

Mapping the Global Landscape of Business Doctoral Programs





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### **About AACSB**

At AACSB our mission is to foster engagement, accelerate innovation, and amplify impact in business education. AACSB strives to continuously improve engagement among businesses, faculty, institutions, and students so that business education is aligned with business practice.

## **AACSB's Global Membership**

We are a global organization that supports and connects more than 1,700 member organizations and over 870 accredited business schools around the world, with offices in Tampa, Florida, United States; Amsterdam, the Netherlands; and Singapore.

3 1,700+ **GLOBAL OFFICES** 870+ **ACCREDITED** SCHOOLS



We foster engagement, accelerate innovation, and amplify impact in business education.



#### **VISION**

Transforming business education globally for positive societal impact.



#### **VALUES**

Quality • Diversity and Inclusion • Global Mindset • Ethics • Social Responsibility • Community

## About EDAMBA

EDAMBA, the "European Doctoral programmes Association in Management and Business Administration," is an international nonprofit association currently operating in 28 countries.

Our mission is to develop common ideas, values, evaluation criteria, standards, and practices to assess and enhance the quality of doctoral education through the exchange of experiences and cooperation in a global network.

EDAMBA members are committed to creating and sharing initiatives and achieving excellence while appreciating and promoting collaboration, diversity, and community-building.

#### **Our Aim**

Develop and secure the highest standards in doctoral education in the fields of management and business studies.

#### **Our Values**

Quality • Community • Diversity • Knowledge

## **Membership**

64 doctoral programs in 28 countries from 5 continents



# **Joint Study Background**

## 2013 Doctoral Education **Task Force**

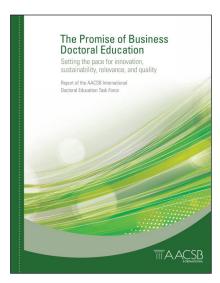
AACSB's interest in partnering on this study stems from much of the work uncovered by the 2013 Doctoral Education Task Force. which looked at the current state of. challenges for, and opportunities facing business doctoral education worldwide. The task force proposed a set of recommendations and opportunities for further innovations for business doctoral programs to explore.

The task force identified five priorities for business doctoral programs to pursue, includina:

- **Pursuing Purpose**
- Strengthening Capacity
- **Expanding Access**
- **Assuring Quality**
- Cultivating an Ecosystem

The task force report provided recommendations for business doctoral programs to explore new innovations in order to create impact and meet the demands of business, business education, and business knowledge.

As AACSB and EDAMBA engaged, the organizations uncovered alignment across their priorities for business doctoral education, which helped shape the research priorities for this joint study.



View the Report

## **AACSB and EDAMBA Coming Together**

At the 2018 AACSB EMEA Annual Conference in Paris, France, EDAMBA's president met with AACSB's executive vice president and chief officer for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) to explore ways to build on common interests in quality enhancement, impactful research, and doctoral education. The two groups agreed to further explore three key milestones for doctoral programs worldwide:

- The 2013 AACSB report, The Promise of **Business Doctoral Education**
- The European Code of Practice for Doctoral Studies in Management and **Business** published by EDAMBA and the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management in 2014
- The EQUIS doctoral programs standard published by the EQUAL network in 2016

In 2019, AACSB and EDAMBA embarked on a project that would take steps in mapping the changing landscape of global doctoral education across the two respective memberships.

See Appendix: About the Study to learn more about the study process and methodology.

**Overview of Findings:** Surveys to Doctoral Program **Directors and Doctoral Students** 

# **Survey Overviews**

Two surveys were administered for this study—one directed to the program director/individual who leads the school's doctoral program(s) and a second administered to current doctoral students of schools that opted in to the student survey and agreed to share the survey with their programs' students.

