European Management Education: learning to think differently

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Abstract

The Europeanisation of management education and training has received considerable attention in recent years. Whereas for some, the inclusion of European experience for students has been seen as sufficient to propose a labour market connection (Easterby-Smith, 1992), others have been more sceptical (Linstead et al, 1988). They warn there is a danger in assuming that the actual activity is equated with 'becoming European'. This study examines the nature of management education and training for courses with an explicit European dimension. It attempts to find out what the structure and substance of this dimension is in the curriculum, and moreover, to identify whether it is connected to the development of a European perspective. The relationship between such a curriculum and the Europeanisation (or Internationalisation) of the institution is regarded as a critical issue in this context.

The research design attempted to capture the views of the main participants in this area; educationalists (here Course Leaders), students and employers through a progressive focusing on emergent issues. An initial survey of course priorities was used to inform in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a sample of selected Course Leaders. Next, a small-scale qualitative study using group discussions on two sites was used in order to focus on the experience of students, and highlight the courses from their perspective. Finally, employers were consulted for their views by a series of telephone interviews. In this way, utilising multiple methods and a strongly qualitative approach, the design attempted to make the very transitional nature of European management education, and Europe, more accessible and meaningful in a holistic manner.

The main conclusions of the study are that a European dimension to management education is not yet as developed as some claims might suggest. Some courses in the study show both more intention towards a European commitment, and actual realisation of it, than others. The increased mobility of students in Europe attached to these courses is undeniable, as is the corresponding activity of institutions in creating international partnership links. The depth of much of this activity is however questionable. Curriculum development is variable, with the identification of uniquely European components difficult to establish definitively. Insight into a cultural
perspective, though an important objective, is not ensured by the curriculum, and is still highly dependent on individual opportunity and circumstances.

Similarly with the institution relationship, this study finds a complex situation with many tensions evident, and European development in most cases dependent on resourcing and institutional inclination, rather than a deeply held commitment to a European future. From the student perspective, the growth of European-mindedness is attached to the course process quite definitely, and strong European career ambitions are expressed. Employers, on the other hand, perceive European graduates as having only a slight difference from other Business Studies graduates. The study shows that employers are not yet as receptive to European Business/Management Studies graduates as they might be, but what does capture their interest is time spent abroad and linguistic proficiency. They are perhaps becoming more attuned to the need for cultural competence, but more work is needed from both industry and education before the full potential of these graduates is realised.
To the memory of Abelard and Heloise
The flame of conception seems to flare and go out, leaving man shaken, and at once happy and afraid. There's plenty of precedent of course. Everyone knows about Newton's apple. Charles Darwin said his *Origin of Species* flashed complete in one second, and he spent the rest of his life backing it up; and the theory of relativity occurred to Einstein in the time it takes to clap your hands. This is the greatest mystery of the human mind - the inductive leap. Everything falls into place, irrelevancies relate, dissonance becomes harmony, and nonsense wears a crown of meaning. But the clarifying leap springs from a rich soil of confusion, and the leaper is not unfamiliar with pain.

*from Steinbeck's Sweet Thursday*
Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of my supervisors, Dr Alan Brown and Professor Karen Evans. They have offered not just advice, encouragement and moral support, but also the example of their own research.

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## Glossary

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<td>AGRC</td>
<td>Association of Graduate Recruiters</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-level</td>
<td>Advanced level of the General Certificate of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTEC</td>
<td>Business and Technician Education Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATS</td>
<td>Credit Accumulation and Transfer Schemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBI</td>
<td>Confederation of British Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNAA</td>
<td>Council for National Academic Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMETT</td>
<td>Community Action Programme in Education and Training for Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRAC</td>
<td>Careers Research and Advisory Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTI</td>
<td>Department of Trade and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECTS</td>
<td>European Community Course Credit Transfer System</td>
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<td>EMDS</td>
<td>European Management Development Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
<td>European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDS</td>
<td>First Destination Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>HND</td>
<td>Higher National Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUA</td>
<td>Programme to promote improvement in the knowledge of foreign languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>National Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O-level</td>
<td>Ordinary level of the General Certificate of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCAS</td>
<td>Polytechnics Central Admissions System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEA</td>
<td>Single European Act (Single Act)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEM</td>
<td>Single European Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEC</td>
<td>Training and Enterprise Council</td>
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<td>TEMPUS</td>
<td>Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies</td>
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<td>UCCA</td>
<td>Universities Central Council on Admissions</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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INTRODUCTION

The overall aim of this research study has been to examine the nature of management education and training for those undertaking courses with an explicit European dimension. Its more specific focus was encapsulated in two objectives: first, in examining a selected number of courses to establish the extent to which the academic process related to current orientations for management in the new European business context. Second, to identify the relationship between the development of this form of European curriculum, and the 'Europeanisation' of institutions. To achieve these objectives, the study focuses on three main groups involved in this process, i.e. educational practitioners, course participants and employers. It examines the motivations and attitudes of these groups in order to establish the parameters of the European dimension, as it is interpreted, and its potential connection with the area of European management. The key question of whether these courses are making a significant contribution to developing a European perspective through the curriculum, or by their very existence in institutions, is addressed through the findings from the three perspectives. In broad terms, the study was conducted using a naturalistic approach because of its appropriateness to the research topic, and researcher alike. The higher education context is a dynamic one, and such an approach suits the 'messiness of the real world'. It allows it to stay alive and keep its immediacy, yet at the same time take advantage of opportunities that arise for in-depth examination.

Origins of the study

The research topic was chosen for reasons of both professional and personal interest in the European situation. The creation of the Single European Market (SEM) and the collapse of the former Eastern bloc in the late 1980s led to a new consciousness about European identity. It therefore seemed a particularly appropriate time to investigate the nature of education's European response against these shifting social and business conditions. The context of higher education (HE) at that interval was also significant. The gradual introduction of a marketplace culture produced considerable change in
HE institutions (*The Economist*, 1992). Given the duration of the research study, it should be noted that this 'culture' has now progressed to a point (February, 1996) where it might be argued that it is a norm (Meikle, 1995). At the same time a similar 'shaking up' was occurring in the specific area of management education in the UK, which was also highly relevant. Finally, a further development was the noticeable inclusion of more and more European based courses, and European initiatives in HE. To set these parameters in their broad context, the following explanation will briefly consider the management education background, and then the Europeanisation of courses.

**Background**

The area of Management Education in the UK has been fragmented in its aims and practice, and a deep-seated debate over whether a theoretical or a practical approach should be adopted in training managers has continued over many decades. Management professionals are not agreed amongst themselves on this issue. This inability to identify and agree on a method of educating and training our managers has contributed to a qualitative problem with managerial stock, compared to our major international competitors.

Under the impetus of two key reports, *The Making of Managers* (popularly known as the Handy report) and Constable and McCormick's *The Making of British Managers*, both published in April 1987, attempts have been made to remedy this situation. These have centred on the design and implementation of policies to improve both the amount and effectiveness of education and training offered to both future and practising managers. Considerable efforts have also been made to clarify the overall status of the management profession. This has been supported by moves to develop a more widely recognised career structure, and at the same time to increase the accredited range of qualifications and awards for courses and training in the academic, corporate and professional fields.

The driving force behind this is essentially pragmatic, and from a strong national perspective. It is based on a recognition that success in industry and commerce against intense and increasing international competition is dependent on creating more and better managers.

As part of a rapid expansion in higher education, business and management schools have been involved in trying to close the quantitative gap in the UK's education of managers. This has led to considerable debate on the nature of the equation between quality and quantity. The main question posed has been: 'Will increasing the quantity of management education result in a dilution of its quality?'
The other issue involved here has been the intensification of the Europeanisation of courses in UK business schools. In this context, particular attention is drawn to the apprehensions of some practitioners involved in this field (Linstead et al, 1988; Linstead, 1990) over the 'scramble of activity' in mounting courses with a European curriculum (for educating and training managers). These fears related to whether a market 'bandwagon' was being created, and if so whether already existing provision with a definite European curricular intention would suffer as a result. Against this, account should be taken of the more recent views of commentators such as Easterby-Smith (1992) and Storey (1992), who see the main impact of the Europeanisation of institutions being achieved through such courses. In the case of Easterby-Smith, a tentative labour market link is also proposed. It was against such background concerns that the necessity for research in this area appeared important, particularly with a view to clarifying current practice and identifying possible curriculum implications.

Scope of the inquiry

The study was carried out in the context of European Management Education, but limited to the UK. It specifically focused on a selected number of European Business/Management Studies programmes offered at universities, polytechnics (as they then were) and colleges/institutes of Higher Education. The study encompasses both undergraduate and postgraduate courses, but the balance is skewed towards the former provision. However, it does not cover courses offered at private training colleges/establishments. Initially the intention was to include such provision, but participation was not forthcoming, and the focus of the study was adjusted accordingly.

The dynamic nature of the context has been a particularly challenging characteristic of the research design, and has been exacerbated to some extent by the duration of the study. However, it should be noted that the emphasis is on providing insight into the current situation, and the intention has always been to regard this as a small-scale qualitative piece of work, and not to generalise the findings.

The timescale of the research study falls into four main periods, which are outlined as follows:

- Phase 1 (academic year 1990-91) was one of establishing the context of the study, primarily through desk research. The conceptual background was approached by consulting reports on higher education and studies of international education, with especial attention to components of study abroad and cultural training, as well as considerable literature on what emerged as further relevant issues. Furthermore, intensive reading was undertaken in research methodology centred on qualitative methods (see
European Research Management

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Research Proposal, Chapter 3), as well as the concepts and methods of evaluation research. Such reading (and study) continued throughout the overall time period of the research, but was particularly intensive at this period.

- Phase 2 (academic year 1991-2) was a period of establishing contact with selected research participants (Course Leaders), first using a self-completion questionnaire, and then directly through in-depth interviewing.

- Phase 3 (academic year 1992-3) was where data was generated on the student experience via a small number of group discussions.

- Phase 4 (academic year 1993-4) was the final stage of the research study, when the views of employers were consulted by means of an intensive cycle of telephone interviewing.

The amount of shift between the intended research proposal and the actual conduct of the study was relatively small, and overall in keeping with the 'emergent principle' of the naturalistic paradigm.

The main question driving the study was framed in the following way: "To what extent are these courses management education development with a strong European dimension in their own right, and to what extent resource-led Europeanisation of institutions themselves?"

Overview of the thesis

This introduction is immediately followed by a literature review in two parts (Chapters 1 and 2), which leads into an outline of the research proposal and approach (Chapter 3). Next, the methodology for each phase of the study is examined, first the research with Course Leaders (Chapters 4 and 5), then with students (Chapter 6), followed by the employers (Chapter 7). The findings from these three phases are then reported separately in the same order in Chapters 8 to 12 inclusive. Finally, the combined findings are discussed and interpreted in Chapter 13. Conclusions of the study and some recommendations for further research complete this document.
CHAPTER 1

The context

Introduction

The trend to internationalisation in business is changing the context in which industry and commerce operate. Competitiveness has gained a prominent new edge - survival. The realignment into trading blocs on a global basis has for some nations in Europe been experienced through the creation of the European Union (EU). This bloc has had significant implications for trade and business generally, which have developed at a fairly rapid rate. Political and social issues have been readily emergent, but more talked about than agreed upon. The reality of a European identity is not easy to define, and it would seem that in many ways there has been and continues to be, as much movement away from, as towards integration. Just how far Europeans see themselves as having a distinct identity based on a unique political and social structure and way of life has been seen as having significant implications for the recognition of a distinctive European style of management (Thurley and Wirdenius, 1989; Van Dijck, 1990).

The impact of these orientations in business and management on the present and future employment of business personnel in Europe has been an increasingly topical subject as both companies and educators consider their responses. One noticeable aspect of this has been the extensive profiling of the characteristics of a European manager. A key issue centres on the need to get people 'to think internationally', and take up a European perspective.

Focusing on the UK, the Higher Education (HE) context is one of marked expansion. This has raised the issue of how quality can be monitored, and stimulated much debate over educational direction. In the area of management education particularly, the question of how competence can best be achieved has occupied considerable attention.
However, difficulty is still experienced from the so-called 'anti-industrial culture' in British education (Storey, 1992).

The other major development has been the rapid moves to internationalise management education. At the institutional level this has been seen primarily in the formation of international links, and curriculum development with a European orientation. The nature of the relationship between institutional practice and curriculum development of European Business/Management courses, and what the literature demonstrates as sought-after characteristics for European management, will therefore be a main focus of this discussion.

Review rationale

The review of the literature is arranged in two main parts. The first part dealing with issues of the European context forms this chapter. The second part covering management education and training issues is the substance of the next chapter. The review addresses the following range of ideas in the order below.

Part One

To set the overall context of the research study, an initial look is given to the impact of internationalisation on companies. Particular focus is put on possible solutions to the added complexity of cross-border work. Next, the specific context of Europe is considered from several perspectives. A brief evaluation of the nature of European identity is made, as a backdrop to the question of how we might adjudge ourselves 'to be European'. In what direction(s) should we look for Europeanness to emerge? The review then leads into a selective consideration of issues pertaining to the new European business environment. This includes views on mobility and competitiveness in the emerging European labour market, as well as the position of the UK in relation to the Single European Market (SEM). The main objective here is to draw out the possible implications for European managerial education and development. The final section of this first part of the review takes a longer and deeper comparative look at the quite considerable literature on European management. Particular attention is given to delineating the thinking surrounding this concept, and the proposals on what competence is appropriate, and how it should be acquired. This brings the review to a suitable point at which to look at further literature (Part Two) on how it is proposed that personnel should be educated to meet these business needs.
Part Two

Before reviewing particular curriculum issues, the overall trends in Higher Education (HE) in the UK are briefly referred to, so that necessary background is in place. The area of management education itself is examined next. Particular reference is made to the anti-intellectual culture in business (Handy, 1987), and its influence in the long-standing debate over what approach should be adopted to management education in this country. The next step combines the perspectives of Parts One and Two of this review, in that it looks at moves to Europeanise management education, and the thinking behind current practice and developments. The question of institutional orientation, and the role of European Community funding is referred to in this context. Selected curriculum development responses are then looked at as a means of identifying relevant teaching and learning programme issues from the practitioner perspective. This is extended into a more in-depth focus on two key issues: namely the language-culture relationship; and features of 'study abroad'.

1.1 Internationalisation of business

In the last decade business has increasingly developed global characteristics. The most outstanding impact has been a shift in world economic power from the West to the Pacific Rim. The speed of economic growth in Japan, China and the Asian 'tigers' has reached a phenomenal rate; estimated to be twice as fast as the rest of the world (Barham and Wills, 1992). The immediate impact and eventual implications of such internationalisation have meant the governments of Western economies, and the companies that make up their trade, have been faced with readjustment on a considerable scale. The inevitability of competition, and the necessity of change for survival have become constant issues for concern at corporate, national and European level (Rajan, 1990; Pryce and McKitterick, 1993). For:

They [companies] are being forced to learn the lesson that if they will not go to the international market, it will come to them.

(Barham and Oates, 1991: 22)

It is not proposed to discuss the substance of these trends in detail, but to view their implications from within a European frame, and with particular reference to the research area.

The shift to internationalisation necessarily means operating within an environment characterised by great diversity - social, cultural, political and economic. Tayeb (1992: 27) speaks of the tremendous challenge that faces companies to succeed or even survive 'within this complex web of peoples and events'. Other commentators, especially Ohmae
(1990) take this scenario further and assert that the world's economy is now 'borderless'. The challenge then is one of global strategy (Hickman and Silva, 1989). The resultant dilemmas have been well documented: the simultaneous demands placed upon companies to be locally responsive and globally competitive (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1989; Barham and Wills, 1992).

In order to manage the challenge (both its threats and opportunities) of this new business environment, companies have been making changes to their organisational structures. More than one influence has been at work here, and to decipher what is attributable to internationalisation in a general sense, and what to the interrelated drive for greater efficiency, is beyond the scope of this review. The moves to downsizing and more flexible models are simply noted in this context (Hirschorn and Gilmore, 1992). Efforts have centred on creating more internationally responsive structures. In practice, some variant of a matrix structure has usually been adopted. The extent to which companies have made radical rearrangement of their traditional structures has however varied widely (Barham and Devine, 1991: 13).

One study of the cross-border environment that has received widespread attention is that of Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989). They think they have the answer in the transnational corporation, which they see as one that can cope with the complexities of this new international environment. It is, they believe, the structural solution to the simultaneous demands by which industry is increasingly driven. Rather than accept that the objectives of global efficiency and national responsiveness (the so-called 'glocal' approach) are contradictory, the transnational approach allows companies to resolve this dilemma. Considerable emphasis is placed on the transnational being a 'learning and self-adaptive organisation', but the one element believed essential is what the authors describe as 'the transnational mentality'. In practice a transnational operates as an integrated network, with the emphasis not so much on the structural arrangements, as on the perspectives and flexible capacity of individuals in the company. Management mentality, the attitudes and behaviour of individuals, is what counts. Crucially, the focus of change as they see it must be on changing the attitudes and perceptions of managers and employees, so that they can become an integrated, networking structure.

This focus on a 'matrix in the mind' has some correlations with the approach of Hedlund and Rolander (1989). They draw on the analogy of the hologram in suggesting the nature of an organisational type called the heterarchy (rule by others). In this structure it is suggested information is stored and shared throughout the company, and the whole ethos is that all employees are expected to think and develop strategy.

Barham and Devine (1991: 13) however comment that the problem with these models is that 'they suggest every company must start evolving into a transnational'. Their research based on selected companies in North America and Europe leads them to conclude that
such prediction of one future organisational type is 'premature'. More to the point, what is happening is that companies:

are exploring a myriad of different approaches, presenting a highly varied picture of strategic evolution.

Similarly, Van Dijck (1990: 475) maintains that the organisational structure of the larger multinationals is changing from a static matrix to transnational networks. By contrast with Barham and Devine however, he does not support this view with specific research findings.

Whatever form of structure does evolve, the implications of working across borders are inescapable. Mutual interest and need will have to take precedence in some way, over internal organisational norms and cultural differences. The understanding of these differences, and competence to manage changes in processes and attitude is central to operating in this international business environment (Barham and Wills, 1992; Tayeb, 1992; Taylor, 1993; Lorenz, 1994b).

1.2 A focus on Europe

Europe and its identity

The objective of this next section of the review is to consider some of the wider issues that make up the context of the research study. For this reason sources have been examined primarily for their pertinence in interpreting the substance of the movement towards European integration, and with a view to informing the nature of European identity.

The problems inherent in European integration are to be discerned only too clearly in tracing its historical development. Heater (1992) in his detailed treatise demonstrates how a striving for European unity existed from medieval times onwards, but only became a reality in this century. In contrast, the European Community has 'happened', something which cannot be said of previous attempts. Schemes to achieve integration: notably Sully's Grand Design, c 1620; the project of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, 1712/13; and the plan of the Duc de Saint-Simon, 1814, were put forward and publicised, but never came into being. Century after century the changing environment in Europe held one constant: war. And so it is entirely fitting that although these proposals differ in other respects, they have a common rationale in that they offer peace as an ultimate goal. It is also of interest, given the very different political conditions under which these plans were conceptualised, the similarity of the difficulties encountered. For instance,
which states were to have roles of central importance (France, Germany); the question of enlargement; the intractable problem of nationalism; what to do about Russia, and the ever ambivalent position of Britain. This century the political conditions have changed, but some problems, such as the question of relinquishing sovereignty by the nation states, have persisted.

More critically, Heater (1992) refers to what is necessary for successful union. A sense of identity which comes from some shared cultural and political traditions and values. However, this he says is 'Janus-faced':

In looking inward it must recognise the characteristics which the members have in common and which thus provide at least a modicum of homogeneity. In looking outward it must recognise the distinctiveness, incompatibility, even enmity of those outside the union.

Considering these two faces in turn, what current assessment of Europe's identity can be made?

The inward face: homogeneity/heterogeneity

The much observed ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences of Europe would seem to negate the chances for homogeneity. However, this is not necessarily the case, the situation is more complex. For instance, Therborn (1995) highlights several important points about the linguistic set-up in contemporary Europe. He makes the case that Western European linguistic commonalities (English, German, French, Dutch) are institutionally underpinned by supra-national associations, networks and cultural exchange, cooperation and distribution channels. He argues inter-communication of this sort across the borders of nation-states is creating cultural bonds. The difficulty perceived is more one of linguistic imbalance. He supports this by reference to France and Germany:

To the people of the two key countries of the EC it is not the other's language which is the first foreign language, but English.

(Therborn, 1995: 218)

Significantly, he explains the Eastern European pattern is much further removed from the attainment of homogeneity. It is marked by linguistic diasporas and minorities, as well as the breaking-up of previous language communities.
The outward face: distinctiveness

The major factor helping to create European identity in the last decade has been the recognition of Far East competition (Tayeb, 1992) and global interdependencies generally (Delors, 1992). In terms of identity formation, this external 'Other' has sped up the development of the internal 'We': Europeanism. The threat posed to the economic growth and standard of living of European countries has led to increased efforts to achieve integration. The intention of the Single European Act (SEA) (EEC, 1986) was a direct response to speed up the process.

What then do we have in common?

The main force to integration has been the construction of the Single European Market (SEM). Intended as a way of dismantling borders and encouraging mobility, it is the economic measures which have received the main attention. The harmonisation of standards and the growth in trade between member states have released homogenising tendencies. In the years immediately prior to the implementation of the SEA, the immense activity of businesses in cross-border alliances, mergers and similar strategies was very much in evidence (Grant, 1990: 5; Porter, 1990). Official emphasis on the '1992' programme contributed a strong pressure for uniformity. There was a noticeable spirit surrounding this programme, characterised by talk of a resurgence in European prosperity as if '1992' was a magic formula. This belief was counterbalanced by those who warned that 1992 was 'not a panacea' and would not deliver a 'miraculously unified' Europe with all its difficulties resolved (Delors, 1992: 152). However, the idea that having set the political-economic process in motion towards unification, there would be an unstoppable "spillover effect" to integrate other areas must also be considered (Wise and Gibb, 1993). The realisation of a more harmonised 'social space' would then necessarily follow because of the indivisibility of economic, social and political dimensions of life.

Does 'Europeanness' exist?

The integrating pressure of the SEM, though undoubtedly contributing a rapidly noticeable official unity, has limitations in terms of social reality. The reception of the Maastricht Treaty, especially the proposals of the Social Chapter (particularly by the UK), has shown up the very real differences between the member states.

Most 'Europeans' still identify mainly with the nation and region (Therborn, 1995: 249). Feeling 'more European' is more likely to occur at the level of deeper value orientations towards such matters as religion, politics, social relations, work and leisure, and 'quality
of life'. Convergence at this level however is not matched on the surface of economic and social life. Here, there is considerable social and cultural diversity (Van Dijck, 1990). Europeans are currently concerned with achieving a point of balance between convergence and divergence. Europe's identity depends on this 'integration of diversity' (as it has been called), and it is a procedure that will take time. Reisch (1993) too reminds us that this diversity and heterogeneity were shaped by history. Laws and systems can be changed over a short period, but people's thinking and feelings cannot. Reisch is not alone in believing that 'Europeanness' will only happen organically. However, it is Delors (1992) who is most articulate in the belief that the unity of Europe is 'not optional'. He argues strongly that it must be 'based on a cultural project' in order to progress. For this reason the fact that education and culture do not figure in the Treaty of Rome or in the Single European Act is viewed as a short-sightedness in policy. The extent to which the identity achieved so far can be maintained and grow further in the context of an enlarged European Union can only be surmised at this stage.

The implications of the new European business environment

For many companies in Europe the trend to internationalisation of the business environment has been encountered mainly in the shape of the emerging Single Market. Europeanisation has been and will continue to be, into the foreseeable future, closely interrelated with wider economic global developments (Dahrendorf, 1989: 7).

The overall aim of the SEM is that:

the internal market shall comprise an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured in accordance with the provision of the Treaty.

(Commission of the European Communities, 1985, Article 13).

The rationale for a Single Market in improved and necessary economic growth has been made persuasively in terms of the cost of non-Europe (Cecchini, 1988). In order to support this process however, human as much as physical resources, are critical. The shift to the knowledge worker (Handy, 1988; Hage and Powers, 1992) in the post-industrial society means a new conception of the skill content of work, and a race to establish ownership of know-how in technology and areas of research and development. In this respect Europe is in competition on a global basis. The major difficulty, however, is that Europe is not in a position to concentrate single-mindedly on generating the much-needed industrial dynamism. As Rajan (1990) only too clearly explains, the more immediate problem for European companies is to close the gap in skill and productivity, both in their external and internal labour markets. This has called for reforms first, in order to make up the human capital deficit if survival is to be achieved.
The completion of the market has undoubted consequences for human resource strategy, especially training and development. Thurley and Wirdenius (1989: 5) clearly identify three direct implications for managerial roles. Companies will require managers with a great deal of international experience; the mobility of these managers raises the need for European-wide training and education systems, and managers must expect effects from the greater competition both in job pressures and possible loss of job security.

**Integrating Britain into Europe**

The UK's response to European integration has lacked commitment. Official reluctance to relinquish sovereignty, the very open resistance to Maastricht, and most particularly the opt-out from the Social Chapter portray a country hardly in touch with a 'European vision'. As Luff (1991) remarks, Jean Monnet's words about the British: 'We will have to build Europe without you, but you will then come and join us', have been only too prophetically true.

British insularity is perhaps difficult to measure exactly, but certainly exists and is frequently accessed in popular media terms. Europe is still thought of as being 'somewhere else':

> The fact is that we live in Europe. We are Europeans. ... Yet we are still reluctant to think and feel European.

(Luff, 1991: 20)

This separateness is complemented by other marked deficiencies which do little to help counterbalance Britain's official track record as Europeans. These deficiencies are interrelated and consist of lack of European awareness, a poor national record in language skills, and a lack of long-term investment in managerial education (see discussion in Part Two). The movement towards the Single European Market (SEM) has been highly instrumental in exposing these gaps in the British workforce. The message is that 'a new thinking process' needs to be developed, and measures to catch up lost ground initiated. To what extent have these messages been received?

In their survey (The Search for the Euro-Executive) conducted among 130 big UK companies, Saxton Bampfyde International found few top British companies appeared to be addressing the issues of the SEM:

> 35% said they did not think the European market was important for them, and only 41% seemed to be giving the matter any real priority.

(Saxton Bampfyde, 1989: 11)
In their study of firms focusing on personnel preparations for 1992, Wood and Peccei (1990) though confirming this 'present relative lack of preparedness', also noted that:

As many as 55% of companies planned to raise the expertise levels of their managers, specifically in order to compete more successfully in the Single European Market.

(Wood and Peccei, 1990: 7)

Wood and Peccei (1990) concluded that it is necessity, ie a business-led response, that is the reason why some firms are adding a European dimension to their personnel practices. They reported little or no concern for most of the issues in the Social Charter. A 'wait and see' attitude demonstrating 'insularity and complacency' was also found by Forster in two surveys of 97 companies in the private sector, carried out between December 1991 and July 1992. Furthermore, he reported many companies' policies on training and recruiting staff remained 'ad hoc and reactive' (Griffiths, 1993). Finally, the explanation given by Atkinson (1990) in his earlier study of UK-based employers and their preparedness for 1993 should be considered too. He reported that employers saw the emergence of an international labour market for several groups of personnel, including new graduates. The numbers involved, however, were 'as yet small', but a need to develop aspects of their business on an international basis was expressed. Having considered the overall European context, we next turn our attention to the area of European Management itself.

1.3 European Management?

The subject of a European style of management is a vexed one. First of all, when or if discussed, it is usually lumped in with the issue of European management itself. This leads to an initial confusion between identifying models of management functions and the style in which these are carried out. What further marks this issue out is the spectrum of views held on the person who presumably practises this style, ranging between the polarised statements of 'does not exist' (Rameau, 1992) and 'a distinctly European style characterises the way' (Henzler, 1992). So in trying to establish parameters here we are confronted by a series of conflicting statements on who Euromanagers are, what skills they possess, what they practise and the style they use. Nor is there a dialogue, rather it is a case of writers attempting to clarify what is happening in the current context of European business, rationalise directions in strategy, and predict and promote 'models' of future needs and strategies.

Looking in more detail, without doubt one of the most lucid explanations is to be gained from Thurley and Wirdenius (1989) in their seminal work Towards European Management. The title offers their point of view in succinct form. They elaborate on the present lack of a distinct European model of management (or even generally accepted
ideology), and point to the ambiguity in the status and identity of 'managers' as a prime contributory factor. The concept of 'management' is an acquired one (American: Harvard) and has been grafted onto, or competes with, national concepts and terms of business organisation and authority (cadres; quadri dirigenti; Unternehmer and so on) (Lane, 1989; Randelsome, 1990; Barsoux, 1992). Differences in style exist too between one part of a country and another (Lorenz, 1994a).

Their analysis is premised on the stance that:

'European management' should therefore be understood to refer not to current practice but to a possible alternative approach (their italics).

(Thurley and Wirdenius, 1989: 4)

They then proceed to 'categorise an approach to management which is peculiarly and distinctly European'. They propose a new and viable European management style and philosophy that innovates yet retains continuity with the past. This they have encapsulated in a European management model.

Much analysis depends on a comparative base, of how the 'European' approach differs from the American and Japanese approaches to management. Why the focus is put on these two countries is aptly described in the following:

Capitalism was born in Europe. But for nearly half a century, its most vigorous offshoots have flourished in the United States and Japan, while our economic performance has been lackluster. Or so the familiar litany goes.

(Henzler, 1992: 57)

For Thurley and Wirdenius (1989) the essential difference is to be found in the legitimacy of management. In Europe they feel this cannot be assumed, rather it has to be created, in both the private and the public sector. A consensus for the legitimacy of the managerial role has to be maintained over time by adjusting to the demands of new and existing interest groups. Henzler (1992) also refers to the European business leader's mastery of solving problems through an iterative, consensus-building process.

Others too use a comparison with American and Japanese models, but claim instead that a distinctive style of European management is gradually emerging (Van Dijck, 1990; Tijmstra and Casler, 1992). The emphasis which lends this distinction is placed on the skill to accommodate culturally diverse organisations in a rapidly changing world. In this Henzler (1992) is keen to highlight a distinct advantage for Europe's managers, on the basis of accumulated skill and expertise. For as he demonstrates throughout our history 'we have always had to think internationally (italics added)'. In other words he sees the style as having already emerged.
However, Barham and Oates (1991) find the basis of this distinction problematic, and argue that such skill is not the monopoly of a European manager, but is equally held by multinational managers of whatever nationality. So in claiming a distinctive European style, it would seem those holding the former view are on shaky ground, or at best ground already staked out by international managers. This obviously presupposes the question of where European management ends and International management begins. Storey (1992) advises us that the difference between a European manager and an International manager must be accepted as negligible.

Handy and Barham (1988) in a letter published in the opening edition of EuroBusiness see 'European' managers firmly in an international context:

For many companies in Europe, internationalism means operating as a 'European' company rather than as a national company. Theoretically, managers in such companies might see themselves as European rather than British, French, German etc.

Here 'European' is defined as something over and above, or instead of, national. Some conception of the intricacies of such distinctions is gained if we refer to Bournois and Chauchat (1990), who put forward a number of interpretations of 'Euromanager' using location as a means of differentiation. The term then can apply variously to any manager from an EC country; a manager working in his home country for a company based in another European country; a manager working outside his home country for a company from that same country; and finally a manager working for a large company that operates beyond the borders of its home country (and this may span several EC countries).

These views appear relatively straightforward and conventional by comparison with Thurley and Wirdenius (1989), who argue in terms of a managerial revolution for creating the alternative managerial systems required for effective trans-European organisations. Managerial systems:

which will receive legitimacy and support only if they are rooted in the values and behaviour of a European way of life.

(Thurley and Wirdenius, 1989: 87)

The question being posed is how do different cultural assumptions influence management practice and lead to a model of management which is distinctly European? (Thurley and Wirdenius, 1989).

The SEM is interpreted as the opportunity to define a distinct European approach to management, and move away from the long-term influence of American business practice. The long established universalistic approach to international management is
rejected. The implications of these ideas for management education and development will be discussed in Part Two.

1.4 Scarcity of 'Euromanagers'

Alongside this rather involved debate on the nature of European management one theme stands out clearly and is oft repeated - the need for Euromanagers. Reference has been made to this manager as a new breed or beast (Linstead et al, 1988; Pickard, 1988b; Hogg, 1989). Their scarcity is also much commented upon (Handy and Barham, 1988; Hogg, 1989; Tijmstra and Casler, 1992) - no difficulty here in terms of existence, it is simply a question of numbers. There is no shortage of theoretical modelling as to what sort of people will make good Euromanagers. The emphasis on working 'effectively' in different cultures or across national boundaries is noticeable (Golzen, 1989; Linstead, 1990). However, few are prepared to define just exactly what this 'effectively' means. The more usual approach is to create a skills profile for the Euromanager.

The proliferation of such listings was particularly noticeable in the few years immediately prior to "1992". This may have reflected a consciousness of the potential changes in company orientation and personnel composition, or alternatively a certain popularisation (or perhaps to be more precise hyping) of the subject. Nevertheless, what we can be certain of is that a wide range of opinions was offered, on the whereabouts of this individual, from smoothly operational (Saxton Bampfylde, 1989); elusive or non-existent (Rameau, 1992); and even more latterly deceased (Lester, 1993). In spite of these, or perhaps more pertinently because of these inconsistencies, an examination of the profiles seems in order.

1.5 What is needed?

Starting with broad groupings, there is relative agreement that experience of living abroad; cultural adaptability; acquired knowledge; interpersonal skills must feature on such a list (Bowen, 1989; Rothwell, 1992; Tijmstra and Casler, 1992; Reisch, 1993). Terms are by no means standardised and a single quality/characteristic may be variously referred to in several ways. This limits the amount of rigorous comparability that can be achieved across studies.

Not surprisingly, there is easy agreement on the high priority of linguistic competence. The disagreement, if this is not too strong a term, is more on the lines of whether a multi-, tri- or bi-lingual ability is required (Hogg, 1989; Sedel, 1989).
The need for international experience is given considerable emphasis. Exposure in this way is viewed as the start of the process of acquiring what has been referred to as 'bifocalism' or a 'cross-border mind set'. Living in a situation outside one's environment means the individual has the opportunity to differentiate sociocultural factors from personal ones (Brislin, 1981). It leads to the breaking down of stereotypes. However, as Reisch (1993) observes, the successful acquisition of competence in cultural adaptability is not ensured simply through living abroad. For learning to occur, the experience needs to be reflected upon and reappraised.

Two factors emerge from this discussion that are particularly relevant to the proposed research study. The time involved in such a learning process is highlighted. The cultural immersion necessary cannot be achieved 'in a few months'. Furthermore, the advice is to start such habits young. These factors have some difficulties attached to them. Bowen (1989) points out such an approach may be 'the best' for the individual but:

one that does not serve the immediate needs of business.

As previously discussed, the demand for personnel to work in the 'new' European environment is now, and a long process of this kind will not deliver soon enough. However, according to some analysts (both academic and industrial) an alternative solution is not easily available. For instance, Mayo (1992) insists that the 'cultural' competence from the experience of living abroad is not something that could be taught on management development courses. Bowen (1989) agrees and sees real international exposure as a necessary part of the undergraduate and postgraduate scene.

A pre-career and post-experience distinction is held in how this competence is developed. Barham (1990) asserts from his research that firms generally feel that the best way of acquiring the necessary skills and perspectives is through international job experience. Therefore, mobility is seen as the way in which managers acquire an international perspective (Coulson-Thomas, 1992). The way in which postings are filled however does not necessarily align with the preferred characteristics discussed (see below).

The question also arises as to whether actual experience, with or without its attendant insight, is enough to develop cultural awareness or cultural sensitivity. It may be that this is a personality trait, and is not strictly trainable. This focuses attention on the type of individual (him/herself). A 'good start' in cultural sensitivity is attributed to the individual's early childhood conditioning and home background (Saxton Bampfylde, 1989). It may too depend on awareness of one's own cultural background (Barham, 1990: 6). To what extent cultural adaptability can be conditioned is considered by others. How much can be expected?
Davison (1990) in her review of such studies demonstrates the confusion that exists over competences, as to whether they are personality traits or skills. Seeing them as traits is unhelpful, and she suggests it is easier to look for more recognisable international skills that can be taught. Ratiu (1983) in his research moved some way towards distinguishing more adaptable ('most international') from less adaptable ('less international') people, by focusing on key learning experiences associated with becoming internationally-minded. He found the difference to lie in the two groups' approaches to assessing individuals and situations, and making sense of new experience. The 'most international' tended to take a much more subjective and individual approach to others in interpreting experience (an intuitive micro-strategy), while the 'less international' were more concerned with finding explanations as to why things occur as they do, and confirming stereotypes (an evaluative macro-strategy).

Another important distinction was that the 'most international' group were ready to recall and discuss the occurrence of culture shock, whereas the 'less international' group claimed not to have experienced it at all. Ratiu points to this finding as further support for regarding culture shock as a positive learning experience; and suggests that, overall, people most likely to succeed in an international environment are those who have the flexibility to modify and redefine their outlook. Identifying an appropriate strategy, and monitoring it, seem then to be vital ingredients in this process. However, Linstead (1990) challenges this intuitive 'rationalism', and says there is a danger in over-reliance on personal rapport. He agrees the latter is important to successful international operation, but that it must always be tempered by assessment of 'context, situations and motivations'.

Davison (1990), in discussing Ratiu's work, refers to the implication here that the key to managing intercultural interchange is the degree of self-understanding that exists, and says that it is this characteristic that is at the basis of any flexibility achieved.

Such a view finds considerable support in the work of Barham and Wills (1992), who propose that besides 'doing' competence, there is an equally important psychological 'being' competence, which is actually a series of progressive stages of increasing cognitive complexity. These are identified as follows: language fluency; cultural immersion; business systems understanding and performing interculturally. It should be noted that the researchers regard this as an 'ideal' representation of the development process, and variation may occur in both the nature and order of the stages. One qualification they make to this is that performing interculturally probably cannot be achieved without the first three stages. Of far more import however are their comments on the significance of 'cognitive complexity'. Evidence suggests it is not innate, and that it can be developed by exposing people to multidimensional situations. Moreover, it tends to be something that is developed gradually, and not in a 'once and for all' manner. In this respect situation is highly instrumental in providing opportunities for continued learning and sustained development. In Part Two of the review we will take a specific
look at the field of 'intercultural skills' to see what it might offer in relation to these aspects of management education and training.

Is a 'universal' profile possible?

Attempts to establish profiles on an empirical basis demonstrate further difficulties. One such research study was carried out on the key characteristics required by the international manager (Barham and Oates, 1991: 69). The top ranking (71%) was given to the 'hard' function of *strategic awareness*, however the next four rankings prioritised 'soft' skills in the following order: *Adaptability in new situations* (67%); *Sensitivity to different cultures* (60%); *Ability to work in international teams* (56%) and *Language skills* (46%). Overall 'hard' or functional skills were rated as a 'relatively low priority' by companies. Barham and Oates (1991) claim their subsequent research confirms that the international manager has a number of 'universally desirable' attributes. There is however difficulty in accepting the validity of these rankings, and others like them (Storey, 1992). This is partially demonstrated in recruitment practice, where the order of selection criteria does not reflect the same ranking (Barham and Oates, 1991). Moreover, other research studies serve to reinforce the variability of perceptions and 'judgements' in this area, and more significantly the fact that differences do exist in what is valued as important between European countries.

Hogg (1992) for instance, in a research project covering six European countries found that junior and middle managers in the telecommunications industry judged task-focused competences to be the most vitally important. 'Softer' competences tended to be regarded as less typically and less vitally important. These findings at least in broad principle are the opposite to those reported by Barham and Oates. Furthermore, Hogg queries whether (on the findings) competence could be said to be 'culture specific', rather than generic. She bases this consideration on the differences observed (201 statistically significant differences) between European managers' ratings of the 22 competences according to typical need and vital importance. She proposes that:

These differences may reflect differential values and/or differential competence requirements. If it could be determined that they reflect differential competence requirements then competence could be said to be culture specific rather than generic.

(Hogg, 1992: 16)

Hogg emphasises the need for further research to substantiate this view, nevertheless the findings, even as they stand, must throw considerable doubt on the idea of establishing 'universally appropriate' criteria.
The complexity of trying to produce definitive listings is further highlighted, this time from the perspective of students in 4 European countries in one phase of the International Project on Culture and Management reported by Boldy et al (1993). Using a questionnaire developed specially for this research, 159 students studying business/administration management or social and behavioural sciences were asked to judge the attributes needed for becoming effective European managers. Four dimensions were covered: skills; knowledge and learning; personality characteristics; and benefits and values. Again, differences between countries were found, but overall the skills dimension was perceived by all groups to be the most important. Boldy and his associates are keen to stress that, though limited to date, the research findings do contribute to the current level of knowledge of management educators, in appreciating the cultural differences likely to affect management effectiveness in the four selected European countries.

The above studies, though of interest especially in the detail of the findings on particular countries, lead us to lend agreement to Storey (1993) in his conclusion that:

> It seems much more probable that there is no one profile of the ideal international manager or manager for Europe.

**Conclusion**

For the immediate purposes of this discussion, the most important implication of the trend to internationalisation is the increased diversity of the business environment. Emphasis has been placed on finding organisational structures that are responsive to this environment. Though agreement does not exist on a particular model, more than one theorist would agree that what is perhaps critical to a new structure is the presence of attitudinal responsiveness (a 'matrix in the mind'). Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989) believe this to be the one element that is essential. Focusing specifically on Europe, internationalisation has overtaken its slow movement towards unification. With varying degrees of willingness, the nations of the EC (EU) have followed a path to integration. The attendant debate over what extent of harmonisation should occur has preoccupied politicians, economists and architects of social policy alike.

This brings us back to the concept of cultural diversity. The integrating pressure of the Single European Market, and even more so the Maastricht Treaty, has placed the subject of Europeanness firmly in the public arena. Some (Reisch, 1993 amongst others) believe that the integration of diversity is critical to Europeans adopting a common identity. However, they feel strongly that this will only happen organically, and moreover, that it needs a cultural base to progress. The most ardent exponent of this belief, Delors (1992), feels that the unity of Europe is not in fact optional. However, it is clear that what is a more immediate priority than cultural direction in
Europe is the need to concentrate on human capital (Rajan, 1990), to meet labour market demands in the new environment.

The position of Britain in this new labour market structure needs particular comment. Official reluctance (especially to the social provisions of Maastricht) is coupled with a number of interrelated deficiencies in the British workforce. The need for 'a new thinking process' to be developed has been highlighted (Brittan, 1989; Luff, 1991), but the extent to which this has been accepted by business remains debatable. Certainly, pre-1992 surveys and studies (Saxton Bampfylde, 1989; Wood and Peccei, 1990) demonstrate a minority involvement in these issues. Necessity, ie survival concern, appears to be driving the response of companies, and there is little evidence of concern for the wider social and cultural integration implied in the SEM.

Moving from the more general context to consider the specific issue of European Management, we are faced with a number of views which are in some respects conflicting. The core of the issue is whether or not European Management actually exists; if it does, what characterises it, and, if it does not, how should it be created? Much of this analysis depends on the need to distinguish between a universalistic approach based on American management practice, and characteristics of management practice and style that can be said to be unique to Europe. Some would claim that a distinctive style of European management is emerging (Henzler, 1992; Tijmstra and Casler, 1992), but such a view is not shared by Thurley and Wirdenius (1989), who put forward the case that 'European Management' is a possible alternative approach that needs to be created. Their idea that the legitimacy of management cannot be assumed, but rather has to be created by adjusting to the demands of new and existing interest groups, has particular implications in the context of Europe's new business environment. Thurley and Wirdenius (1989) argue for a managerial revolution to create the system for trans-European organisations, but what is critical in this is their belief that they will only receive legitimacy if they are rooted in the values and behaviour of a European way of life. In this way, they effectively arrive at the same realisation as Delors (1992), and Wise and Gibb (1993), that a wider cultural integration is at stake.

Not everyone, however, would agree with the need for a revolution. Others, particularly Henzler (1992) refer to the cumulative skill and expertise of Europe's managers already in existence. The fact that they have always had to think internationally is seen as a prime characteristic. Even here, there are difficulties, in that yet other theorists would claim that such skill is not unique to a European manager, but is held by other International managers (Barham and Oates, 1991). Storey (1993) releases us from this dilemma by suggesting that the difference between the European manager and International manager is negligible. In this case, do we require European managers, or simply managers who have the ability to work internationally?
For many, particularly in the years immediately prior to 1992, this was answered in the positive. The scarcity of Euromanagers was much commented upon (Hogg, 1989), and theoretical profiles of what characteristics such people should have were prolifically compiled (Sedel, 1989). This may have been a function of the considerable hype surrounding the advent of 1992, nonetheless, on another level, it is useful to peruse such lists for what they offer as important. From such profiles a number of features occur repeatedly, in particular, a high priority on linguistic competence and the need for international experience. Considerable attention is given by more than one writer in this field (Barham and Wills, 1992; Mayo, 1992) on the development of competence in cultural adaptability through such exposure. However, as several point out, such cultural competence is complex and not achieved quickly, nor simply by 'being abroad'. What is recognised as critical is the need for reflection and reappraisal of the experience. Others debate the right time that such experience should occur for an individual, and indeed whether it can actually be conditioned (Barham, 1990; Davison, 1990; Barham and Wills, 1992). The issue of cultural skill is made even more complex by a number of studies which attempt to rank characteristics of managers (European and International) in order of importance. These studies demonstrate conflicting views as to the preference for soft skills or hard skills. Barham and Oates (1991) demonstrate the soft skill of 'sensitivity to different cultures', (60%), but this they found was not reflected in recruitment practice.

In summary, this first part of the review has raised a number of issues. Do we need a transnational mentality to tackle the diversity of the international business market? Similarly, is some form of resolution of the cultural heterogeneity of Europe necessary? From the debate on European Management, what is the current focus of a distinctive style? Or should we interpret European/international as one and the same thing? Relating to the popular demand for Euromanagers, what can we learn from the proposed skills profiles about the characteristics said to be required by business, in particular the need for international experience and linguistic competence. What conditions are necessary and why? The next part of the review will look at the specific educational context of the research study.
CHAPTER 2

Assessing new directions

2.1 The current context of Higher Education in the UK

The Government's White Paper Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge (DES, 1987) set the present agenda for the change in the shape and direction of the Higher Education (HE) system. Response to concern over the lack of suitably qualified manpower, and hence the country's competitiveness internationally led to policy formulation for a different kind of system. The Government, as the major financial investor in HE, has shifted the balance of relationships by dictating funding arrangements and placing strict conditions of accountability on institutions. HE is expected to become more responsive to the needs of industry and commerce: it must supply more qualified people, and ones who have relevant skills. The 'value added' of HE to companies, to students' working life and student achievements is critical in this context (Johnes and Taylor, 1990; Barnett, 1991). In this context reference should be made to the fact that the binary divide between institutions of HE: universities and polytechnics officially ended in October 1992. This has meant further change in the system as the competition for funding has been intensified. The differences between institutions have not however disappeared, instead the institutional hierarchy is being redrawn as evidenced in the already familiar references to 'new' and 'old' universities (Brennan et al, 1993).

The first step in activating this policy is the expansion of the numbers entering HE - an increase of 50% by the year 2000 (Ball, 1990; Brennan et al, 1993). This move to mass education is held to be dependent on the need to widen access to 'non-traditional' students. Demand needs to be created amongst mature students, women, ethnic minorities (CIHE, 1987: 9), especially in view of the effects of the projected demographic decline (ie fewer 18 year-olds). Such an increase would bring the UK system more in line numerically with its economic competitors, and change its elite
European Management Education

Assessing new directions

correspond to a popular model. However, such moves to a more user-led system, (ie what
students want) can in itself be interpreted as having difficulties. For:

few students would admit choosing their degree course with the view of improving
the nation's competitiveness.

(Ball & Eggnings, 1989: 66)

It is not however just a matter of more numbers studying, but also more in terms of what
they are learning or developing in Higher Education that is sought.

