

Top of the class

Cems claims the number one spot in the 2009 FT masters in management rankings. By *Michael Jacobs*

A CHANGE AT THE TOP for the first time since the rankings were inaugurated in 2005 is the most striking feature of 2009's FT masters in management rankings.

HEC Paris, which has led the ranking for the last four years, has fallen one place to second, with the top spot taken by Cems*, a global alliance of 25 business schools that includes HEC Paris.

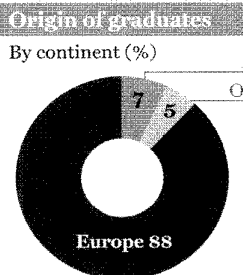
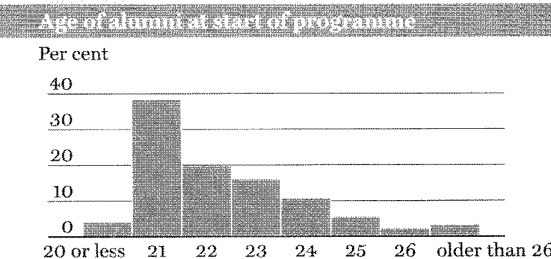
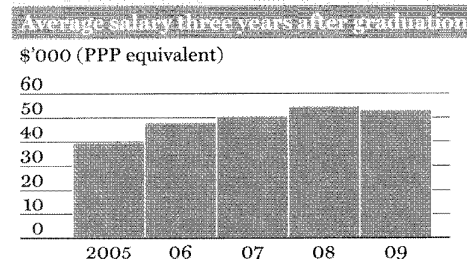
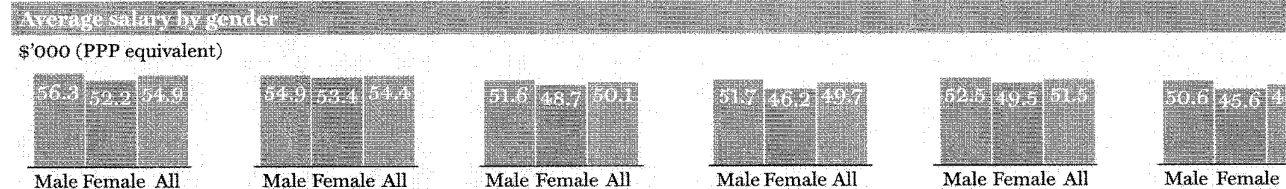
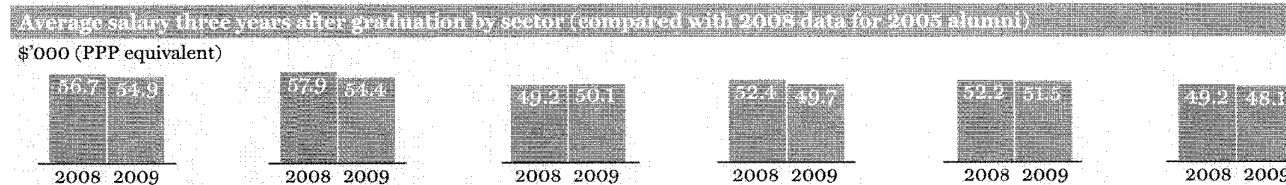
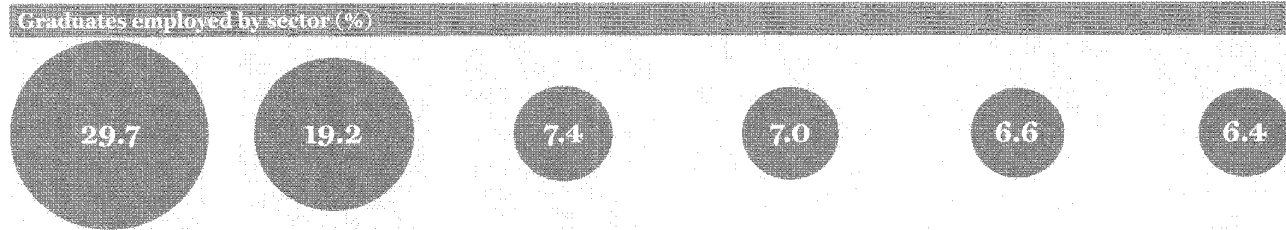
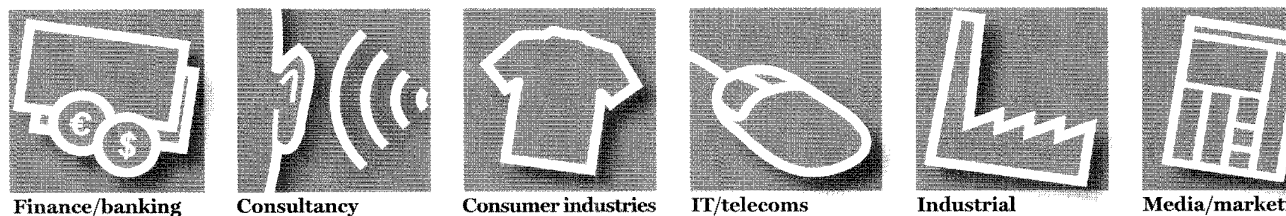
Recently enlarged to include organisations from outside Europe for the first time, Cems offers a masters in international management programme to selected students studying at one of its member schools, with participants awarded the coveted MiM qualification in addition to the degree they receive from their home institution.