#### **Participation**

• 179 total institutions; 269 doctoral programs across 45 countries1

<b>Program Director Survey</b> (December 2019)			
Region	Number of Institutions	Number of Doctoral Programs Represented	
Global (45 countries)	179	269	
Americas	65 (36%)	90 (33%)	
Asia Pacific	28 (16%)	41 (15%)	
EMEA	86 (48%)	138 (51%)	

• 102 programs across 96 institutions opted in for the phase 2 survey directed to doctoral students

### **Program Categories Represented<sup>2</sup>**

- 84% PhD/Traditional academic
- 15% Professional (e.g., DBA, Executive Doctorate, etc.)
- 4% Industry (e.g., Industrial PhD)
- 2% Other

## **Participation**

• **429** total responses (students) across 46 programs and 41 institutions

## **Doctoral Student Survey** (March 2020)

(1.131.1.2323)				
Region	Number of Institutions	Number of Student Respondents		
Global (19 countries and 46 programs)	41	429		
Americas	18 (44%)	233 (54%)		
Asia Pacific	10 (24%)	71 (17%)		
EMEA	13 (32%)	125 (29%)		

## **Students' Working Experience**

- 62% of students indicated working in an industry position (including private, public, nonprofit) prior to their doctoral study, while 30% indicating working in an academic staff position prior to their doctoral study.
- Of those students with industry experience:
  - 40% had 1-5 years of experience
  - 21% had 10-15 years of experience
  - 11% had more than 20 years of experience

## **Research Focus**

Program directors were asked to identify which type of research focus their programs best characterized. As a whole, most programs equally emphasized both new scientific knowledge and new applicable knowledge; but as one would expect, those programs that were characterized as professional (e.g., DBA, Executive Doctorate, etc.) were significantly more likely (at 46%) to primarily emphasize new applicable knowledge in comparison to the PhD/traditional academic (at 3%).



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>A single institution may have multiple doctoral programs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Respondents could select more than one category for their program.

## **Career Paths**

Participants from both the program director and doctoral student surveys were asked questions regarding doctoral student intended career paths-program directors from the perspective of the paths their programs' graduates typically take, and students reflecting on their own aspirations.

Student respondents identified their intended career paths at the time they applied to their doctoral programs, as well as at the time they completed the survey in order to see how or if career aspirations might shift as students progress through their studies. The majority of students continue to see themselves having a career in a faculty position.

However, at the time of survey completion we did see a slight increase of interest in careers related to self-employment/consulting and creating a new company, and a slight decrease from a career in academe.

The program directors survey results show that 86 percent of programs have graduates who typically pursue careers in academia, followed by 53 percent with graduates who seek careers in industry, 32 percent in government, and 19 percent in NGOs.3

## Career Paths as Indicated by Students in Student Survey

At Time of Application to Program		
Career	Percentage of Students	
Academia, in faculty position	71%	
Private, for-profit	10%	
Public sector/government	7%	
Self-employed consultant	4%	
Create my own company	3%	
Nonprofit/non-governmental organization	1%	

Percentages do not equal 100 as "Other" category is not included in the tables.

At Time of Survey Completion		
Career	Percentage of Students	
Academia, in faculty position	66%	
Private, for-profit	9%	
Self-employed consultant	8%	
Public sector/government	6%	
Create my own company	6%	
Nonprofit/non-governmental org	1%	

Percentages do not equal 100 as the "Other" category is not included in the tables.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Percentages do not equal 100 as respondents could select more than one answer.

# For Some, Career **Expectations Shifted**

Although the career aspirations of surveyed doctoral students remained similar from the time they applied to the program to the time they completed the survey, several respondents shared their perspectives on how their future career plans had shifted as they progressed through their doctoral studies. Although those who diverted from academia represented a small proportion of respondents, the insights shared by those select few can be helpful to program directors as they evaluate the types of student support opportunities they can provide to students throughout their studies.

Some excerpts are shared here, grouped into several themes that emerged:



### **Select Student Open-Ended Responses**

#### **Shift in Academic Focus**



Entering the program, I knew I liked teaching college students, but was not sure about the research. Now, I really enjoy the research aspect as well, so my target universities (teaching vs. research) have shifted throughout the program.

## **Broadening Horizons**



During the program I have been exposed to new domains of thought that allow me to develop and apply new professional skills.

This program changed my perspective and broadened the horizons of my expectations from myself. I wish to make a bigger change now than just limiting myself to a faculty position.

I have realized that my knowledge is already an asset and there is a clear demand for it. Therefore, I see that my career could consist of multiple sources of income, where part of it could come from the academic field and part of it from consultative work that I could offer for public sector and NGOs.

## **Diverting From Academia**



I considered a career in academia to be an option for me. After experiencing and hearing of other people's experiences in academia, especially related to the tenure track, that career path has become significantly less desirable.