Therefore, an important demand to be met is the need for higher-level skills required by
the information society. The 'ability to think, learn and adapt' will be essential. There is
an expectation too of personal transferable skills (communication, problem-solving,
teamwork, leadership). Overall, a broader framework for study is seen to be the answer,
with emphasis on active participation in the learning process, rather than passive
organisation of knowledge (Barnett, 1991). Much of the debate surrounding these issues
has centred on 'usefulness'. Critics insist that an economic focus means adjusting courses
to a narrow vocationalism. Such a view has been counteracted with the argument that
breadth will lead to a 'well-rounded person' (CIHE, 1987: 11).

However, Ball (1989; 1990) proposes that in the light of these changes a reinterpretation
of quality is necessary. In his view, criteria 'good courses' should satisfy in future must
be that they are attractive, rigorous and enabling. The first of these criteria will be
decided by the students themselves, the second by the teachers responsible for the
courses, but the judgement of the 'enabling quality' will be a shared matter between
students, teachers and employers.

Industry and Higher Education

A further aspect of this changing scene is that Industry is claiming its partnership with
Higher Education to be accepted now as being a mainstream activity, and not just an
optional extra. The 'lack of esteem for wealth creation' (Wiener, 1992: 127) is something
that industry finds counter-productive, and wants to ensure that the curriculum in HE
fosters a positive attitude towards it. The adherence to this objective is a difficulty for
many in academia, who see the personal fulfilment of the student as the objective to be
given priority (CIHE, 1987; Ball, 1989).

Furthermore, industry make a clear statement that they both expect and are ready to
contribute more to HE, not just in supporting students, but in research collaboration and
involvement in teaching:
Companies are increasingly keen for their own employees to take part in teaching and advising in higher education.

(CIHE, 1991)

They feel too that they should be involved in policy-making and in a position to express their views on curriculum content (Ball and Eggins, 1989). Such a full picture of involvement and initiative is not entirely reflected from the side of academia. Here the opinion held is that HE should be deemed the more aggressive and enterprising partner in the HE-Industry relationship. Industry is perceived as 'less than enthusiastic and a bit bemused by it all' (Kelly, 1989).

### 2.2 Management education in the UK today

This is a necessary background to any discussion of the inclusion of a European dimension in management education and training. As mentioned in the overall introduction to this research study, management education in the UK has been a subject of long-standing debate. Two key reports both published in April 1987 *The Making of Managers* (popularly known as the Handy Report) and *The Making of British Managers* (Constable & McCormick) have generated much discussion and debate in recent years. From the findings and recommendations of these reports stem many issues of importance in management education today. From their standpoint past neglect must be remedied, especially in the face of stiff international competition. However, both these reports were produced by management professionals at the behest of official government bodies, so their message though convincing cannot be viewed as less than partisan. Handy was commissioned by NEDC/MSC and the BIM, and Constable & McCormick by the DES/DTI. These are very self-conscious policy-making documents, addressed in particular to those in control of government funding.

Concern to improve management education and training has been a frequent theme. The driving force is pragmatic, and one that recognises success in industry and commerce, especially against growing international competition, is dependent upon creating more and better managers (Constable & McCormick, 1987; Kelly, 1989). In his report Handy (1987) compared and contrasted the whole process of educating, developing and training managers in the UK and its chief competitors the USA, Japan, France and West Germany. He stressed the low priority put on training in the UK and gave an unfavourable report on the UK's international position. Britain, he pointed out, has neglected her 'managerial stock' by not offering enough education, training and development.

Constable and McCormick (1987) too put forward a clear recommendation for training institutions to remedy the quantitative gap in the UK's educational provision for managers as follows:
Undergraduate places in business and management studies in universities, polytechnics and colleges should be allowed to expand by up to 50% if there are well qualified young people seeking places. This would imply an output of 7,000 by 1995, about 6% of all graduates.


In their proposal and recommendations for changes in the provision of management education and training they also outline courses of action which have important implications for management schools. Their overriding concern is to greatly increase the current level of provision. Larger management schools, which offer fewer qualification courses with larger enrolments, are recommended, and at the same time there is encouragement to sustain a number of schools with an outstanding reputation within the context of the UK's major competitors - Western Europe, North America and Japan. So a two-fold task is laid at the door of the teaching institutions - to greatly increase their current level of provision, and achieve excellent performance - quantity and quality at the same time.

Excellence and reputation

Most commentators on the Constable and Handy reports agree on one aspect at least: there is no point simply increasing the quantity of management education in this country if the result is to dilute its quality.

(Sadler, 1988: 23)

Sadler (1988) also points out that to some:

raising the quality of our existing provision is the more urgent requirement ... a qualification is only as good as the reputation of the institution which awards it, and the average standard of competence of those who possess it.

A further sophistication to this argument on quality is available as follows:

Roizen and Jepson (1985) confirmed the view that British employers perceive a considerable hierarchy of quality differences among universities and strive for a large share of new graduates from the more prestigious universities. In their presentation of interviewees' replies and their interpretations, these authors highlighted another important finding: a strong preference of most employing organisations for university graduates rather than for graduates from 'public' institutions (i.e. polytechnics and other colleges).

(Teichler, 1989: 237)
The role of education and training in broadening outlook is recognised (Constable & McCormick, 1987). But Handy (1987) refers to the anti-intellectual culture in business which has prevailed in Britain, and its low status. In the surveys carried out by (Constable & McCormick (1987), innate ability and job experience were seen as the most important determinants of an effective manager. Employers were interested in managers obtaining skills, but these were specific, job-related skills. Qualifications were seen to be of secondary importance and even opposed by some employers.

2.3 Europeanisation of UK management education

Internationalisation has become an important concern for management education in the 1990s (Ball, 1990). The trends of business internationally, and especially the move towards a Single Europe (Part One of this review) have been encouraging such development. EC initiatives, such as ERASMUS and COMETT (Funnell & Müller, 1991) have played a noticeable role in initiating student mobility and encouraging Europeanisation processes (see below). There are two main developments in this area: business school courses in the public and private sectors, and corporate in-house management development programmes. Here, discussion is limited to the business school provision.

We should, however, at this point take note of the influence of what Bolton (1993) refers to as the 'fright factor'. The urgent activity of HE institutions to internationalise may well have as much to do with the fear of being left behind, as with reflecting the needs and demands of the new business environment. Such a view gains considerable credibility when we realise that two decades ago, Professor Berry of INSEAD was urging Europeans to reject the American inheritance, the 'Havardisation' of business education, with its ethnocentric concerns and:

"teach towards European problems with European teachers ... develop materials, pedagogies and institutions that are related to European expectations and needs."

(Berry, 1971: 23)

Such development of the Europeanisation of programmes seems to have been an inordinately long time coming.

What does internationalisation mean in this context?

The notion of Europeanisation is complex, and it depends on the level under consideration what might be involved (Easterby-Smith, 1993: 32). At the institutional level it is helpful to consider current thinking and practice in relation to policy, the
nature of the student body, and course design. Contingent areas such as staffing and research activities, and the business school-industry relationship also receive comment.

Equally important in looking at potential developments/practice in these areas is some measure of the response offered (ie how do we assess whether it is European/International?). Several attempts have been made to provide 'guidelines' for this purpose (Wille, 1990; Lupton, 1991; Tijmstra and Casler, 1992).

One key path to internationalisation of institutions has been to cooperate in exchange programmes (Braddick, 1991; Easterby-Smith, 1993). Several different forms of collaboration exist: exchange programmes where students do a portion of their studies in another institution; exchanges within 'closed' networks, with students spending at least one year of their studies at another institution (leading to two qualifications); and 'carousel' programmes where the students rotate between countries along a fixed path (Easterby-Smith, 1993: 33). Innovation in this area existed in undergraduate business studies from the 1960s onwards, but in the 1980s there was a noticeable increase in such developments. The CNAA in their timely review on International Management Courses (1992) link this momentum clearly with programmes 'meeting the needs of both students and employers'. Linstead (1990) however, takes a more sceptical view and attributes the growth in such courses to the availability of EC funding. This, he and academic colleagues, argue stimulated higher education institutions into a rash of activity (Linstead et al, 1988). They raise questions as to the reasons for collaboration that need to be addressed.

The institution itself

Increasingly business schools claim 'to be International'. What do they mean by this? Bolton (1993) observes that progress has been most striking in establishing international institutional links. The acquisition of partners in Europe (and wider afield) has significant benefits. Not the least of these Bolton argues, is that it is a way for the overwhelming majority of institutions to achieve a 'convincing international profile'. If we refer to the guidelines offered by several writers for the purpose of measuring Internationalism, we find that there are clear expectations in this respect. For instance, Lupton (1991) suggests 'that the school is linked through its programmes and through its faculty into professional networks on an international level'. And Tijmstra and Casler (1992) develop this characteristic further by insisting that the institution must itself be transnational. Only in this way can it fully demonstrate an understanding of the needs of European business. In their view, the claims of many business schools to be international, and offer international programmes, cannot be substantiated. Among the few that do provide such expertise they list IMD, INSEAD, London Business School and EAP.
Taking INSEAD as an example, it can be established that it meets the criteria to have a faculty of European/international composition 'to a very significant degree' and similarly its course participants are international in origin. As Oldroyd (1991) reports no single nationality dominates the entry, and over one fifth of the student population is drawn from outside Europe. The main language used is English rather than French, despite being located in France. The implications of these characteristics are important. INSEAD is indeed able to project an international orientation, but Easterby-Smith (1993) says this, though strong, is surface. There is still 'a strong underlying flavour of US business school philosophy'. This is partially attributable to the fact that many of the faculty are in fact Europeans trained in the US (viz Berry, 1971), and also to the use of American methods. So even a school as oft-quoted as INSEAD is not totally international.

**Strategy?**

It is doubtful whether every business school could fully conform to *all* the suggested criteria, and it is understandable that institutions may wish to emphasise different aspects (CNAA, 1992; Easterby-Smith 1993). Whatever aspect(s) an institution may choose to develop, one factor is quite clear: becoming international is resource-intensive. It is usually agreed that the expense of establishing and maintaining links with courses and/or schools in other parts of Europe, and elsewhere internationally, is substantially more than the costs for domestic arrangements. Such development then, whatever its exact nature, has the potential to seriously drain resources. In a climate of increasing pressure on institutional resources generally, the necessity for institutions to define their strategic focus on the local-international spectrum is therefore paramount (CNAA, 1992: 13). However, rather than formulating institutional policy some observers have referred to business schools appearing to do the opposite: 'leaping into international links because that is the thing to do'. The range of criticisms levelled in this area is such that the charge of tokenism must be answered (Linstead et al, 1988; CNAA, 1992; Bolton, 1993).

A 'whole organisational' response has been proposed (Rothwell, 1990). Specifically in this regard, Funnell & Müller (1991: 62) explain it is possible to construct an educational strategy for Europeanisation which responds to all competing demands by coordinating development in each of three interacting dimensions. These are the curriculum; the institutional cultural and structural process; and the human resource available. This model allows for the implications of change and development in one area on the other two dimensions. It is suggested that in this way 'enhanced' Europeanised learning opportunities will result.
Resourcing

As mentioned above, the cost of financing international developments, both at institutional and course level, has generated particular comment. The availability of EC funding to encourage a 'European dimension', especially the ERASMUS scheme holds a central position in the debate. There are several strands to be considered, all relevant in this context. Reilly (1993) claims ERASMUS has had a significant impact on policy, compiling a dossier of results. The high participation rate is undeniable; the UK has been, and remains, the largest partner country (Green, 1989; Reilly, 1994). However, this should not be seen in isolation from the mechanics of the funding itself. To a large extent it is possible to view ERASMUS as a victim of its own popularity, as an imbalance in funding opportunities exists. For particular fields of study (one of which is Business and Management), and for certain countries (France, Germany), obtaining substantial funding is very difficult. If however activities are directed at partners in underrepresented states, such as Greece and Portugal, funding is much more likely to eventuate. The different phases of the scheme have encouraged different directions in mobility. The emphasis has been shifting over time from student programmes to staff exchanges and research. The implications of these and other factors, for the renewal of funding and the continuity of institutional initiatives, need consideration. As Reilly (1993) recognises, 'otherwise students may be discouraged and institutions may not make the necessary long-term investment'.

Entrepreneurial activity on the part of institutions to secure funds can lead them away from adopting a whole institutional strategy. It may actually encourage a resource-led approach. In this case narrow-focused curriculum development tied to areas where specific funding is available becomes a real possibility (Funnell and Müller, 1991). Absalom (1990) too, concentrates on the increasingly competitive context of curriculum development and design. He considers that the very activity of securing external funding, such as ERASMUS, can become an end in itself. Neither, he says, should the opportunity for career enhancement through such activity be overlooked. He argues success in this area may become dysfunctional within the 'micro-politics' of the institution. Rather than stimulate curriculum innovation, ERASMUS may perhaps distort curriculum design.

Such concerns are extended on and reinforced by other practitioners. For instance, Linstead (1990) draws attention to the dependent relationship that can exist between the status of a course and whether or not it has ERASMUS support. Significantly, he sees such a relationship as being instrumental in securing the future of a course. This function should be set in context against the increasing number of new institutions entering the market of international activity; an indication that the funding 'challenge' is also on the increase (CNAA, 1992: 27).
Human resource available

The role of the human resource is equally critical, perhaps even more so than that of the financial resource. The amount of staff time and effort involved in the international process should not be underestimated. It is a stressful activity, both 'challenging and frustrating' (Linstead, 1990; CNAA, 1992: 17).

Adding a demand for internationalisation is, suggests Bolton (1993), just increasing the pressures on faculty which are already substantial. Their workload has several priorities: to teach diverse audiences; to research; and to demonstrate relevance of their material to the 'real' world. Not everyone will welcome a move to internationalise, whatever its form, because of these existing demands. And yet one of the major determinants of success will undoubtedly be the calibre of the faculty (CNAA, 1992: 12). The international mix of the staff is a necessary precondition for genuine internationalism. Nor is this simply a matter of national origin, an international orientation has to be present. McDonald (1991), in his analytic account of developing a European programme, confirms that some interest and commitment to 'European' teaching is at least an initial base for curriculum design.

It would appear that institutions in the UK may have difficulties in this regard. In their review the CNAA (1992: 13) looked at the national origins of staff and their language abilities, as measures of how international the faculty is, in order to determine the starting base of the institutions in their study. They reported that in the majority of institutions 'staff are still overwhelmingly British' and 'of the British staff, few are truly fluent in a relevant foreign language' (ie one used in conjunction with the programmes being offered).

2.4 Curriculum development responses

Focusing on the area of undergraduate provision, courses have been developed where there is a definite intent 'to equip students to operate successfully in a range of European countries'. These have been based mainly in the polytechnics (as they were), and according to Storey (1993: 5) represent the most direct steps to internationalise the curriculum to date. The labour market relationship of graduates from the courses is specifically commented upon by Easterby-Smith (1993: 34). Students may be enabled to operate effectively within the labour markets of other countries, rather than just the domestic market. Easterby-Smith attributes this possibility to a placement abroad providing 'sufficient language skills and local knowledge'.

A European dimension: structure and learning approach

The inclusion of a European dimension with languages and business studies has been the subject of an evolutionary process in recent years. Brown (1992) highlights the involvement of linguists in developing such courses. A high profile is given to the labour market-driven research (Hagen, 1988), which presented an overwhelming case for the learning of languages within business studies, and the inclusion of a European dimension in the curriculum. The emphasis however is placed on the importance of an integrated programme with the students' whole experience in mind. The key to this approach is in enabling students 'to relate their knowledge and understanding to experience'.

Linstead (1990) outlines the typical features of an integrated language and business programme as follows: study abroad, work placement abroad, joint assessment of all or part of the course by foreign partners, joint qualification (a degree equivalent award made simultaneously in the partner country), and multilingual study groups. Furthermore he appraises it in these words:

There is no comparable type of structure if the objective is to create fluent operational 'Euro-managers'.

(Linstead, 1990: 66)

Tijmstra and Casler (1992) too analyse the requirements for integrating a European dimension into management education. They draw a distinction between the status of knowledge and attitude; knowledge of Europe is defined as a 'hard' aspect, whereas attitude is a 'soft' aspect. One view of such knowledge is that what should be prioritised is not a 'set of learnable facts', but rather the process of acquiring knowledge and information itself. Such a view that what counts is the capacity to add to and develop knowledge is strongly supported by other practitioners (Coulson-Thomas, 1992; Rothwell, 1992). In order to do this the individual needs an awareness of learning styles, and has to be open to learning opportunities whenever and wherever they may occur. This emphasis on a 'process' direction is also noted by Barham (1990: 16) as an area where business schools should be offering firms support:

the business schools are 20 years behind where we need help. They are good on content but poor on process, what will be important is support on process rather than content.

At this stage of the review, a more in-depth focus will be given to two issues seen by practitioners as vital to the European dimension, first of all study abroad and its outcomes, and then the language-culture relationship in the curriculum.
Study abroad

Time spent abroad (studying, living and/or working) is an important feature for language study. Some degrees offer two years abroad which is the longest maximum accreditation period allowed for degree credited study. The way in which this time is arranged varies; sometimes it is a straight block, sometimes an irregular spacing of semesters. Linstead (1990) makes particular note of the fact that on 'dual qualification' courses students are *examined* in a foreign language in the business subjects 'as a native'. Further, he argues that it is only on courses offering a dual qualification that 'a level of ability compatible with a national' is achieved. This compatibility is then expressed in the award of national qualifications which have currency in the appropriate labour market.

Differences emerge in this area not so much in what is in the curriculum, but how it is studied. The findings of Silver and Brennan (1988) are of interest in this context. In a study of joint courses 'with explicitly vocational objectives' in England, France and Germany, they observed broadly common curriculum content between the three countries. The pattern was one of disciplinary foundations at the beginning moving on to greater emphasis on functional specialism. There were however significant national differences in approach, which appeared to reflect pedagogic style and the role of work experience. Conditions for learning then vary according to the pedagogy practised by each country. The role of the student in relation to the acquisition and use of information (knowledge) is consequently affected by the preferred approach. Some broad generalisations can be attempted to demonstrate the essence of these differences. In Germany, student learning is essentially 'independent and passive', with a concern for knowledge: 'reading books in the library and learning how to apply rules and procedures'. In France, students are heavily taught, contact hours are high and the system has a high degree of control. The approach to information is different, the emphasis being on problem-solving, ie using information rather than acquiring it. To this end students are provided with notes by lecturers, instead of reading and making notes themselves (Silver and Brennan, 1988: 188-9). In the UK, outlines and interpretations are presented, and students fill in the detail by reading on the questions that have been raised (Linstead, 1990: 69).

In essence, the German and British approaches emphasise the *acquisition* of knowledge (theoretical or practical) and the student is made responsible for doing this. The French approach is to emphasise the *application* of knowledge, but not the *process* of its acquisition (Silver and Brennan, 1988: 190). Much has been written about the detail of these different approaches, and this has implications for student responsiveness. However, as Linstead (1990) points out:
If students are prepared for this, that's half the battle, but some of them will still expect conditions for learning everywhere to be the same.

(Linstead, 1990: 69-70)

The way in which courses incorporate relevant practical work, as well as academic study, is also an important issue. Again a difference in approaches is to be seen between the UK and other European countries (Silver and Brennan, 1988: 191). The extent to which periods of work placement and project/dissertation are integrated into the academic framework of the course show up this difference. Linstead (1990: 67) highlights the relevance of such activity to the student's personal development and future labour market opportunities. In view of the educational objective (see above) the need for students to have a work placement in another European country, as well as their home country, becomes a critical issue. How otherwise are they to obtain experience of workplace norms and values? The practice followed by Middlesex Polytechnic (course) of graduates having followed two 6-month placements, one in each country, is quoted as an example that produces 'many synergies' in this respect. In the UK, the placement has been described as 'useful but separate' from the academic part of the course (Silver and Brennan, 1988: 189). This contrasts with the French approach to the final year placement (8 weeks), which is 'closely integrated with antecedent and subsequent academic study'. The intention behind this is that it is run as an executive traineeship with precise objectives meant to serve the interest of both the students and the firm.

Study abroad outcomes

The impact of study abroad programmes on students is comprehensively documented in the research of Opper et al (1990). In a longitudinal research project the process of getting to know the host country was examined in depth. On return, students reported study abroad as valuable in two respects: improving knowledge of foreign languages, and enabling them to become acquainted with people in a foreign country. The academic advantages of such study were seen as of subordinate importance, however the experience of being 'confronted with different subject matter and with different teaching and learning methods' was regarded as worthwhile. What is most significant in the account of students is that great importance was attached by them to integration into the life of the host country. Given a list of various potential difficulties, the most common complaint was 'that too much time was spent with students or other people from one's own country'. Given this point, the writers recommend that:

Activities to encourage integration at the host institution would therefore appear to be a key area requiring programme directors' attention.

(Opper et al, 1990: 206)
In their analysis, Opper et al (1990) categorised the effects of study abroad as academic, foreign language, cultural, and professional outcomes. A consideration of some of the findings seen as particularly relevant to this present research study follows. Students, they report, become highly sensitised to differences in the academic learning climate, and particular importance was attached to opportunities for out of class contacts between students, and also between students and staff. A sharpening of awareness of learning processes is clearly linked to the study abroad experience. In fact, this effect has what the authors refer to as a remarkable finding in relation to students' perception of their actual performance in academic terms. More than half of the students in the research sample reported that their academic performance had actually been better than they would have predicted for themselves at their home institution.

In relation to foreign language proficiency, outcomes were that it rose considerably during the study abroad period. With cultural outcomes, even though participants reported acquiring a high level of information on politics, society and the culture of the host country, what is of particular interest is the way in which general stereotypes held by students 'give way to more differentiated opinions'.

In employment and career terms, two thirds of the respondents in the study reported that the experience of study abroad had been helpful, or even very helpful in finding their first job, and mentioned that it had positive effects on occupational mobility. However, one finding worth noting here is that when invited to respond to an open question on other relevant comments in this regard, a considerable number of graduates made it clear that they were disappointed not to have found occupations with a 'pronounced international dimension'. Nevertheless, it should be noted, their judgement of the study abroad is still predominantly positive.

Finally, Opper et al (1990) refer also to the impact of study abroad reported on other competences and spheres of life. Graduates laid emphasis on effects on personality, workstyle and social competences, which are regarded of more general importance professionally than ones directly attributable to job related knowledge. Their views are noted in detail:

Study abroad seems to promote the ability to adjust to unfamiliar situations, to deal with different kinds of people, to be prepared to take on new duties and new working conditions, to get to know previously unknown subject matter, to manage in unaccustomed circumstances and to learn from comparisons.

(Opper et al, 1990: 213)

The researchers do not make an argument for a strong statistical correlation between the outcomes previously discussed and specific programme factors. Instead, they do place emphasis on the complex conditions, and the fact that different factors may be
decisive for the successful programmes in each case. What is of particular interest, however, is the high degree of uniformity of particular elements across diverse programmes which they assume can have a particularly significant impact on their success or failure. For instance, they cite that:

many of the programmes are characterised by an enormous commitment of the programme directors, and all programmes investigated involved a period of several months abroad.

(Opper et al, 1990: 214)

Reilly (1993; 1994) supports and reinforces these findings viewed from the particular standpoint of the ERASMUS programme. He singles out the development of self-reliance; the challenge of getting to know local students; realising that lack of proficiency in the language is more of a handicap than anticipated; learning from peer groups from other countries; and the re-evaluation of the British system that occurs on return. Furthermore he emphasises the considerable 'multiplier effect' in practice. It is the latter that he depicts as the most compelling. In his view it is:

greater than any other initiative because it touches the daily lives of all those concerned, both mobile and non-mobile students and staff, and it has a lasting quality often summed up in the phrase 'one of the most rewarding experiences of my life'.

To round off this review, a key issue for the curriculum (ie the language-culture relationship) will now be considered.

Language-Culture Relationship: some implications for curriculum design

The advantages of foreign language competence in business have received fresh emphasis in recent years. The user needs of industry and commerce previously recognised in research (BOTB, 1978) have become more defined (Blackburn, 1988; Hagen, 1988). This can be connected to the more general growth in internationalism (as discussed in Part One of this review).

At the same time, there have been frequent references to English now being the International language (Naisbitt and Aburdene, 1990; Ohmae, 1990). Advocates of this view say we can all communicate in English, and not just for business purposes. The universality of English is spreading in many ways, officially and semi-officially, but particularly through its adoption as the language of youth culture. However, Blackburn (1992) says the truth is that English is 'increasingly the Number 1 language', but as business becomes more International 'the need for foreign languages becomes more, not less, imperative.' This view is strongly supported by Liston and Reeves (1985), the reason being that:
The ability to meet the trading partner on his own linguistic territory, to converse and so lay the foundations for a relationship of mutual trust ... to negotiate and so be sure that there are no fundamental misunderstandings - these are some of the immense advantages that accrue to the executive with foreign language competence.

(Liston and Reeves, 1985: 77)

Much has been written about the need for business preparation to meet the demands of the SEM. The majority view has been to see the main obstacle to integration as one of language difference which can easily be remedied by learning a second European language. The government's policies in their initial preparation for '1992' therefore concentrated on trying to address the neglected state of British linguistic skills (Brittan, 1989). Well-publicised chastisement about Britain's poor record in linguistic competence encouraged a surge of activity in language training. This trend has also been reflected in higher education as students, increasingly pragmatic and concerned with preparing for a career, come to acquire 'what the world expects' - high-level language skills, especially oral skills. But 'there is from the outset a dissonance between staff and students', because for staff language is 'enabling', while for students it is 'substantive' (Evans, 1990: 276).

However, some closely involved with language education and training, notably Ferney (1991) and Embleton (1992), see these exhortations and activities overall, as panacea solutions. The focus on language preparation is:

a common trap that equates language with all of culture.

(Grove & Franklin, 1990: 15).

Embleton particularly is concerned about what longer-term benefits will emerge from the '1992' bandwagon. He bases his doubts on the fact that language takes time to learn, and is not by itself enough; the whole of culture is needed. For this reason he believes that a commitment is required to Business Culture Training (see also below).

There is a need too for 'the right kind of language', ie based on the future needs of the business community (Ferney, 1991). Communicative language skills (Blackburn, 1988; Embleton, 1992) are what matters, not literary skills. In this respect, they note a difference of orientation from the schools, where emphasis is towards academic achievement rather than communicative skills.

Research has been carried out to inform whether low competence in language skills is attributable to lack of aptitude or the schooling system. Liston & Reeves (1985) place the blame with the latter; the spread of languages is limited, with the majority studying French, followed by German. A-level specialisation results in a lack of flexibility and a 'cultural and linguistic insularity'. This view is supported by Linstead (1990), who refers to the cultural impoverishment of British students beside their European counterparts.
More emphasis is needed on cultural aspects (Blackburn, 1988). Sensitivity to one's own world view is important, but so too is acquiring a sense of history. Understanding relationships between various countries abroad will be improved, by knowing how countries have been linked by historical events.

**Tackling cultural disparity: inter-cultural communications**

Increasingly, discussion of how to achieve cultural integration has moved from the enabling nature of language to the behavioural context. For:

> language is itself cultural; in order to understand a communication one has to understand its cultural connotations.

(Evans, 1990: 276).

Culturally specific *communication* styles mean we have differences in the way we structure our communicative activity according to our culture. What is more people are usually unaware of these features of style, take their own communicative conventions for granted and transfer them to the use of a foreign language (Knapp, 1990). So business effectiveness and co-operation among firms across Europe will depend not simply on learning each others' languages, but on giving special attention to the problem of inter-cultural communication.

How this is to be achieved has occupied many researchers, including a group of professionals from diverse fields who label themselves 'interculturalists'. They view their work as 'the enemy of ethnocentrism' and see it as having practical relevance. However, they emphatically state that:

> The complexity, contradictions, and subtle warnings of any given culture cannot be fully transmitted through training.

(Grove & Franklin, 1990: 17).

For this reason they recommend a *culture-general* approach to training rather than a *culture-specific* one. Two basic objectives are aimed at in culture-general training:

> to increase the clients' understanding of the nature of culture, of how culture determines one's life at every level, and of the possibility that different solutions to common human concerns may be equally workable.

(Grove & Franklin, 1990: 17)

Knapp (1990) however is adamant that to be successful, Euromanagers besides one or two European languages and their culture-specific communicative styles must also have a knowledge of the society in question's work-related values, management methods and
European Management Education

Assessing new directions

business ethic. He singles out the ERASMUS programme as an important development in helping would-be managers to acquire this knowledge, but in his view this is not sufficient. In his words:

It is therefore necessary for aspects of communication and culture to be anchored in the curricula of managerial education much more deeply and to a greater extent than is the case at present.

(Knapp, 1990: 60)

Barham and Wills (1992) refer to 'performing interculturally' as testing the boundaries of different environments and creating a new intercultural framework. Through their research they link this to the ability to create and produce change.

In this context most writers are agreed that placing people in multicultural groups where situations force them to become aware of their own cultural roots, and to question their own values and assumptions can be an effective process (Davison, 1990; Barham, 1990). However, as Barham and Wills (1992) point out learning will not take place automatically simply by mixing people from different countries. Thought must be given to the personal profiles of participants, and the most appropriate group mix. Davison (1990) adds to these requirements by highlighting the further needs of allowing differences, and suspending judgements so that the 'full diversity' of ways of thinking about, and doing things, can emerge. She extends her argument by saying that simple process skills that anyone can learn are at the heart of any intercultural interaction; but you must be aware of the different cultural influences on all aspects of your own behaviour as well.

Conclusion

An examination of the changes in Higher Education (HE) shows a number of conflicting tendencies. In expanding access, and moving to a popular model, the need to improve international competitiveness has been stated. A large number of people who are economically 'useful' and who possess relevant skills (ie higher level) may go some way towards improving the country's level of human capital, however, concerns for putting wealth creation before personal fulfilment have been raised. In this debate, pleas for quality have been expressed, and the manner in which the quality of a course should be judged has been the subject of much discussion. In this context Ball (1989; 1990) has suggested a reinterpretation is necessary, with in particular the enabling quality of courses to be a shared matter between students, teachers and employers. Such a suggestion is particularly significant in the light of the positions of these various stakeholders. In spite of protestations to the contrary (CIHE, 1991), agreement on and progression of, the overall objectives of Higher Education between industry
and academia is far from being the partnership the Government might have in mind (DES, 1987). Rather, there is a problem of an anti-industrial culture on the one hand, and an anti-educational culture on the other. The attempts to institute a market-place culture into education and the rapid change with which it has been effected have led to noticeable tensions. In turning to the specific area of Management Education, the role of the Handy Report (1987) and the Constable and McCormick Report (1987) was to highlight the deficient state of training (especially compared to international competitors). The debate which followed over what was the appropriate way to train managers and what should be given priority is noted.

Any consideration of the internationalisation of management education in the 1990s must refer to whether the activity of HE institutions is attributable solely to the needs and demands of the business environment. The central question to ask is how much is 'fright factor', and how much is there a desire to develop European programmes? Increasingly business schools claim to be international, and guidelines have been offered as to how such an international standard might be measured. It is significant that one of the most prominent guidelines relates to the linking of programmes internationally, and in the case of Tijmstra and Casler (1992) there is an insistence that the institution must itself be transnational. Scepticism has been voiced over the rush of this links activity, and questions asked as to the real reasons for such collaboration (Linstead, 1990). The difficulties of a school achieving the ideals of international standards are pointed up by consideration of the example of INSEAD, which in spite of its appearance of international orientation does not meet guidelines in full (Easterby-Smith, 1992). A future complexity is added to achieving internationalism by its resource-intensive nature. This is a characteristic which has been dwelt upon from two perspectives: the way in which links can drain resources, and the availability of EC funding and its impact on the growth of courses with links. The financial implications of internationalisation are a key area that need scrutiny; the relationship between the role of funding and development of curricular direction, and the overall institutional approach and policy is of particular interest. Competitive pressures on curriculum development and design to achieve funding may in fact be encouraging a resource-led approach (Funnell and Müller, 1991). Some commentators alert us to the fact that a resource approach can also be looked at from the human perspective as well. In this respect, Bolton (1993) points out that the demand for internationalisation is yet another pressure on a faculty whose workload already has a number of priorities.

Concentrating on curriculum development, Storey (1992) claims the most direct steps to internationalise the curriculum to date have been made in the area of undergraduate provision. A labour market link for graduates from these courses is proposed by Easterby-Smith (1992), the significant weight being placed on the placement abroad providing 'sufficient language skills and local knowledge'. Other exponents of the inclusion of a European dimension place particular emphasis on the integration of
language and business in the programme. Linstead (1990) is perhaps the most ardent supporter of such a structure, believing it to be the way to create fluent operational 'Euro-managers'. Besides the structure of the programme, writers have examined whether the process of acquiring knowledge, or the content itself is prioritised. Time spent abroad (Silver and Brennan, 1988; Linstead, 1990) is a period when students' conditions for learning vary, and they are introduced to a different role in relation to the acquisition and use of knowledge. The mix of experience in study and workplace has been a vital part of this debate. Again, the practice of different countries has implications for student responsiveness.

Finally, the relationship between language and culture is of particular importance in this discussion. Emphasis has been placed on the right kind of language (Ferney, 1991; Embleton, 1992), ie communicative language skills for use in business as the proper focus for training. However, Evans (1990) points out that language by itself is not sufficient and we need culture as well. In this regard he is joined by Handy and Barham (1988) and Knapp (1990) amongst others, who argue for intercultural communication to be part of the curriculum as well.
CHAPTER 3

Research proposal and approach

Introduction

This chapter briefly considers the broad objectives of the research, and how I arrived at a suitable approach for the study. A short description of the issues as they emerged from the literature is followed by a discussion of the nature of the research problem in the light of the positivist and naturalist paradigms.

3.1 Research proposal

After initial literature searches, some issues were eliminated because they were outside the main area of the study. At the same time, other aspects took on a new emphasis as their significance emerged. For instance, comparative material on French, German and other European countries' management and management education slipped from a very prominent position into the background. It was helpful in appreciating the overall context of the study, but I soon realised it was not possible to include everything. This was part of the process of arriving at a UK perspective for the study. Also ideas of comparing corporate approaches to training personnel for European management with those of business schools were seen to be over-ambitious in relation to the time available for the project. In this way, the shape of my research area gradually changed from an over-inclusive collection of ideas to a more refined and pertinent set of issues. My initial thoughts were very influenced by the concept of the 'Euromanager', and my first working title reflected this emphasis. As I became more aware of the implications of the curriculum-institution relationship the emphasis shifted, and because of the qualitative approach employed (see below) the design was able to accommodate this emergent focus. Courses were placed at the centre of the enquiry, and a research outline was
drawn up. The broad aim of the research study was to examine the nature of management education and training for those undertaking courses with an explicit European dimension. It was eventually focused on the following key questions:

1. What influenced curriculum development?
2. Why a European dimension to business/management training now?
3. What are the aims and objectives of these European Management/Business Studies courses?
4. Who are the target group for these courses?
5. Why do students want to do these courses?
6. What is the relationship between the publicised aims and objectives and actual curriculum practice?
7. What is leading the management curriculum of these courses?
8. Is there a consciousness that establishing a European/International dimension in these courses is an investment in a future European infrastructure?
9. What is the nature of the institutional ethos in which these courses exist?
10. To what extent are these courses part of an institutional response to internationalisation?
11. Are these courses contributing to the creation of a European perspective?
12. Do students develop Europeanness through these courses?
13. Do these courses produce what industry wants?

Before considering details of the research strategy and the methodology employed, I next intend to contemplate my choice of research approach in more depth.
3.2 Choice of paradigm

At the outset of this project, I had little background in the methodology of the social sciences. I therefore undertook reading to progress my understanding of this area generally, but also in order to decide on methodological appropriateness for the research design. My subsequent findings are highlighted using an adaptation of Lincoln and Guba (1985: 37) to put forward relevant points for this research study. In particular, my values as an individual (and hence I believe researcher) are indicated. This explanation is central to my rationale for the location of the study, almost exclusively in the naturalistic paradigm.

The importance of paradigms is realised when we consider explanations such as that of Lincoln and Guba (1985: 15). They see them as both enabling and constraining in terms of our actions in the world. Actions, they point out, occur with reference to 'what we think about the world (but cannot 'prove'). Furthermore, according to Patton (1990: 37) paradigms are deeply embedded in our socialisation and are normative, telling us 'what is important, legitimate and reasonable'. However, this very aspect is in his view both a strength and weakness in the sense that 'the very reason for action is hidden in the unquestioned assumptions of the paradigm'. Any number of descriptions and explanations of the two main paradigms (positivist and naturalist) are available, and it is not my purpose here to become involved in the paradigms debate (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Cohen and Manion, 1989; Patton, 1990). Rather, the following discussion aims to demonstrate my understanding of the paradigms in relation to my particular research problem. This is not to make light of the process of examination of the criticisms of the ontological and epistemological bases of the paradigms, because as Henwood and Pidgeon (1993: 16) state, the distinction:

is important in alerting us to the fact that there are competing claims regarding what constitutes warrantable knowledge.

Examination of the criticisms of positivism that exist in the literature (Cohen and Manion, 1989: 23-6) contribute greatly in helping to appreciate the very nature of its underlying assumptions. They are in effect a testbed for your reactions to such a view of the world. Similarly, the criticisms offered of the 'newer perspectives' (Cohen and Manion, 1990: 38) allow the opportunity to further establish just exactly where your grounds of knowledge and view of reality reside.

Given the complexity of the debate, and the tide of literature associated with it, it is necessary to have some point of reference from which to operate. However, even this is difficult because as Lincoln and Guba (1985: 36) remark:
the particular formulation of the positivistic paradigm that one adopts depends as much upon the countercase that one will propose as upon anything else; the selection of points is essentially arbitrary.

Nevertheless, some framework of reference is essential to pull together the findings from my examination of the literature on research inquiry. Therefore I have selected Lincoln and Guba's (1985) case for representing the two paradigms. The table below is an adaptation of their attempt at contrasting the two paradigms according to five selected axioms.

**Table 3.1** Contrasting positivist and naturalist axioms, adapted from Lincoln and Guba *Naturalistic Inquiry* (1985: 37)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axioms About</th>
<th>Positivist Paradigm</th>
<th>Naturalist Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The nature of reality</td>
<td>Prediction and control</td>
<td>... not intended Some level of understanding (verstehen) can be achievable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relationship of knower to the known</td>
<td>Discrete</td>
<td>Interact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The possibility of generalisation</td>
<td>Generalisations hold anywhere and at any time</td>
<td>'Working hypotheses'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The possibility of causal linkages</td>
<td>Cause-effect explanation</td>
<td>Mutual simultaneous shaping Impossible to distinguish cause and effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of values</td>
<td>Value-free Objective methodology employed</td>
<td>Value-bound in at least five ways, viz influenced by inquirer values choice of paradigm choice of substantive theory values that inhere in the context value-resonant (reinforcing)/value-dissonant (conflicting)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.3 Appropriateness for the study**

It is now my intention to examine the appropriateness of the two paradigmatic stances in relation to the nature of the issues (see Research Questions) proposed for study. To help with the clarification of this discussion, I will continue to use the adapted version of Lincoln and Guba's table, but at this stage modify it still further to represent specific concerns for my research study. Also, I will draw on the substantial literature in research inquiry, some of which I have encompassed, as a means of supporting what I believe are significant points.
### 3.2 Interpretation of the paradigms in relation to the proposed research study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axioms About</th>
<th>Positivist Paradigm</th>
<th>Naturalist Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Her-researched relationship | Courses not static (Patton, 1990: 42)  
Intention was not to manipulate variables  
Did not have a preconceived set of hypotheses (Denzin, 1978: 22) | Complexity of human nature and social world acknowledged (Denzin, 1978;  
Cohen and Manion, 1989: 12)  
Exploration, discovery-orientated intention (Blumer, 1978: 39; Denzin, 1978: 8) | Intention to talk with people about their experiences and perceptions; 'reduce distance' (Patton, 1990: 10)  
Obliged [and wish] to enter people's minds (Denzin, 1978: 7) |

| Generalisations | A little initially 'to get a feel' for trends, but not the overall concern of the research study | Personal and non-generalising (Denzin, 1978: 8)  
Capture participants 'in their own terms' Patton (1990: 32)  
Those studied 'to tell it as they see it' (Lofland, 1984) |

| Cause-effect | Objective was not 'to measure effects of programme on participants' | Unable to fully specify theoretical concerns in advance of the study (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1993: 19)  
Agreement with the idea that 'behavioural specimens should be like films that can be replayed and reanalysed as new questions are asked and as new negative cases emerge'. (Denzin, 1978: 26)  
Theories grounded in direct program experience (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) |

| Values | Hold belief that value-free inquiry is a delusion (Heron, 1981: 33) | Not perspective-free (Reinharz, 1984: 25, 38)  
Formulation of an identity 'adequate for understanding the world beyond the confines of sociological research'. (Reinharz, 1984: 33)  
Explicitly utilise personal experiences not deny them (Phillips, 1971: 159) |
Following on from this interpretation, I will next expand on two points: namely the holistic approach intended and the substance of my value orientation. The initial drive of the research study was to find out about the nature of management education and training for those following courses with a specific European direction. I intended to study these programmes in their widest sense, ie including not just what was offered as a course of study, but the attitudes of both those administering and participating in the courses as well. In effect what I proposed to capture was the programme process in the 'reality' of various educational settings. As such the research problem belonged clearly enough to the area of dynamic, rather than experimental, evaluation (Patton, 1990: 52-3).

Even before entering the field, I was strongly aware on a tacit basis, that it is the essence of course programmes to be 'on the move'. Priorities too shift with changes in policy and personnel (Patton, 1990: 42). My concern then, was not to manipulate programme developments and study them in a controlled manner, but rather wholeheartedly 'to accept the complexity of a changing program reality' [emphasis added] (Patton, 1990: 42). The setting was regarded as critically important to the study (see Research Questions). Perhaps it is appropriate at this point to say that ideally I would have liked to have adopted an ethnographic approach to the project (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Having been introduced to the writings of Whyte (1955), Polsky (1971) and others, and having immersed myself in their detail, I was tremendously drawn to the idea of participant observation. However, in spite of its appeal, this ethnographic preference was ruled out by the need to sustain a full-time teaching post. At the time financial considerations were dominant, but in retrospect I would be much more alert on future occasions to 'the extent to which ideals can be realised in practice' (Patton, 1990: 65).

Orientation stems from one's personal experience, and therefore it may be that your very identity as a researcher is integral to the research itself. As far as Reinharz (1984) is concerned this extends to your role in the social system under investigation, and the need to discover the degree of your own 'role imbeddedness'. Rather than adhering to what Heron (1981: 33) refers to as the 'delusion' of being value-free:

> Our responsibility is to be aware of our own perspective and to share it explicitly.
> (Reinharz, 1984: 38)

From the outset of this research I had a naive preference for naturalistic enquiry. From an untutored view, it came closest to what I believed about the nature of social reality. Some initial reading in this area led me to analyse how my social knowledge had emerged, what its foundations were, and its current status (Lofland, 1984; Reinharz, 1984). Essentially the acquisition of my social knowledge is through aesthetic, literary and interpersonal orientations.
Reason and Rowan's (1981) discussion of the styles of enquiry proposed by Mitroff and Kilmann (1978) was also a useful benchmark. The style of Conceptual Humanist (CH) (reproduced below) is one where I can identify many elements of my potential, if not actual, style.

**Table 3.3 Characteristics of the Conceptual Humanist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative categories</th>
<th>Attributed characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External relations</td>
<td>Status of science as a special field of knowledge in relation to other fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does not occupy a privileged and preferred position, is not clearly separable from other fields; no clear lines of demarcation; not autonomous and independent; all fields of knowledge depend upon one another. Science is not value-free; it is political.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal properties</td>
<td>A. Nature of scientific knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal, value-constituted, interested activity; holistic, political; imaginative; multiple-causation; uncertain; problematic; concerned with humanity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Guarantors of scientific knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human conflict between knowing agent (E) and subject known (S); inquiry fosters human growth and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Ultimate aims of science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To promote human development on the widest possible scale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Preferred logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dialectical behavioural logics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. Preferred sociological norms (ideology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic plenty, aesthetic beauty, human welfare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F. Preferred mode of inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conceptual inquiry; treatment of innovative concepts; maximal cooperation between E and S so that both may better know themselves and one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. Properties of the scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interested; free to admit and know his biases; highly personal; imaginative, speculative, generalist; holistic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mitroff and Kilmann (1978), *Methodological Approaches to Social Science.*
My cumulative findings from both reading and personal analysis left me in no doubt whatsoever that I was firmly located in the naturalistic paradigm. From an unformed beginning where I had sensed a preference, consideration of the literature on research inquiry and methodology had led me to a fuller understanding of the naturalistic paradigm.

To summarise, it was highly appropriate in terms of its treatment of the empirical world; it encouraged a people-oriented mandate; it allowed for the development of understanding of the participants' situation 'in their own terms', and above all it emphasised the role of the researcher as the human instrument, whose values were integral to the research process.

**Conclusion**

I now had an awareness and understanding of the principles of the paradigms, and where I stood in relation to them. Furthermore, I had been alerted to what it might mean to be involved in the process of learning to be a researcher. The keywords of the study context were the complexity of the educational situation; the need to 'reduce distance' with people, and at the same time to be reflexive; also the emphasis on an emerging process was fairly clearly signposted. That part of this process would be to discover the degree of my own 'role imbeddedness' was also clear, but perhaps in retrospect I did not understand its full implications. The next stage of the research was to start on the preliminaries of establishing which courses should be included in the study, and this and subsequent steps in the research process will be detailed in the next and following chapters.
CHAPTER 4

Survey of UK European Business/Management courses

Introduction

Even an emergent design has to start somewhere, and this was my next task. I felt reasonably confident that the overall strategy of the design was sound, and that it was sufficiently flexible to allow the research to 'unfold, cascade, roll and emerge' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 210). Furthermore, there were viable and interesting ideas from the literature (as already outlined) and a set of key questions on which the study was to concentrate had been identified. My decision to carry out a survey was heavily influenced by reading on research methods in education (Cohen and Manion, 1989: 99). First I needed to select a population sample and to establish contact with them, and as discussed later in depth, my initial thoughts turned to Course Leaders as the most suitable participants. However, I did not know the area of European Business/Management Studies courses in any detail, so this was my immediate concern. Consequently, I embarked on a strategy of building up familiarity with the courses through desk research. This approach was strongly influenced by my previous academic study, and professional background. Similarly, the idea of attending an academic course recruitment venue was prompted by seeing advertisements in the press, and advice on effective ways of generating contacts. This chapter will now examine the development of this phase of the research in the following order: initial research, the design of the survey, the construction and administration of the questionnaire instrument, and finally the analysis of the data collected and its implications for further inquiry.
4.1 Prospecting the courses

Desk research

The overall objective of preliminary work was to achieve a working basis for a survey on European Management/Business Studies courses. In the first instance, a search was made using Higher Education (HE) handbooks and guides to courses to identify what courses of training were available in this area. Key terms used were Management/Business allied to European. Initially the task was primarily one of exclusion rather than inclusion, to establish the parameters of the population.

Having identified courses of potential interest, the next step was to review institutional prospectuses. These were looked at from the point of view of gaining more detail on the courses, especially their aims and target group. The specific focus was how the term European was utilised. I was particularly interested in whether the phrase 'European perspective' occurred in the course description, and what, if any, mention was made of business/management in the European context. In other words, how consciously were courses aligned to the European management area?

A list of courses was gradually compiled. This was a fairly laborious process, mainly because I found the PCAS and UCCA listings were not definitive. This was reinforced by reference to other current sources, including the weekly Education section of The Guardian. These leads were followed up, along with those from articles (Wade, 1991) that mentioned work in this area, but I was still aware that I could not claim total information capture. I had made every attempt to be as thorough as possible, but the information was only as complete as my sources had allowed. This was a taste of the difficulties to be encountered in researching an area subject to continuous change. However, I did start to build up a familiarity with institutions, and the field overall.

