

## "A RESPONSIBLE APPROACH TO LEAGUE TABLES" THE VIEW OF MEMBERS OF EQUAL, THE EUROPEAN QUALITY LINK FOR BUSINESS SCHOOLS AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

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**EQUAL** comprises seven national and three regional associations in Europe, representing over 750 business schools which in turn provide business and management education to over 1 million students.

**ALL** members of **EQUAL** are fully committed to the continuous improvement of the quality of this provision and this is achieved in a variety of ways including the development of national quality standards, quality audits and for example **EQUIS**, the international accreditation scheme.

The full membership of **EQUAL** is set out in **Appendix One**.

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**1** Business schools provide high quality information about the nature and quality of the courses and qualifications they offer. This is often supplemented by the views of previous alumni, current students and associated employers together with the particular quality assessments, kitemarks and accreditations, which they have achieved.

**2** However, an increasing number of newspapers and specialist journals now publish league tables on universities, business schools and for example MBA programmes. These claim to offer authoritative and independent advice to potential students and employers, in the form of "signposts to the best provision".

**3** It only takes a moment to realise the fundamental flaw with such league tables, which is, that they assume that the needs of all students and employers are the same. In reality, the selection of a university, business school or specific course is always a complex and highly individual decision.





4 For example, it may be the case that a highly positioned business school may not even offer the particular programme you are looking for or perhaps not in mode of attendance which most suits your needs.

5 Also, some business schools may have the particular combination of strengths and specialisms that you are looking for but these might not even have been included in the original league table criteria.

6 EQUAL believes therefore that league tables can just as easily mislead as inform and therefore it is reasonable to expect that all published league tables should be conducted in a fully responsible and highly professional manner.

7 While EQUAL will not approve or in any other way endorse any particular league table, it is prepared to set out criteria which should be met by league table producers so that eventual readers will be better placed to judge the quality and usefulness of the league tables produced.

8 The criteria are as follows:

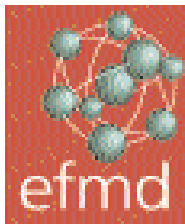
- The research methodology should be scientifically reliable, valid and appropriate to the criteria being measured.
- The range of criteria, which are selected as the basis for comparison should be wide, representative and appropriate for the outcomes being sought. These criteria should be capable of being measured accurately and independently.



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- The assessment process should be credible, impartial and transparent.
- Any individual involved in making judgements about schools or programmes should be expert in all areas covered by the league table and have high personal credibility. They should be independent, unbiased and have no connection (financial or otherwise) with any of the schools or programmes either included or excluded from the league table.



- Pre-selection of schools or programmes should be avoided on the grounds of in-built discrimination and subjectivity. If it is used, then its justification and effects should be described in detail.
- If for example, an accreditation scheme is used as the basis for pre-selection, then prior discussion and agreement with that accreditation agency is essential.
- The application of differential weightings to particular criteria should be avoided. If they are used they should be made explicit and the effect of the weighting should be described in detail.
- Reference to other organisations, which might imply endorsement (explicitly or implicitly), where no such endorsement exists is misleading and should be avoided.



- A ranking or league table, based upon a simple compilation of other rankings or league tables is unacceptable.



## **APPENDIX ONE - CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF EQUAL**

Association of Business Schools (ABS) – UK

Asociación Española de Representantes de Escuelas de Dirección de Empresa (AEEDE) – Spain

Associazione per la Formazione alla Direzione Aziendale (ASFOR) – Italy

Central and Eastern European Management Association (CEEMAN)

Chapitre des Ecoles de Management (CHAPITRE) – France

European Foundation for Management Development (**efmd**)

Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) – Germany, Austria and Switzerland

Association of Management Education (FORUM) – Poland

Russian Association of Business Education (RABE) – Russia

Vereniging van Samenwerkende Nederlandse Universiteiten (VSNU) – Netherlands



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