is ranked seventh for international course experience. "Hong Kong university was a surprisingly excellent addition [to its sister programme]", commented one graduate. "It gave a thorough overview on the most recent developments in Asia."

Alumni from Kellogg/HKUST still have by far the largest average salary at \$478,000. They also have one of the highest satisfaction levels, at 82 per cent. The quality of the faculty was singled out by many graduates.

"The academic level was simply formidable," said one. "Teachers were very experienced on both academic and industrial side, contributing the right mix of theoretical and practical experience."

[HEC Lausanne](#) saw the greatest progression, rising 26 places to 70 after dropping 13 places last year. Positions in the bottom half of the ranking are more volatile than at the top.

Nine other schools are ranked for the first time or returned to the top 100. Among these, [Ross School of Business](#) at the University of Michigan is back at 36, up seven places from its 2015 rank. Both Norway's [NHH](#) in 88th place and Melbourne Business School at 60 were last ranked in 2010.

An EMBA requires a deep personal commitment besides a financial one. "It was extremely hard work to balance the gruelling schedule and workload of the EMBA, a full-time senior job and a very young family," said one graduate in the FT survey. "Collaboration and study groups are essential."

The modules of the most international programmes take place in very different locations in order to provide a global view of business. Rotman's Omnium EMBA, for example, is studied on five continents. "Attending classes whilst jet-lagged is somewhat of a challenge," added another graduate.

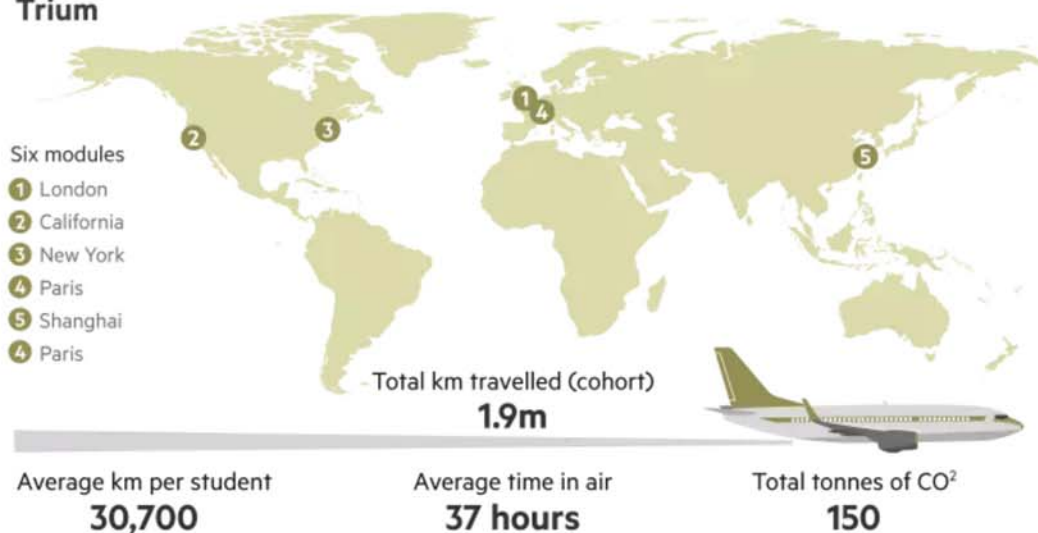
Globetrotting EMBA: four of the longest educational journeys