Information on offer at The Higher Education Fair

A second strategy for acquiring information on courses was thought out. I decided to attend the Higher Education Fair held at the London Business Design Centre in Islington on 5 July 1991. This would give access to a wide range of institutions on an informal basis. The overall aim was to enhance my overview of the provision of courses in the field. Objectives were loosely formulated: I wanted to find out if other courses existed that my information search had not revealed to date, and I certainly hoped that this might be a possible way of making contacts. The approach adopted was very much that of browsing, along the lines of 'go and find out if there's anything there'.
Time-wise the visit was effective, as I gained access to people and information without having to go far afield, or telephone long distance. It was also a significant demonstration of just how dynamic the whole area of HE is, and provided on-the-spot examples of institutions merging, changing status, closing down courses and starting up others.

As a method of collecting 'local data' the HE Fair was invaluable. The response level to my requests for information was uniformly excellent; and in total I spoke to representatives of 25 HE institutions. Making contact in person and talking about courses had a definite edge on reading prospectuses, but the one was a necessary complement to the other. The PR element must be acknowledged. Several representatives were very keen to demonstrate that their institution had European courses, or would have European courses soon, or they had Language courses and would therefore warrant inclusion in a survey. Information apart, the responses were important in stimulating my interest in progressing the research a stage further.

As far as shaping the inquiry it posed more questions. One area that presented itself was that of institutions which claimed their named International Business courses were in fact European. This was very useful in drawing up grounds for typicality of the subsequent questionnaire sample (see Section 4.2). It also led directly to focusing on the European/International dividing line in the continuing literature search, and later in interviews with Course Leaders. Overall this visit was an ideal preliminary to constructing the questionnaire instrument.

4.2 Survey of UK European Business/Management courses

Background to the survey

The purpose of the next stage of the enquiry was to obtain a detailed description of Course Leaders' priorities in the provision of European Business/Management Studies courses. It was thought that a survey method would be appropriate to allow access on a large scale to a range of attitudes and practice in this field. At the same time it could act as a filter instrument in obtaining a sample for interviewing purposes. It was my eventual aim to set up a series of substantive, semi-structured interviews with Course Leaders.

Meanwhile, the intention of the survey was to get through the public screen, to move from the external public relations level of institutional prospectuses to the internal individual practitioner level of Course Leaders. The choice of these respondents, made on the basis of tacit knowledge, was further reinforced by the realisation that it was an important part of the research design to pitch the enquiry at the 'right' level (Lofland,
Too high up the faculty hierarchy and the information acquired would lack working detail and an overview of course design, and probably fall back into the PR bracket.

Preliminary attempts to acquire information on European Business/Management studies courses had demonstrated how difficult it was to establish a complete picture. The dynamic nature of both the field of European Business/Management Studies courses and HE was outstanding; for instance the changing status of institutions (polytechnics becoming universities). The context was vitally important and just as much a focus of the research study as the programmes themselves. It was part of the reality being investigated (Shipman, 1985: 27).

So two main demands of the research design were to make some sense of this mass of information, but at the same time to keep it in its context which was part of it. As an individual researcher carrying out this research study while involved in a full-time and demanding job it was vital to build my concerns into the design. Time was at a premium and other resources were limited in the sense that everything had to be provided primarily from my own budget. These constraints, especially that of time, needed realistic treatment. The other important concern was credibility which will be discussed in relation to the survey instrument.

Suitability of the survey method

The survey method was chosen for the obvious strengths it could offer in relation to these demands, in spite of the fact that it is primarily a method associated with the scientific paradigm and would involve data in quantitative form. The paradigmatic difficulties that existed revolved on the issue of methodological purity. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) the miscibility of methods is an untenable position because it implies a shift from the chosen paradigm stance. The overall validity of the design is threatened. Other research methodologists (Bryman, 1988; Patton, 1990) take up an alternative position and stress that the location of methods in either paradigm does not preclude a mix of methods at all. In fact what should guide the researcher is situational responsiveness (Patton, 1990). Viewed from this methodological perspective the survey's fitness for my purpose was clear. It would deliver the context of the courses, which would help in the progressive focusing on relevant issues.

A survey would allow a static account of European Business/Management Studies courses (Cohen and Manion, 1989: 97); essentially a 'mapping' of the field. It would give access on a large scale to a range of views and practice on a national level in this field. The nature of the chosen survey instrument, a self-completion questionnaire inevitably meant a surface treatment, but this was an acceptable constraint within the overall research strategy. There was no intention to rely solely on this method. The
design was essentially exploratory, conceived of as an entry to the field, as Mouly (1970: 237) so aptly puts it: 'a stepping stone to more precise investigations'.

It was important to gain access directly to Course Leaders who were the nominated respondents in the survey design. Preliminary work had established that the survey population was widely dispersed. Given the restraints on my time and resources already mentioned, a postal questionnaire offered major advantages in practical terms. It would give the desired geographic coverage, it had well-defined stages that could be scheduled (Mouly, 1970), and the format was particularly appropriate for intelligent, professional respondents whose time was at a premium.

Establishing the survey sample

The population for study was Course Leaders of European Business/Management courses in public and private sector Higher Education (HE) institutions in the UK. The institutions concerned were colleges and institutes of higher education; polytechnics (as they were designated at that time); universities; and independent institutions. Courses included both undergraduate, and postgraduate degrees and diplomas. It was felt appropriate to use a non-probability sample (Cohen and Manion, 1989: 103), since the intention of the survey was to look at trends and not to generalise the findings beyond the sample in question. Purposive sampling was used, and typicality of cases for inclusion was established on the following grounds:

1) A European approach was integral to the course. The term 'European' must be in the title; and

2) Training for the European context of Business/Management was specifically mentioned as a course aim. This was also to be indicated by the inclusion of Business/Management in the course title.

The hand-picking of cases for inclusion in this way was aimed at satisfying the specific needs of the research questions of the study (see Chapter 3 for previous discussion).

It is also important to take note of what was not included in the sample:

1. Business and Language degrees, for example: Accounting with French; Marketing with German (Linstead et al, 1988: 11; Wade, 1991)

2. Business Studies with Language;

3. 'European' degrees, viz European Studies, without a business/management component; and

So, essentially, these grounds for typicality, for inclusion and exclusion of individual courses, were a personally-determined definition derived from the study of the literature to that date, and information obtained at the HE Fair.

Sample size

The number of questionnaires sent out was 85. This sample size was drawn up in line with recommendations in the literature. Cohen and Manion (1989: 104) advise a sample size of 30 as the minimum number of cases, if some form of statistical analysis of the data is to be made. It was also important to allow for measurement of the variability on variables identified as central to the aims of the survey (OU, 1979: 88). Finally, the fact that there is no total control over the response rate in surveys meant that it was probably best to survey more participants than would be retained in the final sample (DPHE L2/12: 24). However, the absolutely decisive factor on size was concern that given the competitive nature of these courses, a low response would result from the questionnaire. I received independent advice to send a questionnaire to each Course Leader, rather than to a small sample. This, combined with the likely attrition of numbers anyway, swayed me in that direction.

4.3 Initial specification of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was based on findings from a limited literature search in the area of European Business and Management Education, up to and including December 1991. The prospectus review and information obtained at the HE Fair were also used as a guide to areas for inclusion. Overall principles of questionnaire design were suggested initially by studying the work of Cohen and Manion (1989); and in more specific technical detail Moser and Kalton (1971), and Youngman (1978).

In selecting a postal self-completion questionnaire all efforts to minimise error and bias (OU, 1979) had to be built into the design of the questionnaire itself. The variables to be measured did not lend themselves easily in this respect. Some were quite abstract, viz degree of European integration; the distinction between European/International; identification of European management style, and it was obvious from the outset that only a surface treatment would be possible.

Initially there was far too much content. Moser and Kalton (1971) comment on just this tendency:
The temptation is always to cover too much, to ask everything that might turn out to be interesting. This must be resisted ... and the questionnaire must be no longer than is absolutely necessary for the purpose.

(Moser and Kalton, 1971: 309)

It was therefore important to keep the number of questions and the scope of the content under control. The following discussion is an account of how this was done. It relates to content in general, as well as to specific questions that formed part of the final questionnaire.

Some of the content I originally thought of including covered aspects of partnership, the curriculum, staff involvement and institutional orientation. For instance, I wanted to have a question which queried the countries represented in the course arrangement. This was deleted because I felt it was sufficient at this stage to find out whether or not partner institutions were involved. It was important to leave flexibility to ask additional questions at interview. Another instance was a proposed question 'How is the issue of inter-cultural communication tackled by the course?'. This too was put to one side with the interview in mind.

Another question on the curriculum 'Are subjects taught discretely, or in a European context?' was also put to one side. In retrospect I think this decision was regrettable, and that had I included this particular question, it would have provided some direction from which to approach this issue in the interviews. As it was I had to tackle it cold. Another issue which I intended originally to include in a slightly different fashion to the final version was that of company involvement. I was going to ask 'Which companies are specifically involved with the course?'. However, I decided that this would be too sensitive a question, and probably would not be answered. Also, there was a possibility that it might put respondents off answering the remainder of the questionnaire.

This issue of confidentiality of information was a difficulty in constructing the questionnaire, even keeping it as a surface treatment. Referring to Question 16 on the final version of the questionnaire (see Appendix A3) in the section on industrial links, the original version of this question intended a Likert approach. The form the question was to have taken: 'How much do local companies get involved with your course?' was then to have been followed by a grid, which gave categories ranging from 'a great deal', 'not much', 'very little', 'never' to 'don't know'. I decided against this because it was too subjective an approach. The form in which the question was eventually finalised was much more effective (see Section 4.4 for a full discussion of Question 16). The effectiveness came from the fact that the question was far more neutrally phrased. A potential separate question on student work placements was also left out because I decided it was unnecessary at this stage.
Other considerations at the drafting stage related to specificity. For instance, the original wording for Question 17 was 'envisage other courses'. This was too vague, so I opted for 'planned to start' and added in 'If yes, specify'. Question 18 was reworked for similar reasons. Originally, I had intended to ask about plans on a 3-year basis, but decided that 2 years was probably a more appropriate short-term objective period.

Another potential question I had in mind was on the institution's European orientation, such as 'What is the policy on Europe of your institution?'. I realised the scope of the question's content was too wide for the structured form of the questionnaire, and so it was deleted.

It was particularly difficult initially to resist the wish to include questions that were of interest, and on which I was eager to obtain more information. It is only too easy to get carried away with enthusiasm for the subject with such an instrument, and forget that not everyone will share your view. As Youngman (1978) reminds us:

> there should be some theoretical justification for including a particular question, beyond superficial appeal.

(Youngman, 1978: 4)

In the final section on the personal characteristics of respondents, my original intention was to ask a series of questions along these lines: 'How long have you worked on this course?', 'Have you worked on similar courses in other institutions?', 'Have you been involved in staff development for European Management Studies courses? Please write about this'. 'What countries in Europe have you personally visited/resided in?'. As the shape of the questionnaire started to develop, I recognised that these questions were not at all necessary to classify representativeness. Accordingly, they were reserved for the interview, where they turned out to be very effective in the face-to-face situation.

**Piloting the questionnaire**

The draft questionnaire was subjected to the criticism of several professional colleagues to test respondent reaction (Youngman, 1978: 26). They found the questionnaire generally well ordered and the question wording quite reasonable. Their criticisms related mainly to specific items of format and layout. Running through the questionnaire as it appeared in its final form (see Appendix A3 for sample copy of the questionnaire), these are the revisions that were made in the light of their comments:
European Management Education

Survey of courses

Question 3  This is how it looked originally:

3. Is the course arranged as:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>language + business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>language + business function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>integrated language + business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Would you prefer another arrangement?

All respondents said that the terms used needed to be specific, and were concerned that the difference between the three categories would not be clear (see Section 4.4 to compare with the final wording and layout).

Question 6  This simply said: Is the course over-subscribed? Yes/No. There was a suggestion that I should ask 'by how many' the course was oversubscribed, in order to follow up the information in interview.

Question 7  This was originally worded 'On average what percentage of your students are male/female?' and I had wavered between specifying that this should be answered as a percentage, and wording the question 'Are the students on the course predominantly male/female?'. In this version it was the latter, but some respondents indicated other wordings. Eventually, the wording ended up as 'How many of the students on the course are male/female?' (see Section 4.4 for further discussion on this question).

In the pilot version of the questionnaire, Question 8 was written as two separate questions 'What percentage are EC students (excluding UK)?' and 'What percentage are overseas students?'. It was felt by all the respondents that categories should be inserted here to make the question more distinct.

Question 9  It was suggested that space would be useful to add in other comments.

Question 15  It was felt that the list of possible support systems was not sufficiently specified and should be extended. For this reason, particular care was taken to include the full version of acronyms, and at this stage COMETT, LINGUA and TEMPUS participation were also included.
Question 18 The wording was criticised for being too vague, and for this reason it was slightly altered in the final version. The change made clear that the question was asking about mergers of whole institutions, not courses. It should be noted that one respondent thought that Course Leaders would not be prepared to answer Question 18 because it was too sensitive.

The only other comments respondents made were about overall layout, usually suggesting that more space should be made available than on the original draft. As a result of the piloting procedure some questions were recast in a more concise and unambiguous manner. Attention was given to allowing for further comments that people might wish to offer, and the layout was slightly reorganised. In this way, the draft version was tightened up to eliminate potential difficulties for the respondents as far as possible.

Overall comments on the questionnaire design

In writing the questionnaire particular effort was made to use the terms revealed by the literature (OU, 1979). This was designed to make the respondent feel at home with the wording and the individual questions, and the flow of the questionnaire as a whole. Layout was considered primarily in terms of achieving a clear, uncluttered look with the emphasis on ease of filling out. The questionnaire was pre-coded, but with sufficient capacity to develop further categories. The overall aim was familiarity of terms, ease of response, and a task that was not too demanding time-wise. However, this had to be offset against the type of respondent; one who was intelligent and knowledgeable about the subject area. The construction for the most part also tried to allow for the fact that respondents might have other information to offer, or wish to express their views in more depth.

Composing the covering letter

If the questionnaire was to achieve its purpose it was important to maximise response rates. My credibility as a researcher in this field posed a problem. Gaining access to Course Leaders (CLs) ultimately depended on presenting them with a reasonable case as to why they should expend their time and mental energy on completing a questionnaire for someone, unknown both in personal and academic research terms, for no obvious gain to them. This is a highly competitive course area, and there was a strong likelihood that some CLs might regard information as sensitive, even confidential, and not wish to divulge it. For this reason careful thought was devoted to the composition of the covering letter. The fact that it was for a research degree probably helped its acceptability (Patton, 1990: 251). The particular audience was considered thoughtfully.
tried to empathise on paper with academic personnel involved in this fast-moving area, working from the stance that they had a genuine interest in the European arena and would lend their cooperation (see Appendix A1 for covering letter).

**Distribution of the questionnaire**

The questionnaires were sent to a named Course Leader, where possible. I was dependent on prospectuses for acquiring names so the likelihood that details might be out-of-date was a possibility. For some of the courses I used terms indicated in the given prospectus, otherwise I used the standard title of Course Leader. Approximately half of the questionnaires were despatched to specifically named individuals. There was virtually complete correspondence between these named individuals and their returns. In the light of this it would have improved the mailing if I had made greater efforts to find out the names of Course Leaders. This aspect of research was to occur again when I was trying to contact employers, and on that occasion I dealt with it in a much more exacting manner (see Chapter 7).

The questionnaire was ready to go out in December, but because of its attendant end-of-term/Christmas disruption I had no choice but to wait till January. I then allowed a week into the new term for people to settle in before posting out. Two weeks, usually regarded as a reasonable time for completion, were allowed for return (Youngman, 1978: 29). However, I did allow for the fact that respondents might well be busy, by adding the phrase 'if possible; otherwise by the beginning of February'. This may have been a tactical error, in that respondents might have viewed the deadline as flexible, and then put the questionnaire to one side. The fact that one or two questionnaires were returned very late might well support this view.

**Non-Response and follow-up**

The main disadvantage of a questionnaire of this type, in terms of its validity, is the possible bias introduced by non-respondents (Youngman, 1978; Cohen and Manion, 1989). Details of questionnaires despatched were kept in a special file. As the returns came in they were logged appropriately, so that it was possible to tell who had responded, and who had not. This information was confidential to me alone. Hoinville and Jowell (1978: 142) suggest a daily tally of returned questionnaires is kept, so that it is possible to determine the optimum time for sending reminders. This was done (see Figure 4.1 Pattern of Questionnaire Returns below). Strictly speaking, from a theoretical point of view, a reminder should have been sent much earlier. However, I felt it was particularly important to reach an appropriate balance between the needs of the research design, and imposing further and unwanted intrusion on the survey nominees (Hoinville...
and Jowell, 1978: 185). For this reason the follow-up procedure was left until mid-February. On a future occasion I would probably send a reminder sooner, but I am still of the opinion that further reminders would be inappropriate for this type of respondent.

**Figure 4.1 Pattern of questionnaire returns**

Having invested a lot in the design of the initial approach to respondents, I had sufficient faith in this request for co-operation to think it would elicit a reply. The follow-up letter (see Appendix A2) was written working on the premise that the respondent had overlooked the questionnaire because of other demands. I relied here on tacit knowledge, as much as pertinent advice (Youngman, 1978). A further copy of the questionnaire was despatched to non-respondents.

The number of questionnaires returned was as follows:
- 38 on the original form
- 7 on the reminder, making a total of
- 45 replies in all (53%).
4.4 How the questionnaire worked out in practice

In structure the questionnaire finally consisted of 25 questions divided into six sections. The rationale for the content and order of each section will now be discussed. Further remarks will also be made as to how the questionnaire worked in practice. A full set of the Questionnaire data is available in tabular form in Appendix A4.

Section One: about the course

The overall intention of this first section was to find out where courses stood in relation to publicised trends in European Business/Management courses. Prospectus Literature was drawn on in the design of these questions. There were 8 questions in total in the section. The following critique looks at the specification and rationale of the individual questions:

Question 1 asked for the start-up date of the course. The purpose of this factual approach was two-fold. The first aspect was to do with the overall order of the questionnaire's design. Youngman (1978: 22) comments that the most crucial stage in questionnaire response is the beginning. Keeping this in mind, it was felt that an initial question that carried straight on from the research explanation in the Covering Letter was the most appropriate choice. This would consolidate the respondent's attention, and hopefully interest, and avoid possible difficulties associated with requesting personal information. The reverse impact of this particular design decision will be referred to in discussing Section Six.

The other aspect was to identify the growth pattern of these courses with some statistical substance. From the literature I knew there had been a lot of activity in the field, but apart from one or two of the earlier courses I had no definite information. From another perspective two key dates had emerged from the literature: the creation of the Single European Market (SEM) in 1986, and the ERASMUS scheme in 1987. Plotting of the course start-up dates against these particular dates would be of interest. It would also be reasonable to assume that the start-up date would be a readily accessible piece of course, or at least institutional information (Moser and Kalton, 1971: 310).

Question 2 was designed to see how the designated respondents, ie the Course Leaders, or course representatives, felt about the Course Aims. Again Moser and Kalton's (1971: 261) advice that you cannot ensure the right person completes the questionnaire when using the postal method was noted here. I had to accept this was a possible limitation, even though I had made reasonable efforts to send the questionnaire to a named individual. I particularly wanted to query the European-International 'blurring'; the interchangeable use of these terms, highlighted so much in the literature. I wanted to see
what intention existed in relation to the context for which graduates are supposedly
destined. For this reason, the key terms International, abroad, European and foreign
were underlined to draw attention to them. When presented with a number of frequently
used prospectus descriptions of Course Aims in this way, which context would
respondents actually select? To elicit a precise response, the instructions restricted
respondents to a single choice. This was not strictly a factual question, so the legitimacy
of limiting the response in this way could be criticised. Given that I was effectively
seeking the opinion of respondents, it might perhaps have been better to combine the
existing format with a further open-ended response below the grid. This would have
allowed for those respondents with a different course aim to those listed, or those with
strong feelings/opinions about course aims generally, an opportunity to offer them. In
retrospect, I would now handle the question in this way because I think additional
information would be forthcoming. In practice one or two replies showed that Course
Leaders did not wish to be limited in this way, and wrote on the margin of their
questionnaire to that effect.

Question 3 was divided into two parts to avoid the problems associated with a double-
barrelled question (Moser and Kalton, 1971: 323). The design of this question was
heavily influenced by the appraisal of course arrangements by Linstead (1990: 65), who
makes the case that an integrated arrangement is the ideal one: 'if the objective is to
create fluent operational 'Euro-managers". The question approach was used to get
respondents to consider their theoretical view on course arrangement, against their
actual course practice, using the three types of arrangement as a benchmark (see below).
The intention was to see how widely adopted the integrated arrangement was, and to
highlight any individual discrepancy between actual and preferred practice. Given the
centrality of language in the literature (Knapp, 1990 amongst others), its positioning in
relation to business in these courses was a highly pertinent issue. I wished to obtain
specific information in this regard which could then be followed up in interview.

In the earlier draft of the questionnaire, the three types of arrangement were phrased
rather vaguely, because I had tried to avoid quoting Linstead directly. However, this
lack of clarity in the original wording of the question was noted and criticised, and in
redrafting, extra description was included to make the difference between the types more
distinct. The returns indicate that the question does not appear to have caused any
difficulty to respondents. I have reproduced the final version here in order to let you
call these points:
3.

a) In your opinion which of the following types of course arrangement gives the best framework for training the Euro-manager?

b) What type of arrangement does the course have?

PLEASE TICK ONE APPROPRIATE BOX IN RESPONSE TO (a) AND (b).

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<tr>
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<th>(a)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>language + business (not necessarily connected)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>language + specialist business discipline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>integrated language + business (general or specific) programme</td>
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The other comment that must be made about Question 3 is that on reflection it really would have been better placed in the next section on Course Design. I think it belongs more naturally in that section. It might also have been useful to ask about the actual teaching arrangements that are used to integrate the Language and Business study. More specific information on how Course Leaders thought this was done would have been helpful in creating the interview schedule.

The first part of Question 4 was a factual question requiring an explicit YES or NO response, and simply looked at the frequency of such partnerships. The second part of the question had a more specific intention. I wanted to get some idea of the grounds on which courses, or their institutions choose their partners. Those answering YES to the first part of the question were then requested to select one response category from a list of five possible reasons. In restricting respondents to one choice, I assumed the categories were mutually exclusive, which of course they are not. It would perhaps have been better to ask respondents to indicate which two reasons were the most important. This deficiency in the design was partially compensated for by the provision of other (specify), which allowed respondents to comment on the involvement of more than one factor in their choice.

The next four questions, Question 5 to Question 8 inclusive, were designed to obtain some comparative statistics on the student body. I was interested in overall demographic trends particularly because of the plans for Higher Education (HE) expansion in the 1990s.
Question 5 looked at the size of the course, but there was a slight difficulty here in practice. I automatically assumed, because I was directing the questionnaire to Course Leaders in the UK, that they would refer to UK recruitment only in their replies. However, this was not clear to some respondents, and because the courses are multilocational they included figures for other course sites too. At the analysis stage the UK figures only were considered.

Question 6 attempted to assess the 'popularity' of the course by asking respondents to indicate if they were over-subscribed. This particular question followed strongly from the emphasis in the literature on increased demand to be expected in the period of HE expansion. I was interested to find out to what extent this included European Business/Management courses. One aspect of this question could easily have been improved upon. By simply asking respondents to state 'by how many' the course was oversubscribed, I did not specify the exact form in which this was to be reported. Hence, replies were given in various formats: percentages, numbers and multiples. I had intended numbers to be used, and most respondents did give the number of applicants they were oversubscribed. The information was quite retrievable, but this potential for confusion could easily have been avoided.

Question 7 was included to assess the gender composition of the courses. Again, respondents were left to decide the form of response. I thought the wording of the question implied numbers would be given, but not all respondents read it in this way. The majority did in fact give numbers, but some gave their reply in percentages. It should be noted that originally the wording of this question was: 'Are the students on the course predominantly male or female?' which would not necessarily have elicited an exact quantitative answer. Therefore it was changed to the present wording, because it was thought actual numbers would be more useful.

In Question 8 respondents were asked to give a breakdown of the nationality status of their student body. The intention was to see if there were any significant numbers of nationalities, other than British.

It would perhaps have been useful if I had included a question asking about recruitment of mature students, to give a more complete picture of the student body. However, in retrospect other questions appear only too obvious, when they were not so at the time. Again, it must be emphasised that the questionnaire was designed at an early stage of the research.
Section Two: course design

As has already been discussed, the idea of the survey was as an entry to the field, not an in-depth inroad. The second section of the questionnaire therefore was designed to carry out a sweeping reconnaissance on the curriculum. The questions in each case were really headings for complete fields, for example the competence debate. Also, in view of my stated research aims, it was important not only to get some idea of the shape of the 'European dimension' in the course content, but also to what extent it was specifically related to education for European management.

Question 9 Here there was an interest in knowing how respondents rated all the chosen categories. For this reason a form of semantic differential was used in order to evaluate the level of importance to the course content (a commonly held construct) for all five areas. The instructions paid particular attention to the numerical link so that the data generated could be correlated with ease at the analysis stage (Youngman, 1978).

A space was allowed for comments below the question so that respondents could, if they wished, include additional information. In placing this here, I was trying to allow further expression of opinions on a complex area. In practice, over a third of the respondents utilised this opportunity, and a coding frame was compiled to categorise their responses.

Question 10 focused on teaching strategies that were identified from the literature (Linstead, 1990) as being particularly important for European Business courses. The intention of the question was to highlight if courses were using teaching strategies, accepted as encouraging a European programme delivery, as part of their learning approach. This led to a very short checklist of just three categories being presented to respondents who were then asked to indicate whether they used them. Coding allowed each category to be treated as a separate variable. The other (specify) open category was again used to allow respondents to comment further. Only a small number of respondents utilised the open space in this instance. The only strategy mentioned in common (by just 4 respondents) was European case studies.

The final question in this section (Question 11) attempted a somewhat more ambitious approach. It was based on the characteristics and qualifications referred to widely in the literature (especially Hogg, 1989 and Sedel, 1989) as being typical of the European manager. The intention was to see how Course Leaders (CLs) rated the importance of these characteristics, and then at the analysis stage, to gauge the extent to which their ratings correlated with a profile of an 'ideal' European manager. Again, a form of semantic differential was used, and respondents were asked to rate the importance of the five given variables using a rating scale of 1 to 5 (low to high importance). In practice respondents do not appear to have had any difficulties with this question.
Section Three: funding and support

Section 3 consisted of four questions looking broadly at the range of funding and support available to courses. The literature had highlighted significant points in this area. First of all, European Business/Management courses are acknowledged as expensive to run (Linstead, 1990: 64), and a connection has been made between the availability of EC funding and the growth and development of courses (Linstead et al, 1988: 4).

Question 12 was intended to assess the number of courses supported by ERASMUS. A positive response here, then fed into Question 13 which attempted to find out the main reason for this involvement. The decision to restrict respondents to a single choice was made deliberately. I wanted to see whether courses subscribed primarily to one of the European aims of the scheme, or the availability of finance. In case any respondent resented this restriction, or had strong feelings generally about the course's participation in ERASMUS, an open comment space was inserted after this question as a 'safety valve' (Youngman, 1978).

Question 14 investigated other funding sources. In practice this question led to confusion on the part of a very small number of respondents. They indicated that they did not know whether or not to include funding from their own institution. This might have been avoided if some categories had been listed. However, the reason why I had been reluctant to do this was that the question was potentially sensitive, and I had wanted to make it as straightforward as possible.

Question 15 covered a range of institutional support that might be expected for a European Business course, as well as EC schemes (other than ERASMUS) where there was a likelihood of participation. The overall intention of the question was to gauge the extent of such systems. A subsidiary intention was to see whether there was any correlation between reported extensive support, and the presence of what could be interpreted as 'European' responses on Qu 9, Qu 10 and Qu 13. Again a space was left for Other, please specify in the event that courses might be using systems that had not been accounted for in the checklist. The coding treated each category as a separate variable for analysis purposes. In practice this question worked very effectively, and significant information was provided. This was so both in terms of the frequency, and non-frequency, of items on the list.

Section Four: industrial links

This fourth section consisted of just one factual question (Qu 16). The intention was to find out if European Business/Management Studies courses were supported by local
industry. The follow-on part of the question from a YES response allowed CLs to comment on the form of the involvement. This was heavily used by respondents, and a coding frame was subsequently compiled. Through this several main categories of involvement were distinguished: consultative course role; student sponsorship; live projects.visits and work placements.

Section Five: future

Given that the questionnaire was really an overview of trends on these courses, it would not have been complete without some look at the near future. For this reason, two questions were included along these lines. The first, Question 17 asked specifically about plans to start up other European-based managerial courses. The thinking behind this was to see if the institution would extend their European curriculum development, and at what level of study.

The second, Question 18 was very much influenced by my experience at the HE Fair (see Section 4.1 earlier in this chapter), where the on-going change in institutions was very evident. It seemed of interest to find out if there were any institutional plans that might have significant European/International implications. The acquisition of information on growth patterns/developments in institutions would be useful, as well as finding out whether European links were being strengthened generally. This was a relatively sensitive question to ask, and for that reason the response was left as a strictly YES/NO formulation. No space was left for further comment as this might well have been construed by respondents as impertinent (Youngman, 1978: 16). In the event there were only 4 respondents who wrote on the questionnaire that this information was 'confidential'. The occasional reply did give an additional comment, even though it was not asked for. In retrospect, I should perhaps also have asked whether more partnerships were planned, and in which countries.

Section Six: personal

The final section was basically a set of classification questions on the respondents covering age, gender, qualifications, membership of professional bodies, nationality and the ability to speak European languages. Apart from the need to establish sample representativeness, some of the questions were also designed to see if there was a trend towards personal/professional European development.
The decision to place these questions at the end, rather than at the beginning, of the questionnaire was taken for the following reasons. Having established the explicit theme of the research in the covering letter, it seemed both logical and likely to have more impact on respondents, to then open the questioning by continuing it, thus leaving the biographical information to last. In doing this, I weighed up the consideration, that I would possibly lose the immediate interest to be aroused from the fact that 'most people enjoy talking about themselves' (Youngman, 1978: 22). There was also the feeling that these questions were the easiest to answer, but also a possible source of sensitivity. For instance, a respondent might react adversely to their perceived lack of higher level qualifications, or inability to speak a European language. The only definite change I would now make is in the use of the word 'fluently', for which I would substitute 'competent'.

Finally, an open comment section was inserted at the end of the questionnaire, so that respondents could include additional information. The placing of this page, at the end of the actual questions, but before the request for willingness to be interviewed was, being critical, perhaps not entirely the best choice. There was a slight chance that a respondent would not realise there was another page overleaf. In practice, over three-quarters of those replying did fill in the last page which seems to suggest this was not indeed a problem. The open comment section itself was utilised by just under a quarter of the respondents.

4.5 Coding and analysis of the questionnaire

Preparation of the data

As the questionnaires came back in the post they were allocated a sequential number. Each questionnaire return was checked for completeness and errors, and the coding range was checked for validity (Frude, 1987: 15). The incidence of omission was low, similarly there were very few errors.

Coding frames were utilised on the open-ended questions (Hoinville and Jowell, 1978: 157), and frequency of answers established accordingly. It was interesting to see the range of responses and was an opportunity for data reduction. For instance on Qu 16 (company involvement with the course) easily the highest frequency of response was work placement. However, the various subtleties expressed were retained in broad sub-categories, and this is how the data was classified and entered onto the computer.
Description of codes with a view to computer analysis

The description of all codes, i.e. pre-coded variables; codes now allocated to the open-ended questions and identity codes was undertaken systematically by compiling a codebook. It might be said that this was out of proportion to the small size of the responses being handled. However, I was dependent on textbook descriptions of working practice. The codebook clarified the task considerably, helped to avoid mistakes with data entry, and was an invaluable centralised reference that I was to return to at later stages of the analysis.

Classifying all the questionnaire information in this way, not only prepared for the entry of data onto the computer, but made me think about how the data would be used. For instance, a decision was taken to preserve respondents' answers in full. For this reason the answers to questions with a number of separate items were coded so that the answers were available as separate variables. This allowed for data to be examined not just in terms of frequency, but specificity as well. In this respect Frude's (1987: 20) advice to bear in mind the old saying 'You can't unscramble eggs' helped me to understand the best way to handle the data. Such clear instructions were an essential aid in navigating the plentiful pitfalls awaiting the inexperienced coder, and saved aggravation and reworking later on.

Entry and processing of the data

Having made the decision to carry out analysis of the questionnaire data via computer I next had to familiarise myself with the workings of the SPSS (The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program. My experience with the package was a mixed one, and at first I had difficulties with the actual mechanics of the program. Some aspects of the program were very clumsy revealing its mainframe origins, and it was not particularly user-friendly. By following the user's guide and Frude's advice I entered and checked my data set. However, the next stage of accessing the data and carrying out statistical calculations I found far from self-explanatory (Bell, 1993: 146). However, with some practical tuition I was able to access the data set competently and compile the questionnaire results (see Appendix A4).

Conclusion

The preliminary stage of the research study was important not just as a springboard for further focus, but in demonstrating how strongly the research area was the subject of continuous change. This was particularly so with the Higher Education Fair strategy, which was salutary in confirming the dynamic nature of HE, not just the
European Business Studies arena. The fact that in trying to collect information I came away with more questions posed than I went with was both confusing and exciting. The survey was particularly instrumental in delivering a context for the research study (i.e. 'the reality being investigated'). The questionnaire instrument, though essentially exploratory, was still ideal in its ability to identify the overall orientation of courses. In this respect, the questionnaire pattern of response was highly effective in informing the interview design.
CHAPTER 5

Interviews with Course Leaders

Introduction

The questionnaire had provided some strong leads on Course Leaders' (CLs) priorities, and an indication of the level of institutional support available to courses. It had also demonstrated that European Management courses (especially postgraduate) were very much on the agenda for further curriculum development in the immediate future.

The next stage in the enquiry was to talk face to face with Course Leaders to find out the substance of these trends in detail. The main consideration was to probe the exact shape or parameters of the 'European' nature of these courses from the CLs' perspective. To this end, a number of questions were asked to identify the main influences on curriculum development. What were the specific intentions for their European Business/Management curriculum? What was the nature of the relationship between the course and institutional direction and development? Overall I was interested in what policy was espoused and what happens in practice (ie how is it enacted?).

The issues (now combining literature search and questionnaire leads) centred on a number of questions that had arisen. These all focused on aspects of specific course and institutional practice in relation to their European dimension.
5.1 The purpose of the interviews and underlying assumptions

The purpose of conducting interviews was to gather data directly from Course Leaders. The questionnaire responses had provided statistical data, but what was wanted as Tuckman (1978) so aptly puts it, was 'access to what is "inside a person's head"'. If the study was to have a naturalistic style the phenomena needed to be studied in context (Guba, 1978). This was totally in agreement with Stenhouse's view:

that the purpose of gathering evidence by interview in educational research is to create referent materials which will support a discussion of educational experience.

(Stenhouse, 1980: 26)

The aim of the interview was to explore the European nature of the course. The form of semi-structured interviews was chosen as being the most suitable. Two factors were of major influence here. Firstly, the time factor made it necessary to work within certain parameters. This was so both for me as interviewer, and for the interviewees too. I was conducting the research while in full-time employment and this imposed constraints that had to be considered at this stage. The interviews had to be fitted into my normal teaching and administrative schedule. Furthermore, I was financing myself so careful planning was required in order that resources were not wasted. This is not to imply that if I had been in receipt of outside funding this would not have been a consideration, but rather to emphasise the fact that I was actually accountable to a limited personal budget. The interviewees were all busy educational practitioners who had responded, on the whole very positively, to my request for an interview. It was important that their time should not be used irresponsibly. Hence in negotiating access, a definite appointment time was made, and the length of time required for interviewing specified as between 1 and 1½ hours. If individual interviewees were prepared, or wanted, to expand this time there was sufficient flexibility designed into my schedule to accept; but at no point did I enter the field expecting this by right. It was vital to keep in mind that my task as interviewer was, as Stenhouse (1980) points out, not just a matter of getting the interviewee to talk, but 'to get the richest evidence within the limits of time available'.

The second factor at work was the need to gain information on issues identified from the literature search and the questionnaire responses as being worth a look at in greater depth. However interesting it might be for Course Leaders to talk at length about the courses for which they were responsible, there were issues that I wished to probe (for instance the relationship between 'European' and 'International' in the course design), and an unstructured interview was deemed inappropriate for this purpose. The questionnaire had already provided a structured response; what was needed now was to get beneath the surface of this information and examine in greater depth the different categories emerging. The semi-structured type of interview would serve this purpose, by
identifying specific concerns, but permitting more latitude for respondents to express their views (Wragg, 1978).

Even so there was a certain level of formality implicit in the interview design. It would depend on my skills as an interviewer just how much the 'dilemma of distance' (Lofland, 1984) could be broken down and interviewees have sufficient opportunity and feel comfortable enough to 'speak freely in their own terms'. The first step in the process was therefore to pilot the interview schedule to find out if it was adequate.

5.2 Piloting: adaptation of interviewing technique

In allowing for latitude (see above) I had imposed on myself the need to be quite flexible in style. As I was new to research interviewing this was initially quite demanding, and my first pilot interview showed up this inexperience. The whole schedule was covered, but the overall feel of the interview was very formal, and the data lacked depth. I asked the questions very stiffly, especially so compared to later interviews, and I also switched between questions too abruptly. With hindsight, there are many instances where probes could have been used with a reasonable chance of eliciting more information, or a deeper response. More than once a possible lead from the interviewee was either just ignored on my part, or simply missed. At the end the interview trailed off, rather than finished.

Using Dohrenwend and Richardson's (1982) scale of low to high directiveness, this interview undoubtedly rates high on the directiveness scale. The interview consists almost entirely of the introduction of new topic after new topic, and the interviewee rarely expresses himself freely. I had covered the topics important to the research, but had ended up too close to an interrogation. This was the opposite of what I had intended, so I needed to work out how this had happened. Could I put it all down to inexperience? Reflecting on the overall interview revealed two main difficulties. The first was to do with me personally, and the second with the question technique I had adopted. The following discussion shows how I analysed the problems, and then set about rectifying them.

On this occasion I was nervous, and this was further exacerbated by my mentally classifying the Course Leader as an 'expert'. This had led to me creating a formal and official interview atmosphere. This was particularly evident compared to the 'unofficial' conversation afterwards. I noted down the substance of these comments [on European partner relations] later, and it made me see that a tension in 'partner relationships' existed on this site. When I had asked about this issue in the interview itself, these relationships had not been referred to in this way. The rapport outside the interview situation, which was noticeably different, had affected the data on offer.
I realised that I needed to establish a less 'official' interaction contract (Parlett, 1978). It was fairly clear that I needed to be more relaxed, and this in turn was connected to the other difficulty I had identified. The question technique adopted was patently unsuitable for the interview structure chosen. Originally the key questions were written out on cards. However, the piloting made me realise that I had erroneously assumed that the interviewee would deal exclusively with the question in hand. I had not reckoned on the free-flowing nature of the information that would be offered. It became apparent that the role of listener, and prober, was hampered by my inability to scan the prepared questions in totality. In effect the method was clumsy, because in looking at the next card, it was perhaps a sign to the interviewee that I was disinterested in what he was saying. For this reason the interview guide was transferred to sheets, with an index to the main areas so that the response could be located in the context of the guide framework (see Appendix B3). As I became more adept with the interviewing process this guide worked very effectively. It had the advantage of being very compact and was easy to scan quickly in a checklist capacity (Roizen & Jepson, 1985: 181).

5.3 Selection of interviewees

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked: 'Would you be willing to be interviewed?'. Of a total of 45 replying to the questionnaire, 29 agreed they might be contacted for interviewing. Potential interviewees were then selected on their questionnaire responses to:

- Qu 2: Aims European Business Perspective
- Qu 11: Euro-manager Skills Profile
- Qu 12: ERASMUS
- Qu 15: Systems to encourage European developments

These questions were considered as key indicators of European intent. The other consideration was geographical location. To begin with attempts were made to achieve a balanced geographical cross-section in the interviewee sample. However, in spite of repeated attempts to contact some potential interviewees (see below), I had to accept limited success in this respect. The main omission is the North, which is not represented at all. The geographical spread of actual interviewees was eventually as follows: 1 in East Anglia; 4 in the Home Counties; 3 in London; 2 in the Midlands; 4 in the South; 1 in the West.
Setting up the interviews

Initial attempts to get hold of Course Leaders by telephone were unsuccessful. This forced me to rethink the whole approach to setting up interviews. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983: 125) point out the researcher needs to look at 'how the interview fits into the interviewee's life'.

Instead of accepting that the potential interviewee was simply unavailable, I increasingly targeted administrative staff or lecturing colleagues as on the spot mediators. This strategy was supported by immediately faxing the details of what was being requested to the potential interviewee (see Appendix B1 for a typical interview appointment sheet).

The only constraint was until there was a reply, another appointment could not be set up in case there was a clash. In practice however there was usually a reply on a turnaround basis. Progress gains were noticeable, and this encouraged further approaches in the same way.

Ethics

At this point it is appropriate to dwell momentarily on the matter of ethics, particularly the issues of consent and confidentiality. At the outset of this research project, I was working as a full-time lecturer in a large London Higher Education institution. I was aware that interviewees could be sensitive to what they might well interpret as an overlap of professional interest. I needed to reassure them that I wanted to talk to them purely in a research capacity. My institution did not have a European Business/Management Studies degree course. This was fortunate in that I did not have to disclaim involvement.

Later, on shifting jobs (to a 'new' university), I regretfully turned down a teaching opportunity on my new institution's European Business Studies degree course to avoid the resultant ethical dilemma. Even so, I think this cost me the goodwill of at least one interviewee that I am directly aware of. This occurred when I sent the transcript of our interview to him, and informed him out of courtesy that I had recently taken up a new appointment. There was no response at all. I can only assume that offence was taken. The reason I do so in this case and not others, is that this particular interviewee was what can only be described as 'wary' even before the interview. I was subjected to a telephone 'interrogation' on my intentions, before he agreed to be interviewed in the first place. I am convinced that in doing what was 'right' and making full disclosure of my current professional status, I passed up the chance for further study of this course.
This ethical position was particularly exposed in requesting Validation/Definitive Course Documents, and probably largely accounts for the small sample in this respect. Or it may simply have been a natural response on the part of Course Leaders (CLs). Whatever the cause, CLs were noticeably hesitant in several cases, others simply refused outright. I have maintained this ethical position, throughout the research, but it must be said with increasing difficulty.

Preparation

I obtained background on the interviewee’s institution and the exact site locality from the prospectus. Sometimes I was sent a map beforehand and some idea of the idiosyncrasies of the site. This was very helpful, as well as functional in contributing to initial feelings of rapport with the interviewee. Throughout the course of these interviews I was dependent on public transport, so particular attention had to be given to travel arrangements.

Lofland (1984) suggests a record of information, both before and after the interview, is kept on sheets designed for this purpose. Being new to research interviewing I decided it might be constructive to do this, and during the Course Leaders’ interviews wrote up these sheets (*Facesheet* and *Post-Interview Comments*) meticulously (see Section 5.6).

5.4 Conduct of the interviews

In evolving an approach to the interviewing I was highly reliant on the immensely practical advice of both Wragg (1978) and Lofland (1984).

Establishing rapport

All the Course Leaders were male with the exception of two, and their average age was early to mid-40s. This was to be expected given the gender and age breakdown obtained in the survey (see Appendix A4). Therefore, for the most part I was interviewing someone of round about the same age as myself, but of the opposite gender. It is difficult to say exactly, what bearing either age or gender, had on the nature of the rapport established between myself and the individual interviewees. I will however make one or two conjectures. If anything my age probably allowed interviewees to relate to me easily. Gender is perhaps more difficult to comment on, but I think on the whole that I was seen as ‘unthreatening’ because I was female. After all the interview was on ‘their’ territory, not mine (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: 84).
Whyte (1960) sees the first concern of the interviewer as to build rapport. Some impression of the prospective interviewee was gained from initial telephone contact, but this was fleeting in most cases. The relative status of the interviewees and myself was inevitably part of the initial interaction. From my point of view my credentials were that I was an acting-SL, and a Course Leader, but not of a degree course.

I cannot report what perception of my credentials the interviewees had, but they must have been accepted as satisfactory. The interviewees were all senior staff, and about a third of them held co-ordination roles, over and above, their Course Leader role. This higher academic status was not a barrier as far as I could tell. I was treated as a fellow educational colleague, and I felt quite relaxed with them. Virtually in every instance I was met with a friendly welcome, and the fact that I had often travelled a long distance to the interview site was taken into consideration. People had allowed sufficient time, and the clear arrangements had worked well in this respect (Patton, 1990: 317).

One other consideration on rapport is worth noting here. In arranging my interview guide I had decided to 'start off with easier personal questions to arouse interest' (Wragg, 1978: 18). These allowed the interviewee to talk about his/her background and European interest. This then led into the topic of the aims and objectives of the course in question. This definitely helped to establish rapport much more than if I had launched straight into the course itself. This was the reverse of the approach I had adopted with the questionnaire design. In a face-to-face situation it seemed a logical choice, and piloting confirmed that this was effective. It gave an easy, smooth entry into the interview itself. I did however rephrase one question from 'Would you describe yourself as a committed Europeanist?' to a milder 'Could you talk a little bit about your European background'. My initial wording had too strong a political overtone.

Introducing the research at the interview

A Statement of Aims and Approach (see Appendix B2) was prepared which was presented to each interviewee at the beginning of the interview. It was deliberately brief, and its main purpose was to offer a framework to which the interviewee could relate. Even though all interviewees had received information about the research study with the questionnaire; given the time lapse of several months, I did not assume this would be automatically remembered. The assurance of confidentiality already made was repeated, as indeed was the fact that the interview transcript would be made available for comment and review by participants. These promises were important, not just from the point of view of good research practice, but also in view of the competitive nature of institutions in this field. In every case this document was perused thoroughly by interviewees, and the overall level of interest in the aims of the research was high.
Location and seating arrangements

All of the interviews were carried out on other people's ground. This had implications for the atmosphere of the individual interviews. As I have already noted the interviewees were all senior staff. The choice of interview location was in their hands, though in making the appointments I had indicated quiet would be best for tape-recording. It is of interest to note that over half of the interviews were conducted in the interviewees' own offices. The rest of the interviewees, though they had access to their own offices, chose to go to a seminar room, and in one instance, to a soundproofed 'cell' in the department's language laboratory. The main reason given for these decisions to choose other rooms was to achieve greater privacy. No doubt interviewees were keen to escape from the telephone and by-chance callers. However, it is also pertinent here to consider Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), who draw attention to 'the possibility of being overheard' as a constraining factor. This is of particular interest in the case of one interviewee where a shared office made the removal to another location seem sensible for practical reasons. This forms a comparison with another interviewee in the same position who chose to be interviewed in a shared office.

Apart from the actual location, the conduct of the interview is influenced by the seating arrangements, background noise, and the level of interruptions (Bell, 1993: 94). Most of the interviews were carried out with myself and the interviewee sitting side by side at a table, or sitting at a slight angle to one another in easy chairs next to a low table. In nearly every instance there was discussion about the seating to achieve an arrangement that was both comfortable and appropriate to tape-recording. However, for some of the interviews this was not the case. In these the furniture layout in the interviewee's office dictated the interview seating arrangement. This consisted of the interviewee sitting behind his desk with me facing opposite. This formality was not conducive to an easy atmosphere, but only on one occasion did it prove a real difficulty. This is because it was then linked to other detrimental factors. Only one interview was conducted completely free from background noise and interruptions. This was in the soundproofed language laboratory cell, which was a 'perfect' location. The rapport established was very high and there was a strong continuity in the interview throughout. Some of the success of this interview must be attributed to the absence of any distracting factors.

Recording the interviews

I decided to take notes, and tape-record each interview. Reading about the practice of interviewing had convinced me that this was the best way around the usual disadvantages of each method. In setting up interviews I made a clear request to tape-record the interview, and offered full confidentiality. None of the interviewees refused
me permission for tape-recording. The objective was to obtain as full a record of the interview as possible. I was particularly interested in the views, motivations and understanding of these course practitioners in their own language. I placed value on having further opportunity to study the actual words/phrasing and emphasis used. The interview then, as a record of 'participants' voices' (Stenhouse, 1980), was especially important. In order to do this, I felt taking notes by itself would not be sufficient.