The programme lives up to its billing, scoring well on a range of indica-

tors: the percentage of international students, faculty members and board members are all up in the high 90s. Cems alumni also top the ranking of international mobility, which measures changes in the country of residence of alumni between graduation and today.

"Coming from an international family and having travelled a lot, the Cems programme was perfect for me - it enabled me to combine high academic standards with international

2006 alumni: where are they now?



Source: FT masters in management 2009 * Not for profit

experience and networking. It was the first time in all my academic life that I felt I truly fitted in," says one Cems graduate.

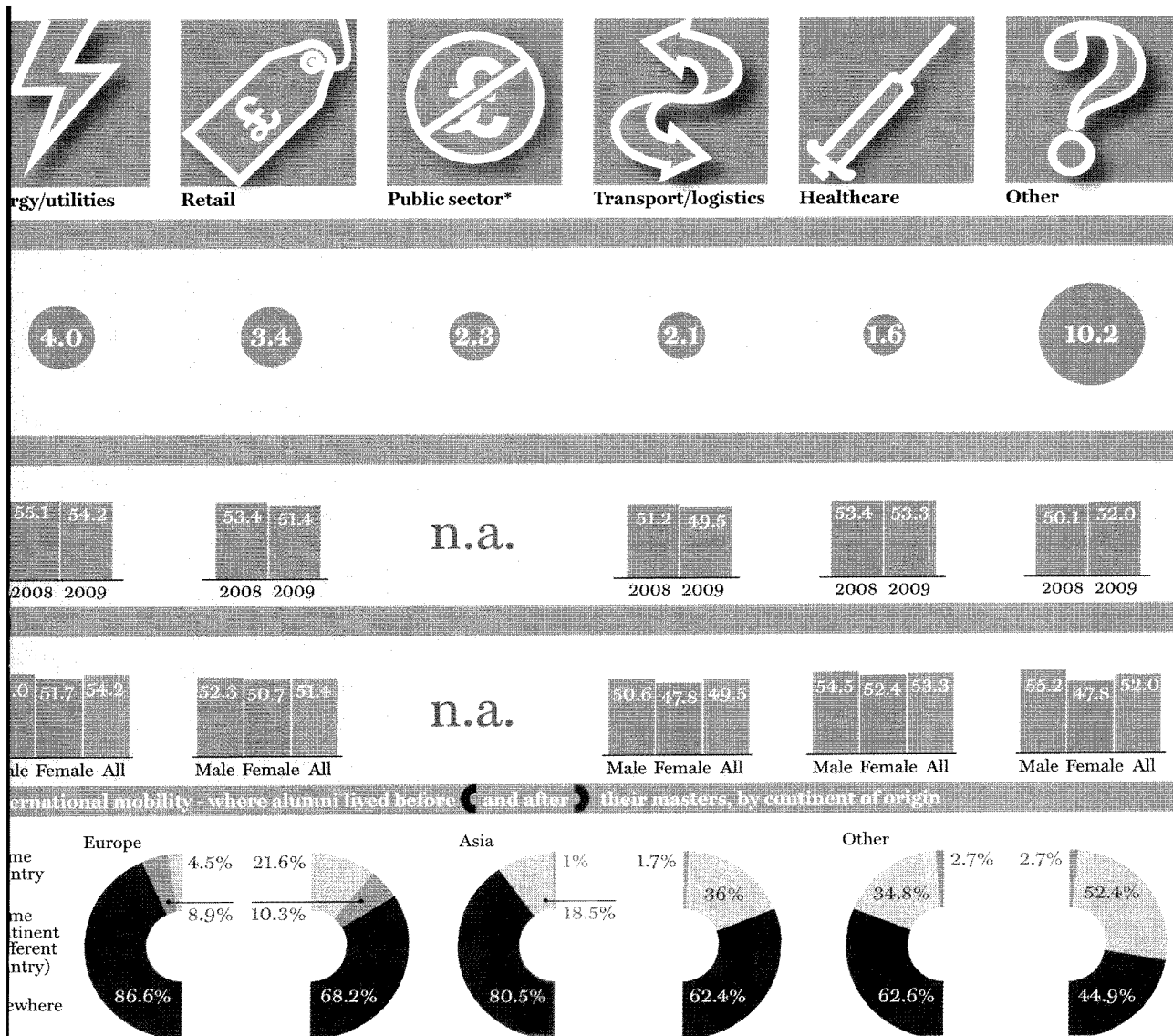
A period of overseas study, which all Cems students must complete, is part of the unique selling point of the programme. Strong links with the business community are another plus. "I managed to find an internship at one of Cems' corporate partners, which made me more valuable on the