Estimated distance, time in air and CO₂ emissions*

Trium

Six modules

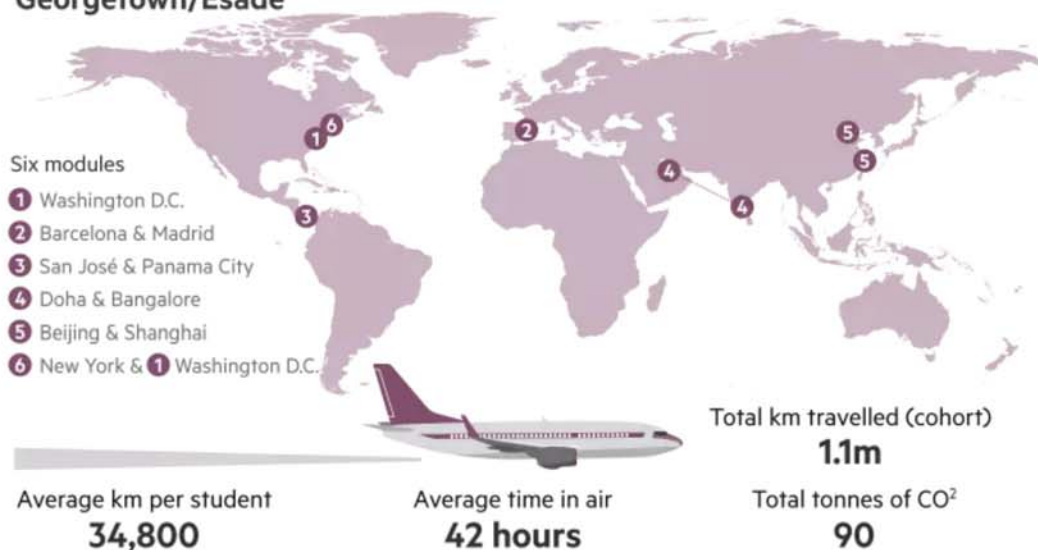
- 1 London
- 2 California
- 3 New York
- 4 Paris
- 5 Shanghai
- 6 Paris



Georgetown/Esade

Six modules

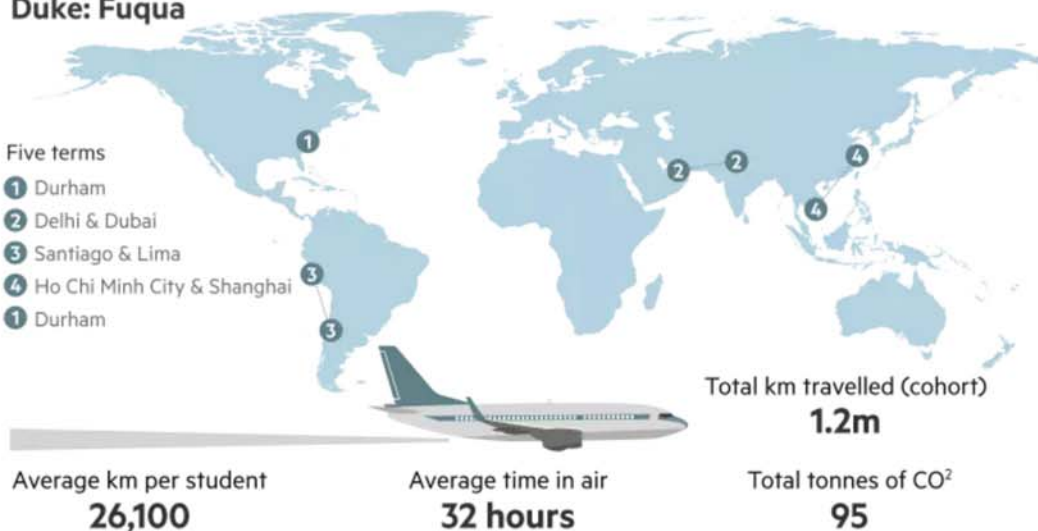
- 1 Washington D.C.
- 2 Barcelona & Madrid
- 3 San José & Panama City
- 4 Doha & Bangalore
- 5 Beijing & Shanghai
- 6 New York & Washington D.C.