In note-taking I tried to capture the gist of what the interviewee was saying, and at the same time maintained eye contact as much as possible (Argyle, 1967: 108). I treated information rather graphically; however it is possible to put the notes and the tape transcript of each interview side by side and see the same coverage. Parlett (1978) warns of the danger of only writing selectively and so giving cues to the interviewee of what is seen as important, and correspondingly unimportant. Even though I cannot state categorically that I did not indulge in selectivity of this kind, I certainly did my best to avoid it.

Stenhouse (1980) also raises the matter of obtrusiveness as a factor in note-taking, but seems to think that:

one early learns that such efforts appear to be closely linked to the personality or style of the interviewer.

(Stenhouse, 1980: 10)

From this stance, note-taking was very appropriate for me. I prefer to take notes, and do so in a variety of situations, so it very much part of my 'style' in a wider sense.

Now to turn our attention to the tape-recording. I have already explained why I made the decision to do this, as well as take notes. I used a microcassette to minimise obtrusiveness (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: 159). Much has been written about the reactivity of the interviewee to tape-recording (eg inducing nervousness), but I did not perceive this to be the case. There was a general matter-of-fact acceptance of the recording activity, and it did not appear to constrain the interviews. It is perhaps interesting to note that the only occasion interviewees actually appeared to react directly to the recorder was when they prefaced a remark as 'off the record'. I think it would be incorrect to say that both the interviewee and I in each case forgot the recording was being made, but it was certainly not our conscious focus.

5.5 Developing interviewing style

The point at which the research interview falls between conversation and interrogation (Parlett, 1978) is not only a function of the approach adopted, but also the style of the
interviewer and the response of the interviewee to it. As already referred to, semi-structured interviews were the chosen research method. In practice, the conduct of the Course Leader interviews varied.

I have previously referred to difficulties encountered in piloting. These were caused by a combination of personal and methodological problems. The format of the interview guide was resolved in the way described, but style was another matter.

After the first few interviews I could feel myself becoming more familiar with the interviewing role, and in particular:

  the free-flowing and probing character of intensive interviewing.

  (Lofland, 1984: 59)

The revised technique worked well and allowed me to engage more with the personality of the interviewee, and concentrate totally on what he/she was saying. My non-verbal communication was accordingly more relaxed and encouraging. In this way I was able to reconcile some of the dilemma between the listener-questioner roles (Stenhouse, 1980). Each interviewee then was not asked the questions in exactly the same order, instead the questioning went with the flow of the information offered. Globally the result was the same, as when a suitable moment offered itself I would check the interview guide to see what had not yet been covered.

I made methodological 'discoveries' (Heron, 1975), as I reached out for the most appropriate way of communicating within the interview context. Without doubt one of the key ingredients in this process was the growing command of the interview topics. I had taken what Patton (1990) refers to as the first responsibility of maintaining control of the interview:

  knowing what kind of data one is looking for and directing the interview to collect that data.

  (Patton, 1990: 332)

Both the interview transcripts themselves, and the transcription records profiling the interaction between the interviewees and myself, show a marked difference in style between the initial interviews and the next three or four.
5.6 Analysis of the course leader data

Post-interview comments

As soon after the interview as possible, I wrote up Post-interview Comments. This had a useful debriefing function methodologically, and also gave me the opportunity of reflecting on fresh ideas emerging from a particular interview. Sometimes this included information given/comments made by the interviewee when we were 'outside' the formal interview (see Section 5.2).

Patton (1990) sees immediately following the interview as a time when the interviewer should write down:

any additional information that would help establish context for interpreting and making sense of the interview ... a time of quality control to guarantee that the data obtained will be useful, reliable, and valid.

(Patton, 1990: 353)

The Post-Interview comment sheets reveal that, from my view at least, the rapport established in the interviews was usually good, sometimes excellent and only on one occasion did I record it as just 'reasonable'.

The comments were an invaluable interpretative source for the insights they provided into the 'social' situation surrounding the interview, and the impact of this on the data created (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983).

Transcribing the interviews

One cannot deny this is very time-consuming, and there is no easy way round it if you do it yourself, which I did. Most authors giving advice on writing about research methods invariably refer to transcription as being done by someone other than the actual researcher, for example Patton (1990: 350). I suspect that, for most researchers carrying out an initial major research project, this assumption is unwarranted.

I soon found that even ensuring that recording conditions are suitable does not guarantee a typical research interview tape is completely audible. The quality of the tape in relation to the interviewee depends a great deal on his/her style of speech. There is a lurking danger of bias here, in that there is a natural preference for the voice that can be understood clearly and without struggling whilst transcribing.
I chose to transcribe the interviews myself for several reasons. First of all from a cost consideration, and secondly because a paid transcriber would have no familiarity with the actual interview material itself. But probably the main reason was the advantage to be gained from studying the data. Lofland (1984) makes the case for the do-it-yourself transcriber, and balances the chore of transcription with its 'enormous virtue'. He explains this as:

> Listening to the tape piece by piece forces you to consider, piece by piece, whether you have accomplished anything in the interview or not. It stimulates analysis (or at least this is the proper frame of mind to adopt while doing it).

(Lofland, 1984: 61)

The main difficulty with this practice was one of speed, so I decided that another approach was required. Working with notes taken at the time of the interview, I listened to the tapes and made summaries of the data. I was able to progress the analysis sufficiently to make memos of themes and patterns in the data. But the further the analysis developed, the more I realised that this stopgap measure was not a substitute for full transcription. The context of the quotations in the interviews became increasingly important as my realisation grew, and I needed to review the full detail of the interaction.

The other aspect of this was the interviewees themselves. In asking them to participate in the interviews, I had promised them access to the transcripts. So even though there was a longer lag than I would have wished, the transcripts were gradually produced and sent to the interviewees with a request for their comments. Their response was disappointing from my point of view. Some did not reply at all, and this may well be because the gap between interview and transcript return was too long. Several did respond in a friendly way, but they all had virtually the same thing to say, and that was how ungrammatical the spoken word is. Only one amended the transcript to add one or two missing words, and a few annotations on the numbers of the current student intake. Stenhouse (1980) comments on just this point:

> I have found teacher interviewees generally more concerned with the grammar or the comprehensibility of their utterances than concerned to alter content.

(Stenhouse, 1980: 10)

The behaviour of my interviewees bears out this habit only too exactly. However, Stenhouse (1980) also emphasises the belief that:

> tape-recorded evidence should not be given a status independent of the affirmation of the person who contributed it.

(Stenhouse, 1980: 9)

[5-12]
I did try to ensure the status of the interviews in this way. I have interpreted the lack of comment and amendment as positive, in the sense that if any of the interviewees had strongly disagreed with the transcript as a record of the interview, they would have made their views known to me. In making this assumption I was also influenced by the inconsequential nature of the comments of the few interviewees who did reply.

Treatment of the data

The process of classifying began after the first few interviews. Intuitive comparison was made of similarities and differences (ie like with like; and data that did not 'fit'). It was exciting to hear people say the same thing, use exactly the same phrase, and off-putting to hear something entirely different, until it was said by another interviewee.

After production of the first transcripts I started to code these in what was effectively a line-by-line analysis. I was particularly intent on examining the words and phrases, terms and exact language used by the interviewees. In doing this, there is no doubt that I over-immersed myself, in what was said, to the detriment of the broader framework. Consequently the initial codes used were over-detailed, and I had not yet captured the knack of developing categories that would lend themselves to a broader analysis of the data.

In order to work with the marginal codes on the transcripts I used a system of cards to develop a centralised file record of the coded references to the data. Scanning this system shows the results of my initial attempts to be thorough in the classifying of the data. Effectively what I produced was lots and lots of 'trees', but the 'wood' eluded me (Dey, 1993: 111).

The second difficulty I experienced with the coding was a direct result of my efforts to speed up the transcription process (see above). This achieved the desired objective, but unknowingly I was building up another problem. I was selecting data on the grounds of coding up to that point, but working in this way the context was ending up as 'wastage' rather than as an integral part of the data (Patton, 1990: 49).

The initial classifying of the data then suffered from these two problems. It shifted between 'too much' and 'too little' as I tried to carry out data analysis. There is agreement that this process is a creative one for which guidelines only can be given, and that the individual researcher must eventually find their own way in the process (Patton, 1990: 381; Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

As with so many other research techniques I discovered 'middle-order' categories (Becker and Geer, 1982; Dey, 1993: 104) through a combination of reading and trying
things out on the data. This is what I had been looking for, but had missed because of the reasons already outlined above. The other thing that now became evident was that, in my eagerness to adopt categories that would reflect the data, I was overlooking the structure that already existed. The reason for this arose from the interviewing style that had evolved on tackling topics, as and when the opportunity occurred in any interview, rather than imposing a set structure. The feeling of 'going with the flow' of an interview (Lofland, 1984) was strong, and I did not at that stage stop to consider sufficiently what would occur at the data analysis stage.

By sweeping the data into piles of a broader scope, some resolution of the scattering was achieved, and the analysis started to make progress. As I became more familiar with the data, revisiting the literature allowed me to develop the focus of the analysis (Patton, 1990: 376). The relationship between the data and the literature was difficult to grasp at first, and I tended to compartmentalise each from the other. It was only with time that the spiralling relationship became clear, and I established the exact nature of its reiterative relationship.

**Coding in practice**

The interview transcripts were coded using *indigenous* concepts generated by the interviewees themselves and *sensitising* concepts derived from the literature and other contextual material. The code headings were as follows:

- Meeting needs
- European dimension
- Experience of cultural diversity
- International links
- Forming partnerships

Next in order to move into analysis and understand what was going on in the data an attempt was made at pattern coding using the advice of Miles and Huberman (1984: 68). The patterns emerging from the data are set out below under themes; causes/explanations; relationships among people and more theoretical constructs.
Themes

Students at 18 are seen as too young to train for management. They lack maturity, don't know what they want and don't understand what management is.

'European' in the course title is important to students and is job-related; the word is attractive to students.

These courses are repeatedly described as qualitatively 'different' to other courses. Course leaders are very consciously comparing their courses to ordinary Business Studies degrees.

These courses are reported as expensive to develop and run, some admit to being 'loss leaders'.

Institutions are expressing interest in European and international links. This interest ranges quite widely in the level of commitment expressed.

Course leaders seem to be using similar terms when talking about language ('a tool'; 'the vehicle'; 'supportive') - seeing it as an essential business skill to develop cultural adaptability.

Causes / Explanations

A-level language results and the subsequent competition for student places is given as the main determinant of undergraduate student recruitment.

Whether or not a prospective student is 'European-minded' or has an European interest may not be accessed by course recruiters because Open Days rather than individual interviews are the norm for undergraduate courses.

A conscious focus on continuing development of a course, a revalidation process, and/or involvement in developing other courses from the original model seems to be an important ingredient in success. Both 'develop' and 'developing' are key indigenous concepts.

ERASMUS is attributed with a multiple role - it is important for the student, for attracting employers (for work placements), and for partners. It is seen as facilitating but bureaucratic. The changes ERASMUS is making in its funding directions are causing difficulties.

The style diversity of partner institutions is the direct cause of problems in relationships, both administrative and student-centred.

The common programme is seen as the hardest way to run this type of course.
Relationships

Networks: getting and retaining the right partners is a dominant concern requiring time, energy and commitment.

Growing/not growing the relationship is a recurrent theme and there is a move to seeking partners on a more systematic basis, matching for suitability rather than leaving to chance. There is conscious networking taking place but this varies in scale and depth.

European team: the existence of committed course teams with lecturers being converted to an European approach. Some Course Leaders chosen because of their 'European' qualifications/experience.

Education-Industry: not seen as being 'in partnership'. Initiatives are primarily education-led; work placements taking priority.

Theoretical constructs

Spending 'a year abroad' seems to be accepted as the way that students are trained to be culturally adaptable.

Being flexible seems to be the way that effective relationships with partners are developed.

Realising the different levels in the data

Dey (1993) makes the distinction between three levels in the data: holistic, middle order, and bit-by-bit. Gradually, I began to appreciate the need to shift focus between these different levels, and how as he describes so clearly to:

use our attention as a telescope, considering the universe as a whole, or as a microscope fixed on a particular detail.

(Dey, 1993: 86)

The other aspect of this stage of the analysis was the realisation of the relationship between the nature of the interview itself, and the data analysis process. This realisation really emerged from the need to 'recover' the context of the data (see above). So it was only as I was developing the analysis that the full impact of the social interaction of each interview that I had been at such pains to observe, record and document finally came home. For instance, the quality of the data offered on partners' teaching methods. This was certainly a topic in the interview that tested my ability to be 'empathically neutral'
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(Patton, 1990: 58). The fact that interviewees were talking to a fellow professional did have a bearing on the interaction. There was an expectation conveyed to me that I would understand the situation, make allowances for physical resources, appreciate the tensions of the job and have a knowledge of educational jargon. It undoubtedly eased the whole process, but at the same time led to the obvious danger of becoming involved in the role of confidante. The question must be asked would Course Leaders have been as open in their responses with a non-academic? Accordingly, my reflections needed to be analysed as part of the data.

Another instance, that was to occur repeatedly, was the need to take note of the time dimension, and make sure it was left attached to the data. For example, whether a course exchange was 'well-established', 'newly established' or 'a few years into the relationship', needed to be part of the analysis as well as the detail of the programme arrangement(s).

Conclusion

The overall purpose of the interviews with the Course Leaders had been to get a detailed picture of the courses from their perspective. This was, to go back to Stenhouse (1980), very much a matter of getting the richest evidence within the limits of the time available. However, what I found myself involved in primarily was learning how to interview and develop my style, and perhaps, on a secondary basis (at least initially) being concerned with the actual data. This was complex, in a cart before the horse manner, because I needed the experience of interviewing to recognise what was actually effective in achieving full disclosure of data. Being brought face to face with the free-flowing nature of the in-depth interview, gaining a command of the interview topics, and actually learning how to handle the data (to think with it) was something that no textbook could have taught. It was a steep learning curve, with some less than enjoyable moments.

What the actual Course Leaders' data revealed was a fairly heavy emphasis on the institutional perspective of the European Business Studies courses. The student experience seemed almost a microcosm by comparison. For this reason, it seemed entirely appropriate to next talk to students about their experience of the course. Were their needs being met? And how did they feel about their course? In particular, what was their experience of cultural diversity?
CHAPTER 6

Group discussions with some student participants

Introduction

This section concentrates on the use of group discussions in order to obtain data on the courses from the students' perspective. I planned to hold these discussions at two sites where Course Leaders had previously been interviewed. The courses were both 'new', but quite a distance apart; one being in the Midlands, the other in the South. To guarantee confidentiality, the former will be referred to as Course A, and the latter as Course B. Sometimes the site will be referred to, rather than the course itself ie Site A and Site B. The findings from the Course Leaders (see 8.2) demonstrated that the different types of course arrangement held implications for the actual running of the course. Morgan (1988) quotes Axelrod (1975: 10) as saying "concentrate on those population segments that are going to provide the most meaningful information". For this reason, a deliberate sample bias was introduced into the research design. Two courses were selected to compare different course arrangements. Course A, because it operates on the principle of 'mutual recognition', and Course B, because it is 'fully integrated'. The method will now be explained in terms of its suitability, the practicalities of and limitations on its use, and my experience in moderating the discussions themselves. The way in which the data collected was subsequently analysed will also receive critical comment.
6.1 Purpose of the method and its appropriateness

There were several factors in favour of group discussions as a method for this phase of data collection. First of all, there was an undeniable appeal as far as I was concerned in doing some 'pure' qualitative research. I have previously expressed a preference for naturalistic inquiry (see Chapter 3). To date, the research study had employed a mixture of methods, but nothing that could be defined as totally qualitative. This would give me the opportunity for an in-depth study, and at the same time develop my research skills further.

Employing group discussions at this stage in the research design would also enable me to collect data on the courses from a perspective other than that of the Course Leaders. The value of such triangulation by multiple methods is emphasised by Patton (1990: 187). And so this method fitted particularly well in relation to the rest of the research design.

The use of group discussions as a research method had another aspect that made them seem especially appropriate. They offer a particular form of access. Here, as Watts and Ebbutt (1987) point out 'it is the interaction [my emphasis] between participants that is important'. Morgan (1988) too sees this being used explicitly:

\[
\text{to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group.}
\]

(Morgan, 1988: 12)

Artificial setting as it may be, it is debatable whether students would have discussed these particular topics in this way, in the naturalistic setting of the course, without the 'control' of the group discussion. They may have voiced their opinions and attitudes, commented on behaviour and events, and expressed their feelings over a period of time in 'casual conversations' (Morgan, 1988: 21), but to access them would have required a different study. The well-known Hawthorne effect (Cohen and Manion, 1989: 202) might further influence the naturalness of the interaction, but this I felt was an acceptable limitation.

These difficulties apart, I was further influenced by the compelling reasons offered by Morgan (1988), for using groups to get closer to participants' understandings, or as he emphasises their 'experiences and perspectives', on the research topic. One of his most persuasive points is that:

\[
groups \text{ are useful when it comes to investigating what participants think, but they excel at uncovering why participants think as they do.}
\]

(Morgan, 1988: 25)
European Management Education

Since learning about why the students had chosen these courses and their experience of
the curriculum was exactly what I wanted to do, I was convinced group discussions
were a highly suitable method.

Even though these were the prime factors behind the choice of this method, it must also
be noted that I was very aware of the time factor. Given the limitations imposed by the
part-time research role that have already been explained, the group method was an ideal
design choice in meeting with these constraints.

6.2 Planning and preparation

The cost factors involved were relatively low, and were met with one exception out of
my own budget. I did the moderation of the groups myself so there were no costs
involved in this respect. I did not pay participants as I felt it was inappropriate in this
case, but refreshments were provided for all groups. I was responsible for catering and
paying for refreshments on Site B, but not Site A. Tape-recording and transcribing
incurred virtually nil cost except for time. Planning was another matter. Careful
preparation of all aspects of the group discussions was very necessary (Morgan, 1988:
41), but it was quite time-consuming. Some of the reasons for this will now be
considered.

Gaining access and recruitment of groups

I will deal with the two sites chronologically at this stage, as it is more logical in terms
of the explanation of how access to students was gained.

I started negotiating with the Course Leader (CL) of Site B in early November; even
slightly earlier informally. Even though there was an immediate verbal agreement to the
holding of group discussions, nothing was forthcoming when I wanted to discuss
practical details of recruitment and timing. I decided the best strategy was to formalise
the request by giving my proposed plans in writing (see Appendix C1). Only after
prompting did I get a further verbal agreement that the discussions would be possible,
but again no firm dates were set.

After tackling the CL directly, I was offered ten minutes at the end of a lecture session to
outline the purpose of my research, and request student involvement. Though I arrived
on time for this slot, the CL continued his lecture so the group was not in the most
receptive mood. Rather than leaving me to talk one-to-one with the students, the CL
remained in the room. Even though I had thought out how I might capture their interest
in the research, the group listened politely, but unresponsively. As a recruitment session
this instance was a total failure. Eventually one student only was recruited from this group. The only thing in my control that I feel could have been done differently is the actual mechanics of the recruitment. It would have been better if I had asked those willing to participate to sign up there and then. However, in all probability the outcome would have been exactly the same. I can only surmise that the students, because of the presence of the Course Leader, viewed my request as having official connotations, rather than seeing it in an independent light.

I decided that if I was going to achieve my objective, I needed to get a wider audience and a more open atmosphere. Since official agreement had been obtained, I decided to go via other lecturers to recruit students. This approach was much more co-operatively received, and led to an opportunity to speak to a large group at the end of a core lecture. On this occasion there was a definite interest, and this was followed up immediately. We were able to meet the following week (in mid-January). I did offer to run a further session the next week, but by now students had end of semester exams virtually on top of them. If the go-ahead had been given earlier more students might well have participated.

The arrangements with Site A followed a different pattern. I wrote to the Course Leader in mid-November putting forward my research proposal. There was a lengthy delay, but I was not unduly concerned as informal agreement had already been given. Eventually a mutually convenient date in February was established. The Course Leader's overall response was helpful, and his attitude towards the research approach positive. He agreed to recruit groups from across the course, and offered to arrange for refreshments. After the 'blocking' from Site B, this encouragement was timely. The group discussions on Site A were then held on a normal lecture day at the beginning of February.

The student sample

Decisions on the number of groups to conduct, and their size were based in the first instance on theoretical advice available (Morgan, 1988: 42-3). My intention was to maintain a fair degree of moderator control by using a topic guide. As outlined above, the overall aim of the research was simply to gain the students' perspective. Given these parameters 'a few groups' would be sufficient. According to Morgan (1988: 42), the more homogeneous your groups are the fewer you will need. I saw the population as 'students pursuing a European Business Studies course', and had introduced a sample bias as already indicated. On Site B, after initial negotiation, I had direct control of the arrangements so I deliberately recruited to the upper end of the group size. It was as well that I did so because several of those who volunteered did not arrive on the day. This meant that the groups ran at the lower end. On Site A, the recruitment was in the hands of the Course Leader and he asked for volunteers from the three years (Year 1, 2 and 4)
of the course present on site at that time. Students from Year 3 who were abroad on placement were not therefore represented.

At the negotiation of access stage, I requested that groups should be of 6 - 8 students. Opinions vary on the exact optimum size for a small group, but most advise somewhere between 5 - 8 (Handy, 1985: 165; Hedges, 1985: 75; Morgan, 1988: 43). I was keen to conduct discussions where all the students had the opportunity for a high level of involvement, and felt they had a stake in 'producing' the group view. Eventually the largest group consisted of 8, and the smallest of 4 people. Interestingly enough, all the groups were more or less evenly productive.

6.3 The role of moderator and use of the topic guide

In keeping with the ideas of Walker (1985) I saw my role as moderator of the group as:

> to facilitate a comprehensive exchange of views in which all participants are able to 'speak their minds' and respond to the ideas of others.

(Walker, 1985)

To create the appropriate rapport, I opted for a fairly high level of involvement as moderator. Besides the need to gain the students' perspective, one of my objectives was to compare what they had to say with Course Leaders' views. In order to do this, it was important to address topics in line with my research questions. At the analysis stage, the effectiveness of this approach was realised, as I was able to code and compare the data from the different groups far more readily as a result.

In introducing the research to the students I explained briefly what the project was about, and how their discussion fitted into it (Hedges, 1985: 79). Particular attention was given to the confidentiality of the information, and I offered assurances that course management would not have access to either tapes or transcripts. This explanation was treated very seriously by the students of Course B, whereas the response of students from Course A was very matter-of-fact.

However, in a way the group discussion begins not with this introduction, but with what Hedges (1985: 79) refers to as the first duty of the moderator. This is to put people at ease, so that they are 'relaxed and confident, talking as freely as possible'. My completion of this duty was put under severe strain with the first discussion held at Site A because of local difficulties, and compared quite dramatically with Site B where I had been in full control of all arrangements.
To ensure the desired set of topics were covered I used a Topic Guide (see Appendix C2 for copy). In constructing the guide, I was particularly aware of the consideration that:

A failure to discuss an explicitly introduced topic is stronger evidence of a lack of interest than a mere failure to raise it.

(Morgan, 1988: 51)

Opinions vary on how many topics should be included. For instance, Morgan (1988: 56) advises fairly prescriptively that 'the limit should probably be four or five, with preplanned probes under each major topic'. On the other hand, Hedges (1985: 77) takes a far more open view of the topic guide overall:

which simply lists the areas thought worth probing. This will often be extremely broad, and will potentially encompass far more ground than could be covered in a single interview. [It] ... maps out the purpose of the exercise, the territory which is likely to be relevant.

(Hedges, 1985: 77-8)

In preparing my Topic Guide I fell between the two approaches. I included 9 topics, but I also thought out probes and organised them under the set of topics. So the guide was broad and ambitious in scope, but at the same time I allowed for the scenario where discussion might not be forthcoming. In the event quite the opposite was true. All the groups spoke throughout their discussions, each of 1½ hours duration, and only one student 'left early'.

The order of the Topic Guide (Hedges, 1987: 80) was also thought out carefully. To put students at their ease I decided to start with 'Why did you choose to do the course?'. This was something they could all answer from their own personal experience, and therefore a much more suitable start than launching into the course arrangement, or something as conceptually abstract as 'cultural adaptability'. It gave them a chance to warm up.

In opting to use a topic guide, I inevitably made the control of the group's discussion reasonably directive. However, the actual issue of control is rather more complex than a simple matter of whether one exercises high or low directiveness. Watts & Ebbutt (1987: 32) emphasise the group's lack of amenability to influence, and their potential to usurp the moderator 'so that the chemistry of the interaction feeds the shape and direction of the conversation.' As already pointed out, it is this interaction that is the essence of the group discussion method, and the reason why the method was chosen in the first place. Therefore, it was important that its 'chemistry' was allowed to operate in its own way. At the same time, as the moderator (and researcher) I wanted to ensure that the desired topics were being covered.
Hedges (1985) refers to the role of moderator as conducting a 'steered conversation' and sees his job as nudging it progressively into 'more fruitful channels'. On no occasion did I adhere to the guide rigidly, instead if a topic came up I drew the group onto it. I had a copy of the guide on the table next to me, but found that I did not need to refer to it much. I was able to remember the run of the topics fairly easily, and so it was possible to keep eye contact with the participants except when taking notes.

**Controlling the discussion**

What has been said so far shows moderation appears to be a somewhat contradictory task. This brings us to the matter of skills. Hedges (1985) comments that:

> The skills themselves are largely just the same conversational skills as we all use every day - but group moderators try to handle them more consciously and more skilfully to achieve their particular ends.

(Hedges, 1985: 85)

The experience of running the groups at Site B was of great help in allowing me to scrutinise my skills as a moderator. Also, it helped me to gain a feel for the way students offered information, and how this could evolve in the group context. This coupled with previous experience of working with groups made me feel confident and comfortable in the role. At this point, it is helpful to consider some of my responses to the task of moderation. Examples from the group transcripts have been chosen to illustrate points of style, and general handling of the discussions.

In order to encourage talk I tried to maintain eye contact as much as possible, smiled from time to time, and spoke in a natural conversational tone. In this respect I did not have to adapt my normal style at all. Reviewing the transcripts and focusing on my moderation, I frequently say 'Yes' 'uhu' 'Mm mm' 'mm' to what students are saying. This definitely helped the flow of the conversation. Being critical I do ask direct questions too, but not in a challenging way. Sometimes it was for clarification, for instance:

Hannes: we have had quite some problems in just introducing it here because they think we want to

Claire: spoil

Hannes: spoil their marketing

HT: Who is 'they'?

Hannes: the course management
On other occasions I do probe what they are saying. The difficulty is maintaining complete neutrality, while at the same time being empathetic and involved with the group. However, the one rule of moderation that must not be violated is never to disclose your own feelings by 'word, gesture or expression' (Hedges, 1987: 82). In the second discussion at Site B, I was faced with this difficulty direct when towards the end a member of the group actually asked me what I had known about the course beforehand. This placed me in the position of having to break the established rapport, and say that I was unable to answer this question. I offered a brief explanation of how the researcher must be impartial.

Sometimes participants spontaneously raised topics. I had to make a decision whether to encourage them to pursue discussion of the topic raised, or direct them to stay with the one they were already on. Evaluating the decisions I made is interesting, but in the end analysis whether the decision was 'right' or 'wrong' must rest on the data acquired. In staying with the direction of the conversation that emerged out of the interaction of the group, there were insights into the way in which the students viewed the interrelationships of different aspects of their course. These insights may well not have arisen in this form if I had stuck rigidly to the Topic Guide and its artificial divisions. The conversation is not tidy, and at the time it was often difficult to judge where it might eventually lead. The level of involvement and interest of the group in what they were talking about was usually an indicator that the topic was important to them.

For example, Course A Discussion 2 - here the group in picking up on the introduced topic of Course Arrangement were talking about the nature of different course subjects. They moved from considering Politics, to discussing the lack of general knowledge of students on the course. This then led them into a lively debate about the media and their Europeanness. Throughout this part of the discussion I let the group dynamic have free rein, and did not intervene. I think this was the right decision, and certainly the material is rich and insightful. However, at the time this was not at all clear, and my decision was mainly an intuitive one based on the strength of the group's involvement.

By comparison in Course B Discussion 1 - here the group had been comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the different HE systems they had encountered. They had raised this subject themselves out of a consideration of the breadth and depth of the course. This is what happened:

Victoria: And you learn different cultures as well in the same way as learning different ways of being taught.
HT: I think that's very interesting and that's something I want to talk about in more depth but I'm going to move you on to something else and we can come back to that particular point.

(Students Course B)

With hindsight it was a pity that I intervened, and data was most likely 'lost' at this stage.

Other instances, in this case from Course A Discussion 1, show different decisions being taken. Right at the very beginning of the discussion (the first couple of minutes) the group was discussing what I had directed them onto from the Topic Guide, i.e. why had they chosen the course, when this occurred:

Emma: Still yeah I'm more impressed with the Second Year than I was with the First.

John: Yeah

HT: Right OK so perhaps that's an issue we can pick up on so you know still this idea why was it attractive or why did you take it?

(Students at Course A)

The reason for keeping them on this topic was that they had barely touched on it, and not all the group had yet spoken.

Again, later on this same group were discussing the difficulties of learning from a lecturer who speaks another European language, and found their way naturally onto the topic of European placement. In this instance, I encouraged them to take this up:

Gill: abroad we weren't told much just when was it a couple of weeks ago

Others: yeah mm mm

Gill: I mean it's a bit late

HT: Is this getting ready for next year?

Gill: Yeah

Others: Yeah

HT: Let's talk about that. What's been going on? What's happening do you think?

(Students Course A)

This worked well in that the group's concentration was transferred onto another part of the Topic Guide without a heavy-handed intervention on my part. One of the other
factors at work here as well, was that they had already spent a considerable amount of
time discussing the previous issue. It was a convenient breaking-point, but with the
advantage that they had made the connection to the 'next' topic themselves.

And finally an instance of seeing if the rest of the group would take up an issue:

John: But I think um we have been learning all the time and about culture in France
and in Europe

HT: Do you feel more European now?

John: I do certainly.

HT: All of you?

(Students Course A)

This was interesting in that the group as a whole did not discuss how European they did
or didn't feel, but rather how they wished they had the opportunity to debate European
issues on the course more often. In doing this I think there was a realisation of what
Patton (1990: 336) calls the stimulating activity of the group discussion, if not a little of
the Hawthorne effect as well. They were enjoying themselves and the topic allowed
them to express it:

Emma: and I mean things like this are brilliant like we understand like I know how
you all think now and what you all think about it and you know how I think about it
and things like tutorials (in background yes yes) I mean we did that for Politics last
year and the Politics tutorials were good

HT: Mm

Emma: but some of the tutorials we have at the moment have been awful it's a case
of the lecturer sits at the front of the room and says 'What work have you done?'

John: Mm

Elizabeth: Yes

John: Something that does my head in is that sometimes the lecturers walk into
tutorials automatically presuming that we've done absolutely no work OK.

(Students Course A)

However, in exploring this issue the discussion covered quite a distance and the group
eventually ended up thoroughly endorsing the group process and the value of teamwork.
On each site I met up with the need to ensure that the discussion was not taken over by dominant individuals. In both cases these were male students, one English and one German. Neither of them was overbearing, simply very articulate and confident. I found it necessary to draw in the rest of the group in each case on several occasions, until they got the message and began to give the others more space in the conversation.

Also it was necessary to make sure that those who were not highly verbal were able to share their views. For example, at the start of Discussion 1 at Course A, all the participants had spoken, some of them more than once, except one female student. I intervened and made a space for her to enter the conversation:

HT: Let's bring Elizabeth in.

Elizabeth, in a fairly quiet but clear tone of voice, then spoke about why *she* had chosen the course, revealing in the process that she had lived in Hong Kong and so had experienced another culture. This altered the atmosphere of the conversation, and led to another student offering an anecdote about her experience in France. In tapping this vein of personal experience the discussion moved onto a more involved level.

From that stage, even though she did not speak as often as the others, Elizabeth was very much part of the group, and found her chance of contributing when she wanted to. When she did speak she tended to have a reasonable amount to say.

The need to bring in less verbal members of the group occurred in several other groups as well, and my interventions were usually successful. One noticeable exception was the case of a male Spanish student [Jose] on Course A. My attempts to include him in the discussion foundered every time, because he was not as proficient in English as the others in the group.

The case of Elizabeth (above) is of interest, not just as an example of my intervention, but also shows how students in volunteering their experiences to the group generated a level of depth in the discussion (Morgan, 1988: 55). However, sometimes the group process had another effect. For instance, in Discussion 3, Course A, Simon voiced a growing awareness of his own viewpoint on Europe in contrast to the rest of the group's comments. The discussion had emerged out of a swapping of their experiences before coming on the course. To pick it up:

Dennis: I was just working down in France I tried to look for a job there but I ended up staying with about three or four families and I attended French classes I avoid the English like the plague ... er I've got the same opinion as everyone else you know whether we like it or not we're going towards a unified Europe.

HT: Do you like that idea?
Simon: Not especially I don't know I suppose I'm a bit of a patriot really I can just see Europe becoming sort of the same as the United States sort of always having the same sort of parliament one universal parliament um one universal currency like it's all moulding in together so I mean you lose all the culture and everything of each individual country.

(Students Course A)

Much later on in the same discussion the students touched on this point again, when considering the nature of the subjects they were studying and whether they were European-based. It was obvious, from what Simon contributed to the conversation then, that he was starting to review his opinions.

The group dynamic was particularly powerful in Discussion 1, Course B. At one stage in the discussion they were talking about the difficulties of studying at one of the mainland European partners. It was obvious that they were concerned over the status of the issue. A disagreement broke out and voices were raised. However, they did as a group finally agree that the problem was indeed one of 'lack of co-ordination', and humour was restored.

These last two examples I think highlight the potential of the group discussion as a research method, and its powerful effect on the individuals who make up the groups. The dynamic created affects both the researched and the researcher. Hearing their 'stories' certainly gave me not just a quantity of data, but much to reflect on in terms of the research process.

6.4 Sites and data collection

On each site I was able to sort out the seating arrangements to my own plan. The tables were shifted to form a U-shape, usually suggested as the most appropriate for group discussions. I sat myself at the head of the table with the group participants on either side, and in this way we could all see each other. On Site B I used a seminar room separate from the main building. There was an added advantage in that it was a Wednesday afternoon when no lecturing occurs, so site traffic was low anyway. On Site A, as mentioned before, it was a normal lecture day. I was allocated a small room off a corridor at the back of a main lecture hall. Again this was a reasonable site as only people using that room came to it. There were two recorders in operation at all sessions. Since the tapes were only 30 minutes per side I asked the students to keep an eye on the 'recording' light. This proved to be the most difficult aspect of running these sessions. Involvement in what the group is saying, taking notes, keeping in mind the run of the topics means you have very little spare concentration, if any, left over to attend to the tape recording. And yet this is vital for afterwards at the analysis stage.
6.5 Transcription and coding

Transcription of the tapes was immensely time-consuming, but partially this was cumulative fatigue as I had already transcribed the interviews with the Course Leaders. On balance however, there were advantages that made the process worthwhile. It was an excellent feedback exercise on my strengths and weaknesses in the role of moderator. Also on the positive side, I became immersed in the data. I kept the notes taken at the time of the discussions next to me while transcribing. Occasionally I heard things that I did not 'hear' then, and sometimes I heard with increased emphasis points that I had already noted. Removed from the actual setting and the responsibilities of moderating I was able to listen on a different level, and tune in more to the tones of the voices and the interaction of the group. Each group was very distinctive. Apart from the odd occasion where everyone had spoken at once, or a speaker had just said 'mm', I was able to identify individual speakers without too much difficulty. Some of the time students had referred to each other by name in the context of the discussion, and when I spoke I made a practice of doing this as well. The frequent references throughout the discussions for voice identification worked very effectively.

Analysis and interpretation

In coding and analysing the data, I relied on the approach recommended by Hedges (1985: 90), because it offered a systematic way of giving the data some form. I went through each transcript and made a summary in note form arranged under the topic headings. These comments and notes actually contained more material than I used in the final data analysis. However, they helped immensely in seeing the shape of what had been said, and interpreting how important the group considered particular aspects of an issue. Although it took time working through the transcripts thoroughly in this way, it certainly made me consider what the students had said much less selectively than the notes taken at the time of the discussion reveal.

There were two main advantages to approaching the analysis in this way. As noted above, during the discussions I had treated the Topic Guide in a flexible manner. If students had spontaneously raised a topic, rather than deter them from talking about it, I had usually taken the decision to let them continue. The flow of the discussion had taken precedence over sticking to the order of the topics. This meant that at the analysis stage the topics were not all tidily arranged ready to be summarised. Compiling a working note file of the transcripts forced me to address this 'untidiness' and ensure no potential data was overlooked. I also had the opportunity of seeing the interrelationships between the topics (see above). The other advantage was that I began to know my data really well. Rereading the transcripts and listening to the tapes in order to make these files gave me a feel for the implications of what the students were saying, and I started to
consider these more in relation to the main questions of the research study. Comparisons between the previous Course Leaders' perspective, and this new perspective from the students started to come readily to mind.

In interpreting the group discussions and reporting them, a decision had to be made whether to ascribe views and comments to the group as an entity, or to individuals. No set formula exists, and writers have adopted different treatments (Watts & Ebbutt, 1987: 30). I was keen to capture the interaction of the groups as far as possible, and felt that there was no one most effective way of doing this. And so I was guided by Hedges' thoughts that:

> Qualitative research is direct and vivid ... much of its value comes from this vividness and the insight it can give us into the way people think, feel and behave.
> (Hedges, 1985: 90)

Sometimes individuals' contributions to the conversation give the course experience with great insight, while at other times this emerges from the 'group' view. The main aim of this research phase had been to obtain the students' perspective of the course. If the discussions had then encompassed the course perspective of the student as an individual, as well as of students as a group, then the one should not be submerged by the other. This is why I have included extracts from the transcripts in the findings (see Chapter 11) of both the groups forming opinions or voicing comments, as well as particular thoughts of individuals. There is no intention to represent every individual or every group, rather to provide as realistic a picture as possible of the students' perspective.

**Conclusion**

The experience of using a different data collection method was both challenging and stimulating. It must be said that the data to be analysed was extensive and the necessary transcribing, though advantageous as previously described, was a drawback in time spent. The other realisation that emerged was just how hard it actually is to write up data so that it retains the 'vividness and insight' (Hedges, 1985: 90) available in reality. If anything, this increased my admiration for the ethnographic writers I have referred to earlier. Triangulation must also be commented upon. It was reassuring to find consistency in the overall patterns of the data (Patton, 1990: 467). Generating data from a different point of view, (ie the students') was interesting for the insight it lent to certain points the Course Leaders had raised, but not developed more fully. For example, the mechanics of the coordination of the programmes.
As a way of achieving the students' perspective the group discussion method had much to offer. Individual interviews might have collected more detail, but I do not think they would have captured the 'perspective' of the course participant in quite the same way, nor so well. The other outcome of this part of the research design was a personal one in terms of research learning. I am keen to do more of this type of work in the future. I have no illusions about the amount of work involved, but feel this is an interesting research method and would like to utilise it more. In the immediate context of this research study it highlighted the need to complete the view of the course by consulting yet another perspective - that of the employers. The methodology used to do this will be considered in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 7

Telephone interviews with a sample of employers

Introduction

Having gained data on the European Business Studies courses direct from Course Leaders and student participants, I was now keen to complement the picture by obtaining the views of employers. Course Leaders (CLs) make a strong claim that there is the need for this type of graduate. Therefore my main intention was to find out whether Education was indeed meeting Industry's needs from these European Business Studies courses. The product of these courses are graduates declaring a firm European career intention, and holding a named European Business qualification. I was particularly keen to establish whether this orientation made any substantial difference to the take-up rate of these graduates in the labour market. This phase of the research, including the initial searches, covered from August to mid-December 1994. The number of company representatives finally interviewed was 36. The sample was UK-based, and was drawn from companies across a range of industry sectors.

7.1 Establishing contact

Initial research

This was quite wide-ranging, but both interesting and productive. Working in the first place from sources derived from literature on the labour market and recruitment, as well as more general information on companies, I drew up a list of ideas and possible research leads and contacts. This included both industrial and academic bodies, among
them the Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGRC) and the Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC). These were immediately added to by other contacts, and quite quickly I had a feeling of growing familiarity with the field.

This direct experience with individuals in the careers advisory field and professional bodies helped me to appreciate the dynamics of the recruitment aspect of education-industry liaison. I also quickly came to realise that the labour market's boundary with the academic world was not as precise and exact as I had imagined it to be. Effectively I was invited to view from a labour market perspective, rather than an educational one.

**Locating appropriate data sites**

One thing that became clear almost straightaway, was that if I was not careful this aspect of the research study could easily get out of balance with the other perspectives. The reason for this was that, because recruitment was a field in its own right, there were so many different aspects worthy of closer investigation. It also became evident that each group I tapped into had its own particular stake. So I became involved in a process of moving from one lead to another, as I tried to locate the most appropriate data sites.

One of my initial approaches to locating employers who might be willing to be interviewed was to contact The Confederation of British Industry (CBI). They seemed the logical body for this purpose, and this perception was reinforced by independent advice. My request was to be put in touch with employers' forums, or advised of current meetings or conference sessions. I was looking for a venue where it might be possible to interview a reasonable cross-section of employers. I had separate discussions with two professionals in the Training Department, who agreed to look into the matter on my behalf. Even so, they did eventually come back to me with the response that they were unable to set anything up. Other advice was offered on current EU initiatives, but this was not in line with the idea of what I wanted for this phase. Even though I had felt the CBI was certain to be able to give me some fairly sound contacts, I decided not to pursue the matter further. It seemed a better idea to progress other possibilities.

Another avenue I explored was the Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), first of all by speaking to the National Council. My contact here encouraged me to get in touch with the local TEC for specific details of their programmes, and suggested that the CBI might also be a useful contact. Effectively the research process at this point was displaying a circular tendency, and was not producing viable information. These organisations did not recognise the nature of my research problem, and were instead offering me their standard information.
Nonetheless, I did contact the local TEC, and requested contact with local employers who might be willing to be interviewed about their recruitment of European Business Studies graduates. Again I found myself confronted with a standard explanation about the current Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) initiatives. My informant said that they were just in the process of setting up a local forum, and suggested I get in touch again when it was more established in a few months. I already had contacts with the local Chamber and did not consider further work in that direction was particularly appropriate. This decision was reinforced by the Course Leaders' data, where only one CL had mentioned the local Chamber of Commerce as a relevant forum for course-industry liaison. At this point, I decided that this approach was not going to be fruitful, at least certainly not in the short-term. I needed to find a more direct route to employers.

The next period of trying to evolve a strategy was somewhat of a vacuum as I deliberated over various ideas which did not really lead anywhere. I briefly considered repeating the highly successful enterprise of the HE Fair (see Chapter 4) by attending recruitment fair(s) as a way of contacting employers. But there was nothing immediately to hand. I had missed the main Summer trawl, except for the Guardian National Education and Jobs Fair at the NEC in Birmingham, which was not to take place for four weeks. This was too long to wait, so the idea was abandoned.

I also thought about, more than actioned, the idea of setting up interview contacts based on one of the rankings such as Europe's Top 500 (RSW system December, 1993) or the more recent FT 500 (January, 1994). Even though I eventually rejected it, I think considering such a basis for the selection of the sample of employers had two benefits. Firstly, it demonstrated the scope and complexity of the corporate area I was trying to access, and secondly it opened my eyes to the need to establish guidelines for a balanced sample.

A number of issues were bound up in this that took the form of questions to be resolved. These were in summary:

What was the relationship of the proposed sample of employers to the HE institutions that I had already included in the study?

How was I to allow for the differences between the sizes and types of companies?

Should I deliberately seek out companies with an expressed European orientation?

Was I going to include just companies based in the UK, or those based in mainland Europe too?

This last issue also preempted the question of how would I handle the interview? Inclusion of companies based in mainland Europe would necessarily be dependent on an
assumption that English was to be used, as I did not possess the basis for conducting
interviews in other European languages. My attempts to develop a research strategy
were generating questions that needed answers, but an effective framework was
remaining elusive.

Selection of the interview sample

At this stage I returned to the literature for a fresh look at sources, and took up a more
specific careers focus. I was also introduced into an informal network of careers and
industrial liaison officers. This then rolled from one contact to the next, as I was passed
onto other people, both within education and in careers consultancy. Very quickly my
information search opened up into the whole area of recruitment. With this well-informed
and practical advice, it then became viable to contact a sample of employers,
based on the HE institutions I had already interviewed.

I consequently drew up the list of potential employer contacts from two main sources:
firstly, selected entries from a number of institutional databases; and secondly,
employers advertising in recent Eurojob Watch abstracts, and the European Graduate
Recruitment Guide.

I made one last attempt at an additional strategy to meet up with employers face-to-face.
I was alerted to the fact that the Euromanagers Forum '94 was to be held in Brussels on
15 & 16 December 1994. This fair is run by an international recruitment consultancy
and attendance is on application, ie effectively by invitation only. I rang the organisers,
EMDS, in Brussels and spoke to one of their Directors in person. My suggestion was,
that with their agreement, I might attend the forum in a research capacity. Acting in line
with the Ethical Principles on disclosure [para 3.1] (British Psychological Society, 1985)
I explained that even though I was a university lecturer, this collection of data was for
my PhD and that I had no vested or commercial intentions for it otherwise. I was met
with a politely expressed, but quite definite 'hands off our territory'. The specific reason
given for refusal was that companies would be too busy with recruitment to be bothered
with research interviews. I could do nothing other than accept their decision. Later I
became aware that this consultancy is doing its own research in this area, and this helped
to inform their defensive attitude. Again, comparison with the open and welcoming
approach offered by all I spoke to at the HE Fair (see Chapter 4) springs to mind.
Needless to say this reception was instrumental in my reaching a decision not to
approach other recruitment consultancies. I made the assumption that because of their
commercial interests they might well give a similar response.
7.2 Construction of the interview guide

The research problem was conceptualised as a number of questions centred on finding out about employers' attitudes to European Business Studies graduates. Frey (1989: 120) advises the construction of a 'questionnaire map' for this purpose. Variables of interest to the researcher are grouped around topic areas (see Table 7.1 below). In this way the questions being asked are matched with the goals of the researcher. Key questions for this study were:

- What perception does the employer hold of the European graduate?
- Whether the European dimension makes any difference in the recruitment process.
- Does the European emphasis get the job?
- Is the European orientation recognised and developed by the company?
- Does European matter to the company?

These formed three main topic areas that can broadly be described as follows: the Educational background of the graduate, ie the evaluation of the graduate and their qualification(s) by the employer; European orientation, ie whether this is part of the employer's selection criteria; and Company orientation, ie in relation to European/International development. These topics did not always allow the questions being asked to be grouped according to specific variable, eg Qu 2, Qu 7. Nevertheless the question arrangement was thought to be appropriate to maintain the broad topic. It is generally suggested in the literature of questionnaire methodology that logic should be maximised in favour of the respondent's understanding, and that it is possible to rearrange variables for data analysis later, thus making more sense for the researcher.