I realized that having an academic career would be more dependent on networking and knowing the right people than your actual qualifications and therefore I decided not to pursue an academic career.

Academia is anti-social. Particularly, there is little sense of community... Assistant professors have little to no work-life balance and feel constant pressure about meeting tenure requirements.

While I still enjoy research, I have realized how hard it is to make an academic career because of the shortage of funding and lack of stability in employment (short contracts).

I don't know whether the academic career path is for me. It can be very close-minded and old-fashioned.

I considered the prospect of a faculty position in research. After seeing the dysfunction in universities, I changed my mind. I also considered a position in teaching but have determined that this would not be a good choice for me, either, based on the archaic system of management in academia.

# **Supervisory Models**

Respondents to the doctoral program directors survey were asked about their programs' supervisory models. Results show that the majority of programs across all regions have a supervisory model where multiple individuals serve as co-supervisors/ advisors, but one individual is considered the primary supervisor, followed by a single individual serving as the doctoral supervisor/ advisor. This model, however, was less prevalent in EMEA.

Supervisory Model	Global	Americas	Asia Pacific	EMEA
Multiple individuals (1 primary)	67%	59%	66%	73%
Single individual	35%	49%	41%	23%
Flexible, varies	16%	26%	7%	12%
Multiple individuals (equal)	10%	9%	0	14%

Percentages do not equal 100, as respondents could select all that apply.

# **Student Perspectives** on Supervision

Respondents to the student survey were also asked about supervision in their doctoral programs, including the importance of the supervisory relationship to their success, and were given the option to elaborate on what they valued most.

of students said the supervisory relationship was important (38%) or most important (56%) to their success

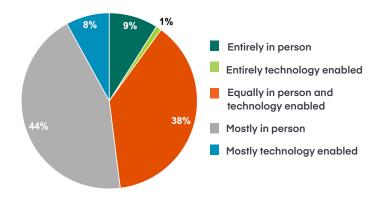
The types of activities and support that students say they most valued from their supervisors include:

- Guidance in focusing research
- Developing new, higher-level thinking
- Creating balance between autonomy and mentorship
- Access to academic networks/expertise
- Publication process support/experience
- Cultivating a personable relationship

Although student respondents participated in the survey prior to the widespread onset of COVID-19, there may still be value in learning the degree to which student-supervisor interactions were technology enabled. Further, as we may expect more cases today where doctoral students do not reside in the same location as their supervisor, as of March 2020 nearly a third of student respondents indicated so.

of doctoral students said they do not reside in the same location as their supervisor<sup>4</sup>

## **Degree of Technology-Enabled** Interaction With Supervisor<sup>4</sup>



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>These insights were collected prior to global onset of COVID-19.

## **Contributions for Doctoral** Theses/Dissertations

Program directors shared what characterizes acceptable contributions for theses and dissertations in their programs.

Globally, a single authored monograph was most frequently selected across programs. However in the Americas, an anthology or paper collection composed of multiple, separate, and primarily co-authored studies with a common focus was most frequently selected.

In Asia Pacific, where the anthology model was the least prevalent selection across programs, the second most frequently selected form for theses and dissertations was publication of one or more articles in a journal. This option was the least selected across other regions.

Thesis/Dissertation Type	Global	Americas	Asia Pacific	EMEA
Traditional model: single-authored study (monograph)	61%	59%	71%	59%
Primarily co-authored anthology	47%	64%	17%	45%
Primarily single-authored anthology	49%	48%	29%	57%
Publication of one or more articles in a journal	36%	23%	54%	38%

Percentages do not equal 100, as respondents could select all that apply.

# **Teaching Preparation**

The study aimed to learn more about how teaching preparation was being addressed across doctoral programs. Responses to the program directors survey indicate that only 31 percent of reported programs include a mandatory requirement for teaching preparation. In general, teaching preparation appears to be encouraged and considered valuable by most institutions, but few prioritize this area.

- Preparation for teaching is not an expectation in part of the program: 51%
- Students have an option to teach/assist with a class during the program: 44%
- Preparation for teaching is a mandatory/ explicit part of the program's requirements: 31%
- Preparation for teaching is encouraged (e.g., supported by optional resources and/ or mentorship) but not an expectation: 31%
- Students are expected to teach/assist with a class during the program: 30%

Percentages do not equal 100, as respondents could select all that apply.