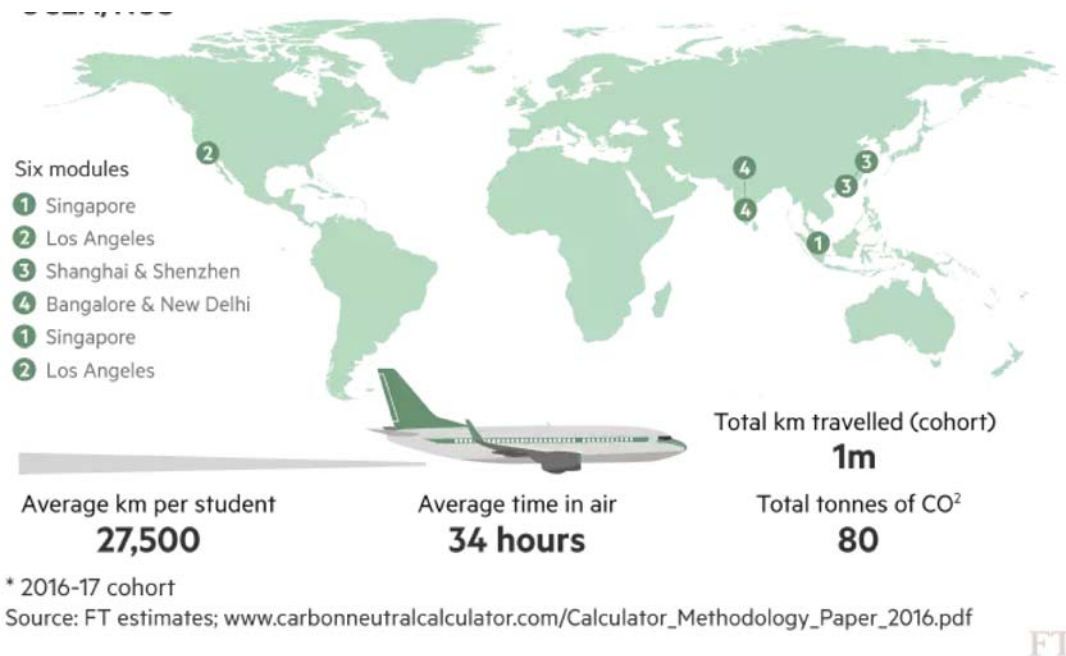
Duke: Fuqua

Five terms

- 1 Durham
- 2 Delhi & Dubai
- 3 Santiago & Lima
- 4 Ho Chi Minh City & Shanghai
- 5 Durham



UCLA/NUS



Top school: Kellogg/HKUST



This is the second year in a row and the eighth time overall that the joint executive MBA delivered by Kellogg School of Management in Illinois and HKUST Business School in Hong Kong tops this ranking. The quality of the participants is one of its main strengths. “The excellent class environment provided rich networking opportunities,” said one surveyed graduate. “Much business has been done amongst my class, including at least six start-ups.” Alumni receive the highest average salary three years after graduation, at \$478,000.

Top new entrant: Columbia/HKU/LBS



The cross-continental joint degree delivered by Columbia Business School, London Business School and the University of Hong Kong comes in at number two. It draws on the strengths of three top-tier schools. “The combination of the schools was very powerful and attracted very interesting students,” said one graduate. The EMBA has a strong focus on entrepreneurship. More than 40 per cent of graduates from the class of 2014 created their own start-ups during or since their EMBA, compared with an average of 27 per cent.

Best gender balance: CUHK



[CUHK Business School](#) has the most gender-balanced cohort, with 49 per cent female students compared with an average of 29 per cent among the top 100 ranked schools. Only the two programmes delivered by the University of Hong Kong and by BI Norway/Fudan University have a majority of women. This is a turnaround from five years ago when only a quarter of students at CUHK were women. The faculty body on the other hand trails in terms of diversity, with only 24 per cent of professors being women.

Highest riser: HEC Lausanne



The Swiss school is the highest climber, rising 26 places to 70. The school had dropped 13 places the previous year. Alumni from the class of 2014 have an average salary of \$133,000, up 29 per cent from their pre-EMBA pay. These are up 12 per cent and 7 percentage points respectively compared with the previous cohort. Despite both being below the overall average, graduates rated their programme highly. “For me, it is the best value-for-money EMBA in Europe,” said one graduate, stressing the degree’s relatively low fee (SFr34,500 in 2013).

Only Oceanian school: Melbourne



Melbourne Business School’s EMBA is the only institution in Oceania among the best 100 programmes. The school re-enters the ranking in 60th place after a gap of seven years, 12 places down compared to its previous rank in 2010. The modular programme takes place over 17 four-day residencies spread across 18 months. “The residential set up provided some fantastic networking experience,” commented one graduate. The school’s alumni tend to be in more junior positions: only about 40 per cent of them work at department head level or above compared with two-thirds of alumni overall.

Only African school: Gibbs



The [Gordon Institute of Business Science](#) at the University of Pretoria, ranked 87th, is the only representative from Africa. It is the first and only African school to feature in this ranking. The school has been continuously ranked since 2011, when it entered the top 100 at 67. Its highest position was 60th, in 2012. Its alumni have the highest average salary among the bottom half of the table at \$207,000, a 48 per cent increase on their pre-EMBA pay. While the school has the second-lowest proportion of international faculty, it is in the top 10 for gender diversity.

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