The initial question on company orientation was chosen as a means of easing into the interview with the respondent. It seemed logical to begin with a question that allowed the communication of information about the company itself (ie a knowledge-type of variable). In this respect it fitted well as an item 'relevant to the topic, interesting and easy to answer' (Dillman, 1989: 143). In practice, this opening worked exceptionally well, and was successful as a means of establishing rapport with the majority of respondents. Given that Question 2, by contrast, turned out to be difficult to answer specifically, for reasons I simply had not envisaged (see Chapter 12 Section 2.1), this was particularly fortunate.
Table 7.1 Questionnaire Map: Recruitment of European Business/Management Studies Graduates - Variables and Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables of Interest</th>
<th>Question Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employers' perceptions of European 'difference'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European qualifications</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European graduates</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extent of difference</td>
<td>3, 8, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer's selection and recruitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recruitment practice</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effects on selection criteria</td>
<td>3, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attitude towards validating institution</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attitude towards dual qualification</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attitude towards time abroad</td>
<td>10, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers' company practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>operations</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attitudes towards graduates</td>
<td>13, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management development</td>
<td>13, 14, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of a respondent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orientation focus</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The order of the questions, as previously indicated, was decided by the topics. Within the topic areas, I tried to let the relationship between items prevail as strongly as possible (Frey, 1989: 145). For instance, the sequence of questions (Qu 2 - Qu 8) deliberately switches back and forth, between the graduates themselves and their qualifications. Tackling the variable of 'European difference' from these two directions was a conscious attempt to access employers' perceptions and attitudes, as precisely and clearly as the interview instrument would allow. In effect the objective was to treat 'the graduate' and 'the qualification' each in a 3-D manner.

A similar logic prevailed with the questions which looked at the topic of European orientation. Strictly speaking, I should have asked a question that allowed employers to present their preferred selection criteria for graduates, rather than the list offered in Qu 9. A far less leading approach would have been to pose a question which probed the relationship of company criteria to 'European' indicators. In my keenness to triangulate the data collected from Course Leaders and students I committed two methodological errors. One was assuming companies were seeking graduates set on a European career, and the second selecting particular criteria rather than leaving them to designate their
own. These lapses were compensated for in part by the interviewees themselves (see discussion of this point in Chapter 12 Section 3.2).

With Qu 12 - Qu 15 I was really extending the interview into an area of study wider than was strictly necessary to complement the data capture from the CLs and students. However, the reason I did this was because I wanted to inform the question of what might happen to the claimed 'European' orientation of the graduate once he/she was recruited by a particular company. I should perhaps have restricted this inquiry to the open-ended Question 13, and seen what emerged. In retrospect, I am glad that I did not do so, because I gained much more insight into the topic of company orientation from asking the additional questions. They did not take much longer to administer, and the resultant data quality was well worthwhile. This was because employers offered not just knowledge, but self-perceptions too.

Partially, this can be explained by the fact that the focus of the interview returned to the specific nature of company orientation. At the same time it allowed respondents to explain not just what their company does, but why it acts as it does, ie its motivation(s)/philosophy/strategy. This in practice depended on how effectively I probed the interviewee at this point, and how ready he/she was to continue with the topic. An additional advantage of constructing the schedule in this way, was that the ease of the opening was balanced by the use of two tightly structured questions to end the interview. This allowed too for possible 'fatigue' on the part of the respondent.

A short comment must be made here about the first version of the schedule. This included one question on the format of graduate recruitment which read as follows:

In recruiting first-time graduates to the company do you:
- advertise positions
- use recruitment fairs
- target individual institutions and courses
- use other contacts?

Originally I had placed this question at the end of the topic grouping on Educational Background. During piloting, I made the decision to delete this question as I realised that it was not strictly necessary. This was prompted by the fact that there was an overlap in the data collected from this question, and what on the final version became Question 6. I then utilised the space relinquished in the schedule to include the present Question 8 which looks at the experience of work placement.
7.3  Research strategy

I opted for telephone interviews on a short structured basis (see Appendix D2). These were to be prefaced by a fax request for company involvement. The reason for this approach was that I saw time and control of this aspect of the study as critical. Above all, it had to be kept fairly compact and manageable. I weighed up too what would be the most cost-effective in terms of time and money. The type of data I was seeking was instrumental to some extent. I did not want a series of in-depth interviews, but rather short focused interviews on specific issues. I needed to collect data from a group of employers who were sufficiently representative, in order to make some conclusions about the take-up of European Business Studies graduates in the current UK labour market, and their role in the European/International business area. If I had succeeded in accessing an employers' forum, or suitable conference where employers were in attendance, I would still have used a similar interview schedule. Even though this access had not eventuated, it did not make a move away from the structured approach necessary. I was simply accessing this group by a different means. It made ultimate sense in every respect to do this from my own desk using the convenience of technology (Frey, 1989: 52). In this respect the telephone is ideal on the grounds of operational control, cost efficiency and speed (Lavrakas, 1993: 5-8).

I did very briefly consider using email, but decided in favour of the more established modes of the telephone and fax. In retrospect, I have no doubts that this was definitely the right choice. Apart from the actual mechanics of the process, it simply is not as quick and immediate as voice response, and not 'interactive' in the same way. I could have made the interview process more or less autonomous (similar to a postal survey), but in doing so I would have missed opportunities to query and probe what the interviewee said.

A brief look at the cost implications of the project is interesting. Initially, I was concerned that the whole strategy, though cheaper by comparison with field interviews (ie no travel expenses), might still be relatively expensive for my limited budget. In actuality, the costs turned out to be quite reasonable. Partially this can be attributed to the fact that some company representatives offered to ring me back, thereby reversing the cost of the call to themselves. However, perhaps more critically, interviewees were introduced to the rationale of the interview by the faxed request, so no time was wasted (Dillman, 1989).

Time scheduling also needs some additional comment. In spite of my attempts at control, the research process gained a momentum of its own and gradually encroached into other parts of the working week. This inevitably caused difficulties, as I did not want to restrict the access of potential respondents to me, but at the same time I had fixed teaching commitments at particular times. There was no easy solution to this dilemma.
Negotiating access and the ethical perspective

I was very aware that I would be dealing with busy individuals in a commercial environment. In this perception I was heavily reliant on tacit knowledge from previous business experience. For this reason I planned my approach carefully and precisely, trying to build in allowances for every contingency. My original idea, which was the one I eventually utilised with some minor variations, was to try and gain the participation of individuals by giving them time to digest what was required, before I actually spoke to them (see above on cost implications). It seemed important to me, that the choice of whether company representatives would participate in the research should be entirely theirs (Bell, 1993: 59).

Here particular reference needed to be given to the Ethical Principles [para 2.1] (1985), which states that 'the investigation should be considered from the standpoint of all participants'. Therefore, apart from my obligation to give full disclosure of all aspects of the research to obtain consent [para 3.1], I had to consider 'the ethical implications and psychological consequences' of the research from the participant standpoint. Given the increasing invasion of privacy because of telecommunications (Lavrakas, 1993: 14), this was an issue that required some additional thought. Lavrakas (1993) maintains that the general norm of courtesy to listen to the purpose of a call is weakening. He attributes the increase in non-response to the hounding of the telemarketing industry. Although his discussion relates to public telephone surveys, nonetheless I think his comments are equally valid in the business context.

Therefore, even though I was approaching an 'elite group' (Frey, 1989: 57) working in a business environment, rather than the general public, privacy was still a relevant issue. In other words, I did not perceive these people as fair game simply because of their business status. Hounding people, and adding to a possibly already full workload, without convincing reasons, might well cause psychological stress.

This was an issue that needed to be resolved so that I was ethically comfortable with it, before I could approach employers. This meant that much thought went into the introductory letter to differentiate my research in a clear manner, and it is one of the main reasons why I said what my profession was and gave my place of work. Establishing credibility was an even greater challenge because unlike the previous research phases, I was now operating outside my own professional working environment (see Appendix D1).

Frey (1989: 136-7) emphasises the significance of the introduction to the point of saying it can 'make or break' a project. An unanticipated call, especially without a contact name, might well have an adverse effect on the decision of potential respondents to participate in the research. My overall objective, heightened by the ethical considerations already
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referred to, was to do what was most convenient for the potential interviewee. In practice, I encountered resistance from just one or two people.

7.4 Administration of calls

I had virtually 100% response on people ringing back when they said that they would do so (compare discussion below with answerphones). This was not always immediately, but they did pursue my query. I also received one or two letters several weeks later explaining what had become of my initial contact, when someone had moved on.

A very small number of potential interviewees, and not enough to have a serious effect on the sample, did not return the call. However to contemplate why this was the case is of methodological interest. Perhaps I called at the 'wrong' time, or possibly an answering machine was being used to screen unwanted calls. Lavrakas (1993: 13) refers to the 'very small, yet probably growing population' using an answering machine in this way. For my calls I think it is likely that getting the answerphone once could be explained by the former reason, but for more than once at a series of 'different times', probably the latter explanation is correct. This practice is elucidated further by reference to Frey (1989: 20), who advises 'it is better not to leave a message and to call back at another time.' Otherwise the respondent is then placed in the position of initiating interaction with the interviewer, or not, as he/she chooses. In my experience the small handful of messages I left resulted in 100% non-response. This was disappointing, and I had to accept that he/she was not interested. By contrast, the number of return calls I made were, with repeated efforts, all successful.

Progress of the interviews

The research process started off very slowly because I assumed people would reply immediately. As I realised this was not going to happen I gradually increased the number of letters that I sent out at once. For this reason the first couple of weeks of the interviewing period were not tremendously productive, especially compared to the later weeks. However, this did give me time to contemplate the process, review the data, and reflect on the overall interview strategy. Later, when the number of interviews I was doing had increased dramatically, there was no such time to spare.

After the event the research process all looks very manageable, but at the time it felt quite hectic. Being well organised was definitely mandatory, and my concern for the fact that these were busy people whose time should not be wasted unnecessarily was fully justified. It was essential to match in with their schedule to achieve interviews, otherwise it is quite probable that the sample would have been reduced considerably. This was a development on from the setting up of the Course Leader interviews. Far
more work overall went into arranging these employer interviews. There were more of them of course, but there was also a difference in the organisational structure and work pattern with which I had to contend.

As the research progressed I deployed a number of different approaches. About two weeks into the interviewing period a two-tier strategy was adopted by sending out letters to one set of companies, and making calls to yet another set of companies simultaneously. I also decided in some cases to make an introductory call first, then send the introductory letter by fax. This was an attempt to speed up the whole process. This procedure seemed to meet with a more positive response. Perhaps it fitted a business pattern, or maybe it was simply the decision of whether or not to participate was handed back to the potential interviewee. This was exactly the way I had originally intended the strategy, but the difference was that I now had someone on the inside of the organisation operating almost as my sponsor. This can be compared with the similar technique in setting up the Course Leader interviews (see Chapter 5).

The other strategy I employed to sharpen up targeting the right person was to check with the switchboard if I had the correct name. I used this confirmatory technique especially when working with contacts generated from the Eurojob Watch abstracts, where I was not always sure of the name or level of the appropriate person. Even so, it was still not straightforward because of the degree of divisional autonomy within companies, which made locating the person likely to have the answers difficult.

Sometimes, I was quite clearly only awarded the interview because I had been recommended by another contact. Finally, to what extent some people helped out and were friendly because of public relations must also be considered. This was particularly noticeable with more junior levels of personnel, many of whom were attentive to my request and located the right person in their department for me.

7.5 Nature of the interviewing style

Indubitably we do have a strong need to 'know' our conversational partner. In the face-to-face interview this is not a problem, and familiarisation with expressions and gestures forms part of the opening stages of any interaction. The telephone mode where the interaction takes place in the absence of visual cues probably lends more neutrality to the whole process. Indeed some research indicates that response bias is lessened (Miller and Cannell, 1982; Frey, 1989: 123).

However, from my experience in conducting this phase of the research I have reservations on this matter. I do not think the ability of the interviewee or interviewer to be un/favourably affected by voice quality should be underestimated. I make this
inference from analysing my reactions as an interviewer. I admit that almost unconsciously I found myself 'sizing up' the interviewee by what his/her voice sounded like. This was fleeting, but nonetheless I was aware of it occurring. It was also in spite of being aware of the need to be on the lookout for the introduction of bias. It seems inevitable that the respondents too would have been involved in judging me, in some fashion or other, by the sound of my voice.

During the interviews I generally met with a relatively even businesslike response. Some respondents however were almost immediately warmer than others. I naturally injected warmth as part of the process of establishing rapport. As the interviews proceeded I found myself having to adjust style to allow for the styles of different respondents. If we accept the 'warm-cool' classification of interviewing styles (Rogers, 1989) I would place myself in the 'warm' category. However I do not feel that claiming this 'warmth' eliminates a task orientation, nor a businesslike approach (ie the characteristics of a 'cool' style). I maintain from my experience that it is possible to combine the characteristics of these styles, in spite of a preferred orientation in the warm direction.

**Length of the interview**

There was a need to keep as close as possible to the time that I said the interview would take (15 minutes) and not wear out the goodwill of the interviewee (Bell, 1993: 97). At the same time I wanted to let the respondent offer more information on issues if possible. I needed to assess the overall rapport, and willingness of the interviewee to continue without the advantage of facial expression.

Advice varies on whether the amount of time the interview will take should be specified to the respondent. Lavrakas (1993: 102) says to mention it 'if under 10 minutes', but 'if longer' not unless asked. I thought this entirely inappropriate to secure the cooperation of a business respondent and instead was honest about the timing (Frey, 1989: 129). On the whole I did not have difficulties with the timing, some interviews running to about 20 minutes, others closer to the specified time.

**7.6 Withdrawing from data collection**

About what turned out to be halfway through the interview cycle I started to become very immersed in the research. I had gained a feel for this style of interview, and was now confident with the process. The other thing that began to occur was a number of interviewees expressed an interest in the eventual research findings. This happened in half a dozen cases in a cluster. At this stage I realised that the research was becoming an end in itself. Reinhartz (1984: 48) quotes W F Whyte (1969) on 'the excitement of
personal involvement' in this regard. This certainly reflects how I felt at this time, and I was to remember this in the post-interview period when things were relatively 'flat'.

The interviews came to a natural conclusion as the lead-up to the Christmas period started to take hold of companies. I still had a number of other contacts in the pipeline, but after a break of a few days because of other commitments, I found they had 'gone cold'. It was clear from one or two attempts, that the effort necessary to restart the cycle was out of proportion to the additional data to be obtained. The sample was robust and the ongoing analysis showed clearly established categories. Consequently, the timing of the decision to withdraw from data collection was settled by a combination of these factors.

7.7 Coding and Analysis

Interviewing had proceeded according to the structured order of the schedule, consequently the notes taken down were in this order. This meant that there was a clear framework with which to commence coding and analysing the data collected.

I therefore started with a question by question analysis initially keeping to the schedule order. The majority of the questions were closed, and the ease of analysis was quite striking. This was particularly so by retrospective comparison with the complexities of the Course Leaders' data. Many questions were accommodated under straightforward headings of 'Yes'/No'/Qualified' as the level of agreement with the specific question was mapped out. The size of the sample had generated a range of description where clusters of similar/identical concepts were clearly sited. I found the process enjoyable and interesting, especially as the various viewpoints began to take shape. Even though, as already pointed out the structured interview offers these benefits at the analysis stage, I also felt more competent in the handling of the data. My experiences with the two other phases of data analysis were there to be drawn upon, and the whole process was far more manageable overall.

Besides identifying the pattern of response, I examined the data closely to see if further insight could be gained from the substance of how the respondents had replied to the questions. The labour-intensive activity of keeping as full a set of notes as possible during each interview now paid off. The nature of the interview instrument meant the data was very conversational by comparison with the face-to-face mode of the academic interviews. The speech was concise, 'down to earth' and retained the immediacy of the telephone encounter. Therefore these notes were now the source of quotations which allowed the analysis to reach a more conceptual level. I was able to move from the identification of concepts to accessing the nuances of employers' attitudes, motivations and self-perceptions. As the analysis progressed in this way, I rearranged some of the
questions so that the data collected was now united with other data relating to the same variable of interest. The final arrangement of the analysis was then written up under the issues of Recruitment Practice, Recruitment Policy, and Graduate Employment within the company (see Chapter 12).

**Conclusion**

As pointed out in the chapter, this phase of the research was my first experience of working 'outside' the confines of my familiar educational context. It turned out to be an important milestone in terms of my research training. Methodologically, I learned to handle the technique of telephone interviewing, with its tighter focus and different pace. The comparison formed between my earlier experience with the face-to-face in-depth interviews with Course Leaders was useful in helping me to improve my technique. Moreover, I experienced a growing confidence in the manageability of the whole research process. This was particularly attached to achieving credibility with a sample in the business context. I found the telephone method interesting, particularly because of the way it altered the conditions, ie without the visual channel. The operational aspect was also challenging, especially the ethical dimension, with so much sugging rife. The achievement of a strong sample, and my own feeling of a successful data collection was further contributed to by the interest shown in the research area by several of the employers. There is no doubt that this contributed to my morale, as well as a growing realisation of the research process. The other aspect that must be commented upon is the process of data analysis. By this stage in the research, my grasp of the process was quite different to the earlier stages of the survey and initial interviews. For this reason, the recognition of sometimes familiar concepts viewed from a different perspective was particularly interesting, and part of a feeling that the data was now moving into a holistic shape. In other words, I gained a strong realisation of what the theoretical objectives of triangulation are like in practice.
CHAPTER 8

A view of curriculum intentions

This chapter is concerned with the overall design of the European Business/Management Studies courses in the study. There are three sections, which broadly encompass course origins, curriculum intentions and proposed participants. The chapter takes a look initially at the background of the courses and tries to set the curriculum development parameters in context. It next gives an indication of the espoused course philosophy, and examines the intended course aims and objectives in detail. In the final section the chosen process of course recruitment and selection is considered, and the ideal student participant sought by courses is portrayed.

8.1 Curriculum Development Context

Introduction

This section examines why the European Business/Management Studies courses central to this study started up when they did and what main influences are attributed to their development. Given the growth pattern identified in the survey (see below), I was particularly interested in finding out whether courses acknowledged the Single European Act (SEA) as instrumental in their development. The link proposed between the human resource implications of this act and the need for European-wide education and training systems (Thurley & Wirdenius, 1989) had encouraged this focus.

Moreover, in view of the clear directive in recent reports (Constable & McCormick, 1987; Handy, 1987) on the need to provide more management education and training in the UK to meet growing international competition, it seemed fairly critical to ascertain
whether this was a prominent influence on course development. Similarly, analyses of
the use of language in business (Liston & Reeves, 1985; Hagen, 1988) highlight the
specific need to improve British language training provision. Was such national concern
recognised as a course development issue?

The interview data shows up clear patterns of start-up rationale based on response to
perceived need/demand. The simultaneous role played by opportunity is also evident in
a number of cases. The initial impetus behind development was not known by a few, but
for the majority it was, and they identify two drives. One of these was their
understanding of the needs of the labour market. This was enhanced for some by student
feedback or company research. The other drive was the promptings of European
partners to share their interests and plans in this area. The direct influence of the Single
European Market (SEM) received only general acknowledgement as a factor in
development.

It must be noted that even though the above patterns can be identified, the overall tone
of the data is one of a complex interaction of factors at work. The range of factors
involved is borne out through consultation of the Validation Document sub-sample.
However, shifts in emphasis between the interview data and the documentation data are
noticeable. This compounds the contextual complexity making it difficult to establish
the exact nature of priorities in the curriculum development process.

The rationales will now be examined in some detail to find out to what extent
programme developers were responding to European business/management education as
an initiative in its own right, and to what extent as a reaction to present market
opportunity.

8.1.1 A pattern of growth

To begin it is helpful to set this start-up activity in context by examining the growth
pattern of courses in the bar chart (see Figure 8.1). This shows us that 21% of the
courses surveyed began pre-1986. A more detailed examination of the questionnaire
data identifies that the courses in this group had start-up dates ranging from the years
1974 to 1984 inclusive. In 1986 the year of the Single European Act (SEA) 16% of the
courses began. What is of particular significance is that in 1989 another 21% of the
courses surveyed began, that is an amount equal to the total development in the period
pre-1986. To put this another way, in a single year the same number of courses started
up as had done so in an earlier ten year period. Overall these figures demonstrate a clear
surge in growth in this field in the late 1980s.
If we place the courses in the sample in this context we find the following. At the time of the survey, a very small number of courses were well-established (pre-1986), approximately half the courses were a few years into their life having between three to five cohorts graduated, the rest of the courses were in effect 'new' and did not yet have any graduates. The latter did however include several courses which had been developed from other courses.

8.1.2 A 'need' rationale

In looking at why European Business/Management courses started up when they did, what emerges very clearly is an expression of meeting need. The words vary but the perception is the same. The majority of Course Leaders (CLs) said that the programme was an outright response to a definite need or demand. For some opportunity also came into it. A small minority admitted that for them the two factors coincided, such as this CL in the following response:
CL13: The idea that this course should come into existence was not my idea um it was the idea of the Dean at that time who thought there was a need and an opportunity and um he asked me if I would like to be involved in it.

What must be taken into consideration here is the length of time CLs had been associated with their courses. This impinges on whether they were in a position 'to know' the original development influences on the course, or not. Half the CLs had been involved with their courses from the outset, a quarter of them had become involved very shortly after start-up, and the other quarter had very recently 'inherited' their courses.

Before looking in detail at the substance of these needs and opportunities, it is pertinent to focus momentarily on, to whom or what, CLs attributed the impetus in identifying them. Two drives were frequently referred to; one being an understanding of the labour market. This they said had been gained variously from student feedback, research on employers' needs, and other sources. The other drive identified was liaison with European partners and contacts.

The 'need' rationales offered fit into one or other of the following three descriptions. Firstly a need for business education with a European dimension; secondly a need for 'somebody with language but with something else as well'; and thirdly a specific need for European managers.

Business education with a European dimension

The first explanation was given by just over half the CLs. They said that their courses were developed when they were, because a need for business education with European links was recognised. Circumstances differed from course to course, but some correspondence exists. One of these similarities is that most CLs said that this was something they had wanted to do, or they had had an interest in this area beforehand. In many cases they referred to other courses they already ran which they were keen to improve upon, or develop further in relation to the European dimension. So internal curriculum development 'pressures' clearly did contribute. Some courses said that an external trigger to development was set off by partners. These courses will be examined further on in this section.

If we refer to the Validation Document sub-sample this picture is easily substantiated. In their general introduction to the course proposal half the courses were concerned with developing or adjusting their course to put further emphasis on its European curriculum and structure. The other courses all refer to partners or entering an additional network, as the leading reason behind either starting up the course or enhancing its European nature (see Appendix E1).
An instance of the former type is exemplified by this CL:

CL8: Well we had at that time ah part of a Combined Studies degree which was in European Studies we were never very happy with that ... and we couldn't find time in the course to allow students to spend a period of time studying (mm) or working in Europe so we've always wanted to have a Single Honours degree in the European area ... and we were also concerned that there wasn't a business aspect to the material that we were doing and of course round about that time there was a big ah arousal of interest because of the plans to create the Single European Market [SEM] and I had a strong research interest in that as did the Head of the Department Professor ------ so him and I were really the leading people who said that we needed to move into a Single Honours European Business-type degree.

Here then expertise and previous course experience, firm European interest and a strong eye on shaping the curriculum along European Business lines can be identified. Particular individuals led the course development in the educational direction they had identified. What also stands out is the number of influences at work. This complexity in the development context is very noticeable in the explanations that CLs offer, and the various influences are not easily isolated.

It is of interest to note the reference to the SEM as one of the formative influences in CL8's explanation. Overall, specific mention of the Single European Market (SEM) or '1992' in the interviews was rare. On querying this with CLs, it was acknowledged by some as an influence. A typical reply from one Course Leader being '1992 yes that was there in the thinking'. However, if we turn to the Definitive/Validation Documents (see Table 8.1 and discussion later in this section) mention of the changing environment of Europe is very evident.

Pioneers

Separate mention must be made of the two CLs who avowed their courses were initially established by the work of 'far-sighted individuals'. Both these courses were long-established, in fact recognised as prototypes, by those now involved in the field of European Business study. One of these CLs muses on the origins of his course:
CL5: it was the sort of brainchild of em a particular person I mean where the influence upon him came I don't know but er him plus two others I believe whether it was in the wind or I don't know I honestly don't know whether the idea for such courses had already been voiced elsewhere I don't know but this one particular person was very instrumental in finding a partner in Germany and that was actually how it started ah it started here and the first link was with a Fachhochschule in Germany and it developed from there it was an immediate empathy between the two and from then onwards it was decided well yes we must look for a partner in France which was very soon established and from then it grew Spain in 1981 and Italy in 1986.

So it appears even with what we might call the pioneers that linking up with European partners was a vital drive to course development. The role of the individual should not be discounted, but the 'actual influence upon him' is not known. The length of time that has elapsed can pose a difficulty, as the CL of the other long-established course also admitted. He offered an explanation of the development context as he understood it, as well as, what he called the 'mythological origins' of the programme:

CL9: a meeting between a guy called [---- -----"] who you may have come across and ah his French counterpart a chap called [Pierre ------] and the story as I tell it is that they met in a bar in France but they certainly met in some circumstances in France prior to British entry to the EC and they recognised that there was a need both in France and in the United Kingdom for managers who were able to operate equally with equal freedom in the two cultures.

Such empathy has an undeniable appeal, however it must be accepted that the story is part of the culture of that particular course, rather than verifiable data.

The opportunity of partner links

Other CLs also talked about how they too had ideas for course development in the European Business area in mind. But what is highlighted here is the strength of other factors which came together at that particular time and helped to effect the setting up of the course. One of the main things discernible here is the influence of opportunity. Especially, European opportunities in the form of developing course links with European networks. Some CLs reported how such opportunities were more or less presented to them. This was usually because of the existence of other institutional contacts. These CLs, the first of an undergraduate degree just starting up, and the other of an established postgraduate diploma, help us to appreciate this kind of opportunity:
CL6: Well yes I was involved it's been something that we've been planning for a number of years now (mm hm) partly because we felt that this was something that we should've been into a while back other institutions have developed Business Studies degrees with European links um and we had other courses that were successfully linked into Europe through ERASMUS networks and um there was a network that we wanted to come into because we'd got good contacts.

and now the postgraduate course Course Leader:

CL11: Yes it em it grew out of an existing relationship with a French partner (mmm) whose needs coincided into his ambitions if you like to coincided with ours and ah we'd already collaborated on undergraduate courses of a more conventional type ... they already had a postgraduate course in export management and we wanted to get into postgraduate education in this area and I say there was a convenient (mmm) coincidence of interest.

The catalytic nature of such opportunity is seen here. It is also important to focus on the role attributed to European partners in the process. The opportunity was sometimes initiated by the European institution and the British course acted upon it. Overall, there is a clear networking drive to course development fuelled by these opportunities.

One exceptional case must be quoted as it demonstrates that such opportunity can be entirely capricious. The CL in question reported that his institution's own planned programme development had been overtaken by an opportunity offered to them to join an already well-established programme. As he explains enthusiastically:

CL2: involving us coming into a particular network as the new British partner replacing another British institution ... we've simply been very fortunate really to be able to get into a network at that time at very short notice um I don't think it's happened before and I doubt it would happen again there's been an element of chance about the thing.

Language and 'something else'

A second pattern was to be seen in the courses (just over one third) that CLs said had been developed in response to a recognition that language graduates needed to have business skills as well as language in order to get jobs. These were mainly postgraduate courses. Here one CL of a postgraduate diploma, now entering its fifth year, and himself a member of the original design team, reflects on why they started the course at that particular time:
CL14: The perception that there were an awful lot of people coming out of university with language degrees who were not able to find employment so a valuable resource for the country was not being harnessed.

CLs in this group explained that their understanding of such need had been shaped by various influences. Student feedback was mentioned by more than one Course Leader, as too was company research. This had shown them the advisability of developing a course that would 'convert' language graduates so that they were useful to business. They needed adaptation of their languages to the business and economic field to get jobs, and to get promotion once they were in a job. There was a definite sense that the time was not just right, but highly appropriate for such courses. As one CL explained 'there was a demand that we thought we had to answer'. Yet another CL, referred to the guidance given by people in the Careers Centre in the initial formulation of his degree, who had told him 'that's what the market needs'. One other CL referred specifically to the involvement of course colleagues in published research on this area (viz Hagen, 1988). As she explained:

CL15: it was discovered that a lot of companies felt they needed somebody in the company with a language background um but not exclusively a language background.

This work had led directly into course development at her institution. The original intention was to offer language graduates a course to qualify them to work in companies with a business background. They would then have 'the linguistic skills as an extra'.

Need for European managers

Finally, it should be noted that three CLs stipulated that their course was started up to meet a specific need for European managers. None of them had been involved with their courses from the outset. In one instance, the CL surmised what might have been the drive to development and then read out passages from the Course Validation Document on his desk. So it was the 'official' rationale that was offered. Another of the CLs, recently recruited to his post after a long business career, after a definite hesitation launched into this explanation:

HT: Do you know what the main push behind them starting up in 1986 was? Why at that particular time?

CL3: Oh:: (hesitation) well it was the need for European managers

HT: Right
CL3: The fact that your European manager in Britain meant Continental Manager and on the Continent it also meant Continental Manager.

HT: Yes.

CL3: Because British managers did not become managers on the Continent whereas Continental Managers became managers over here.

HT: So there was an opportunity that was recognised?

CL3: Yes. A very definite need.

HT: Mm.

CL3: Otherwise all the management positions in Britain would be taken over by foreigners.

Given that the CL was not in position at the time of course start-up this rationale could be interpreted as an expression of his own personal views. Indeed this does appear to be the case, as the Definitive Course Document shows that the original idea behind the course proposal was phrased in much more general terms as simply 'an increasing need for education and training in all aspects of European business'.

8.1.3 'Me too' activity

Nearly all the CLs interviewed were aware of the activity of other institutions in this area. They mentioned each other sometimes as sources of ideas, sometimes to comment on reputation, occasionally to criticise performance. They spoke about looking to, and trying to create, particular models. Some admitted that this consciousness of the courses other institutions were mounting had informed their own curriculum development activity. Sometimes they had been concerned 'to be distinctive' from a certain model, in other cases they were keen to emulate a particular feature that they found impressive. Some CLs said that they had worked their own course ideas out before considering the practice of other institutions; others had run the process in tandem. The 'brand leadership' of one institution in particular, was frequently and spontaneously referred to in this context. The CL of the course concerned who formed part of the sample, himself explained exactly this point without prompting:
CL9: I don't think we were ever able to exploit the competitive advantage that we had in the early days because ... the attitude here was that free publicity was what counted and therefore it was papers presented at conferences and all that sort of thing and that wasn't what was important because it wasn't getting through to the punters the people who were going to recruit our students on graduation. What it got through to were other institutions who suddenly thought 'my God there's a market opportunity here let's go after it'.

8.1.4 The 'official' rationale

It seems appropriate to complete this section by looking at what courses offered as the reason for their course proposal in the validation process. Examination of the Validation Document Sub-sample (see Table 8.1 overleaf) reveals the following information. The context of the course in relation to perceived need/demand and existing provision is given substantial treatment in all documents. The content certainly confirms in the first instance the range of factors bound up in this context, as already indicated in the interview data. The course proposers are keen in each case to draw their audience's attention to trends that they see as significant for this area of business education. The immediate focus selected is the 'quickening pace of integration' in Europe; and particular mention is given to the implications of the SEM for business. These developments are held up as the reason why variously education and training/managers/graduates are required.

The other main emphasis is on demand. The details of course rationales differ in wording and emphasis, but they all set out to convince their audience that there is an increasing requirement for business and language education in one or other form. In every case this argument is supported by reference to demand expressed by employers or students, in most cases from both. This demand is put forward as a key point in supporting the timeliness of the course proposal and the strong sense of the rationale in employment terms.

Established courses quote with equal validity from both directions (for example C5). They were acting in response to views expressed that demand exists, and that such graduates are 'attractive to prospective employers'. New courses forecast with equal confidence, referring to good employment prospects and a range of job opportunities.
### Table 8.1  Background/context to course proposal

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Conclusion

'Need' rationales were informed by outside sources, but CLs refer to both internal and external pressures on development at that time. The SEM was acknowledged as an important influence in the 'official' validation process, but referred to only generally in the interviews. By contrast, opportunities with European partners were much commented upon as a formative influence (by about half the CLs) in the 'informality' of the interviews. In this respect they received decidedly more emphasis than in the Validation documentation. The complex interweaving of drives, both within and without the institution, therefore provides the background of European Business/Management courses start-up.

Clear emphasis is placed on the need for labour market skills (language and business combination), and establishing links with European partners. There are too, indications that courses were aware of each other's development, and that competing for the educational 'market' in European Business was a definite consideration in developing a number of courses. What implications these factors have for the overall course ethos, and course aims and objectives particularly, will be discussed in the next section.

8.2 Course philosophy, aims and objectives

Introduction

This section attempts to establish the overall intention of the courses in the study. First, consideration is given to course philosophy. Given the fact that these are named European courses I was especially interested in the relative intentions with regard to 'European' and 'Business/Management Studies. Furthermore, a conscious networking drive by European partners has already been referred to above (8.1.2) where programme development influences were examined. What is the proposed partnership arrangement, and how does this relate to the philosophy expressed?

It also explores course aims and objectives as expressed by Course Leaders themselves, as well as the way in which they are stated in validation documentation. The literature reveals several trends that are pertinent here. The increasing globalisation of the business environment and the shift towards a higher incidence of transnational working, howbeit in an evolutionary stage, has been much commented upon (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989; Van Dijck, 1990). The need for personnel to be flexible in their thinking, culturally aware and able to network with others of different nationalities has been emphasised as concomitant with such organisational developments (Vineall, 1988;
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Tayeb, 1992). Within Europe itself, the creation of the Single Market is expected (at least in the long-term) to lead to a more competitive labour market characterised by greater mobility. In view of this, enhancing 'flexibility and attractiveness' has become a critical focus (Wheatley, 1993).

The final part of this section looks at the proposed course structure in relation to the period of European study/placement. A recent and highly visible trend is the Europeanising of the curriculum through inclusion of a study/work placement abroad as a means of giving the graduate 'operational effectiveness' in Europe (Easterby-Smith, 1992). For this reason, the roles envisaged for both language study and European experience respectively, and the relationship between them, was regarded as a key issue.

What emerged from the data was a main emphasis on producing broad operational business people. This in itself was not surprising as it was already signposted in the results of the survey. However, what is noticeable is the strength of the vocational orientation to course aims demonstrated in Course Leaders' attitudes. Attracting employers and being attractive to students are heavily prioritised. The other clear emphasis is a strong claim for 'difference'. This in essence comes from providing language and European experience. Course Leaders claim that this is a route to 'cultural adaptability'. Strategies for integrating the period of European experience into the course structure are an important concern for most of the courses in the study.

8.2.1 Course philosophy

All Course Leaders (CLs) agreed that their courses were 'European'. What varied was the level of specificity of the dimension. This ranged from the focus of the course being 'firmly rooted in Europe' through to 'geared towards Europe'. Together they offered a combination of reasons as to why the courses were European, rather than International Business/Management. For most of the CLs there was some overlap in their reasons. The responses are quite revealing on this issue. Some identified the views they offered as those of the course team, one or two made no apology for offering their own thoughts.

The two reasons most commonly given, at least in frequency terms, were as follows: that the European basis was what the market needs; and that concentration on Europe was because this was now our business environment. The substance of explanations for the first reason went along these lines. Business Studies itself was a growth area with a lot of potential and the market was right for this course. One or two CLs took this further, and stated outright that in their opinion the choice of 'European' was no more than 'pure fashion'. On the other hand, many who offered the second reason emphasised the logicality of such an orientation to the study. The need to understand the European environment was very important, and some referred to how lax Britain was in this
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respect. In their view it is a problem we suffer from; we are 'poor by comparison with Germany and France'. There were also two CLs who saw the European context of the course in wider terms than the business environment. They said effectively that there was a 'need to create European people'. Some CLs did not exclude International development of the course in the future, but at the moment they said that there was a lack of appropriate expertise, or sufficient resourcing was not available.

A European banner

The significance of European in the title as an initial means of making the course distinctive was certainly recognised by CLs. It is seen as a signal to prospective students who want a European career orientation. As one CL said: 'it's very important to students while on the programme'. Some admitted that it was a deliberate marketing ploy; others explained it was a genuine attempt to reflect course aims. In this respect it seems to strike a chord, as one CL expressed it:

CL8: we say this is training people who can be trained to be managers to work in Europe.

In discussing the course title some strong personal views emerged too, about what perspective Business Studies should have overall. For instance it was the belief of one Course Leader that the course not being International was a retrograde step. Calling the course 'European' was a marketing ploy, and in his opinion it was already out-of-date. He believed all their courses should be International, because 'the horizon of Dover's not good enough anymore'.

By contrast, another CL was equally adamant that all Business Studies courses should be European because 'we are Europe'. He thought straightforward Business Studies courses were not sufficiently European because they looked at things from a national, rather than a European point of view.

The use of the term does however create an expectation of a European curriculum. How is this expectation conceived in the aims and objectives of the courses? This will be discussed further on in this section.

How much integration is intended?

Some CLs report strong commitment to achieving a unified approach. This was particularly the case with those running 'fully integrated' courses. At the same time there is an awareness that what they are trying to do is by its very nature necessarily
constrained because harmonising content means it has to be acceptable to all partners. Some said that they had made considerable effort at the curriculum development stage to ensure there was a representative multinational involvement, and had acquired other partners for this reason.

In principle, the courses in the sample collaborate with their partners in the following ways. Just over a third of the CLs report the course operates on an 'exchange' basis between institutions involving the principle of mutual recognition; about a third of the CLs are involved in a 'fully integrated' programme, ie there is a common curriculum in a network of partners; and the remaining CLs indicated that their courses are intended as a European pathway on a Business Studies degree/diploma. They follow independent arrangements with 'partner' institutions, ie there is no binding principle of partnership.

Expressions of commitment varied a great deal from very strong to relatively non-committal. For instance one CL said that his course's intention was to achieve a 'pan-European identity', and another CL reported that his course aspired to the ideal of an eventual European qualification. These expressions of commitment stood out by comparison with some courses where 'European' was conceived of as an extension to a 'combined' degree/diploma.

8.2.2 Course aims

The influence of the labour market in course aims is considerable. In all the discussions with Course Leaders (CLs) much emphasis was placed on vocational relevance. This was especially the case with CLs of established courses, who liberally mixed talk and examples of past graduates, with explanations of their course aims. Frequent reference was made to 'being saleable'. Most CLs too, drew attention to the broad base of course study. Some went on to say that they had no intention of producing specialists such as accountants, marketers and other business professionals. They made it clear that these courses are concerned with 'generalist' business/management, but with a European proviso. Some of the more experienced CLs commented that their courses qualified graduates for a wide choice of jobs.

The usefulness of a student acquiring language and business skills and European experience is seen as an eventual 'plus factor for jobs'. The claim is that it is this overall European dimension that differentiates them from 'ordinary' Business Studies courses. Two-thirds of the CLs made such claims for difference and distinctiveness. Language study is not something new, what is emphasised time and time again is that it makes particular sense to offer the two together now in a European business context. Examination of the data highlights a strong consciousness of both students' and employers' perspectives in this regard. 'Competitive advantage' in getting jobs is very much in CLs' minds. Having 'something else' will make their graduates different to other
job candidates. A number of CLs quoted evidence from past cohorts to this effect. This is particularly noticeable in the group of courses (all postgraduate) which prioritise the 'value added' by the course in adapting the linguistic skills of their students to business usage.

All courses in the sample, with one exception, have specific objectives for Language and the European experience offered to students. Course Leaders regard the knowledge and skills acquired under these headings as making a significant contribution to the overall purpose of the course. Through them graduates will be able to offer employers the vital 'something extra' identified above. Before examining the nature of these objectives in detail we need first to consider how CLs conceptualise the intended course product.

The intention is to produce/develop ...

Most Course Leaders pointed out the main purpose of their courses is to produce graduates capable of operating, or similar words, in a European context. This relates well both to the information obtained on the Course Aims from the prospectus literature and the survey.

Reviewing the prospectus descriptions of the aims of the courses in the sample, the main emphases discernible are 'business education' and 'European environment', with mention of languages following close behind. Managerial education receives sparse comment; and only one course specifically singles out European managers. So the publicised intention of the majority of courses is broadly couched in terms of business and education, with some general European reference.

Further information is available from the survey, where respondents were asked to select one prospectus-style description (from a choice of five) that best described the aims of their course. In Figure 8.2 below we can see that the most frequently selected description (43%) was 'To produce business graduates who can operate effectively in a European context'. This was selected in preference to the description containing the phrase 'international environment' (29%). Given this response it seems pertinent to focus on what 'operate effectively in a European context' actually meant to Course Leaders (CLs).
Figure 8.2 Course aims
Source: European Business/Management Studies courses survey, February 1992

There is a consciousness of the changing shape of the European business environment, and the likely labour demands that will need to be met. However, what is much more precisely realised in talking to CLs is the exact nature of this capability, and its relationship to management. This gave rise to specific comment. The data shows that CLs make a number of qualifying statements, and some of them are particularly cautious in the phrases and words they use. These are things that the course of study might produce, offer, give hope for, but CLs make it clear what they are, and are not, prepared to guarantee a graduate will be capable of doing.

Course Leaders spoke in terms of their particular course enabling students to get a job with a European link. Again, speaking both from direct experience and projected ideas, they depicted where and in what type of company, current and future graduates would be likely to find themselves working.

A typical example is this undergraduate Course Leader explaining what his course is trying to do:
CL6: I think we were trying to produce graduates who had the capacity to operate in more than one European country effectively from graduation (mm mm) um who would have had the benefit of a good vocational Business Studies degree but also the benefit of having worked abroad which would I hope have made them capable of either working in that country on graduation or at least working for a multinational or British company that was interested in operating in on a European-wide (mm) arena.

Graduates from these programmes are said by Course Leaders to exhibit mobility, and some CLs quoted evidence of this characteristic in previous graduates. They are seen as operating mainly in large companies. These were not necessarily designated as European, sometimes CLs referred to multinationals. Their geographical employment location was occasionally referred to as a specific country, for example Spain, but more commonly CLs talked about their graduates 'working in Europe'. In other words they were seen as destined for a European labour market, rather than one limited to possibilities on a purely national level in the UK. Emphasis was placed on courses offering European career opportunities.

Though quite a number of CLs were more or less in line with the thoughts expressed in the excerpt above, there are some points on which they varied. CL6 sees graduates operational in 'more than one European country'. Not everyone was confident that their graduates would have such capability. They discussed the things that stood in their way. They were not being trained as specialists, and they would not have enough experience. What could they say graduates would be capable of? They would have a 'useful perspective', as this Course Leader explains:

CL1: but what we do think is that people could bring a very useful European approach and attitude to working in organisations in this country some of which have got strong European connections so they fit in with that um or they can work in an organisation in this country and try and bring something of what they have learned to the organisation and then maybe afterwards go and work in Europe when they've got their experience but we don't pretend to be producing European managers because it's not true.

Several CLs of undergraduate courses made the point quite strongly that they were not saying that their programmes produced people who would be 'operational immediately' in a managerial capacity. More specifically, they saw their graduates as people who would receive training in a company, and then at some later time they would become managers in Europe. Course Leaders of more than one of the postgraduate courses, however, were confident that graduates would be able to contribute immediately.
8.2.3 European experience: specific objectives

As mentioned earlier in this discussion, courses have specific objectives relating to language and European study/work placement. Course Leaders referred to these as the reason the course was 'different' to other courses. All except one course in the sample were involved in some form of joint-study or exchange arrangement, which meant students were in mainland Europe for some period of the course. The duration of this European experience ranged from one term to a total of two years. Details of this can be seen in Appendix E2, and the types of course structure are discussed more fully below.

Course Leaders explained the particular intentions their courses had in relation to language and European experience. The two are indubitably interlinked but they do not carry equal weight. The European experience has the upper hand, the Language a subsidiary instrumental role. Yet the experience is dependent on sufficient linguistic proficiency being in place at the appropriate time. Its essential nature, summed up by one CL as 'they have to have the language' notwithstanding, nearly all the CLs, talked of language in terms of 'a means to an end', or similar phrase. It was there, as this CL explains:

\[ \text{CL2: to enable students to learn the other subjects when they're abroad and to adapt more generally to the culture.} \]

It is this 'cultural' function for the Language that Course Leaders focused on. By using another European language while studying and/or working in another European country, it was intended that students would be able to develop some level of cultural adaptability.

**Cultural function: objective**

The exposure to another culture and the potential benefits it could offer was something on which CLs were especially articulate. They mentioned not only the level of general social awareness, expressed by one CL as 'to open you to looking at things from other people's point of view', but awareness of specific academic and business contexts too. About half the CLs referred to the value of the European educational experience itself, adding insight of cultural difference. Others emphasised the importance of the work placement in this respect.

CLs generally were agreed on the importance of cultural diversity. The period abroad was in their view a time when students would experience the substance of cultural differences. They conveyed their perceptions of how they thought this would happen, as well as their personal beliefs on what diversity meant. The exposure to another culture
was they believed a chance 'to see other things'. In the words of one CL it was 'an enormous practical demonstration' of diversity. Students would encounter the 'culture' of another country and have a different social life. Also some CLs remarked upon the fact that they would be opened up to cultural diversity in the form of a different education style. This was regarded as significant. They thought students needed to be aware of both the good and bad points of style, and adapt to the differences. Several CLs pressed this point further. They made the connection that different countries do things differently not just in education, but it carried on into business. Most importantly, as this CL expressed it:

CL11: you need to respect the cultural difference because that's adding insight that will also be valuable in the business context.

Understanding differences, and being alerted to the limitations of their own culture were benefits CLs hoped students would gain.

Not all CLs emphasised the educational experience, others (a third) focused their remarks on the work placement. This was seen as bringing students face to face with 'the reality of business' in another culture. Appreciation of normal business life while using a language other than their own would help them to empathise with the culture. As one CL said 'being on their own in a company was the ideal way for the student to immerse in that culture. In this way they would avoid what he described as the tribal element: 'this little group of students clinging together'. As far as he was concerned in the educational situation they would use their language, but they would not immerse in the same way. One other CL saw the work placement as critical to 'getting the feel' of the culture.

Two CLs (both postgraduate courses) held slightly different attitudes about cultural diversity. Both saw their students as 'already culturally adapted' through language study and previous experience abroad. They did however, subscribe to the importance of this process being continued and reinforced, by encouraging a mix of cultural groupings on their courses.

8.2.4 Course structure in relation to European experience

In referring to course arrangements, CLs centred on the way in which it was intended that the European study period should be integrated into the overall programme. For the 'fully integrated' courses study in different European countries is a 'normal' part of the programme arrangement. The course content abroad is 'fully harmonised' along with the rest of the curriculum.
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For the courses with 'exchanges', the intention was to make the study abroad integral to the course. CLs were very much of the opinion that the European experience should not be regarded as optional. There was a particular anxiety that students should not see it as 'a holiday'. For this reason this group were especially concerned with arrangements for integrating the period abroad into the course curriculum. Making it compulsory, and thereby weighting it in the course structure, was important. This meant ensuring that the period of study abroad was assessed and counted as part of the student's progression to their degree. How long students went abroad for, and by whom they were assessed, and the exact way in which this period of study was to be recognised towards the final qualification(s) were all touched on (see Appendix E2).

For instance, one CL pointed out how this concern had been at the basis of the recent revalidation of their course. Previously, a year abroad had been optional for students in the final year, if they could afford it. They also had three weeks in the second year, but this was 'too short to be assessed'. Neither of these arrangements had been satisfactory. In order to improve the situation, they had changed the course conditions, and now he reported 'the year abroad is embedded in our four years'.

A handful of CLs had another view of arrangements for the European experience. This can be encapsulated in the words of one CL as 'swings and roundabouts'. Basically they said that the idea was to adopt a 'non-prescriptive' approach, and just try to achieve the best possible arrangement in each situation. Here one CL of an undergraduate course just starting up an exchange explains the rationale for this:

CL6: we don't expect a one-to-one relationship with what the student would've been doing here on the third year of the degree with what they will be doing while they're studying in an overseas institution ... it's basically simply that we think it's worth doing and therefore we're prepared to say OK for 6 months you may not be studying exactly the most appropriate things from the point of view of a UK Business Studies but we think what you will be getting is is the benefits of having seen a different culture see a different education style.

Another CL in this group explained that he preferred a small number of students to do things independently, including finding work placements on their own initiative. The reason for this was a belief that immersion was vital and it was more likely to be achieved in this way, rather than on a group basis. He explains:

CL4: what we want when the students go abroad is that they go on a work placement which immerses them in that country in that culture we want them to be on their own surviving in a company and doing something useful in that company.