## **Do Students Feel Prepared?**

Seventy-five percent of student respondents said they felt prepared to effectively teach, with 64 percent of those respondents within two years of program completion. Eight percent replied that they do not feel prepared to effectively teach, while 14 percent said they are not sure<sup>5</sup>.

Further insight on how schools are addressing this area could be useful and of interest to doctoral programs looking to make teaching preparation a greater priority.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The remaining 3 percent indicated they were in a doctoral program not intended for teaching.

## **Online Coursework**

At the time of the survey, only 2 percent of surveyed programs reported offering coursework fully online. Further, 40 percent of student respondents said there is or could be value in moving some of the doctoral program to an online format. Students shared the pros and cons of greater use of online tools for program delivery. Many of the benefits and downfalls that students predicted would occur in online delivery are playing out in the COVID-19 learning environment. For example, advantages include an online format allows for locational flexibility and access to a wider variety of resources and/or specialists. Downfalls, on the other hand, include isolation, lack of networking opportunities, and fewer in-depth and critical conversations with peers and supervisors.

### **Programs**

- 45% of programs do not offer coursework online
- 19% of programs offer coursework partly online
- 2% of programs offer coursework fully online (4 programs)

Percentages do not equal 100, as respondents could select all that apply, and the figures do not include "other" as a possible answer.

Responses collected prior to global onset of COVID-19.

#### **Students**

of all students think there is/could be value in moving some of the doctoral program experience to an online format while, 27% are not sure

Student respondents were invited to share their perspectives on the advantages and disadvantages of online delivery within a doctoral program. Below are some themes that surfaced from their responses.

### Online Learning Allows for...

- Greater access to specialists and resources
- · Flexibility for working students
- Locational flexibility
- · Better use of resources and time
- Experience in teaching within an online environment
- On-demand, personalized learning opportunities

## Online Learning Cannot Replace...

- Peer interaction and support in what is often described as a "lonely job"
- Development of networks
- Collegiality
- The seminar experience
- Higher-order thinking and discourse
- A stronger mentorship relationship/ experience





"Online resources can certainly supplement the coursework, but doctoral work cannot be completed only online. The in-person seminars are crucial to developing relationships that lead to collaborations and provide peer support through very difficult academic challenges."



"As member of the knowledge-based society, you can benefit from the opportunities provided by the technology. You can better use your resources and may achieve a better performance."

## **Indicators of Success**

Respondents to both surveys were asked to identify metrics that they associate with success of the doctoral program from their respective viewpoints as program directors and doctoral students.

Although the answer options from the two surveys were worded slightly different, in general, the three most frequently selected indicators of success remained the same among both groups and across regions (Americas, Asia Pacific, EMEA). However, increase in salary and promotion were selected more frequently by students than program directors.

## **Doctoral Programs**

Metrics Used for Assessing Program Success	% of Programs
Graduation rates within duration of program	78%
Proportion of graduates who are successful in obtaining academic job at "desired" institution	62%
Number of publications in defined list/tier of academic journals	44%
Student promoted when degree earned	9%
Student salary increases when degree earned	6%

Percentages do not equal 100, as respondents could select all that apply.

#### **Doctoral Students**

Indicators of Success Upon Program Completion	% of Students
Achieving desired number of publication(s) in defined list/tier of academic journals	82%
Obtaining academic job at desired institution	70%
Graduating within duration of the program	55%
Salary increase upon earning degree	28%
Receiving promotion upon earning doctoral degree	21%

Percentages do not equal 100, as respondents could select all that apply.

# **Desired Doctoral Degree Outcomes for Students**

Student respondents were provided with a set of excerpts depicting profiles of doctoral degree holders and were asked to identify up to two that resonated most strongly with them.

## **Excerpts That Resonated With Students**

- Has become a prolific publisher in leading peer-reviewed journals: 42%
- Has conducted research that has shaped public policy: 35%
- Has become recognized for innovative and engaging teaching: 29%
- Has become recognized as an expert in the application of "X": 28%
- Has become recognized as an expert in theory of "X": 25%
- Has become a frequent contributor to an academic published management magazine: 13%
- Has collaborated on numerous NGO projects: 10%
- Is frequently called upon by journalists and news media: 7%
- Has authored several bestselling books: 4%

## **In Relation to Career Expectations**

Some differences appeared across desired types of impact when viewed across student career expectations at the time of the survey. For instance, those looking for an academic career in a faculty position were more likely to want to be associated with being a prolific publisher in leading peer reviewed journals. However, those hoping for careers in the public sector/ government, as well as those students anticipating a career at a private, for-profit organization, were more likely to select wanting to conduct research that has shaped public policy, in addition to being recognized as an expert in theory "X."



