

MBA course surge outside the US

By Rebecca Knight in Boston

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About 80 per cent of MBA programmes launched over the past 10 years have been introduced outside the US, reflecting the increasing globalisation of the business education market, a study has found.

Of the 3,710 graduate management programmes introduced in that time, more than 1,500 have been at European business schools and 1,449 at schools in Asia, South America, Australia and Africa. The figures include programmes launched with US schools as partners.

"As the economies of India and China are heating up, there's a need for highly trained business managers," said James Danko, dean of the Villanova School of Business in the US, who worked on the study. "You've got the demand so schools are increasing their supply."

North American schools, which have long dominated the MBA market, opened only 708 programmes during the period, according to the study by the Graduate Management Admission Council, an association of business schools.

"Since 2000, we've seen less interest from [international students] wanting to come to the US," said Mr Danko. "The two main drivers of that are that European schools have started to get a better reputation in terms of the quality of their programmes and their faculty, and the fact that it has been problematic for international students to get a visa after September 11."

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11 2001, the US state department imposed tough restrictions on foreign students seeking visas to study in the US. However, the department has recently added staff, a move that has improved visa application processing times.

These efforts have not completely reversed the trend, however. "It used to be the be all and end all, but the lustre is off the US MBA," said Mr Danko. "I am sure the automotive companies in the US thought they'd always be the strongest out there too. But there's no reason to believe that we'll always have an edge."

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