For this reason ERASMUS support had been avoided in the past, and he had only now reluctantly agreed to a small exchange with a French institution.
Conclusion

A clear European course orientation is espoused by Course Leaders. The majority are content with such an orientation, though some CLs are not averse to, or indeed foresee, expansion along International lines in the future. There is some evidence of courses exploiting a European business dimension for market advantage in its own right. However, though most CLs interviewed were quite aware of an educational market niche for European business, there appears little data to suggest that this is seen as their sole objective for running such a course. On the other hand, views articulated by some CLs demonstrate a clear intention to create a European curriculum, premised on a strong belief in a European educational, as well as business, future.

Vocational relevance is explicit in the aims of all courses in the sample. It is centred on the usefulness of graduates acquiring, and being able to offer employers, the particular combination of language and business and some European experience. A strong belief that the particular combination offered by the course will confer competitive advantage in the job market is readily identifiable amongst CLs. This is so for both well-established courses, and those who have yet to produce their first graduates.

Considerable emphasis was placed by all CLs on career opportunities. However, views varied on whether graduates would be enabled sufficiently by the course to obtain employment in a European country (other than the UK). Some CLs thought graduates would not have enough experience at this stage. However, value was placed on their European approach/perspective, and belief expressed in their future career potential in a European labour market.

Where CLs placed most weight was on the fact that students would obtain some European experience. This is how they perceived their 'difference' to other courses. Much is said about the need to respect cultural diversity and the importance of experiencing it in reality. There is a generally held attitude amongst CLs that this European experience will result in cultural insight, though opinions differ on whether the educational or the workplace setting is the most beneficial in this respect. What is clear is that course structures intend varying levels of integration, and set up different conditions to be met in terms of the coordination of the course curriculum and the formal assessment of students' learning. How these conditions are achieved, and the curriculum in practice will be examined in the next chapter. In the final section of this chapter, attention will be given to the course participants themselves.
8.3 The course participants

Introduction

The survey showed that most courses were oversubscribed for the available places. Given this I wanted to know how Course Leaders reacted to this demand, and why did they think students wanted to do these particular courses. In view of the recent continuing debate on quantity as opposed to quality, it seemed particularly relevant to establish how these key issues were handled in this context. What were courses looking for in prospective students and how did they actually select them? In the previous section (8.2) the significance of the European experience for the majority of these courses was clearly demonstrated. Therefore it was important to see how this was related to the selection criteria. The treatment of language was of especial interest as it was prioritised in course objectives as an essential prerequisite for the European experience. Finally in what way was the general European interest of students ascertained/assessed?

8.3.1 The target student group

The data fairly predictably shows a demarcation of prospective students according to whether the course is undergraduate or postgraduate. This distinction is highlighted in the following discussion, but a comprehensive comparison is not intended.

The student targeted by undergraduate courses is post A-level with language proficiency already in place. The 'right' type of student is depicted as high calibre in other respects but the language is seen as a must. The majority of Course Leaders (CLs) are fairly consistent in the view that trying to attempt the course with language ab initio is not possible, or at best a mistake. It must be said that such comments related specifically to French and German, but not to Spanish and Italian. The reason for this variation becomes clear in the context of the recruitment process (see below).

By contrast, the postgraduate courses in the sample are looking for someone with a degree (not necessarily in Languages) with work experience and clear career-related intentions for the course. Most courses in this group require students to demonstrate an appropriate level of linguistic proficiency, but CLs are actively looking for more than this. Work experience and the ability to reflect on it in the course context, personal qualities and sharpened career aspirations are all seen as highly important. The expectation here then is of a 'mature' student who prioritises vocational relevance. As this CL makes the point:
8.3.2 Entry requirements

The formal entry requirements for undergraduate European Business/Management Studies courses are based on standard academic criteria of passes at GCSE and A-level. Subjects specified are English, Mathematics and Foreign Language. The language requirement is the one that receives the most attention and is the most precisely specified; the typical minimum grade acceptable being a C. The average A-level score requested is 18 points. Other criteria are specified exceptionally rather than as the norm. See Appendix E3 for the information outlined in the prospectuses of the courses in the sample.

The extent to which courses are prepared to probe the formal A-level requirement in Language is pertinent here. Most CLs (about two-thirds) made a point of saying that they wanted students who were prepared to apply the language. In the words of this CL speaking with the conviction of long experience:

CL9: what we are looking for is somebody who's prepared to open their mouths and actually try to communicate.

Even though they are looking for the A-level qualification this in itself is not enough. They prefer students with 'a willingness to use the language'. How closely courses then scrutinise prospective students for this 'willingness' is not nearly as well articulated. What does stand out is that there appears to be a clear assumption, on the part of most CLs, that language equates to motivation. This is heard in the words of this Course Leader:

CL7: I mean that if somebody hasn't gone to some considerable trouble to learn at least one if not two European languages you know to understand it I don't think they'll make it. There are plans to give people an accelerated course but I think it indicates far more interest from somebody who's already decided to do that you know.

Obviously other pressures exist that intervene between expressing that you want students who will apply the language, and actually checking that they do. One such pressure is the competition between institutions in a 'limited pool' (see discussion below). This has strong implications for attracting in sufficient numbers of the 'right type' of students.
Commitment to a 'demanding' course

Just under half the CLs also stressed the 'demanding' relationship between the course and the student. This was the reason offered as to why they looked for a student of high academic calibre overall. As this CL reflects:

CL8: what we want is in some senses we're asking for a tall order we want academically bright people with an aptitude to study languages and who also are culturally adaptable we want very high calibre students.

The demand made on students was mentioned in the particular context of the European study/placement. Understanding on the part of the student of what 'a year abroad' would actually involve was considered to be vital. Mention was made at this point by more than one Course Leader of the conditions of study, for instance 'will have to study taught alongside'. Concern that such a commitment is understood is voiced by a CL of an undergraduate course:

CL10: there's far more to it than a BABS course I think they should have a far greater understanding of the demands upon them with that third year [European study and placement] and the commitment they have to make financial commitment as well.

Nevertheless, proactive work in attracting 'the right type of student' was not really noticeable. Only one CL seemed to be wrestling with the problem. He was convinced that if his particular course was to attract students with appropriate commitment it needed first of all to get the message about what was involved through to Careers teachers. One other course mentions in its Validation Document, the decision to appoint a Publicity/Recruiting Officer, so that there can be concentration on a more proactive approach to recruitment. However, the existence of such a post and related work was not mentioned in the interview context by the CL concerned.

How is European interest assessed?

So the data clearly identifies that Course Leaders want students with the ability to cope with a tough course. The question must be asked as to how, and at what point, they assess whether the prospective student has this European commitment. Is the application scrutinised for information about the applicant? Or is the applicant given the opportunity to present his/her case at interview?

Overall there appears to be a lack of scrutiny. This is noticeable by comparison with what happens in the case of someone who does not have the required academic qualifications, or other recruitment circumstances prevail. Here CLs say that the prospective student is interviewed, whereas the 'normal' case is not.
An example is this CL just establishing a course:

CL2: however the people who apply to us in August and September will all be interviewed right the reason for that being that they may not have applied earlier for European Business courses and we really sort of need to ascertain (mm) their motivation I think if they've just failed to get into a Law degree for example and have come to us I think it's important for that particular person to let them know what they're in for and for them to ask as well.

For most CLs 'what they're in for' is eventually centred on the European experience. However, this procedure is not the norm, as the following CL reveals:

CL5: well there are very obvious questions you ask them about 1993 what's going to happen what are your opinions on the future of Europe how should it develop etc etc. By asking such questions you can get an idea of whether a person's European-minded.

HT: And you would do that at initial interview?

CL5: Yeah the problem is we don't um we don't interview any longer all the applicants ... we have Open Days and then they divide off into small groups or smaller groups where we talk to 15 or 16 people and at that point we do ask for we ask questions and ask for comments but the individual interview I'm afraid unfortunately is a thing of the past.

It becomes evident that the individual's European interest and commitment may remain entirely untouched in this situation. The issue of selection will be examined more closely (see below), but first we need next to look at the overall recruitment of students to the course.

8.3.3 The recruitment process

What is very evident in CLs' descriptions of the recruitment process is that many of their courses are met with marked demand (see Figure 8.3 below), but this in itself poses a difficulty. The nature of this is, that in order to deliver the programme as it is structured, they have to recruit fairly precise numbers of specified linguistic groupings. To elaborate, since most of these courses are set up on the principle of the students undertaking a mandatory European placement; the number of places available for study is in effect leading the choice of student. This results in a classic supply-demand imbalance.
The roots of the problem that courses are experiencing lie in the study of languages at secondary school level. Course Leaders, over and over again, referred to the fact that they cannot command enough students with foreign languages, other than French, because young people do not take them at school. In line with this, intense student demand for French was observed by over half the CLs, and about a third of them reported German was a difficulty. The feel of this situation is captured, and conveyed with immediacy, by a Course Leader with long experience in this field:

CL5: particularly we recruit French Spanish German Italian at the beginning of the course groups of roughly 25 French 20-something German 18 Spanish 16 Italian that's normally the pattern ... yeah we're like most places inundated with applications to do European Business Studies with French we can't satisfy the demand not the situation isn't the same with German (mm) where we're crawling around to find (laugh) sufficient qualified students.

Courses then are competing to attract, not just high calibre students (academic qualities specified by the A-levels), but they must also at the same time ensure they recruit enough students with the 'right' languages. This language drive to recruitment was very obvious in the data, especially so for the undergraduate courses, but also for most of the postgraduate courses as well.
In the following example, the CL of one postgraduate course explains how they have an over-demand on all their courses and had deliberately aimed not to go above a set number for the course in question. The reason is significant in this context.

CL1: Oh yeah yeah we deliberately did not recruit more than 52 um and it was driven not only by the overall number but by the languages that we were recruiting for (ah huh) so we could've recruited 52 or a 100 of certain linguistic qualifications but we stopped recruiting in those qualifications so for example we could've filled the course ten times over with people who had no language (yes) at degree level we could've filled the course quite well with people who had French but we had Spanish and German groups that we also wanted to run at postgraduate level and so at a certain stage each year we stopped recruiting for the other sections the UK and the French and we recruit only Spanish and German for awhile (mm hm) which means that you may go below numbers but you do end up with reasonable balances on group size.

Numbers then predominate, but they are numbers of a particular type.

Selection procedures for undergraduate courses

Nearly all Course Leaders of undergraduate courses said that they run Open Days to which a body of prospective students are invited. The extent to which CLs then enlarged upon details of the typical procedure of the day varied. Even so, what is noticeable is that most of them expressed reservation or regret about the adequacy of this procedure as a selection method. Instead, interviewing was seen as the 'ideal' method. The reason offered for not interviewing was resource-based. It was time-consuming and/or insufficient staff were available. CLs gave explanations that staff resources were better deployed elsewhere, or it was a question of something else being more important (eg research).

A small number of CLs identified that they use both Open Day and interview methods. However, the interview was quite clearly the exception to the norm of the Open Day. In all cases, the reasons given for these departures, related to the need to ascertain more precisely the commitment or motivation of the individual student, to the course in question.

For instance, some CLs (a minority) referred to interviewing students who did not have the required qualifications. The acceptable alternative criterion was studying or working abroad, in all cases. For this, CLs admitted they were prepared to flex their entry requirements. This Course Leader explains:
CL8: we're prepared to dip grades even to find students who are interested and motivated ... given ah evidence of some student who is culturally adaptable for example a student who's studying or working abroad in the continent of Europe.

And this Course Leader makes the connection too:

CL12: for instance anyone who hasn't got A-level or can show that they lived in the country a long time is very unlikely to be offered a place.

But there is more to this alternative criterion than meets the eye. Returning to the first Course Leader above, we find that what happens to the student who is an exception, he would prefer to happen to all. In other words the exception is also an ideal:

CL8: Yes but I mean ideally I would like to recruit the vast majority of our students who've spent a year in the country in which they've studied (mm) working at anything you know just to get mature a little bit.

This CL was not alone in a preference for students 'to take a year out', but CLs actually voicing this sentiment were still in the minority. So 'somebody who's got a little bit more experience under their belt particularly of working abroad' as one CL put it is viewed favourably. But only one CL took up the stance on entry requirements we find in the following excerpt:

CL3: I've got a mature student who's just applied to come here and she has she's lived in Spain she's worked in the business and she's got all sorts of live experiential learning ah but she's failing one or two entry qualifications that to me is completely unimportant to me the important thing is what leaves here rather than what arrives and sometimes you just have to ignore the normal requirements for entry if you can get someone who is enthusiastic and committed and ah knows what they want (yes) and most students don't.

So some CLs it seems are capable of flexing entry requirements if the prospective student evidences what they consider desirable attributes. Experience (especially abroad); commitment; enthusiasm; maturity; things, other than language, that they equate to motivation. The language competence has still got to be there but the missing paper qualification is circumvented.

Selection procedures for postgraduate courses

Just under a third of the respondents in the survey were postgraduate courses. Over half of this category forms just over half of the total courses in the 0 - 30 student numbers group. All the Course Leaders of postgraduate courses stated that they interviewed their
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prospective students. They offered reasons for this choice of selection method relating to wanting to meet the student as an individual. Typical numbers on the courses are small, certainly by comparison with some of the undergraduate courses, and resources to interview were spoken of in positive terms. As one CL says of his course of 20 students 'a not too unmanageable task'.

CLs described what they tended to do at interview. As one CL explained, we 'let them know what they're getting into'. Various tests (verbal/numerical) were used especially in order to check or assess the language of non-British EC students using English for the course. The individual interview on recruitment was specifically used to probe awareness and personal career objectives.

8.3.4 Attracting students: the course or the institution?

The ability of the course to attract the calibre of student it requires is it seems inevitably bound up primarily with the type of institution mounting it, and only secondarily with the reputation of the course itself. Most of the Course Leaders admitted the academic status and reputation of their institutions were directly influencing student demand for their particular courses. They identified the underlying institutional 'pecking order', which they said was quite clearly perceived by students, and referred to by them when making their choice of course. The existence of this institutional factor consequently affected the quality of the intake they could command. For some courses this was a problem that had been detrimental long-term, whereas for others this 'league table' was quoted as working in their favour. There is quite a strength of feeling about this factor, particularly from CLs with successful courses in institutions with less perceived status. Take for example the negative position in the comments of a CL of an undergraduate degree in a College of Higher Education (CHE), as he pinpoints the difficulty from their point of view:

CL3: we're not a university ahh and therefore we do not get the best of the student stream ... mean you've got the universities your polytechnics as it was and your colleges and so we get the lowest stratum or the least examination-orientated stratum of the student population (mm) and um exceptionally they're quite brilliant but um in general they're not they're not particularly well-motivated.

The status of the institution then means that the course in question is unable to recruit the academic quality in students it would like, and is constrained in this way. Some explained how their courses had 'suffered' from this institutional handicap, but that the position had been recovered over the years. Another CHE Course Leader makes this point:
CL5: What did happen is that the course itself it took awhile but the course did establish a reputation which managed it which enabled us to recruit students with better profiles than you would expect in a College of Higher Education so the course established a reputation of its own which irrespective of the (mm mm) actual institution (pause) but I think we have suffered to some extent.

So with time the respective positions of the academic institution status and the reputation of the course can be reversed, but there is a cost involved. One CL described the fact that his institution was a poly as 'something that they [the students] accepted as the price they had to pay to get into the course'. Other CLs spoke in glowing terms of the popularity of their institutions. They were in the enviable position of being able to recruit whoever they wanted. This ability to actively practise what amounted to a quality standard was not however uniform across the institutions.

What do students find attractive about these courses?

According to CLs, one of the main reasons why students, particularly undergraduate, want to do these courses is language. There are however different emphases to what they have in mind. Many Course Leaders of undergraduate courses say prospective students have a relatively unformed response to this language orientation. It does not really go further than the expression of 'I'd like to use my language'. So wanting to do a course of this type it would seem is seen as an outlet for using languages. An interest in languages at school can be continued in study at the HE level. This attraction to language largely for itself has the potential to be, and is reported by CLs, as being a problem. In the previous subsection (8.2.3) the use made by these courses of language in a functional capacity to facilitate the European experience was pointed out. However, there is an ambivalence here in that students are undoubtedly attracted to these courses by the Language, and the course gives it a high proportion of hours of study, but it is its functional contribution in achieving 'cultural adaptability' (via the European experience) that actually matters. There is fairly universal agreement amongst Course Leaders that student perception needs nurturing along these lines.

The fact that students are attracted to these courses by the language provision should not however be allowed to outweigh the equally strong evidence that there are many prospective students who 'don't have a clear idea of what they would like to do'. Over half the CLs referred to reasons other than language, as to why students wanted to do the course. One thing that was clear in this was that in many cases it wasn't students who were attracted to the course at all, but others on their behalf. Parental pressure was mentioned in this respect, and advice from careers teachers and friends that 'something European was a good idea'. This CL portrays this phenomenon at work:
CL8: a lot of them are pushed by their parents (mm hm) their parents obviously see a
degree like this as being very good and useful and languages and business and a
double award and a lot of them I think are pushed by their parents ah this creates
difficulty because this is a tough course ... and some of them are struggle with this ah
and although they can vaguely see the benefits of a degree like this they're still too
young to grasp the importance of it so we do have a motivation problem I think
amongst our students ah which I think would be helped if they were older when they
came.

So there is no clear conception of personal goals on the part of the individual student.
The motivation problem pointed out here can also be exacerbated by the perception that
language is the most important aspect of study.

By contrast, it appears that with postgraduate courses the main reason students want to
do the course is related to their employment intentions. The language orientation is seen
as subsidiary overall to their career ideas. CLs report that students seem to be attracted
by such factors as what the course can offer, its duration and for some the funding
available (eg European Social Fund). The fact that many postgraduate students are
involved in a significant investment of their own money was also commented upon. The
course for some is seen as a 'stepping stone', a route to a new career, and some are
hoping it is a 'fast-track' in employment terms.

8.3.5 Profile of students

Not surprisingly, given the A-level stipulation, students recruited to undergraduate
courses are typically 18 year-olds entering Higher Education (HE) for the first time.
Most then are coming straight from school, though the very occasional 'mature' student
was mentioned by some CLs. The lack of suitability of those recruited was the subject
of much comment. Their youth, immaturity, lack of knowledge and motivation were
singled out. When queried about the marked female bias in the student composition of
their courses (see Figure 8.4), Course Leaders unanimously and firmly attributed this to
the large numbers of girls specialising in languages at A-level, and not to a trend of
more women aspiring to managerial careers.

The postgraduate group has both first-time graduates and post-experience 'mature'
students. Some CLs explained that a typical intake included amongst their numbers
some 'redundant people' and 'mid-career people'.
How did Course Leaders view their students' level of European interest? CLs, unprompted, made the distinction between students' attitudes on beginning their courses, and on graduation. Of the CLs of the undergraduate courses interviewed, one third reported a motivation problem on the part of students which they specifically linked to their lack of European awareness. All these courses were 'new'; only one or two years into their course life. As previously discussed, ascertaining students' European commitment on recruitment was done in a general manner, if at all. CLs reported ignorance on the part of a lot of their students, and voiced doubts about their ability to become culturally adaptable.

Several of these CLs openly admitted that their students had been redirected to them on the European Business Studies course, after first being turned down for the institution's main Business Studies degree. This had exacerbated the motivation problem as the students did not differentiate themselves as having any particular identity.

Other CLs depicted students who were enthusiastic and claimed a strong European identity for themselves. These courses were all long-established with a firm tradition of European social and academic activities. Reference was made to a distinct type of participant and strong student identity. A few CLs volunteered the information that students were openly critical of staff who voiced anti-European views.

The remainder of the CLs of undergraduate courses spoke of students' European-mindedness solely in terms of their language ability. This they felt was at least an indicator that students could sustain a European interest. Again the courses involved were 'new' ones.
The Course Leaders of the postgraduate courses in the sample all gave a very positive report of their students' European-mindedness. Mature students were spoken of as bringing with them a definite interest in Europe, what one CL referred to as 'a wider perspective'. Language graduates, who formed a large part of the participants on these courses, were described by another CL as 'already culturally adapted'.

Conclusion

Undergraduate courses want academically able students, and use A-levels as a primary indicator of such ability. Language is stipulated at C or above. Commitment to a usual course condition of a period abroad is 'looked for' too. But the data strongly demonstrates that ascertaining the European interest of prospective students is not normally carried out, other than in a general manner. So it is dubious if commitment is ever formally scrutinised. Exceptions to the expected academic requirements it seems are possible, if a student can demonstrate evidence of 'European' interest and motivation. Commonly, this is taken by courses in the study as meaning time spent abroad, particularly in the country the student proposes to study while on the course. Ideally, some CLs would prefer all their prospective students to have had 'a year out' before tackling the course. Such experience is seen as an ideal way of acquiring maturity.

By contrast, the person targeted by postgraduate courses is expected to be 'mature' and to have developed career intentions in line with the vocational purpose of the course. Evidence of motivation to pursue the course is actively sought in the course selection process. It is seen as of equal, if not more importance, to a proven level of academic ability.

However, the most important overriding factor for course recruitment is acquiring the set number of students to fit the linguistic groupings of the course structure. This is particularly the case for undergraduate courses, but is also evidenced on postgraduate courses. This language-drive means that institutions are in heavy competition with each other because of the limited pool of students with appropriate linguistic competence. With undergraduate provision, the reputation of the institution is shown to be a decisive factor in attracting a quality student intake. With postgraduate courses, it appears that the course itself and the qualification it leads to are perhaps more significant. It must be noted however, that some undergraduate courses, over time, have established a reputation for quality. The course status is able to stand independently of the reputation of its actual institution, and is recognised by prospective students accordingly.

Course Leaders' perceptions of the undergraduate course participant at the outset of the course vary. There does appear to be relative agreement that keenness for language, and endorsement of 'something European' exists amongst most participants. However, it is
clear that there are noticeable differences between the students' expectations of the course, and those of the course for them. CLs, as a group, do not readily identify the bulk of the student body as having any depth of European-mindedness, or actual suitability to become culturally adaptable. A number of CLs placed on record that motivation of students is an identifiable problem for their course, at least initially. This is not a difficulty with the postgraduate course participant. CLs here report clear interest and motivation, and some students 'already culturally adapted'.
CHAPTER 9

Curriculum practice

This chapter focuses attention on the actual curriculum practice of European Business/Management Studies courses. It is particularly concerned with how the course content and structure activates the aims and objectives already identified. In the previous chapter it was pointed out that the majority of courses are aiming to produce graduates with general operational ability for European application. Specifically, they will gain linguistic proficiency, and through their participation in European placement some experience of another cultural environment. The latter is the prioritised objective as it is seen as enabling the student to acquire 'cultural adaptability'. 'Getting people jobs' and gaining competitive advantage in the labour market were seen as important course outcomes.

9.1 Developing competence for the European context

Introduction

The present section explores the way in which courses develop students' competence so that they can 'operate effectively'. The shortage of managers with 'international' capability has been frequently commented upon by management development specialists (Barham and Oates, 1991; Rothwell, 1992) amongst others in recent years. There have also been many attempts to define the characteristics of European/International managers by researchers (Barham and Wills, 1992; Hogg, 1992; Boldy et al, 1993) being preeminent. There is marked discrepancy between the usefulness of, and the priority attributed in business, to 'soft' skills (eg adaptability) as opposed to 'hard' skills (eg strategic planning). This controversy is of particular relevance here because of the multicultural dimension of the courses' aims and objectives. Therefore the need to establish what thought has been given to development,
and which skills courses say they 'teach', or students 'learn', was an important issue. What balance between 'hard' and 'soft' skills is achieved? The other aspect of this was to find out whether development of competence was conceived of as being specifically European, and if so, in what way.

The interview data with a certain inevitability highlights the British academic versus practical debate about management education and training clearly present in Course Leaders' views. The approach to the development of skills across courses does not show any one clear pattern, rather a range of practice exists. Some Course Leaders are noticeably more enthusiastic and aware, of integrating and giving attention to skills development in their work programmes, than others. Practical experience for students through work placements is heavily prioritised by nearly all the courses. Linked to this there is strong evidence of a far from complete 'partnership' between industry and education which has further implications for student development.

9.1.1 Approach to management education and training

Most CLs readily proffered their views on what was needed in management training. Some individuals made it clear that these were their personal or particular views. Others identified the managerial training stance of the course at present, and what they would prefer it to be. Expressed views fell predictably enough into two camps: academic versus practical. More than half of the CLs spoke out firmly on behalf of the need for a practical approach, the remainder lobbied for a more academic base.

When we look at a strong advocate from each camp we find the following. First of all the practical protagonist:

CL3: We are still in the process of moving away from talking to students for an hour (mm) and into developing skills (right) and I very strongly feel that talking to students is a waste of time um it's a waste of time for us they realise it's a waste of time as well and they support it they you know they put up with it rather than benefiting greatly and I think that there is a very great need for the people of the typical age that we get 18 19 20 to have practical experience.

and the corresponding academic view:

CL8: I have a view that the British view of practical on the job training is very harmful for management in Britain ah I'm also very impressed by the way that the Continentals do it when we've talked to our partners (mm) and it seems to me quite crucial that in the training of management there's a need for a very sound academic base to managers (mm) ah that's not to say that practical things are not unimportant they are important but they need a sound analytical base they need certain academic and analytical skills.
So on the one hand we have a belief that appropriate skills are best developed through practical experience, and on the other that an academic base that develops analytical skills is necessary. The Course Leaders who argued for an academic approach were concerned that British managers 'don't take a wider view'. They compared their performance to the Germans, but also the French and Spanish, who they said had the ability to manage business, not just from a technical standpoint, but with an awareness of its wider environment. Management training needed 'a little more academic clout' if the British were to achieve this edge.

Those CLs who felt that students needed a strong practical orientation made frequent reference to their youth and inexperience. If students were to understand what business was about they needed to see how it was done. Talking about theories was not sufficient. They needed exercises and work in companies that allowed them to appreciate what the theoretical concepts meant. Sometimes the argument turned in on itself. The CL in the following excerpt typifies this tendency:

CL10: Relative to the ... course I think that one of the things that we will probably have to consider in trying to make it slightly more practical ... please don't interpret that as I'm saying weaken down the academic input I'm not I do believe that um if they're going on a work placement for six months then organisations will expect them to know how to work the fax will expect them to know how to answer the telephone properly (mmm) and I think there are some fairly basic-type competences skills call them what you will we'll have to give them.

Here the CL's concern is for preparing students so that they are able to cope with their work placement. But at the same time he illustrates the quandary a lot of CLs found themselves in about balancing the demands of theory and practice in their courses. Next, we need to look at how these approaches are carried through into the arrangement of the course content.

In the introduction to this chapter, attention was drawn to the fact that linguistic proficiency receives priority as an objective for most courses. Just under half of the survey respondents (49%) rated Language training as very important to the course content of European Business/Management Studies courses. Overall Language received the highest rating to the course content (approximately equal with Acquiring Specific Management Competences) of the five items presented (see Figure 9.1 overleaf). Given this its treatment seems a logical place to begin.

9.1.2 Language

In the previous chapter (Subsection 8.2.3) courses' specific objectives for Language were examined. The fact that Language has an ambivalent role is seen quite clearly in the data. It is essential, but it is of secondary importance to the European placement.
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Figure 9.1 Rating of importance of categories to course content
Source: European Business/Management Studies courses survey, February 1992

Over half the CLs said that the role of language in the course was a functional one. There was also a trend reported that the perceptions of many students did not correspond to this idea for Language. On the contrary, Language was seen by them as 'attractive', an end in itself. So for many courses, at least initially, a perceptual imbalance exists between the course objectives and the learner's expectations.

In other words language is not seen as a skill for communication but as knowledge in its own right. This problem is almost immediately compounded by the way in which the majority of the courses treat language study in their programmes. The actual number of hours spent on the study of language varies between courses. The duration of the programme, typically four years for an undergraduate degree and one year for a postgraduate diploma, is obviously an influencing factor. Most of the degree programmes devote around a quarter to a third of the total contact hours of a course year/level to language. This is especially so in the years preceding the European placement, when this is structured in the third year of the course. As one CL says 'as
high as you can go without compromising other subjects'. The difficulty is that these are business courses not language courses, but the language is essential. As most undergraduate CLs stressed, students have to become sufficiently proficient to cope with the European placement on the equal terms envisaged in the course objectives. This means their linguistic skill must allow them to study under the same conditions; attend lectures, sit exams, and do coursework. They must live as other European students, communicating in the language of their chosen country. Developing linguistic proficiency of this standard in a limited timescale is very demanding on students. The students need the high number of hours (4/6 per week), but this weighting does nothing to lessen the importance of language in students' eyes as an end in itself.

Nearly all the Course Leaders interviewed said that they had an integrated language and business arrangement for the programme. This was in strong agreement with the data from the survey, which showed Course Leaders reporting a high incidence of this arrangement. To recapitulate, respondents to the survey were asked which of three types of arrangement listed (see Appendix A3, Qu 3) their course had. In Figure 9.2 it can be seen that nearly three-quarters of those replying had an Integrated Language and Business arrangement. However, examining the mechanics of this 'integration' is revealing.

![Figure 9.2 Actual course arrangement (percentage of courses)](image)

Source: European Business/Management Studies courses survey, February 1992
Exactly how courses related language to business was specifically referred to by just over half the CLs. For all the postgraduate courses, except one, this was a key area of the course strategy. Referring to their 'value-added' intention the treatment of language followed on logically from this. The expectation is that their students because they are primarily linguists, are 'already culturally adaptable'. This releases them to concentrate on 'certain skills related to the business usage of language'. This postgraduate Course Leader clarifies their practice:

CL1: increasingly we don't teach language as language at the postgraduate level what we do is use the language in a business and economic context so we don't sit down and teach them translation or teach them any of the normal language activities we use the language in order to complete some of the business activities and tasks.

Only a small number of CLs of undergraduate courses spoke in detail about the relationship of language to business in the course. What they had to say however is significant viewed against the data in Figure 9.2. How the Language is positioned in the course, and at what point students realise it is 'a means to an end', can and does cause difficulties. The fact that students find the idea of studying language attractive has already been referred to, the study they are then involved with does not necessarily meet with their expectations. This CL (kicking a box of Student Feedback questionnaires under his desk) wryly explains:

CL3: this is one of the things the students have been complaining about this year ... that they are not being taught Language but the language is the vehicle for what they are learning (ah huh) so they are taught for instance Export Procedures in the language and they feel they should be taught to conjugate the verb for um 'exporting' or 'filling in a form' or 'manufacturing' or something like that.

Students do not appreciate the relevance of the business language. One CL remarked that they found it 'boring', but put equal blame on his traditionalist staff whom he said were highly resistant to teaching 'through the language'.

It is evident from the comments of most CLs that Language is being taught by specialists from the Language Department/School of the institution in which the course is sited. These staff are referred to quite unconsciously in terms which demonstrate they are regarded as separate to the rest of the course team. Two courses were exceptions to this in that they were run by linguists within Language Schools. Interestingly enough they did not refer to their Business School colleagues in a separatist fashion. The desirability of having native speakers involved in delivering the course, not just in languages but in the business area as well, was talked about by only a couple of CLs. The composition of course teams, and their implications for both the curriculum and institutional orientation, will be looked at in more detail in the next chapter.
In practice, the data shows that on most undergraduate courses in the sample the language is effectively positioned parallel to other formal course activities, and not integrated with them. The critical point at which it becomes truly integrated is when students go to live and study in their European placement country. This is looked at in the last section of this chapter (9.3).

9.1.3 Development of skills other than language

Some Course Leaders revealed through what they said, or openly admitted, that they had strong views on which skills should be prioritised and why this was necessary. However, no standard approach to skills development across the courses in the sample is evident.

Some CLs outlined their approach in terms of general skills development. There is an expectation that students will be proactive and course activities on the programme are structured around this. An undergraduate CL explains how they go about it:

CL2: give seminar papers um you know and express themselves actively in front of a wider group of students then in addition to that we also have a couple of specific skills courses too business workshop-type courses (mm hm) and the aim of those is to bring out the personal qualities particularly communication skills.

The demand placed on students here, in seminars and workshops, to actively engage in the learning process is interpreted as a vehicle for skills development. Similar demands were made in a number of ways according to the course's preferred strategy. Seminars were frequently quoted as a means of developing presentation and communication skills. The only reference to assessment of such activities was from one CL who emphasised that his course did not formally assess students' skills. He explained that they made it quite clear to students that the interpersonal and presentational skills they are reliant on here were important to their future career prospects. However, they are keen that students should not be penalised if they do not possess these skills naturally. They want to encourage them and give them time to develop their confidence.

Also interesting, in view of the gender composition on these courses, is the information offered by several CLs, about the contribution of female students to group work. One or two said female participants were 'less willing to verbally hold forth' and lacked confidence. The men were 'more forceful' and took leadership of the group. Another welcomed their 'slightly different perspective' as a balance to some of the competitive instincts of the men. What were they doing about it? One CL stressed that they had introduced assertiveness training for all participants to try and counterbalance this difficulty. However, one undergraduate CL said that it was quite difficult to do anything about; I continue in his own words:
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CL8: Sure I mean I must admit as a course team we haven't given a lot of thought to it which may well be because apart from the language teachers we're an all-male group ah that might be why we haven't given any real thought to it.

This information does not form a major pattern in the data (about a third of the CLs interviewed), but given the gender composition remarked on previously (Subsection 8.3.5), it should perhaps not be overlooked.

Some CLs had given particular attention to skills development in the work programme. The following interview excerpt exemplifies a particularly positive response:

CL1: we are going to have a whole subject area which will be something like Transferable Management Skills (right) so we're convinced it's probably the most important thing that we're doing ... it's the process what we think is that organisations are much more interested in people who've got a good process base (mm) rather than a good knowledge base um and that's exactly the sort of area that those MCI competences cover Managing People Managing Information all those kinds of things.

What this Course Leader also explained was that previously workshops had been structured as satellites around subjects, but now as the excerpt shows they intend to establish skills in a central position. The reference to the Management Charter Initiative (MCI) must also be noted. Most courses did not refer to the development of specific management competences. Some said the MCI had been an influence on course development in that they had read publications and discussed its Standards. Effectively it had been used in the words of one CL to 'contextualise' their own efforts. Other CLs were openly sceptical of it, and one or two well informed about its details were particularly critical in their comments. An influence on the course was not claimed in these cases. Two CLs, both of them linguists knew nothing about the MCI at all, and simply could not say what, if any effect, it had been on the course approach.

Business problem solving

Much more noticeable is the emphasis on the development of business problem solving skills. This was specifically related by half of the CLs to project work and consultancy done by the students in connection with local companies. With some of the postgraduate courses this work was seen of particular value, and efforts were made to integrate it into the course programme. Sometimes this was done through a particular unit, Marketing for instance was mentioned on several occasions. Some of the undergraduate courses were also included here and were committed to the idea of 'live' projects. Initial collaboration had turned out well and more was planned. The value of such projects in terms of students' practical experience was emphasised. It seems once their usefulness has been proven, companies are keen to utilise students and give them the opportunity of
operating in a real business situation. They want students to come back and do more of
the same. However, only two of the CLs pointed out that the projects were European in
orientation. Moreover, CLs admitted that coordination of these projects was time-
consuming, and could be frustrating. Companies often needed to be sold the idea, and
when they had openings it was sometimes after the ‘window’ in the course programme
had passed. This burden of coordination fell quite heavily on the Course Leaders
involved, and was often regarded as a two-edged sword. This postgraduate CL’s tone
was resentful, as she gave her comments:

CL1: financially there is no support whatsoever um we do get support if you can call
it that I think probably we support them by students doing free consultancy for them
so they do a consultancy project with no cost at all to the company um so the
companies support us in collaborating in these schemes but I’m sure they get a lot
more out of it than what they put in.

The view here from Education is that Industry are the free-riders. There is no denying
that there are a lot of conflicting tensions present, and CLs made this very clear in their
remarks. These centre on who is putting the most into the collaboration, and what they
are getting out of it.

Some CLs mentioned they were hoping these project links would lead onto work
placements. This was very marked in the case of one or two of the ‘new’ courses where
in the next few years they were going to have large numbers of students coming on
stream.

9.1.4 Work placements

In the survey CLs were asked to indicate their involvement with local industry. The
most common form of involvement reported was through work placements. It should
also be noted that this activity was one and a half times more common than the next
activity, which was course design and monitoring, and this was followed immediately
by projects (see Figure 9.3 below). In interview this was strongly confirmed with two-
thirds of the CLs saying that their main involvement with local companies was through
work placements. What however is of interest is the substance of this contact. A lot of
emphasis is focused on the actual obtaining of the placements. Course Leaders talked
about the difficulties of acquiring placements and the tensions of their relationship with
industry, rather than the actual process of students’ learning which received little
comment. They did not talk about dissertations or projects related to the work
placement, that are outlined in Definitive/Validation Course Documents (see Appendix
E2) as the formal assessment of this experience. Even where students were supposed to
find the placement themselves, as one postgraduate CL said ‘we can’t in the end wash
our hands of the problem and say now it’s just over to you’. Most agreed that the impact
of the recession on companies had not helped them. These excerpts are typical of how CLs spoke about it:

CL8: but it's hard work and I think the recession has made it harder work. Most companies are so pushed with trying to deal with the recession some of them are laying off staff.

CL11: Placements have been a struggle this year (mm) um whenever students have a choice between two countries we've often encouraged them not to stay in the UK if they can help it.

However, some CLs said it would still be a difficulty even if the recession had not occurred. Several factors were referred to as why this was the case.

This postgraduate CL speaks from her experience:

CL15: We've always managed (mm) um I'd be loathe to say without too much trouble I mean when you've been running the course for a fair amount of time (mm) you've got some contacts that you wish to use again and who wish to take students again ... but we always have managed to find placements for students um ranging in things from banks to export companies Trade Fair organisations um Chambers of Commerce ... but it's tended to be outgoing to them um rather than them coming to us.
Other CLs were in agreement that they initiated the contacts with industry. They devoted a lot of resources to finding placements but it was hard work getting companies interested. Effectively they had to convince companies why they should give students work. Several interrelated factors were acting against them in this respect. The large numbers of students involved in some cases, and the period of time for which the course was seeking to place them, CLs explained already made placements a problem. Firstly, on some of the undergraduate courses numbers were plainly a source of anxiety to CLs. One postgraduate CL said it was a 'struggle' to place 18 students, and yet some of the undergraduate courses had over *three times* that number. One undergraduate CL summed this up graphically in these words: 'eventually we'll be looking to place 150 students a year'. Secondly, the time required for placement is dictated by the nature of the course. Half of the courses in the sample were looking for work placements of one term or semester (3 months), the rest 6 months. From the point of view of the companies involved, particularly 3 months as a training period is seen as too short, as one CL described 'to get something out of them'. There is little evidence of a two-way commitment here. Basically from what CLs say the emphasis is very much on making a case for what the student could offer the company, and not the reverse. Those CLs with well-established courses, like CL 15 above, did mention some continuing take-up over time.

Several CLs pointed out the fact that because of the way their programmes are structured the students being placed in local companies are 'foreign students'. Even so the offer of European know-how is still not snapped up. As this CL explains:

CL8: So we've been trying to push to them the value they could have because these are foreign students they can use them to particularly if they're wanting to penetrate the company's market the countries they come from and do some research in the language (mm) something like that.

Yet another CL said from her perspective the difficulty was that there were not many international firms in the area. If the course could have links with what she described as 'genuine European companies' it would be a different matter. In that case she felt it would be worth the time and effort of liaising with them.

The lack of enthusiasm on the part of companies to become involved in course placements can perhaps be partially explained by what CLs say about their long-term relationship with industry. It is essentially a pragmatic one. As previously referred to Education fairly conclusively see themselves as the initiators in liaising with Industry. The majority of Course Leaders reported this to be the case:
CL11: I think to be honest we do the initiating (mm) um we have representatives from local industries on the Business School Board and so on (mm) and as part of the creation of the course design in the first place we had to do market research (yes) and so we had um solicited support from companies in terms of advice which has been put into practice with placements and things like that.

Such comments depicting a rather intermittent commitment were typical. Two-thirds of CLs said they had involvement from industry, over and above work placements, in their courses. What they were mainly referring to was support in an advisory capacity. The timing of this involvement is critical; CLs mentioned course re/validation as the time when industry was involved. This was immediately noticeable in the quotation above from CL11. It is also clearly exemplified in the following interview excerpt, where the Course Leader draws attention to the limited nature of this involvement:

CL5: The only time when we're actively involved with local companies is through placements where we do place a lot of students ... and also the time of resubmitting courses we actually look for support but it's only in the form of looking at and judging what we're intending to do and giving passing their opinion on it ah the involvement doesn't go beyond that.

A really strong theoretical input from the industry side into what subjects students are studying and the managerial approach to them is noticeably missing. Reference to actual delivery of course content by practising business and industrial personnel was patchy.

The relationship with industry was not seen as a 'partnership'. Basically education wants placements and financial support, but industry does not want to pay out and does not initiate involvement. One of the more obvious barriers was money. As this CL pinpoints there may be a perceptual difficulty:

CL5: I think unfortunately in this country industry tends to be a bit suspicious of approaches from educational institutes they tend to think they're after their money which may be true.

This projection may well be warranted; about half the CLs talked about industry in just such monetary terms. This CL is typical of this:

CL15: it's not financed in any way (mm) but we do cooperate with um local companies [on projects] ... what we really need from them is money (laugh) but um even four years ago when there weren't the economic problems there are now (mm mm) there were no take-ups.

There seems to be an assumption on the part of most Course Leaders that companies should offer some financial support to the course. They are actively looking for this in
some form or other - prizes, sponsorship and so on - very few have it. So with Industry
suspicious of Education being 'after their money' in the manner referred to here, quite
strong perceptual barriers exist on both sides preventing a joint investment in students'
managerial future.

Conclusion

A division over which orientation to training should be adopted is strongly present.
Course Leaders clearly indicate that their views carry through and influence the course
towards a more practical or more academic approach.

Skills development does not appear to be conceived of in any particularly 'European'
way. Language is certainly given priority on undergraduate courses in terms of contact
hours, however the emphasis is on getting students 'operational' for their European
study/work placement. Furthermore, before experience abroad at least, the data shows
that language is not perceived by students as having a wider cultural and communicative
function. Furthermore, though an integrated business-language study is claimed by the
majority of courses, this integration is not supported in the data. Essentially Language
study is a more or less separate entity usually run by the Language School. Some of the
postgraduate courses do however demonstrate a business language focus to course
delivery, supported by students working in continuous multilingual groupings.

On the whole, Course Leaders, with some noticeable exceptions, were rather vague in
detailing how their programmes incorporated skills development, other than
communication and interpersonal skills in seminars and workshops. On the other hand,
attempts to develop business problem solving ability through projects and consultancy
were more definitely noticeable. There were some hopeful signs of developing industrial
interest and support for such work, but this was detracted from by the fact that a
European orientation was scarcely in evidence.

More to the point perhaps, opportunities for student development have to be offset
against the increased workload for CLs. They, as a group, are clearly weighing up the
time-consuming, and sometimes frustrating nature of this work against its potential
benefits.

CLs it seems are diverted too from considering the effectiveness of the work placement
as a learning opportunity, because they are too preoccupied with organising them.
Industry's involvement is somewhat reluctant, and their collective attitude appears to be
short-termism. 'Getting something out of' students seems, at least on the face of it, to be
put before a long-term investment in the 'value added' through the workplace
experience. So cumulatively the British management training divide in all its aspects is
continuing to deflect emphasis from actual student development.
9.2 The European context

Introduction

This section further examines curriculum practice in relation to the expressed aims of operational capability in a European context. It has been established in the previous chapter (8.2) that these courses aim to prepare their graduates for careers with a European dimension. Given this it was considered important to find out how the courses interpreted this context, and more significantly how it is conveyed to students. What mechanism, if any, do courses have for ensuring that the subjects and study experience overall is representative of the European business environment? Is knowledge alone prioritised, or do courses also try to encourage awareness and understanding (Tijmstra and Casler, 1992)? To what extent also can it be said that students are made aware of the socio-cultural complexity of the international business context, and its implications for working in a multinational work environment (Tayeb, 1992)?

9.2.1 The extent of the European context

The European context focused on by these programmes is Western Europe, or more specifically the EC. Though half of the CLs mentioned an interest in Central and Eastern Europe, this was in relation to the setting up of institutional links and staff visits (to be discussed in Chapter 10), and not at curriculum level. The EC focus was explained variously in terms of the need for reciprocity with partner exchanges; by the fact that courses were in receipt of EC funding (ie ERASMUS and ESF see Subsection 10.1.2); and the need for students to understand the EC as the emerging European business environment. This postgraduate Course Leader explains:

CL15: We're tied to European um partly because most of the students have had experience in other European countries partly because all the students have to be European nationals in order to get the grant and um partly because in most cases the students do their work placement in another part of the European Community.

Some ventured a more detailed explanation as to why the focus was so exclusive, and again this was directly related to course links. They referred to the lack of political and economic stability in Eastern Europe as being the main reason why their courses had not pursued an interest there. For example, one typical comment was that it was 'not the sort of market at this time' for this particular course. So the EC base to the curriculum is arising primarily out of the way in which the courses are linked with other EC Higher Education institutions. Eastern and Central Europe are consequently excluded.
9.2.2 Substance of the European orientation in the curriculum

The courses in the study demonstrate different strengths in their European orientation, and how they structure and interpret their business and management content is one indicator of this. The data shows several main interpretations, and these will now be discussed.

About two-thirds of the courses adopt an identifiably European framework for the course units. This occurs in two forms, either a conscious attempt to make European business central to the course structure throughout, or alternatively to gradually increase the European focus as the course progresses. The remainder of the courses do not have an explicit 'European' business focus, and rely mainly on the study of Language and the inclusion of a European study/work placement to establish their European credentials.

The first of these forms is to be seen in some courses which see the focus on the European business environment as central to the programme. Subjects are specifically European, and Course Leaders say a holistic approach to the European business environment is encouraged right from the outset. An example of this is as follows:

CL8: we think the course is very specific again er if you look at a course outline of ours (mm) we have things like Introduction to European Economics we have European Accounting ah we have Marketing in Europe it's not it's geared towards ah an understanding of business techniques in Europe.

Other courses have a subject called European Business Environment which is seen particularly as a way of giving students an idea of the economic environment. These units vary in how comprehensive they are, but usually they deal with some details of EC institutions as well. The use of such units was particularly noticeable on postgraduate courses. Here a Course Leader of one such course explains:

CL1: Well the students have 2 hours a week doing a subject called European Business Environment and it's aimed at giving them an idea about the economic environment the way in which organisations operate ... then it fans out to look at the EEC and looks at acts the Social Charter and legislation the different directorates and what the different bodies in the EEC do and what they can do what their power is so they do that for 2 hours a week.

Reference to the course validation document and course publicity brochure shows that this is a core subject. Eastern Europe is not included in this study, but it is available as an assignment option, and student groups are increasingly choosing to look at this area. According to this particular CL, the reason for this can be found in the fact that students are 'interested in political events'. Also more specifically because many are Germanists who are aware that Germany now includes the former East Germany.
Other CLs too talked of such a module. One Course Leader, also from a postgraduate course, explained that their European Business Environment covered particularly the economic areas, and made the point that the specific content changed from year to year depending on what was happening in the EC at the time. However, it is the approach the course encourages in students which is of especial interest:

CL15: we do state that what will be of most use to them will be reading the papers (mm) um and keeping aware and keeping abreast of what is going on in both Europe and outside Europe um in particularly economic terms um but politically as well ... what we're trying to say is that really you know the fact of what is happening in Japan actually influences what you're doing and what will happen in your business (mm) and so you can't compartmentalise things um to such a degree.

So here students are being encouraged to develop the ability to access relevant information and take up a wider international outlook on business. However, the implications of the time available for this study within the total programme were still a concern:

CL15: now that's ambitious that's very ambitious (slight laugh) when you've got a year and basically two terms.

Therefore, she made the point that they try to raise awareness of students, rather than simply convey content. In the time they have (just one year) they won't necessarily access all information and gain a knowledge of everything. The fact they are dealing with current events was emphasised, hence the need for research skill.