# What the Future Holds for Doctoral Programs and Faculty

Program directors had the opportunity to share any specific strategic shifts or new approaches they had recently implemented or were planning to implement within their programs, at the time of the survey. Some of the major areas that escalated within their responses include:

## **Strategic Shifts/Priorities for Doctoral Programs**

- Mental health and well-being initiatives
- Mentorship on creating research with impact
- Specialized academic centers
- Transferable skills development
- Mode of delivery (e.g., online), program length
- Partnership development—academic and corporate
- Funding model (e.g., more departmental, studentships, research allowances)
- Incentives (e.g., interdisciplinary work, cash awards)
- Teacher training support
- Mandatory courses on big data
- Soft skills development
- Online resource hubs

## Role of Faculty, 10 Years From Now

Students who said they aspired to an academic career in a faculty position were asked how they thought their role as a faculty member 10 years into the future might differ from the faculty role today:

- 50% said somewhat different from that of present-day faculty
- 28% said very different from that of present-day faculty
- 14% said the same as that of present-day faculty
- 8% said they weren't sure

## When asked to elaborate on how the role would be different 10 years from now, the following themes surfaced:

- More interdisciplinary
- Oriented to real-life, practical problems
- Active/practical engaged scholarship
- Al/technology enabled; virtual platforms
- Greater demand for rigor and relevancy
- More cooperation with industry
- New funding structures/incentive models
- More emphasis on working with data
- Personal brand building
- New university models



# **COVID-19 Impacts on Doctoral Programs**

Considering that both the program director and student surveys were conducted prior to the global onset of COVID-19, AACSB and EDAMBA engaged in 19 exploratory interviews with program directors to better understand and capture the direct impacts business doctoral programs were facina.

A short survey was also released in September 2020 that focused on impacts of COVID-19 to doctoral programs. Although participation was low, the insights shared helped shape understanding of the challenges and opportunities business doctoral programs face.

## **Major Areas of Disruption to Doctoral Program**

#### **Mental Wellness**

- Student (and faculty) isolation, especially among international students who are unable to travel
- Overall insecurity around future (private and professional life)
- Engagement of students and faculty
- Overload on faculty; juggling additional responsibilities

## **Network Building**

- Inability to participate in conferences and build networks and relationships that integrate students into the scientific community
- Supervisory relationship strained; more difficult to engage in higher-level discussions, exchange best practices, and cultivate personal relationships outside of the program

## **Program Delivery**

- Online format attractive to certain part of student market, e.g., part-time students, and can help globalize program offerings, widen access to speakers, as well as diversify and increase candidate pool
- Alternatively, online format might not be conducive to quality for certain programs, e.g., those dependent on strong supervisory relationships
- Presents time-zone challenges
- Certain areas of administration may be more efficient in an online setting, e.g., setting up office hours, scheduling, etc.; other areas may be faced with excessive flow of information and difficulty in managing

### Student Intake/Financial

- Scholarships/funding, particularly for international students, have been deferred until travel/visa restrictions have been lifted
- International student visa challenges
- Student intake may increase in certain markets, e.g., as unemployment rises, doctoral study may seem like a more attractive career move
- Some schools have made strategic decisions to increase student intake, e.g., within professionally oriented programs where the online format allows a wider candidate pool

#### Research

- New research topics/areas of interest or demand (e.g., effects of social distancing on certain industries, organizational impacts, remote working structures, etc.)
- Increased relevancy of business school research
- Challenges in facilitating research exchange programs
- Increase in research productivity for some doctoral students, while significant decrease for others (e.g., individuals with domestic/family obligations, individuals facing infrastructure constraints, etc.)

#### **Job Market**

• Hiring freezes in certain markets/types of institutions; hiring boost in others

## What's Next for Doctoral Programs

Several lessons learned and insights on new strategic directions were shared through conversations between the AACSB and EDAMBA teams and doctoral program directors.