international labour market," says one alumnus from the Corvinus University of Budapest.

CEMS' RISE TO THE TOP SPOT is not totally unexpected, with it finishing in either second or third position in each of the last four years. A total of 13 Cems member schools also feature in the 2009 ranking, including four in the top 10 (Rotterdam School of Management,

Erasmus University, ranked 10th, Esade Business School ninth, LSE fourth and HEC Paris second).

This year's breakthrough is largely explained by average salary data. While weighted salary average for Cems graduates is more or less unchanged compared with 2008, up less than 1 per cent to \$61,003 (£37,000), its nearest rivals saw a reduction in alumni salaries year on year. This, combined with a consistent



performance on other indicators, was enough to give Cems the crown.

Across the rankings, the information gathered on salaries gives an indication of how the downturn is affecting graduate earnings.

Overall, average salaries three years after graduation fell by just over three per cent compared with 2008, reaching \$53,000. The consultancy sector, traditionally targeted by graduates seeking the best salary packages, was particularly affected. Alumni reported a decrease of 6 per cent (about \$3,500) year on year, leaving the sector average at \$54,400. Despite this reduction, consultancy is the second highest paying sector, reflecting reductions to levels of remuneration across other sectors.

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Average income in the retail, transport, logistics and finance/banking sectors all fell by more than three per cent. The only group of alumni to buck the trend were those working in consumer industries. Salaries in this sector were up almost 2 per cent to \$50,070, albeit having been the lowest-paying sector in 2008.

Given that the surveyed alumni graduated in 2006, when conditions in the labour market were more favourable, the level of the overall drop in salaries is perhaps surprising. One explanatory factor for the magnitude of the decrease is the concentration of alumni in the consultancy and finance/banking sectors. Almost half of alumni reported that they work in these sectors, which have been

particularly affected by the financial crisis. The fact that salaries reported by alumni also include discretionary bonuses – which have dried up in recent times – may also be a factor.

Purchasing power parity, affected by movements in currencies, has had an impact too. The decline in the overall average salary would have been 2.3 per cent, instead of 3.1 per cent, if the rates used in 2008 still applied.

The news on graduate prospects is not all bad though. Of the 65 per cent of alumni from the most recent graduating class for which schools held data, 86 per cent found employment within three months of graduation. These proportions, both in terms of data coverage and employment, are in line with previous data for the previous four years.

**Alumni data for Cems were gathered from students of the 17 European schools who were members of the then Community of European Management Schools in 2006*