Still other courses have yet another approach. All the courses in this category were 4 year undergraduate degrees. Here there is a gradual introduction of a European focus as the course progresses. After the period abroad on study/placement is seen as the appropriate time to make the subjects specifically European. As one Course Leader of a well-established course explained, the reason for this is before that students are new to the subjects (eg Accounting). And so, on his course, the first 18 months were regarded as 'very much to be a foundation'. In this way consideration is given to the youth and inexperience of the participants (see Subsection 8.3.5), particularly their lack of business knowledge.

Such an approach is reinforced by the attitude of:

CL5: I think it would be difficult to argue there is much of a European flavour in teaching basic Accounting methods in teaching basic Business Law.

How in this group do they approach the European business environment? Through placement, and study in the final part of the degree:
European Management Education

Curriculum practice

CL5: where each of the subjects that they study is done from a European point of view so in fact the specialisms are for example European Marketing em European or let me get this right yeah European Accounting and Finance and they are specifically called that and the syllabuses reflect that.

However, it must be said that even though the Validation Document in the above case would support such a view, it was not discussed to any great extent in the interview. Given this was one of the first interviews, the thinness of the data is probably a function of the instrument, rather than necessarily a reflection of course practice.

A final grouping can be seen where courses do not really give specific attention to European business at all. There is perhaps some token study (eg EC institutions), but otherwise the course does not exist as a separate entity. Therefore the only possible route open to gain experience of the European business environment is in the time spent abroad. Some attempt is made to ensure European material is covered, for instance as one CL put it 'options decided for them if they're going abroad'.

Referring to the Validation Documents sub-sample (see Table 9.1 overleaf and following), it can be seen that all three forms of structure identified in the interviews are represented. Half the courses have made European business central to the course structure (see Courses 1, 3, 8 and 11); of the remaining half some have adopted a gradual European focus (see Courses 2, 5 and 10), while one course has a 'dependency' structure with language and placement the only identifiably European elements.

Some CLs referred to the modularisation of their courses in this context. They thought some synergies might possibly result, and a more flexible provision overall. At the same time there was concern that the course structure should be preserved.

9.2.3 European-International

Course Leaders (CLs) discussed how they saw the relationship between European and International Business in the curriculum. Most pointed out that subjects adopted a European regional outlook, rather than a national one. Some CLs were particularly conscious of this factor. They referred to the shifts in relations between countries and within markets, and said that their staff tried to reflect this in their teaching. This was especially the case they said in subjects such as Marketing, Corporate Strategy, and International Trade. There was, without any doubt, a definite awareness of the emergence of Europe as an internal market. However, some CLs were more precise about the way in which this had affected the delivery of subjects, than others. The reason for this may well lie more in familiarity with their own subject orientation than what actually happens on the course.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Course 1</th>
<th>Course 2</th>
<th>Course 3</th>
<th>Course 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Terms 1 and 2  
Core:  
European Business Environment  
Admin. of the organisation  
Administrative systems  
+ 3 options  
Term 3  
Project:  
6 hours/week | I  
Foundations of Business  
(broad range of disciplines)  
Foreign language  
(integrated compulsory part of the course study: max 6 hours/week) | Prescribed subjects  
European Business Studies One  
(Firm foundation in business knowledge and skills, includes study of the European Environment)  
Language One  
(All areas taught through the medium of the foreign language) | Part I  
Semesters 1-3  
Business disciplines  
(Concepts and techniques fundamental to business in general)  
Language I  
Study 4/6 hours/week average |
| 2    | x | II  
9 subject streams  
including Business Core Stream  
(in some cases more explicitly functional slant)  
Foreign Language Stream (study continues at a less intensive level) | European Business Studies Two  
(Functional aspects of business and less emphasis on the business environment)  
Language Two | Part II  
Semesters 4, 5  
Partner institution |
### Table 9.1 Course structure and content

Source: Validation Document sub-sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Course 1</th>
<th>Course 2</th>
<th>Course 3</th>
<th>Course 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>II continued</td>
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<td>Part III</td>
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<td>Semesters 6-8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Core:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1 specialism out of 3 options)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>European Corporate Strategy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>European Business Environment</td>
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<td>European Integration</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Abroad at partner institutions</td>
<td>Language II (study 3 hours/week average)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>+ 1 elective/semester</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>European Project Dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>III</td>
<td></td>
<td>III continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Compulsory courses in the functional areas of Finance &amp; Accounting, Marketing and Human Resource Management</td>
<td></td>
<td>European Community Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(wider European business perspective, more comparative approach to business matters)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Business policy</td>
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<td>Language Four</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(interpreting, negotiation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Course 8</td>
<td>Course 10</td>
<td>Course 11</td>
<td>Course 12</td>
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</table>
| 1    | Core: 5 units eg Introduction to European Politics  
Language: 6 hours/week | Grounding in the main Business Studies subjects, including the functional areas of management  
Language | Introductory course (5 weeks)  
Semester 1  
European Business Environment (2 hours/week)  
Languages (2 hours/week + 1 hour optional)  
European Industry Study (4 hours/week)  
Semester 2  
EC Policies and Institutions (2 hours/week)  
Languages (2 hours/week + 1 hour optional)  
International Industry Study (4 hours/week)  
Semester 3  
Business Placement | Language (special course)  
Business Administration (parent courses: BA Accounting 2; BA Business Studies 2)  
Economics (parent course: BA Business Studies 2)  
International Business Environment (parent course: BA Accounting 4)  
International Law and Tax (special course)  
One option (all choices drawn from existing degree course units from: Accounting Marketing Business Operations Business Decision Making)  
+ Placement (12 weeks) |
| 2    | Core: 3 units eg Marketing in Europe  
Language: 6 hours/week  
2 options (broad) | Business Studies (develop knowledge and competencies)  
European Dimension - introduce | x | x |

Source: Validation Document sub-sample
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Course 8</th>
<th>Course 10</th>
<th>Course 11</th>
<th>Course 12</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In France or Germany</td>
<td>Abroad: study/work</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Core:</td>
<td>European Business knowledge and competencies acquired in earlier years - build on</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 unit: Policy Making in the European Communities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3 options (more detailed) eg Management Techniques</td>
<td></td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Language</td>
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<td>4 hours/week</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Project</td>
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<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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Source: Validation Document sub-sample
Nevertheless, enough was said to demonstrate that consideration was being given to what should now be regarded as the domestic market. CLs offered examples of how this revision of outlook was occurring in course practice. For instance, through teaching a subject where the lecturer:

CL5: automatically assumes that you see corporate strategy as a firm operating within the European context rather than the national context.

or, students doing a consultancy project for a local British firm on 'What's the market for TQM in Spain?'. But as the CL in this instance explained, the European regional outlook also depends from where you are looking:

CL1: It works both ways as well because we've one company where it was a Spanish company getting research done on the British market for olives which is why I have several jars of olives in my office.

There was fairly solid agreement among CLs that where the focus of study extended into International, or became International, was not something that was readily distinguished. There was overlap, as CLs show only too readily in their remarks. Typically these followed a common pattern of 'it can be European and International', juxtaposed by the equally common 'not just International but also European'. Nor were the titles of the subjects on these courses necessarily a resolution of this terminological juggling. According to Course Leaders, International can contain a preponderance of European material, and European may be essentially International in orientation.

Several CLs drew specific attention to the attitude of their Marketing staff in this regard. Their point of view was that this subject by its very nature was International, and they did not want to see it limited to the European region. A small number of CLs indicated the influence of external examiners as arbiters in this debate:

CL1: occasionally when lecturers have used International as opposed to European materials external examiners have said this should be more European.

So International Business trends are for the most part only loosely integrated into these courses. The main focus is on Europe, or more correctly the EC. The amount of attention given to wider relationships is virtually in the hands of individual subject lecturers. Only one CL spoke about a unit in International Business that was 'compulsory and key' to his particular course.
Conclusion

The interpretation of the European context is restricted primarily to economic and political aspects, and is specifically EC (EU). Course links appear to be a major determining factor here, and neither a potentially enlarged EU, nor the newly emergent Eastern European concerns are represented in the formal curriculum.

Several main forms of European treatment were identified in the sample. Overall, the chosen approach to teaching business areas appears to be mainly functional. However, there are some noticeable efforts to generate a holistic framework, and create units with European business credentials. How far such units are 'labelled', and how far they are actually representative of European business practice must remain open here, because of limitations in the data collection. However, it can be noted that at the other end of the spectrum such practice was balanced by other courses which had virtually nil European strength. To all intents and purposes they seemed to be an extension to other courses, but with the difference of a European title.

Course Leaders referred to several reasons that should be reviewed in conjunction with their attempts to construct a European frame for the business curriculum. These were the constraint of the youth of students on the initial stages of undergraduate courses; the tight timing imposed by one year postgraduate courses ('difficult to cover it all'); and finally, pressures from external examiners and individual lecturers.

There would appear to be strong grounds for saying that some courses are more alert to thinking of students' development in terms of awareness (and not simply 'factual' knowledge) than others. Nevertheless, most Course Leaders were keen to confirm that their courses were conscious of the development of the SEM (internal market) and that this was reflected in subject teaching. Details as to how were not always forthcoming, though it is beyond the data as it stands to determine exactly why this should have been the case.

However, where the focus of study was regarded as 'International' was not at all clear. Overlap was expressed, and the names of subjects it seems were not necessarily indicative of their real orientation - International may mean European, and vice versa. Overall, it would appear that interpretation of international trends is almost entirely random according to personal predilection. So, consideration of a wider interpretation of the international business context (Tayeb, 1992) is by no means ensured.
9.3 Students' European experience

Introduction

The emphasis on European experience (study/work placement) in these courses, and its particular role as an entry to cultural diversity has already been highlighted earlier in the previous chapter (Subsection 8.2.3). It was established that Course Leaders (CLs) place a value on respect for cultural diversity, and some see the study experience leading on to insight in the business context. Therefore given the importance attached to this experience in course objectives, it was deemed essential to examine what happens in practice closely. Study abroad programmes have received in-depth research scrutiny. Most notably, Opper et al (1990) assessed the complexity of the impact on students' development and careers, and overall demonstrated that positive benefits emerged. More recently, the featuring of a European exchange, via a number of different arrangements, has been widely used as a means of 'Europeanising' the student body (Easterby-Smith, 1992).

In the present analysis, my attention was directed first of all to identifying CLs' expectations of students while abroad, and how they are prepared for this period. Moreover, I wanted to make some evaluation of the nature, and related quality of the students' learning experience while abroad. This was specifically focused on the realisation of the cultural objective. So what opportunities are offered to students so that they can sample this diversity, and acquire this cultural learning?

9.3.1 Course expectations and preparations for the European experience

Not surprisingly given the emphasis on language already discussed, the main concentration of effort for the time abroad is a linguistic one. The attitude voiced by most CLs is one of 'they have to have the language'. Students need to be strong in language to be sent 'with confidence' abroad. The timing of the period abroad was particularly referred to by the CL of one postgraduate course. Here, students went to Spain and other partner countries in the final term of a one year programme, when 'people are properly prepared for it'. This was compared favourably with other courses who sent people abroad 'in the first term' before they had any foundation. On some of the undergraduate courses there is an early transfer abroad, so students are very dependent on their 'willingness to use the language' (see previous discussion Subsection 8.3.2). The critical nature of the linguistic preparation was emphasised by the CL of one undergraduate course. He reported that some students on the course were fearful of 'whether they can actually cope' linguistically. He likened the atmosphere amongst the group about to go abroad to pre-exam nerves. In this case he pointed out the difficulty
was exacerbated by the fact that 'our German partner can't take them in Semester A'. This meant that the students would be doing their work placement first, which was not the way round the course had intended.

Other preparation is decidedly informal and follows no set pattern. It is related mainly, though not exclusively, to the study environment, and 'domestic' matters. Two-thirds of the CLs spoke about one or other of the following: talking to students about the time abroad; offering them practical information and advice about living in another country, usually on accommodation and finance; and telling them about teaching conditions at the host educational institution.

Here are a couple of typical remarks:

CL5: We'll point out but on a very informal basis things that they can expect to find in that particular country but we certainly I don't think er that we could claim to prepare them for working in Spain for example except that we're preparing them linguistically.

CL8: we'll also talk about ah for example the number of hours that you have to do in lectures and they all fall off their chairs when they find it's 25 to 30 ... so they're aware that they're going into a very different environment.

Some CLs explained that they made a point of emphasising the conditions of the course to their students. The rules and regulations of the host institution were what they would have to comply with, and examinations would be the same 'as the native students'.

Other CLs spoke about the difficulties experienced in achieving these intended course arrangements. For instance, one CL felt the fact that the course couldn't stipulate a reasonable level of work placement job in the other EC countries was a problem. He spoke of advising students that if in the last resort they had to get a job as a waiter, to do so, because they would be able 'to find out about the culture' and the quality of life in that country. But he emphasised that he did not see this as helpful to them writing a successful project in Year 4.

However, preparation for the extent of cultural difference they are likely to experience appears ad hoc at most. It is mainly highlighted by its exception. For instance, one CL who had recently taken over the management of a large programme was very aware of what he saw as the deficiencies in the preparation of students at present. Apart from the address of the host institution, students had virtually no information at all. At the time of interview he was publishing a booklet within the next week to compensate for this. But he felt very strongly that the fact that 'there is very little planned into the course' on 'cultures of different countries' needed to be put right. In his view, students should 'be considering and planning and working for' this period.
A few other CLs too were new to the whole task and were obviously feeling their way on what advice to offer, and other ways the course should help students in getting ready for this experience. The main concern was that students might 'stick together' and not form friendships with students of the other nationality. Doubts were voiced as to whether all students had the personal qualities that would help them cope with the change. As one CL expressed it 'they needed some kind of independence' (see Subsection 8.3.5).

The presence of other students from different countries, and accommodation possibilities were also referred to in this context. One CL explained that there was not sufficient space for students to live on-site at the French host institution. The fact that students would have to be 'dispersed into private accommodation' was regarded favourably, as an opportunity for them to form 'deep relationships' with the other nationality.

A number of CLs had a consciousness in this respect shaped by their past course experience. One CL referred to the stress of being 'a long way away from home'. Several others talked about students being 'out of their depth' and unable to cope. Some used the analogy of 'sink or swim' to refer to the process. Students said they found it painful initially, but most survived.

9.3.2 The experience in cultural diversity 'in Europe'

In discussing the actual period in Europe what the majority of the Course Leaders concentrated on was the study experience of students in a different educational system. Work experience in mainland Europe was not commented on to anywhere near the same extent. Nor was it thought of in the same way. CLs spoke in very general terms about students 'getting a feel' for, or bringing them 'face-to-face' with, the reality of actually working/business abroad. However, apart from one or two CLs, they did not go into specific detail about how this was achieved. Before examining this data in detail, what must be commented upon is the degree of emotional involvement noticeable in the CLs' responses. This is a matter about which they have decided opinions, openly admit likes and dislikes, and sometimes they express themselves in quite emotive terms. Extreme and openly-made judgmental remarks aside, there is implied criticism of other countries' pedagogic methods in virtually all that was said. Their comparative benchmark was how things were done in the UK system. It was against this standard that CLs placed their remarks, sometimes by direct comparison, on other occasions through negative reporting.

CLs' remarks typically ranged across several aspects of difference in teaching methods and learning conditions. They tended to exemplify difference mainly by reference to one
or other of the partner institutions with whom their course was involved, as opposed to what occurred in their own institution. In switching between these perspectives, they also drew on anecdotal evidence of the reactions of both home and host students when encountering differences in their learning environment. These comments and stories had been made or told by students directly to them, or were based on the assessments of others who had observed the students' behaviour. What emerges in the data is quite complex, in that these reports from various sources are freely mixed by the CLs with what can be construed as their own views. This inherent bias must be noted against the overall tone and substance of the findings which appear to depict the study environment in France, Germany and Spain in primarily ethnocentric terms.

Again, there are exceptions to this pattern with some Course Leaders (a minority) voicing commitment to the need for a more Eurocentric view and practice. This was related to the development of staff teaching visits and exchanges (see discussion in the next chapter, Subsection 10.2.4).

A different learning environment

The countries in mainland Europe that Course Leaders discussed were France, Germany, Holland and Spain. Two CLs mentioned Italy in the context of setting up partnerships, but in neither case were these exchanges yet operational. Considering them as a group, these CLs had access to knowledge of 50 institutions in those countries. Some had acquired information themselves on visits to partners, and others from talking to Course Managers on sites. Most of the Course Leaders spoke about either the teaching arrangements or resources available, some both. The main issues they drew attention to were the large number of contact hours, the formal lectures to very large numbers of students (by UK standards), and the absence of small-group teaching. To a lesser extent they commented on the small libraries and lack of books, and what they saw as inadequate computing facilities.

What concerned CLs was the 'very very mass' nature of these situations. Their comments vie with each other for the most expressive way of representing the hundreds of students in lectures. One CL delivered a swingeing attack on the pedagogic methods of each of his course's partner institutions in turn. In a tone verging on the incomprehension of such a situation, he concludes:

CL3: in Spain the students Mathematics lectures to 700 students and the students queue up for an hour and fight to get a seat to get in. How can you teach like that?
It was a rhetorical question, but it is representative of the logical endpoint to which many of the CLs directed their remarks.

**Adjustment: the curricular process**

Most CLs were fairly agreed that this was a 'tough' learning environment for students to go into. The courses at the host institutions differ in virtually every respect from what students have been used to at home. This structural effect can then be exacerbated by other factors on their part, such as an immature outlook. Those CLs running established courses reported that not all students cope with the changes, at least initially. They offered examples of difficulties that arise, and explained why they, or others, thought they occurred. It was at this stage that CLs focused more on details concerning student's performance. They did not all talk about the same aspects, but cumulatively what they did discuss, for example being caught cheating in, or failing exams, can be categorised under this heading. Two perspectives of experience emerge here, one which can be termed negative, the other positive.

Beginning with the negative perspective, we find that the difference in learning environment exposes the UK students in a number of ways. Adjustment is not an automatic process, as Course Leaders in their accounts showed quite graphically. The mass situation requires a different learning style, and students react to their loss of individuality in various ways. CLs identified a number of coping strategies used by students and their effects. Some turn up for lectures, but do no other work yet perhaps do not realise that they are not doing the work. Others favour the active learning style of their home (UK) institution; as one CL said British students sometimes acquire a reputation for 'over-questioning and over-wanting to know'. They find this is not always well-received by staff at the host institutions, they then feel 'disadvantaged' and sometimes tensions result. Still others try to copy what seems to them the host 'norm' of behaviour, for instance they try to cheat in exams. The data is a compilation of what Course Leaders interpreted as student misfortune as they try to adjust to the different teaching style in the partner institutions. For instance, failure in exams (Germany); being caught cheating (France); having the 'wrong' skills (Spain); dropping out of the course (France); suffering from Anglophobia (France). Anecdote after anecdote was quoted in support of this point of view. This is exemplified by the following CL:

CL9: the British students say you know sorry but you've trained us incorrectly ... by the fact that we have learnt to read widely read around the subject to challenge the question to argue with the question that's not helped us in the Spanish context.
At the same time, CLs offered their observations on the behaviour of the host European students tackling the UK system. The maturity of the German students especially received almost uniform approval, as did their serious attitude to study.

Several CLs quoted students from the European partner countries as liking 'the independence in terms of their learning' in the UK. They preferred the 'open door' approach, being able to see a tutor and ask advice, though they reacted adversely to being asked to resit a piece of work. This CL describes students on his postgraduate course:

CL11: the style of teaching here with fairly open-ended assignments and this type of thing um for some of the French and German students it does create a different type of environment to work in they're not familiar with and and they occasionally puzzle them anger them irritate them make them anxious until they come to terms with it and seeing how you know it can be handled and it can come out the other way.

In spite of their catalogue of difficulties, Course Leaders do report a positive perspective to the British student's experience as well. As one CL puts it, students 'can go abroad and can cope'. Another, with a slight qualification, goes much further and claims that it is 'a wonderful experience for most of them, not all, but for most of them', however what was more noticeable were the comments that demonstrated that the existence of another perspective is to be found not just in the formal study setting.

The extracurricular process

One of the factors that several CLs referred to in this process of adjustment to a different environment, was 'the tremendous support students have for each other'. This not only enables them to adapt to the different learning situation, but extends further into the creation of a peer network. Sharing accommodation, socialising, intersite course student union activities, a European Club were examples given of the ways in which this is progressed on an extra-curricular basis. A few of the Course Leaders mentioned that students shared accommodation together in the UK. As one CL commented they 'do build up a very good social network of their own', but do not meet very many British students, other than those on their own course. In some instances CLs said that this 'social' process begins during the period abroad, but continues on when students return to their home countries.

However, even student-based activities are not immune from 'difference' difficulties. Friction with course management because of unfamiliar student activity arising out of another cultural base can be a problem. One CL of a long-established course explained the reaction of German and Spanish course management to finding themselves having to accept the Student Bureau of their French partner, and the British Students' Society. The
Germans were 'quite horrified' and the Spanish 'were not used to dealing' with the students on this basis.

9.3.3 Outcomes

Did students fulfil the courses' objective of cultural adaptability? As has already been pointed out, at the time of interviewing not all courses had reached the stage where a cohort of students had been through a period of study abroad. This places a limitation on the data in respect of outcomes, as some CLs (about one third) simply were not yet in a position to comment. Their hopes for students' development in general were spoken of, but they had no definite information about specific students. Those CLs from established courses were in entirely the opposite position, and here their comments reverted to a UK focus. Though they varied in the emphasis of their comments, the outcome they reported in common was that students 'came back different people'.

What Course Leaders said clearly associates the gaining of 'cultural adaptability' by students with this European experience. This was how they depicted it. The linguistic progress made by students was singled out for particular comment. CLs described this as 'remarkable', 'does wonders for' and other such phrases. Some referred to their students not just in these terms suggesting high proficiency, but actually as becoming bilingual. One exception to this paean of praise was from a linguist. He was much more measured in his response, saying just that the students were able to 'communicate more'. He reserved judgement on their ability in the written language saying it was not totally accurate. However, technicalities of proficiency aside, it is what students want to do with the language that is perhaps of more interest. Especially so, since language was perceived as a 'means to an end' in course aims and objectives. This CL, and others, drew attention to the fact that students are more serious about wanting to develop their language after the time studying it in the host country. This keenness for language it seems is not an isolated phenomenon. What Course Leaders explained in more general terms were a number of attitudinal and other changes, that contributed to an altered outlook.

**Becoming**

There was easy agreement on students becoming mature. As one CL said:

CL5: in mathematical terms they've aged one year but in terms of maturity a lot more.
Other CLs stressed further aspects of personal development. Students became more tolerant, more informed about the host countries and more open-minded. This attitudinal change was seen very much as a product of 'being plucked out of your home environment at the age of 18' and having to succeed in another environment: France, Germany, Spain, Holland.

One or two CLs directly referred to this development actually in terms of enhanced European identity. Typically there was a move towards Europeanness:

CL5: You do find also they come back normally I can't say always but normally they come back far more open-minded and also keener to develop. They've seen something they want to do more they want to become even more European.

Conclusion

Linguistic preparation is the only formal course preparation Course Leaders referred to in getting students ready for their time abroad. It is difficult to assess just how much cultural awareness students have before they enter the different setting. However, the lack of specific course activity towards this period seems to indicate that preparation is left very much to the individual student. There is a gap in the data on the exact nature of confidence levels, interest and enthusiasm of outgoing students. A contributory factor here is that there are several 'new' courses in the sample, hence CLs are just sending out their first cohort. Overall, concern was noted by some CLs that students might 'get out of their depth', whereas others saw 'sink or swim' almost as a necessary part of the development process.

The data reveals that CLs, on the whole, are critical of pedagogic arrangements at the host institution, rather than exhibiting respect for cultural diversity. An ethnocentric strain is easily detectable throughout the interview material. Course Leaders find little to comment favourably on, especially by comparison with the UK. Nevertheless, students are reported as 'coping' with the different environment. Adjustment does occur, and CLs attribute this partially to student support for each other. Student development is seen especially in terms of linguistic progress, but also in personal qualities; maturity is noticeable, and an altered outlook.
CHAPTER 10

The institution-course relationship

This final chapter of these Course Leaders' findings reviews the institutional 'culture' of the European courses in the study, and examines the substance of the international links established with other institutions. It also sets out to determine what overall view of success Course Leaders (CLs) attach to their courses. Several themes highlighted in the literature and the subject of strenuous debate at the current time are particularly pertinent. The trend for institutions 'becoming International' and the significant resource implications attached to this activity must be mentioned (CNAA, 1992; Bolton, 1993). The need for educational institutions offering European courses to be European/International themselves is also prominent in reviews (Tijmstra and Casler, 1992). Related to this is the question of whether or not International developments are coordinated in a 'whole institutional' approach. The relationship too between the orientation of the curriculum and its resource input has also been considered (Funnell and Müller, 1991).

10.1 The institutional response

Introduction

Given the particular European nature of the courses being examined in this study, I wanted to make some assessment of the institutional strength of commitment to 'being European'. Did a definite policy exist and what, if any, connections were there between course ethos and institutional commitment? Furthermore, the survey findings showed strong indications of involvement in EC training initiatives. How did Course Leaders perceive their institutional involvement with such schemes? Again it was of interest to
find out how this fitted into the overall institutional setting in terms of structure and culture.

A variable picture emerges from the data with most institutions demonstrating leanings to a particularly recent formal European commitment. Probably the most readily identified activity is enthusiasm for developing international links. This is particularly so in relation to Eastern Europe. Coordination of activities is largely unplanned, and again only recently has this received much official attention.

Course personnel on the whole show more willingness to a European commitment. However, difficulties are present in several ways. Full institutional support for courses is the exception rather than the norm, and obtaining EC funding is not necessarily a fait accompli. Also Course Leaders are not in the position of being able to give their undivided attention and energy to their courses because of other institutional demands on their time and an underlying concern for their career future.

10.1.1 Institutional policy

Moving in a European direction

Most Course Leaders considered that their institutions were now orientated towards Europe. Evidence for the actual strength of institutional commitment as realised in European policy and development differed quite widely. Indeed some were very conscious of, and occasionally openly critical of, the institution's lack of activity. Most spoke of the declaration of a European policy as essentially reactive in nature. As one CL put it, the 'need to catch up', had prompted his institution to give 'the green light' to European development. Others too talked about recent increasing support for European activities. This CL speaks out plainly on the matter:

CLA: The university has been singularly short on policy in relation to Europe but it's now remedying that ... and Europe figures in that Strategic Plan but it had been rather less actualised than many other aspects.

About a third of the CLs made reference to institutional policy in the form of a corporate or mission statement. One or two were fairly disparaging of such formal commitment and did not feel it was actually reflected in reality. A few also referred to the intensely rapid growth of their institutions in the last two or three years, and felt that such transition meant that policy was lagging behind. Comparison was made by some CLs in a broad fashion with other institutions, usually as a way of expressing how little they thought their own institution was doing. For instance, one Course Leader said he did not
think his institution was as 'determinedly European' as it might be, especially compared to some other institutions.

The feeling too that perhaps the European detail and support didn't always arrive at the operational level was present in much of what Course Leaders had to say about institutional policy. This CL expresses this point of view:

CL6: I mean apart from the::e ERASMUS funding I'm not sure that we've had ... we've had encouragement I guess but not much practical help and so on in getting European orientations going.

The high cost of European developments, and in particular exchange courses was acknowledged. CLs were very aware of the choices inevitably made on resourcing. However, the fact remained that they still needed support for their European courses and were hoping for this, both in terms of money and morale, from the institution (see discussion in Subsection 10.1.2). The preoccupation with obtaining sufficient resourcing and support was a major theme in the interviews.

Some Course Leaders, just over one third, did speak much more positively of a definite commitment stemming from proactive policy. This CL of a postgraduate diploma highlights her institution's strategy:

HT: Can you talk a little bit about what is now the university policy on Europe. Do they have a stated policy?

CL15: Yes yes um in the last year has been set up a network called the European network (uh huh) umm part of the Mission Statement actually specifies um that courses will include a European you know will be European in outlook and the European Network actually brings together um course designers and Course Leaders from all faculties (right) um to discuss what people are doing ... quite a lot of debate has gone on about how 'What is a European dimension?' (mm) and 'How do we introduce it into our courses?' and 'What nature should it have?' so that's been (mmm) quite extensive.

The creation of what amounts to a forum does here seem to have produced an atmosphere where people are starting to think about what a European orientation means in the institution, over and above its resource implications. Even though other CLs did refer to committed policy such definite reference to the resulting ethos was rare.
Language Policy

One institutional policy to do with Europe that was frequently commented on by Course Leaders was to do with Language. Many report the provision of language classes as a deliberate staff development. It is difficult to say with certainty just how well attended these are, and their exact impact. CLs varied in how well informed they were on details. More to the point they offered this provision as visible evidence of European policy. Staff development in language has been prioritised by institutions and funding for it is made available. This CL provides a clear picture of such activity:

CL1: Yeah there is a positive policy on Europe in terms of instituting in terms of Languages they've instituted a Language programme for both staff and students ... so that's been a positive decision by the Polytechnic um and there does seem to be support for European initiatives when they take place ... yeah there's a big take-up it's very very popular ... you go along the corridor [the Languages Department] on a Tuesday or a Wednesday evening (mm) then the classrooms are full of professors sitting next to secretaries being taught O-level German.

Others were rather more vague. The excerpt from this CL is perhaps a more typical example:

CL8: we run some classes here (mm) the Languages Department runs some classes and you can join in those they're free of charge

HT: So do many staff take that up?

CL8: Ah a fa::rly large I wouldn't I couldn't quote numbers to you. I haven't got numbers in my head

HT: No but?

CL8: it's fairly well supported I think currently we run classes in French German Spanish (mm) which is the main languages which are taught by our Languages Department.

The full impact of 'Europeanising' the institutions of the CLs interviewed via such a Language strategy is not known. The degree of staff expertise actually produced cannot be stated with any certainty. What can be said is that it has created sufficient interest so that Course Leaders have noticed the activity and quoted it in interviews. None of them claimed to be personally involved. The obvious need of institutions for improved language expertise will be picked up later in the subsection on staff commitment to Europe.
International links

There is also evidence from two-thirds of the CLs of movement towards an International aspect to their institutional policy. This emphasis it seems did not exclude the European approach already referred to, rather it involved a certain amount of semantic switching between the two terms. In substance, this aspect consisted of developing international links. Almost without exception, the examples quoted by Course Leaders focused on an increasing involvement with Eastern Europe, based mainly on TEMPUS. One or two CLs also mentioned Know-How Fund programmes. Reference was made to other links that existed in some institutions in Asia (Hong Kong, Malaysia) and North America, but not with the same emphasis. The Central and Eastern European activity are the developing links that CLs chose to discuss. This emphasis is perhaps all the more significant for this fact, as the question asked in the interview did not specifically direct them to this area, but simply queried institutional policy. Before looking at this trend in more detail, a brief look should be taken at the survey data, where CLs reported 'healthy' European support systems and quite strong participation in other EC schemes, as well as TEMPUS (see Figure 10.1 below).

![Figure 10.1 Existence of systems encouraging European developments in institutions](source: European Business/Management Studies courses survey, February 1992)
A CL of an undergraduate degree demonstrates this trend:

CL3: Yeah. The college is very enthusiastic about International I won't just talk about Europe (no) about International link-ups (mm hm) they have principally been in Western Europe ah but we have I believe the largest TEMPUS bid in the UK with um Poland ah which is worth about £1.5 million per training management teachers component ...we also have um TEMPUS bids with um Hungary (mm) and I'm involved in one at the moment with um I think Hungary and Czechoslovakia and Austria.

The financial benefit to the institution of this 'international links' activity is deducible from the turnover. This factor alone makes it hardly surprising that as yet another CL says in his institution:

CL5: there is a lot of activity a lot of effort put into currying links between Eastern Europe and ourselves.

Course Leaders were generally informative on this activity. Talk of successful bids and contracts was intermingled with the names of countries - Rumania, Poland, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Hungary and cities - Budapest, Prague. Visiting lecturers and students over here in their institutions, and talk of themselves (in some instances) and colleagues (in others) being in Poland, Russia and so on. Overall the data does indeed give strong supportive evidence of a 'lot of activity' with people coming and going. Not every CL claimed quite as large-scale an involvement with TEMPUS in the same way as CL3 (see above), but nevertheless 'widening' links were still being set up.

European or International, both orientations together the overall pattern arising here is one of institutions attempting to develop another dimension. Different growth rates clearly exist but institutions are moving. As this CL so aptly puts it his institution is:

CL6: I mean I wouldn't say racing in a European direction but certainly at different speeds and in different ways yes.

Hence the ethos emerging from this activity is difficult to define. The changes and developments mentioned in many cases were exceptionally recent, and in many cases CLs were still in the process of adjusting to them.

**Coordination**

According to CLs, very few institutions seem to have any set policy for the coordination of these European/International activities. Given in the survey only 2% of the respondents reported the existence of a European office (see Figure 10.1 above), this
pattern in the data would appear logical enough. On the whole activities are haphazard, and individuals are aware of what's going on only through informal channels. In some cases this meant that colleagues were completely unaware of each others' contacts with other European institutions. Again there was talk from many CLs of recent developments in their institutions to create formal links, such as the excerpt from CL15 already referred to above.

One recurring theme was reference to an International Office/r or similarly named individual, and co-ordinating committees as being important in this respect. As one CL heavily involved in such activities commented, the lack of an International Office was 'a big failing' that was costing his institution a great deal of money in failed bids.

This CL's description of what happens in his institution is, specific detail apart, fairly typical of the way in which Course Leaders reported these activities were carried out. He begins by referring to the fact that there is no interdepartmental forum:

CL2: Um no there isn't no there isn't and it's a great lack there should be um we have somebody who coordinates all of the ERASMUS bit and the ERASMUS information it's an Information Office really we fill out bids ourselves and there is a TEMPUS committee now (mm hm) in the university as well but the people who chair those two committees and departments are just other um they have other roles as well one is a Head of Department for example (mm) who also deals with ERASMUS things and the TEMPUS committee leader is is just say just is a PL in the School of Languages um there's some kind of um International Committee as well which seems to have a pretty low profile and my guess is that when the International Director is in place he or she is going to take that by the scruff of the neck and make that into something quite um quite powerful.

And this CL demonstrates how the blurring of the European-International boundaries can occur in this area:

CL15: the setting up of the International Office which was (mm) originally between the time of really being appointed and taking up position it (slight laugh) had more or less become it had started off being a European Office (mmm) but in fact in the last six months it's become evident really it's an International Office it's really functioning as an International Office and the European is one part of that.

As the CL in this case explained the main driving force behind the setting up of a European/International Office had been the perception that something was needed to coordinate contacts. With the growth in European activity generally, and particularly with plans for joint research and joint departmental efforts it was decided that the informal base was not sufficient. What however is of even more interest is the fact that the person who then became the International Officer was a linguist who had been Course Leader of the institution's European Management course. She had often been
approached for European contacts, and it seems was then the 'driving force' behind the setting up of institutional coordination.

The recognition of the residual power in the position of International Officer was referred to by quite a number of Course Leaders. They drew attention to the political underbelly of European activities and the fact that 'empire building', can and does occur. One of the most potent factors present in this is what is perceived by many as the travel 'perk' associated with the European/International activities. This CL recently appointed to the post explains the difficulty:

CL10: there is a certain amount of er politics underlying the whole process because some some people in here who had do get European visits which they are holding onto as their preserve ... so there are certain territories which have already been mapped out.

As he continues to explain the actual work done in co-operating with European institutions is often not what is seen because:

CL10: I think there are a lot of people here still see that er if you're going to Holland or you're going to Spain it's a holiday.

This viewpoint is reinforced by the Course Leader below speaking as someone who had previously been involved in extensive business travel in Europe.

CL3: it is a very interesting activity in that it adds a big dimension to the job and everyone is pleased to have the reason for a trip abroad unfortunately unless you've been accustomed to going abroad and spending your own money in order to work you very often don't realise that it is work rather than (mm) just a trip abroad to socialise.

Vested interests, looking for perks, establishing territories in summary what one CL described as 'a very human sort of problem'. The implications of these tensions will be examined in more detail within the course setting in the next section.

10.1.2 The financial resource

Course support from the institution

The point at which Course Leaders were acutely aware of institutional policy was in the level of support for their European courses. There is a clear split between those who have noticeable institutional level commitment, and those who don't. What is particularly evident from the interview data is that there is a group of courses who refer
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...to themselves as 'loss leaders'. It appears that they continue to attract the necessary resourcing because their institutions prioritise the value of their European nature over the financial loss. For instance:

CL14: I understand that it's still a loss-leading operation still don't cover our costs but the college is prepared to live with that.

Around one third of the CLs reported excellent institutional commitment to their courses. This was evidenced both in resourcing and interest. One pattern here was that unequivocal support stemmed largely from the fact that an individual 'high up' in the institution had once been directly connected with the course, either with the start-up or running it. There were enough mentions of ex-European Business/Management personnel now in higher institutional posts for them to be noticeable. As well as the following example, one was now a Director of his institution and two others were International Coordinators. The following Course Leader explains the exemplary connections he enjoys in this respect:

CL8: I think the key route to getting support from the top came from two-fold there was Professor ----- who used to be in charge of ------- -------- but isn't any longer and he had a strong European interest he's ------ [European nationality] and ah he had links to the Director and we had run some courses ... and the Director got a lot of pats on the back about that (ah) ... now the Dean of this Faculty Professor --------- who started as a language graduate has been very supportive he's very very interested in international links and in fact he's been not just supportive he's been actively operationally involved he's done a lot of these trips to Europe himself (mm) he's done a lot of the negotiations he is now in fact responsible for this course. (mm) It's now this ------- -------- ---- which directly reports to Professor --------- so in fact he's down to things like he's the Chairman of the Examination Board for this degree which is nearly unheard of for a Dean. Deans in polytechnics are quite important people so I mean I have direct access to him ... he's ah more than supportive he becomes operationally involved where necessary so in that sense we've got access to good (mm) facilities and good resources. Can't say everything we want but ah we do quite well.

Such personal interest and enthusiasm undoubtedly facilitates the running of what the majority of CLs freely admit is an expensive and administratively complex type of course.

However the majority of Course Leaders do not enjoy such complete back-up. This lack was directly attributed to institutional attitude. Supportive behaviour from Deans was not reflected by those higher up, and the reason was usually to be found in the finances. As one CL said:
CL9: You know as far as we're concerned we're another undergraduate programme as far as the institution is concerned it's another undergraduate programme which may or may not be profitable but we don't really have the accountant data to enable us to say that but what they can identify um the cost of travel which is associated with the programme the cost of sort of administration which is associated with the programme.

And this CL of a postgraduate diploma is philosophically resigned to living without top institutional support:

CL1: Mm right the Deputy Director his view is 'Why are you running a course like this anyway?' (mm hm) um the in terms of our faculty the Dean and he's also Head of Languages is totally supportive and sees it (right) as a very positive course and most people who know it see it as very positive but the institution's run by accountants who don't always think that what people are doing is the best thing on earth if they don't bring in large amounts of lolly which we don't.

This attitude to resourcing should be compared with the group of 'loss leaders' referred to earlier. It appears that the European mission of the institutions supporting those courses is able to rise above the purely financial considerations outlined by the CLs in the last two excerpts.

**Obtaining the financial resource from the EC**

The question of how their course is to be resourced is an on-going concern for most Course Leaders. Apart from their institutions, EC funding is the main source of support. Over two-thirds of the courses receive ERASMUS money and the remainder rely on the European Social Fund (ESF). Before considering Course Leaders' views in detail, it helps to set the question of the financial resource in context, by referring to the survey. Here respondents were asked the main objective behind their ERASMUS involvement. In reply, student mobility was prioritised over availability of finance, with academic cooperation lagging a long way behind (see Figure 10.2).
In practice, CLs conveyed that the relationship of most institutions with ERASMUS has a strongly paradoxical nature. It enables and hinders at one and the same time. This was summed up by one CL in his phrase 'you need it but it's a nuisance'. The other clear theme is the shift over time, the 'progressive erosion' in the funding received by institutions. This is particularly noticeable in the comments of those Course Leaders with established courses. For instance in the words of one CL 'we got in on the first year of ERASMUS and um we've seen the best times'. Some felt they had never used the scheme to best effect anyway, because of the trade deficit between partners. They had received far more students from Continental European institutions than they had sent to them. This in retrospect was viewed by one CL as 'foolish generosity'. Their now increasingly uncertain relationship with ERASMUS has led them to look elsewhere for funding, or alternatively dismiss ERASMUS in terms of essential finance. Indeed, some of the new courses starting up said that they had been designed 'to live without ERASMUS'. Nevertheless the paradox remains, because as one Course Leader said 'not to be in ERASMUS from the point of view of peer review' is in itself a problem. There was also the need to consider their partners' wishes, and for some of these ERASMUS was important. It is helpful at this stage to consider the substance of CLs' remarks about the significance of ERASMUS support to their courses with regard to effects on the course itself, and on the students.
The significance of ERASMUS to the course

Course Leaders were divided about the significance of ERASMUS to the running of their courses. Some saw it as highly significant, others as not significant at all, or at best as less and less significant. The money received was 'not enough'. Much of the ambivalence in how CLs regarded ERASMUS is sited here. A typical comment was along these lines 'it's just the amount of bureaucracy for the little money'. Filling out forms and dealing with the intricacies of ERASMUS regulations was tedious and time-consuming. Some CLs said that other personnel in the institution were responsible for bids. This it seems did not necessarily mean they received the money in every instance without aggravation. As one CL vividly described a situation had arisen with ERASMUS payments to her students which demonstrated all the worst aspects of internal bickering (see previous discussion on Coordination).

Several CLs talked about things that went against them with ERASMUS. The fact that Business and Management courses were oversubscribed was a main difficulty for them. The location of the partners was also problematic. Their view was that the best days were over for courses centred in the 'golden triangle' of England, France and Germany. If they wanted funding for Portugal, Greece, and some of the minor countries of Europe they would fare better. As one CL put it 'you could retire on the money'. Yet another CL remarked they did have a Portuguese partner but no student has wished to go to Portugal. Their established networks were based on France, Germany, Spain and to a lesser extent Holland. This is where they had the demand from students (see again Subsection 8.3.3). In effect then, they saw themselves as 'penalised for being successful' and their collective tone was one of powerlessness with the scheme. In the following excerpt one of the 'pioneers' gives a sense of this:

CL9: I think in the early days it was [significant] because of the amounts of money distributed by ERASMUS were very substantial and we certainly benefited from ERASMUS ah but ... it's probably gone down by 70 80% in the last 2 to 3 years as far as we are concerned and of course the poly or the university is very unhappy about suddenly being asked to close the gap and we're suddenly being asked to live within our means.

And yet the course administration workload of coordination meetings, exam boards and so on continues. This CL puts his view forward:

CL11: It's very vital to keep the administrative um ah requirements of the course um going because having chosen the model of the course that we've chosen it requires a great deal of coordination as opposed to courses where you just swap students or students slot into bits of existing programmes ... it does mean a lot of meetings to sort these things out and that's where the ERASMUS budget is most vital ... but it helps us if you like to the minimum we would like.
Partners' attitudes towards ERASMUS are also something that have to be taken into consideration. Budgets vary and some partners want ERASMUS involvement. Some CLs said that some of their partners had more resources than others, though they were anxious to point out that it wasn't possible to make full-scale generalisations. One Course Leader was an exception in reporting that his institution had a 'generous budget' for overseas travel and development. The usual response was the opposite, and some CLs saw the ERASMUS money as enabling in this respect. Mention was also made by one or two of how important ERASMUS funding had been with allowing meetings at the curriculum development phase of the course.

The significance of ERASMUS to the student

The significance of ERASMUS to students on the courses, as opposed to the course itself, received far less attention. The concentration of comments on student support were on the money itself. CLs' views ranged from thinking that students 'couldn't have gone without it' to 'having a little bit more money in their pockets' was helpful when they were abroad. The variable cost of living in different European cities was commented upon, as was the fact that some students ended up in financial difficulties while abroad. However, sharing the money out between a cohort meant it was 'just a little trickle of money' by the time it reached the individual student. For this reason some CLs said it couldn't be banked on to retrieve them if they did run into difficulties. Some Course Leaders remarked that it was also particularly important to foreign students who were not on grants. Though, as one CL said a surprising number of his students did not get their grant made up to the full amount by their parents, so it was also helpful to them.

Another aspect was mentioned by just two CLs who commented on the attitude of employers to student involvement with the ERASMUS scheme. Though in a definite minority what they said should be noted. One CL said that in his experience most employers are not quite sure what ERASMUS is, but they have heard of it and seem to take it as 'some sign of quality'. The other CL was in agreement on this point and felt that there was a certain facilitative effect, particularly in looking for work placements. As he said:

   CL5: employers are far more willing to listen to you and accept a student for work placement. 'Are they on the ERASMUS scheme?' (mm) you say 'Yes' (mm) and they'll open the door.

This status for the exchange student was seen as important. The money that students received was 'helpful' to them, but the wider kudos stemming from the scheme was a 'more serious aspect'.

[ 10-13 ]
European Social Fund (ESF)

As previously mentioned a small number of the courses had ESF funding, and their experience is of interest too. One CL referred to how in the early days the future of their course was 'dangling on a thread'. They had been dependent on the EC funding which was allocated per calendar year. So they had been left each year wondering if the money was going to be forthcoming for the next year. This meant they were placed in the position of being unable to guarantee to students that money would be available, and explaining to them that they might have to be self-financing for Terms 2 and 3. However, in spite of the difficulties caused by this uncertainty, each year the ESF had come up with the money.

Other Course Leaders pointed out that the ESF was 'more lucrative'. One CL referring to his institution's European MBA said:

CL3: we were given this year for this country I think £27,000 or we can call on £27,000 depending on the number of students we get.

However, the CLs involved did comment that accepting ESF funding did restrict the clientele to whom you could offer the course, as one female Course Leader expressed it 'Women Returners and Women Unemployed rather than just anybody'.

10.1.3 The human resource

Course team

At course level there is a pattern of growing European awareness and interest. The majority of CLs referred to staff in similar terms such as 'a supportive team' or 'a good committed team that's gradually formed'. For many the course staff's attitude is the reverse of the institutional one.

The things enumerated in favour of the European programmes included the student clientele, meeting European colleagues, and the opportunity to further European research. Some programmes enjoy an enviable reputation if Course Leaders' comments are taken as they stand. For instance, this CL said:

CL11: colleagues sometimes fight to get onto teaching on this course which says something for it.
There was of course the occasional individual exception quoted that must qualify a total picture of European course enthusiasm. What was more the case however, were the numerous anecdotes from CLs, which demonstrate how staff initially resistant to involvement in the programme underwent what can perhaps best be described as 'an attitudinal conversion'. The following Course Leader was describing a seminar programme his courses run with a German partner institution, when he referred to just such an individual:

CL14: and we've even got a tame accountant who's interested in Europe now who a few years ago um was incredibly anti-European and used to say you know um 'I don't want one of these funny new European Community passports I want a British passport' and so on he seems to have changed completely. He went out to ----- with --- ------ to talk to colleagues over there about the sorts of differences in Accounting practice within Europe (mm) and he came out with me in fact in February to have a chat oh no March to have a chat with some colleagues at -------- on the same topic ah so there are hopeful signs.

However, from the information given by Course Leaders it is clear that only a small number of European nationals are working on their course teams. Almost predictably they are language staff from another department to the one in which the course is sited. Very occasionally a subject specialist is involved. CLs were rather vague in some cases, and given how few European nationals are involved this is surprising. Here is one such case:

CL10: Um yes um um a person that will be the links co-ordinator with Languages next year (mmm) is er French (mmm) um who else is teaching on the course? The person that's doing the European Economics is I'm not sure what his nationality is actually but he's certainly not er British (mmm) I'm not sure what his nationality is (mmm) um several of the linguists are of course are ah non-UK um I can't think.