## **Potential Strategic Shifts and Lessons** Learned

- Explore hybrid models for delivery or consider new offerings that can be delivered exclusively or partly online
- Develop programs that are positioned more for a practitioner/industry audience
- Nurture more cooperation with other institutions, e.g., develop consortia in order to increase scale while reducing/sharing costs
- · Shift in focus to national/domestic market in light of international travel/visa barriers (temporary or as long as challenges remain); reduce dependence on candidates from a single country/region
- Revise course structure and topics to be more relevant and agile to current needs
- Create proactive processes for implementing technology-based options
- Increase faculty training in online delivery



## **Closing Reflections**

While AACSB and EDAMBA research teams were quite pleased with the global participation from both doctoral program directors and doctoral students in the two surveys, the findings suggest that there is much more that can be studied to better understand the variability and unique challenges and opportunities that business school doctoral programs face.

As mentioned earlier in the report, the surveys were launched prior to the global onset of COVID-19 and therefore we imagine that if they had been conducted later in 2020, some questions would have yielded significantly different responses.

We feel compelled to continue delving deeper into the findings from these surveys and to further explore the topics that we consider unique to doctoral programs in our respective communities. Better understanding of the evolving landscape of doctoral programs continues to be in demand as business schools seek greater innovation within their doctoral program offerings. Such enhanced programs can positively impact societies and economies both locally and worldwide.

From conversations with doctoral program directors, we have learned about opportunities for serving a wider market of doctoral candidates whose career paths may veer in the direction of industry sectors as opposed to the more traditionally pursued academic careers. This is one area where further insight is necessary.

From this study, we realized a need to better understand how the particular aspects of a program—supervisory models, course structures, and research/thesis expectations and outputs, to name a few—can impact student shifts in expected career outcomes, as well as inspire multiple career paths that they hope to achieve throughout their future careers.

It also became evident just how pronounced regional, contextual, and institutional differences impact doctoral program models. In some cases, we observed significant differences in things like supervisory models or dissertation types, based on region. These initial findings only present a preliminary glimpse and further emphasize the need for a global discussion around innovation and variability in models of business doctoral education.

As the pandemic continues to disrupt numerous industries, including higher education, common public goods, and the nature of life and work, we expect that this is just the start to business doctoral programs evolving to meet a new set of demands not only by students, but also by stakeholders who turn to relevant business research for shaping organizational priorities and strategies in order to thrive.

# Appendix: About the Study

AACSB and EDAMBA came together in early 2019 with the joint objective to learn more about the global landscape of business doctoral programs, including its defining characteristics, points of variability, unique challenges and opportunities, and what "might be next" in terms of innovation. The study consisted of two surveys:

- Survey to doctoral program directors/ leads of doctoral programs at 641 AACSB and EDAMBA member schools. The survey was open from November 2019 to December 2019.
- Respondents to 102 of the doctoral programs (at 96 institutions) opted in to share the student survey with their doctoral students. The survey was open from March 2020 to April 2020.

Given the significant impacts to higher education resulting from COVID-19, AACSB and EDAMBA teams engaged in 19 exploratory interviews with surveyed program directors to gain better understanding of the immediate and anticipated impacts faced by global business doctoral programs. The experiences shared from those interviews helped inform much of the insights in this report.

In September 2020, a brief survey focused on COVID-19 impacts to doctoral programs was distributed to the same set of 102 respondent programs as in the student survey. Participation was low, at 24 responses, but this feedback supported some of the insights shared from the interviews.

On September 29, 2020, preliminary survey results were shared with attendees at EDAMBA's General Assembly. Afterward, the AACSB and EDAMBA teams began work on producing this report to provide an overview of study findings and to continue to prompt important questions that business school leaders, doctoral program directors, and doctoral faculty should discuss and explore around business doctoral education.

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### Exploratory interviews were held with key informants at the following institutions:

Antwerp University

**Bond University** 

Corvinus University of Budapest

**Durham University** 

EGADE Business School Tecnológico de Monterrey **ESADE** 

Hanken School of Economics

Hong Kong Baptist University

Kozminski University

New York University

Oklahoma State University

Örebro University

Stanford University

The Open University

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Tongji University

Universiti Utara Malaysia

University of Ljubljana

University of Rennes



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