And another undergraduate CL:

CL3: Ahh we have an Iranian teaching Statistics we have possibly one or two other foreign nationals teaching but we don't have as a matter of course we don't have um staff here from partner countries.

Just one Course Leader talked of employing European nationals deliberately to improve the European perspective in the course team and the teaching itself (see Appendix E4). This lack of European or International balance on the course teams was compensated for to some extent by a recognition of the importance of teaching visits and exchanges. According to a number of CLs these were being developed as course practice (see discussion on Partner Relationships in Section 10.2).
Course Leaders

The Course Leaders themselves were unanimous in their willingness to be described as Europhiles. Their European expertise indicated by qualifications, linguistic proficiency, travel and work experience in Europe was quite substantial. However, they were completely in keeping with the survey profile (see Figures 10.3 and 10.4) in terms of nationality and gender, being overwhelmingly male and British.

![Pie chart showing nationality of Course Leaders]

**Figure 10.3  Nationality of Course Leaders**
Source: *European Business/Management Studies courses survey, February 1992*
Figure 10.4  Gender of Course Leaders
Source: European Business/Management Studies courses survey, February 1992

Two-thirds of them had a long involvement with their particular course. Slightly over one third of them held a European or International Master’s qualification, but of these awards only four were specifically-named European. The opinions of the Course Leaders, as to whether they held the job because they had the qualification, or had acquired the qualification because they were doing the job, were split fairly evenly both ways.

All had travelled in Europe (here excluding the UK) for leisure, and some expressed a lengthy affinity with a particular country. The European countries they had most familiarity with were France, Germany, Spain and Holland. Some of them had been extensively involved in European journeys during previous business jobs before taking up an educational career. This CL gives her background:

CL12: Yes I worked in Europe a lot that’s why I think I was put onto the course. I speak fluent French and I’ve also got some Italian as well

HT: Yes I noticed that.
CL12: plus I travel a lot in my previous job I worked in France I lived in France I worked near Belgium well most places really Finland Sweden Denmark and so on.

The linguistic connection is of interest. All but two of the Course Leaders admitted fluency in French, Spanish or German. Half of them were professional linguists with considerable teaching experience. The other half consisted of those who had either initially learnt the language at school, and those who had acquired another language on their own initiative. The latter recounted considerable determination in this respect. Below one of the two exceptions to this overall picture of linguistic expertise makes the point of how ignominious it feels to lack this linguistic competence in a professional capacity.

HT: Did you have any experience yourself in Europe that allowed you to help develop this?

CL6: No and that was a disadvantage. I can remember for instance visiting Spain a couple of years ago (mm) and being a total passenger in the sense that I couldn't speak a word of Spanish and the meeting's in Spanish. It wasn't quite as bad as it sounds in that I went with our ERASMUS Co-ordinator who's got perfect Spanish but basically he was trying to translate and that was making points that he translated for the rest of the meeting ... but I wasn't the ideal person in that sense because we didn't have anyone in the Business Studies team at that time who was really a good linguist (mm) and also we didn't have a great deal of experience of working abroad in that group either.

Even though this CL was an exception he draws attention to the need for both linguistic and negotiating expertise to be available in the European course team.

**Demands on Course Leaders**

The 'push-and-pull between different demands' on Course Leaders is very evident in the data. All said that course development and administration was time-consuming and hard work. Other activities conferences, research, publications, teaching in other countries came second. Often their expressed interest in an area had simply not been realised because there hadn't been time. There was very much a feeling that 'you can't do everything', but that they were being asked to do just that. Tension was created as a result, and resolving it consisted of doing one thing at the expense of another. In some cases (a third) Course Leaders planned to give up course administration in the near future, so that they could concentrate on their other interests, mainly research.

'Time' is the most frequently mentioned concept central to their perception of managing different demands. The fact that time had not been spared for research was seen as an
institutional deficiency, not a personal one. Nonetheless it was a deficiency about which they personally expressed regret, or were apologetic about. As one CL said she would do other things if there was more time, but 'someone's got to give more time'. In essence it was a resource issue, and on the evidence of the courses in the sample it was one that was causing tensions. Where individuals actually placed their priorities, and what they regarded as important was constantly clashing with their work on course administration and development.

Some Course Leaders, in response to further demands upon them, were in the process of establishing their personal priorities (see for instance CL12 in Subsection 10.2.4). Others in reply to queries about their involvement in wider academic activities were somewhat cynical in response:

    CL4: I don't butterfly round the conference circuit.

Some were trying to juggle course responsibilities simultaneously with research projects, attending conferences and travelling abroad. This led to a very busy, sometimes hectic schedule which was not necessarily personally fulfilling.

The huge amount of work associated with these courses was very evident in all CLs' comments. They were clearly of one mind that European commitment was not sufficient to sustain their efforts indefinitely. They recognised there was a personal cost to their commitment. Some were dubious as to whether this was actually recognised by their institution. This CL who had been doing the job for 5 years dwells on the matter from his perspective:

    CL9: I get paid no premium for doing this I'm an ordinary SL [Senior Lecturer] like everybody else ... but really you haven't done enough research you haven't published enough ... I'm not even sure now if they [management] came along and said 'Right £5000 a year more consolidated into your pay so it counts in your pension' whether I'd actually say 'Well I'll carry on for another few years' ... I find it increasingly frustrating particularly given my subject [International Relations] ... I should be up with it I'm not ... I just don't have the time to do it and I don't have the energy ... but um you know at one time it was exciting getting up early in the morning shooting down the M25 jumping on an aeroplane at Heathrow being in Madrid at you know 10.30 in the morning going into a meeting and

    HT: Now?

    CL9: no not anymore.

It should not be thought that every CL was quite this disenchanted, but the message that goodwill is not infinite should be noted. The tension between commitment to the course, and being rewarded in one's own career was touched on by every Course Leader. The
human resource implications have to be met: as one CL emphasised 'somebody somewhere in the institution's got to have the energy and the time and the enthusiasm' for the course.

**Conclusion**

The European orientation of all institutions in the sample is acknowledged as being very recent. For most institutions though, its inclusion in the mission statement does not necessarily mean detail and support for European initiatives is always visible at the operational level. Some institutions seem to exhibit more definite commitment than others, and there are reports of attempts being made to generate a European 'culture'. Rather more noticeable than actual strategy is strong evidence for activity in developing 'international links'. The frequency of such activity and keenness for it stand out across the courses in the study. The connection between these widening links and the monetary gain to the institutions involved, appears by implication, to be significant.

Institutions are starting to realise that the coordination of international activities needs to be fitted into an official structure. There is however evidence of internal politicking which is itself thwarting coordination efforts. In this context the activity most singled out for comment was the opportunity to travel abroad. This is seen by many as a high profile activity valued for itself rather than for its functional purpose.

Full support from their institutions is enjoyed by some, but not the majority of the courses. A self-identified group of 'loss leaders' suggests that some institutions are actively seeking a genuine European commitment, and in this are prepared to work with the financial constraints in some way. From a resource perspective the majority of courses look to ERASMUS funding, but view the relationship as far from certain. Course Leaders also perceive the shift in ERASMUS' objectives over time as penalising, rather than supportive. The problem of how to finance their courses is therefore one which Course Leaders are constantly trying to resolve, and the worry attached to this is very evident.

Courses in the sample as a whole exhibit a pattern of growing European commitment. Instances of staff being converted to an interest in 'European' teaching and research are common. There is however a huge imbalance in the European nationality mix of staff, there being very little representation of any Europeans, apart from British on all courses. Indeed other nationals of any country are equally scarce. Only one Course Leader admitted an active policy of international staff recruitment to the course team to redress this deficiency. Demands on Course Leaders themselves are intense, and they are conscious they simply do not have sufficient time resource. Institutional pressure on them to do other things, especially research, is competing with their European course...
European Management Education

Institution-course relationship

commitment. This tension is further increased for some who do not see a likely route to career enhancement in continuing course administration.

10.2 Partnership relations

Introduction

All but one of the courses in the present sample were involved in partnerships. This was completely in line with the survey (February 1992), which showed respondents overwhelmingly worked with partner institutions. Links of this sort with institutions abroad are seen as a measure of internationalisation (CNAA, 1992), and there is increasing activity in this area (see previous Subsection 10.1.1). With the courses under study I was particularly interested in the effects of the partnership relations on the course curriculum itself, especially the philosophy and delivery of the course. The substance of the relationships and whether or not they were perceived as successful was similarly of interest. The data demonstrates much activity in this area. There is considerable movement with complex tensions resulting that courses are trying to absorb. Overall there is a lot of immersion in the sheer activity itself, but also some signs of European direction appear to be emerging. The substance of these relationships, as reported by Course Leaders, will be examined in this section.

10.2.1 How partners were chosen

Course Leaders indicated that partners had been chosen in slightly different ways. Chance or opportunity was the basis for about just under one third of the courses. This can be compared to the survey, where opportunity was the dominant criterion selected (see Figure 10.5). Two very long-established courses said that originally the partnerships had emerged from the meeting of like-minded individuals. The origins of these courses are now surrounded in mythological stories. Approximately half the courses said that the partners had been inherited, or had been passed on by other contacts within the institution. Sometimes these were from existing networks, or from contacts used by other courses for placements abroad or related activities. Only one Course Leader demonstrated that they had actually set up the partnerships on a very deliberate basis of suitability.
10.2.2 Evaluation of relations

It is very easy to become immersed in the details of the experience of individual institutions. However, Course Leaders (CLs) frequently referred to relations as 'not good' or 'problems with' and similar descriptions. This is not to say that other assessments were not made as well, but it must be noted that the cumulative concentration of remarks was weighted this way. This pattern will be given priority here, as it is through discussing their problems, that CLs also considered what they saw as other important aspects in their partner relations. For instance, they explained what they thought was needed because it was currently missing, and hence causing a problem. Difficulties in partner relationships of one sort or another were reported by nearly all the Course Leaders. Collectively, they had experienced a number of problems to do with both setting up partnerships, and ongoing course administration. Some CLs talked about the difficulties of working with particular nationalities, for instance the French or the Spanish. Other Course Leaders had found it more difficult to work with particular types of institution within another European country. One CL narrowed difficulties down to particular personalities at another institution. It is helpful at this stage to look at the nature of some of these difficulties for the light that they shed on this issue.
Problems

In referring to negotiations, one of the problems that occurred across the institutions is the difficulty of equating qualification requirements. Much depends on what each partner institution requires, and how this can best be achieved. Some Course Leaders reported that this was where considerable difficulty had been encountered. Much centred on the regulations in force at partner institutions in mainland Europe, and how far they were prepared to modify or move away from these traditional regulations. Most CLs reported that this had been of particular difficulty with institutions in France and Spain. On the other hand, German institutions had been found to be more open to change. No CL mentioned this as a problem in relation to Dutch institutions. However, it was not simply a matter of national bias but more particularly of institutional difference. What more than one Course Leader raised was the fact that the status of the institution, particularly in France, can have a tremendous effect on what can be achieved in the partner relationship. The elitism of certain French institutions means, as one Course Leaders put it, that they have 'different concerns'. Some Course Leaders stated this more openly than others, but essentially it amounts to the same thing. These institutions it seems are more concerned with their status than they are with negotiating 'amenable partnerships'. One CL pointed out what he had learnt through experience in many negotiations recently. The 'up and coming' institutions in France or Italy are driven by an alternative agenda. They are keener to establish quality courses and they want international links. For this reason, he had found them more 'prepared to give and take' by comparison with the old-established institutions.

Other Course Leaders discussed continuing aggravation in the relationship once partnerships had been established, caused primarily by difficulties over covering course content needed for qualifications. In the case of more than one institution, assurances given at the time of negotiation had subsequently not been kept. For example, the difficulties spoken of by one CL with a Spanish institution resulted in this link in the course network being discontinued two months after the time of interview. This was confirmed in writing by the CL directly, as well as through another independent source. A third of the Course Leaders interviewed were involved in noticeable difficulties of this sort. This figure is probably higher than can be shown definitively. The reason for this is that some CLs only hinted at difficulties, whereas others were much more outspoken about the exact nature of them. The impact of difficulties on at least two courses had reached such a pitch that CLs indicated that they were going to stop working with the particular partners in question. One was the CL referred to immediately above, and the other a Course Leader who referred to the relations with the partner concerned as 'a track record of bitterness' that was beyond retrieval.
Arriving at the need for flexibility and enthusiasm

In commenting on the nature of their problems, Course Leaders reveal an emphasis on a general need for rapport in partnerships. Further, in diagnosing particular problems they had encountered, CLs demonstrated that whether or not they had eventually been able to reach a solution, had in effect depended on the amount of flexibility available within the partnership. From such experience they were acquiring a feel for what was needed in making partnerships work effectively. Several CLs independently offered the same advice, you have they said to 'be prepared to bend'.

In working with partners establishing networks most Course Leaders demonstrate quite clearly that there is a high cost in terms of personal energy and commitment, as well as the cost in institutional resourcing (see Subsection 10.1.2). All CLs already involved with partners, or currently trying to establish links, talked of this cost. Some demonstrated by what they said that expending energy on work of this sort can be related to the personal pursuit of a European ideal. The need for an 'enthusiastic person' somewhere in the partnership was indeed recognised. One or two CLs quoted the presence of such a person:

CL3: the essential thing in any partnership is not the institution it's the person and it all centres round one enthusiastic person and we unfortunately have just lost that real Anglophile at our German institution um but the present incumbent is um is still doing very well.

10.2.3 Impact of the partnership arrangement on the curriculum

The degree of severity with partnership difficulties ranged then, from 'mild hiccups' through dysfunctional, to total breakdown. What seems to be indicated by the data is that the severity of difficulties is related to the arrangement of the programme being run. Course Leaders running 'fully integrated' programmes appear to be facing more difficulty than other programmes. By contrast, those CLs favouring 'mutual recognition' appear to be more able to manoeuvre in course operations. A CL of a relatively new mutual recognition course talked of other institutions now moving towards this arrangement because 'it's a lot easier to operate'.

Those CLs running a common programme report that negotiating and coordinating curriculum matters across a number of partners throws up difficulties which have impact on the actual course delivery. Even so it should be noted their problems were not uniform. Some had been able to resolve difficulties, others had not. A Course Leader of a very long-established course reported the most severe difficulties, and indeed referred to the closeness of the partner relationship as actually 'becoming dysfunctional'. He was
very despondent and talked in terms of the course being unable to continue in its present form much longer:

CL9: We have become locked to such a degree with our partners that it makes any change very very difficult ... the very very close relationship we have is becoming dysfunctional.

The most recent need for change had arisen because of the modularisation of courses at his institution. This was having a considerable knock-on effect on his particular course. On the other hand, a CL of a newly established programme simply talked of the course as 'always going to be something of a compromise' because of the need to agree content across five partners. What yet another CL pinpointed as central to any discussion of difficulties, was the fact that as a course model the common programme requires 'a great degree of coordination'. For this reason he did not recommend other institutions to take it up 'unless they've got hours of time and patience'. His view was that it was probably the hardest way to run such a course.

CLs referred to difficulties arising from the different pedagogic traditions in the partner institutions (see 9.3 for previous discussion of the student experience). Specific reference was made to the different ways in which courses were weighted, the different handling of class contact hours, the setting and marking of assignments and common exam papers and issues of quality control. Negotiating the 'agreed agenda' for course content was sometimes a difficulty. Accountants were cited as causing headaches in this respect by several CLs; in the words of one CL they 'find it quite difficult to agree with each other'. Agreement was perhaps eventually achieved on the content, but it was surface. Attitudes again varied as to how far this was a 'problem'. One CL referring to a common exam paper in Accounting said that it was 'an appalling constraint' and staff knew 'in their heart of hearts' it was not what they would have set if only for their site.

More critically, ensuring students had covered sufficient 'common ground', so that at the crossover point between semesters in different countries they had had the 'same' experience of the course was vital. This Course Leader helps us appreciate the exact nature of this difficulty:

CL11: if they've had a very different experience in Germany and France in Semester 1 and they come here (mm) and all the students who were in France say 'Oh we did that' and then the German students all say 'Did this' er all the students who had been in Germany then then we do have a problem because we you know how do we cope with that?

The potential overlap of such a situation necessitated ongoing coordination meetings. CLs noted these as one of the high contributory costs of the programme, but nevertheless essential. This was one context in which specific mention was made of
ERASMUS. The budget from the scheme was used by some courses to finance the costs of these coordination meetings (see above Subsection 10.1.2). The fact that the money was not necessarily awarded to them was a further constraint.

10.2.4 Teaching visits and exchanges

Apart from the impact on the actual courses themselves, what other effects were noticeable? A number of CLs talked about the development of teaching and research involving themselves and their partners. For some this had grown out of travel associated with the course, and several expressed a determination to develop this activity further. The evolutionary nature of such teaching is a very noticeable feature. It does however appear to be very dependent on the enthusiasm of course members and/or their partners. If this enthusiasm is lacking such proposals are nipped in the bud. Before considering this activity further it is salutary to look at what one CL, who is basically against such visits, and at best places them 'quite low on my agenda', has to say:

CL12: We've had one or two people go to ----------- because that's been lecturing in English and one of their lecturers is coming here next term it's been planned that I should go there but at the moment I'm trying to backpedal on that because I think my research is more important because I'd have to prepare classes in an area which I'm not specialist and it would be quite a lot of reading before I could do it so I had to back out of that ... I can't quite see what the benefit's going to be I don't see what Dutch students are going to gain hearing me go on about International Accounting ... I think it's a great idea that the students should travel I don't see the point though of letting the staff travel.

This Course Leader then basically does not subscribe to the view that mobility of staff is useful and to be encouraged. For her it is very much a matter of personal priorities, besides this she lacks the inclination. However this is an exception, and there are others who do wish to promote staff visits and exchanges. Their's is another view; for instance a postgraduate CL explains here why they want to develop their programme of teaching visits and exchanges:

CL11: because it's not as substantial as it should be it's odd weeks here and there and in fact it's something we were just talking about at management team this morning ways we could make it more systematic but we do do that (mm) for example Organisational Behaviour is not something which features much on partners' programmes so I try and go and do a bit of that with them if I can find a moment during the year to give the students a different perspective on some of the things that they're doing (mm) equally there are some of the things like for example the French do what they call Techniques of International Trade ... a rather more detailed technical subject than we do ... there are different emphases and so the French can come over for a few days give the students that extra bit um that's all to the good.
Here there is a recognition that 'a different perspective' in the subject is useful to students. The effect on the staff, working closely with their partners delivering the curriculum on each others' sites is also noted. The point made about a systematic inclusion in the course programme seems to be of significance. Things do not necessarily always work out smoothly as the following CL shows:

CL3: we do once a year have a one week after the exams we have a one week Language Week in which we invite tutors from partner institutions to come and teach here on their favourite subjects for a week

HT: That sounds nice.

CL3: and ah yes but it's difficult to motivate the students to um come and attend. They've done their exams they've had a week off and for instance this year we had a tutor from the University of -------- who cost us about £1250 to come here for a week we only at present have about 10 students on the first year of the Italian stream and on the first day 2 of those turned up. On the second day 4 turned up and it gradually increased to 6. But um so enthusiasm amongst the staff but not necessarily amongst the students.

So these activities too are not without difficulties. The key elements involved in making them work appear to be time, money, interest and enthusiasm on the part of both staff and students, and of course to a certain extent linguistic expertise.

10.2.5 Growing/developing

Some Course Leaders talked further about the positive benefits of working with partner institutions. These were related to what one Course Leader called the 'interwebbing effect'. They were gradually starting to move around and exchange both staff and students between partner institutions. A few saw signs of a European system developing out of this activity. One CL in particular admitted he had hopes for a European qualification. The UK institution had been in the lead, but gradually the other partners had become enthused as well and:

CL8: discussing the possibility of drawing into a more coherent bundle of institutions again with this long-term hope of moving towards a European qualification.

The articulation of such a hope was however the exception and other CLs were more in keeping with one who said: 'we hear echoes of the debate from time to time'. In terms of further development, Course Leaders were split fairly evenly in both directions. Those wishing to develop partnerships further were looking for other suitable partners, and in
some cases were involved in discussions with potential institutions in countries outside the EC. This CL talks of his network:

CL2: there is a putative link there with a college in Russia and we're looking to the medium-term there ... maybe have just one or two students coming along for one semester on the programme and sort of building from there ... I think if there aren't any sort of major sort of eruptions in Russia which is quite possible if the political situation stabilises it could well be that there'll be an extra partner say in five years' time. We want to be ahead of the pack as well on that one that would be very distinctive for this programme.

The very clear competitive effect here should be noted (see also discussion in Subsection 10.1.1). Others had considered partners or partnership links with Eastern European countries, but had decided against them mainly on unsuitability 'at this time'. There appear to be two clear directions in the data on this issue. One direction demonstrates a wish to develop deeper links with a smaller number of partners. Some were concerned to consolidate the links they already had and extend their commitment to them. As one CL said 'we can't manage the partners we already have'. Another CL explains thoughtfully:

CL11: we realised that the problems of coordination with four partners were going to take a few years really to bed in well. I think we've taken a conscious decision not to grow the thing any more at the moment in terms of new partners until we thoroughly digest each other as it were before moving on ... we weren't speaking with one voice on every issue perhaps not the most exciting approach but we want to make it successful.

Others were very decisively going to develop relationships further, a typical response being 'we will grow we will have more partners'. One or two spoke about the institution's phases of development being the decisive factor on whether further partnerships were likely to be formed. The need to acquire more French partners because of student demand for the language was mentioned, as well as Italian partners. It is interesting to note that there was little or no interest in developing partnerships in the 'minor countries of Europe'.

Conclusion

From the data available it seems partnerships have been established mainly through chance or existing institutional contacts, not primarily on grounds of suitability.

Frequent difficulties/problems with partnerships were related by all courses. It appears that the status of institutions, particularly in France, is instrumental in how effective a
relationship can be achieved. However, Course Leaders indicated that there was no one root cause to their difficulties. Instead, ongoing problems in partner relationships were attributed to a range of causes. Broken assurances over arrangements have sometimes meant that the partnership has 'not prospered'. What is clearly shown is that some CLs believe that in order to operate effectively partners need to be flexible. This has been driven home to them through experience. There is a noticeable awareness on the part of a few CLs that adopting a stance of being prepared to modify and work at the relationship, is probably necessary for its 'success'. It appears to be the case that 'fully integrated' partnerships running a common curriculum are experiencing the greatest operational difficulties, to some extent because of the very nature of the model.

CLs traced coordination difficulties particularly to the different pedagogic traditions of partners, and their effect on the overall content and approach seen to be appropriate for the course. Reaching agreement on content is further hampered by budgetary constraints.

Some courses have developed teaching and research in conjunction with their partners. A few CLs were noticeably enthusiastic about this because it gave the chance to offer 'a different perspective' to students. The data shows a definite dependency between the existence of motivation and enthusiasm on the part of both staff and students, and the success of such activity. Once again there is an evident tension between 'European' developments and staff commitment. There is definite movement of the extension of staff activity into a more academic partnership role, but it is by no means standard practice.

### 10.3 Perceptions of Success

**Introduction**

The final section of the chapter looks at Course Leaders' perceptions of the success of their courses. What overall view of success do Course Leaders attach to their courses? It was of interest to see whether Course Leaders felt they were achieving their aims of making students 'operational' for the European context. In their view, did the course produce the hoped for plus factors that would give students competitive advantage in the labour market? Of particular relevance was whether the European difference was recognised by employers.
10.3.1 Getting jobs

The majority of Course Leaders of established courses saw success in terms of graduates gaining employment. Just two CLs referred to success as attracting student intake, one in terms of quality the other quantity. The employment record reported by Course Leaders was, in line with how one CL described it, 'reasonably good'.

The CL of this postgraduate course is quite explicit on this point. The biggest success of the course to date is:

CL1: Getting people jobs. The fact that they get jobs at the end of it.

HT: So there's a good take-up rate?

CL1: Yes it's the take-up rate's good the no just the employment success rate is what I value most because it's why people do a course of this sort (mm) purely for the reason they want a job they know they haven't got the skills to offer and they come and they pass a postgrad course for that reason um so I'm very pleased that they get jobs and that's probably the thing that I'm most pleased about.

One or two said their graduates were 'very sought after' or had been identified as 'fast-track' by companies. A few mentioned students had experienced difficulties in the previous year because of the recession, but nevertheless CLs were generally positive and pleased with the pattern of graduate destinations. Several said they felt that there was evidence to say that their course was 'meeting needs'. Such comments were formed in the first instance especially on feedback from students. What they had told them had given Course Leaders some perception of how the graduates and the course itself were regarded by employers. There was too direct contact with employing organisations, though not it seems on a uniformly regular basis.

Why did they get jobs?

CLs, referring to feedback received, gave their opinions on why they thought students had been offered jobs. The reasons were diverse: the actual course itself, the qualification, the skills developed - no one reason predominated. Some put emphasis on the particular combination their graduates offered employers:

CL5: first of all they're very good at languages which is a plus and secondly while doing the course they're likely to have had relevant professional experience or work experience and often well always in a foreign country.
Others too backed the cumulative experience students had gained during the course. Opinions varied too on whether the actual European title of the qualification counted for anything. One CL remarked that his students were highly critical of employers because they didn't seem to take it into account. Another said her students felt that they were definitely 'at an advantage' in getting interviews compared to other students, so it must be counting for something. However, overall the interviewees as a group did not think employers placed much weight on the European title.

However, one CL working on the basis of information from a small survey of employers his course had conducted said that what they valued most were the attitudinal skills of graduates:

CL9: personal qualities that could be identified with the graduates from this programme and they were motivation maturity self-reliance flexibility adaptability things of that sort.

As CL9 pointed out these qualities were chosen as important in preference to as he put it 'the two degrees the bilingualism etc etc'. Other Course Leaders in essence supported this view but in nowhere near as specific a fashion, instead they talked about the 'something extra' of cultural adaptability.

Some CLs said employers were not just attracted to European Business Studies graduates, but were actually 'looking for' them. They felt students working in companies established a reputation for their course, and then employers wanted to recruit others like them.

In this context one CL of a postgraduate course thought that the way in which employers approached them was not satisfactory. Usually they heard of a job opportunity via an ex-student, or alternatively the employer got in touch saying that they wanted to recruit someone with the same sort of background as a current employee who had done their course. She felt it needed organising because 'we're wasting an opportunity'. On the other hand, a Course Leader of another postgraduate course spoke about how they spent considerable time 'cultivating and encouraging' relationships with employers because they were equally as much their clients. Yet another CL spoke at length about how time-consuming a task it was getting companies to realise that they needed to spend time on 'getting their name across' to students if they wanted quality recruitment.

Some Course Leaders reported that they had established links with particular companies who saw them as regular or 'preferred' suppliers. The names of several well-known multinationals were quoted, some courses having a number of such contacts. Some said companies returned to them for recruits on an annual basis. One or two also mentioned that companies recruited a few students to their management development programmes each year.
Conclusion

Course Leaders viewed the perceived success of their students in the labour market in personal terms, they were *pleased* on their behalf. There was a strong belief in the business and language combination offered by these degrees, though opinions varied quite widely on whether the actual *European* nature of the qualification counted for anything. There was a tension between seeing their students at an advantage in getting jobs, and feeling critical in a vicarious manner, because employers were not actually taking sufficient notice of the European dimension. Most agreed that the 'something extra' (interpreted as a cultural element) provided by the courses was noticed by employers. In terms of recruitment, opinions varied widely from job opportunities being wasted, through to some courses with strong links with particular companies.
CHAPTER 11

Students: the course experience from their perspective

Introduction

Having heard from the Course Leaders what they considered the aims and objectives of these courses to be, and their thoughts on how the curriculum worked in practice, it now seemed logical to obtain the students' perspective. Given that they are the actual participants, I thought it important to hear first-hand from them what it was like to be on such a course. For reasons of practicality and personal interest, group discussions as a means of accessing the views of students, appeared to be both a sound and appropriate choice of method. My overall aim was to get a feel for the student experience. I wanted to gauge students' reactions, feelings and attitudes to their course. More specifically, given the data from the Course Leaders' perspective, I was keen to find out what students thought about particular aspects of the curriculum. How conscious are students of their development, and the 'difference' that Course Leaders' claim for them?

As has already been explained (see Chapter 6) discussions were held with courses in two institutions, referred to here as Course A and Course B: the first run on a 'mutual recognition' basis, the latter on a 'common programme' arrangement. To recapitulate, I did not have direct control of the arrangements for the discussions at Course A, as I was at a distance. I found that the Course Leader had recruited three groups on a Year basis, representing the First, Second and Fourth Years of the course; the Third Year being away on placement. This had not been my intention, but its effect on making a 'Year' perspective more clearly available in the data must be mentioned. The students in the first two of the groups at Course A were mainly British nationals, but in the third group there were more other European nationals than British (ie these students were doing their British 'placement'). At Course B, I had only partial access for the reasons already outlined in Chapter 6, and here two groups were recruited. Both these groups consisted
mainly of students of other European nationalities, from Level Two of the course. Here then British students were in the minority.

The following analysis of the issues raised by the students aims to show where Courses A and B had views in common, and delineate where they contrasted. Also in the case of Course A, it tries to capture the differentiation in views expressed by the year groups when this occurred. Further to this, comment is made, on issues where students agreed with what Course Leaders had said, as well as when they raised new issues. To respect the promise of confidentiality given to all of the students who participated in the discussions, real names have been replaced by pseudonyms. However, it must be noted that in choosing these a conscious effort was made to reflect nationality, because this is relevant to the discussion.

11.1 Attractiveness of the course

There was a general feeling amongst students that they had chosen the course with thoughts about jobs in mind. It would be useful, beneficial and above all it offered potential. Views were put forward enthusiastically. They saw their choice as relevant to living and working in Europe. In their view they needed a business element as well as language, and vice versa for the European situation. In detail students on both courses concentrated on three interrelated aspects of their courses: the breadth of study available; the presence of language study, and the dual award to be gained. This is how they saw it.

Breadth of course

What they focused on most was that the breadth of the course appealed to them. It provided a 'great cross-section', and the range of subjects covered was accordingly reeled off in support of this claim. This view can be heard in this exchange:

Simon: I think the other thing about this course is that it's got very very broad aspects to it because it goes from Law to Accounting

Debbie: Yeah

Simon: to Economics

Debbie: you're like multi-skilled

Simon: I mean there's no sort of definite 'cause you've done this you'll go into this bit of the business world you'll be able to concentrate on a bit of it if you prefer it after studying it
Dennis: It just opens so many doors for you just keep your options open.  
(First Year students Course A)

and here too:

Elizabeth: I wanted to do something broad and this incorporates lots of different 
things so I can get a taster of different aspects and know then perhaps see what 
happens when I finish the course.  
(Second Year student Course A)

First and Second Year students on Course A admitted that the broad nature of the course 
related well to how they felt at present. They had no set ideas, apart from a broad belief 
in, and willingness to accept a European future (see Section 11.7 European- 
mindedness). They didn't know definitely what they wanted to do in life yet. This latter 
view was particularly supportive of the perspective available from the Course Leaders.

The students from Course B also concentrated on the broad study experience the course 
offered. Some voiced concern that the intensive nature of the course ('in 6 months we do 
the programme of a whole year') led to superficiality at times. On balance however, this 
concern was dismissed in favour of the view that getting 'a taste of everything' gives you 
flexibility:

Hannes: cause if you come across it afterwards in your profession some little lamp 
pops up in your mind and says "Oh I've heard about that" and you know where it is in 
the books and where to look it up and then you can easily learn that in a week or 
whatever.  
(Student Course B)

So the learning benefit to be gained from such a course is seen by the students as 
enabling in the long-term, in terms of the jobs they can apply for and the approach they 
will be able to offer. Besides the breadth of the course being important, the fact that it 
was allied to language study was also regarded as highly relevant. Here again there was 
a high correlation in what students said with what Course Leaders had indicated were 
their views on language.

Significance of language

A distinct concentration of comments came on languages, across both courses. Each 
student had chosen the course for a personal combination of reasons, but particularly 
because of language. This was very much the case with British students whichever 
course, who voiced quite a strong emotional attachment to language. At some stage a 
liking for language had been formed; then it had been shaped and sharpened through
European Management Education  

The student perspective

study, travel and experience in other countries. So there was a major perception of the course as the chance 'to carry on with my language'. Why they felt this way was shared with others with great animation:

Michael: I chose Italian for more I guess sentimental reasons rather than practical 'cause I went there when I was 12 and I just like fell in love with the country and this was the first opportunity I had to study it couldn't do it at school so I was really pleased [that the course had started an Italian pathway] it meant so much in view of finding a job otherwise I may have chosen French or Spanish.  
(First Year student Course A)

Keenness aside, two factors emerged quite clearly. First, there was a unanimous preference for language in a business context over a straight Language degree. This preference was related to job relevance:

Phil: I didn't want to go onto a straight Language-Literature course because I didn't think it would be don't think it will be ah useful later on when I start looking for a job.  
( Fourth Year student Course A)

Gill: I chose the course I mean I'd done French A-level and decided I didn't want to leave it there I wanted to continue but I didn't want to do just pure French I wanted to do something to do with the business aspect as well ... it's definitely I think more beneficial than just doing a Business Studies degree.  
(Second Year student Course A)

as well as personal inclinations ('you know it provides so many opportunities to travel').

Language was therefore clearly identified as a prime motivation in choosing the course. Although the availability of a particular language (French, Spanish and so) was usually a catalyst in their choice, there was also recognition that getting an 'extra degree' was important too.

Dual Award

Students categorised the dual award as something that would help them to achieve an 'edge' over other graduates in career terms. They put forward their views to convince, and looked to each other for agreement. Their rationale was that:

Emma: Degrees are two-a-penny nowadays aren't they? So if you have that extra bit then it just helps you it gives you that edge that you might not have otherwise.  
(Second Year student Course A)
Dennis: You feel as if you're like doubling your chances of getting a job don't you?
(First Year student Course A)

Michael: You have the option as well of not being so tied to this country which at times seems like a useful option to have.
(First Year student Course A)

It is interesting to observe that some of the students on Course B gave initial priority to 'getting two degrees', over breadth of study, as the main reason why they had chosen their course. It was appealing as one student said:

Katharin: because students use the time of one course and get two things in the end.
(Student Course B)

But what the Dutch students highlighted as especially important to them was the English degree:

Helga: because it enables you to work abroad because it's more than a Dutch diploma.
(Student Course B)

Though they valued the dual award, most of them declared they would still have done the course even if it had not been available. Otherwise they simply viewed it as a 'plus'.

This idea that what matters is not just the number of qualifications, but how they might be used as alternative currency depending on the job market considered, was reflected in the views of Course A students too. In this respect the First Year students saw the extra degree in especially positive terms. Having two degrees they said 'guaranteed a job in one or the other [country]' because you could 'speak with people from that language and talk business with people in that country'. The Second Year students were equally enthusiastic, but held more pragmatic views. These were typically that if you wanted to travel and work abroad, for example between Britain and France, then you needed another degree from a French institute in your CV.

Such confidence was not matched by all the other students. For instance, the Fourth Years on the German route diverged from this view. Instead of seeing the 'other' qualification as a guarantee of a job, they expressed a feeling of unease about being awarded a German Diplom. They felt that they couldn't really claim they 'knew what a German knows'. They did not believe their course of study was equivalent to that of the native speaker. This stemmed from their experience in the German academic system at \________ in the previous year, when they had been made aware of gaps in their theoretical knowledge of Economics. They now realised the German course was much more specific in nature compared to their own programme. As one student put it the German
course was 'not just based in Economics but very heavily based in it'. Their views on the respective qualifications had been modified accordingly. However this difficulty apart, and taking the views of students on both courses altogether, they were quite strongly orientated towards gaining two qualifications from their study. This emphasis was not to be found in the views of the Course Leaders, who placed far less weight on the dual award, speaking instead more generally of students achieving 'competitive advantage'.

11.2 Their experience of selection for the course

The composition of the groups had a marked effect on the discussion of this topic. Almost inevitably the conversation in each case took on first a British and then a 'Continental European' character, or vice versa, as individuals talked in 'national' terms of their selection experience. There was only one cross-over point noticeable in discussion. This was when a few Continental European students on Course B related their experience in searching for courses in the British system. Here the split along national system lines is retained for clarity.

British students' experience of selection

Initially, British students on both Courses A and B described their individual experiences of how they had been selected for the course. In this desultory way they still created a picture of the process of considering different courses, looking at and applying to institutions, and getting offers. Location they indicated was a key personal factor. The course being based in a large city in the one case, and by the sea in the other, they admitted was an influence on them. Students from both courses acknowledged Open Day as a marginal influence only. Course A First Year students who had gone through the process most recently commented that the course leaflet was very 'impressive'. Nonetheless, the idea they had obtained from it, of what the course was actually like, was limited. No-one on either course had been interviewed at any stage, not even through Clearing or internal transfer. The only possible exception to this was one female student on Course B, who said that she had a three-quarter hour telephone conversation with the Course Leader during Clearing. What had proved decisive in their selection, was whether or not they had obtained the points to match the offer they had been made.

The main focus British students eventually brought to their review of selection was a concentration on A-levels. They detailed the points they had needed and what they had scored. This was the most outstanding common link between them. 'Missing out on a couple of points' meant coming to ----------, rather than going elsewhere.
The Continental European experience of selection

The students from Year 4 Course A, and Course B who were from France, Germany, Holland, and Spain shared details of their selection experience. On Course B because of the composition of the groups these views took precedence. The Dutch, French and German students described the process of pre-selection for their courses where they had all been tested in languages and Maths. They impressed upon the other students the seriousness and importance with which it was regarded:

Sylvie: Ah selection is quite big we are pre-selected on a written part so we have both languages ... and we also had how do you call it general culture test test your knowledge about everything ... very typical for the French system ... they took 40% of the students ... so if you had less than 10/20 in one of the languages you're out for example things like that it's very strict.

(French student Course B)

Hannes: you'll be tested in groups of 20 and then out of those 20 some 7 reach the interview and the interview is twice as important as the tests.

(German student Course B)

What they emphasised most however was the way in which their personal qualities, and 'motivation' had been probed in interview.

A 'course' perspective on selection: language and partner links

With students on Years 2 and 4 on Course A the comparing of the 'personal' view of selection led onto a wider consideration of course practice. In this way they became consciously aware of the discrepancies that existed between the standards applied to them personally, and those said to be or listed as the requirements for entry to the course. There was some resentment from students who had achieved the 'asked-for grades', and Clearing especially was mentioned in this regard. For instance:

Emma: I mean I got above the 3 Cs but um I was quite surprised at the amount of people that came in um through Clearing ... and the course was still being advertised even when I'd joined so I thought well there's that many people on you gave me high grades quite high grades to achieve but you know you're letting people on who have got things like the two Es and so on and I didn't really understand the process you know were the grades important or weren't they?

(Second Year student Course A)

Other students who had not got the asked-for grades, but nonetheless had been accepted onto the course commented:
Phil: I came to ------- expecting to be starting the Language and Literature course so my first day in um one of the lecturers from the ---------------------------- [European degree] course came in and said 'Is anybody here interested in doing ------- --------? Anyone with German? ... the thing is I find it very strange here cause getting any other language is I think I think you needed a C (yes) and I just ended up with an E [in German] and got on (slight laugh).

(Fourth Year student Course A)

But what collectively they attempted to rationalise was why the course management did this. Exceptions and lack of a standard pattern were explained from a course perspective. They did not condone the practice of accepting different standards, but they tried to understand why this was done. They were attuned to the language pivot of the course structure and explained the behaviour of Course organisers along these lines. Insisting strictly on the required A-level grade for German had meant the course was down on numbers for the German side. So many were applying for the French side because more people do French A-level, they realised that they needed 'to prop up' the German side by accepting lower grades. Finally they recognised that:

Alex: Yeah I mean the course has it's been shaped very much by the foreign institutions that we're involved with and the introduction of new languages as well because now we've got Spanish and Italian on the course as well ... they've introduced that now for the First Year.

(Fourth Year Student Course A)

The effect of language on selection patterns was commented on by students from both courses, though the actual circumstances differed according to the partner links. Students on the Dutch link of Course B gave observations of their experience with Clearing. Here a student on that link gives her perception of course selection:

Katharin: we were selected last year because ------------ [name of the English institution] was in this programme for the first time so they needed to fill up their course quickly with people I know that this course was advertised through the newspapers to seek for people filling up the course so that they filled their quota of students ... so that's how we got in.

(Student Course B)

However, what was an opportunity for students approaching the course from a German or Dutch base was not regarded in the same light by British students. For them being placed on the Dutch link and studying French as a second language (while being instructed in English) was not acceptable:

Claire: I don't want to go on the Dutch link because my idea of learning French is to be in France.

(Student Course B)
European Management Education

The student perspective

The UK leg of the course filling particular links, rather than attending to students' preferences, was viewed as a negative practice on the part of course management. Course B students were far less willing than their counterparts on Course A to rationalise the programme needs of the selection process.

11.3 Course arrangement

This was an important topic of discussion for all groups and covered aspects of structure, content and delivery. Mostly, as might be expected, students were concerned with their immediate personal experience (an inside view) and not with an institutional view. However, note should be made that some students on Course B did present their thoughts on institutional commitment to the course programme as part of their reactions. Otherwise this topic was more or less subsumed in other topics discussed. This represents a reversal to the way in which the Course Leaders viewed the courses.

The other point that needs some prior explanation is that there was often no neat dividing line between issues of course arrangement, and students' consideration of their learning process. Partially this was a function of the way in which the discussions were conducted (see Chapter 6), but also it reflects the complexity of this particular topic area. In order to convey the range of students' feelings, attitudes and observations at this stage, priority has been given to what the students found important.

Course organisation

There was a general feeling from students on both courses (A and B) that their course lacked coordination. Broadly speaking, students felt there was a lack of communication between staff, between staff and students, and also between partner institutions. With Course A, although they held some opinions in common, there was a difference of emphasis noticeable according to the stage of the course they had reached. This varied from rather vague perceptions:

Simon: I find the course itself is very disorganised it's

Debbie: Yeah

Other: Yes

HT: Why's that do you think?

Debbie: Just lack of communication between the lecturers.

(First Year students Course A)
to more specific thoughts about those teaching them. Staff were not 'dedicated' to their course:

Debbie: the problem with our course as well because not everybody is from the \[\text{name of the course}\] unit we've got them drafted in from the Economics Department drafted in from I don't know like \[\text{name of course}\]'s from the Law department they're all over the place.

(First Year student Course A)

Students were not sure whether this lack of identity was necessarily a bad idea. They compared their course favourably with the Business Studies course. They felt their course was more varied, and so they reasoned, they needed staff from a wider range of disciplines.

Students from Course B observed similar fragmentation in the course team, however their reactions were more critical. It was not just a question of information but attitude, as far as they were concerned some staff lacked commitment (see below).

However, on both courses the general lack of communication was overshadowed by the more specific issue of the actual coordination of the programme. The further on in their course they were, the more aware students were of this as a problem. They felt instances of disorganisation had affected their own, and their peers' performance, and also their attitudes to the course itself.

'European' approach

On both courses students highlighted gaps between the 'course' view of what was offered as 'European', and their own view of it. This varied from specific subject relevance to the whole European interpretation offered by the course.

Looking at Course A to begin, some initial insight is gained from the French, German and Spanish students' view of the way in which they were now involved in study at an English university. In a similar way to the British students (see above language) they reflected the evolving nature of the mutual course arrangements. Central to this was that they didn't see themselves as having chosen this particular course. They were doing it because their universities had an agreement with \[\text{name of course}\], and it was deemed equivalent to their respective courses:

Heiki: It's similar to the Spanish system we had to pass all the exams in June in order to be able to go over um plus we had to have English as a subject as one of our main subjects (mm) when we actually started the course so not the \[\text{name of the British degree}\] but the Economics course in Germany we didn't know this course
These students wanted a 'European dimension' to their study and that was why they had taken up the option of coming to study in England. They developed a picture of 'mutual recognition' from their perspective. They explained how the degree was based in France and Germany. In the former it had a strong languages emphasis, and then an option of International Business or Tourism. The French students in the group had chosen International Business, and so they had come to study in England. The German degree students also were specialising in International Business in the final part of their Economics degree. In effect the Continental European students see their study on the two courses as virtually separate.

Students of Course A were happy that a European perspective existed in what they were studying. The course has a definite EC focus. Opinions varied as to the exact point at which this became noticeable. The First Year students were vague in their response, but felt that some lectures were 'more practical as to what we're going to need'. So lecturers didn't just talk about Accounting for instance, but gave them examples of Italy, Germany and so on. The Fourth Year students saw the course based more in: 'how to interpret information that you might get in a real-life situation'. The views of both the Second Year and the Fourth Year students coincided. They felt that the course became more specifically European in the Second Year, and that retrospectively the work they had done in the First Year was a 'good grounding but not Europe'.

For the Second Year students the content and approach now met with their approval. It was more what 'we really chose the course for'. There was some thought as to how the course might be better arranged to let them have European material right from the start. However, they understood that designing the First Year as an introduction was perhaps necessary given that people had come from different academic backgrounds. Fourth Year students were in agreement on this point, and thought that teaching Economics for instance in a British context to start was probably done to make it easier for them.

However, the students as a whole were still critical of subjects that they classified as 'not useful'. This was especially so if they could not discern a European connection or application. Politics particularly was thought of in this way. They were in full agreement...
that the characteristics they wanted in a subject were that it should be interesting, current and above all relevant, defined by them as about Europe and European Business now.

Lack of correlation of subjects studied

The Fourth year students of Course A were particularly concerned with the problem of correlation. It should be commented, that the strong comparative base to the discussion arose naturally from the composition of the group. They had all experienced, or were currently experiencing, study in two different countries. The discussion thus gave rise to a natural triangulation, where a Continental European perception was matched by an English perception of the same system (see also discussion in the next Section 11.4 on Learning Style). Even so the French and English students dominated talk at this stage, with the German and Spanish students having far less of a say.

Students pointed out that difficulties arose with subjects because theoretical knowledge taken in the normal course of things at an earlier stage of the course (in the UK) was assumed. This it was felt was true for the French, German and Spanish students here in [--- ] on the final year of the course. But it was something that the English students had experienced as well during their year of study in France or Germany. The substance of such 'assumptions' and students' reactions to it were graphically described:

Louise: Accounting for instance we did basic Accounting for the First Year like work out accounts and put it in a Balance Sheet not many people could actually end up doing (laughter) and then we did half a term of no we did a term didn't we of Accounting in the Second Year got to France and they've got a different accounting system

Others: yes

Chantal: I found it horrible last year

HT: Ah

Louise: and we understood nothing ... it was a higher level anyway because the French had done a lot more Accounting ... and we all sat there thinking 'Oops' so we were all completely lost.

(Fourth Year students Course A)

Students were unable to work out problems because they did not have the requisite theoretical grounding necessary to do so. This was true of students in both systems. In the UK for example, students said that in their study of European Marketing Strategy basically the whole course hinged on the fact that they had done Marketing before, and
had all the models or the theory 'in our heads'. This posed difficulties for the Spanish students because they had not done Marketing before.

They were of the opinion that there had been no overall attempt to reconcile different orientations and levels. During their time on the course only minor changes/modifications had been made. For instance, the course required you to have Economics now; and the course management were trying to improve the level of Statistics by insisting on attendance at lectures. This latter issue was confirmed by a memo from the Course Leader to this effect on the noticeboard.

The students from Course B viewed the European nature of their course in more complex terms. In some respects there was agreement with Course A, for instance if the subject did not have a realised European dimension, and if lecturers did not offer specific examples. They were also highly critical that subjects were not designed specifically for their course, and that the group was lectured to along with students from other courses for some subjects.

All Course B students felt quite strongly that their course also suffered from coordination problems. There was overlap in the study between partner countries which stemmed primarily, in their view, from a lack of communication and effort. To them it seemed as if staff 'did not know the course'. They reported that in some cases staff were unaware of what students had already covered in their studies, and perhaps more significantly at what level. The question of level was of particular concern to them, coupled with the fact that different countries in the scheme had different standards. This had become increasingly clear to them by now (in Semester 3) and they were very critical of the impact that this had had on their performance. Reference was made to the number of people who had left the course as a result. They were at pains to point out that this was not simply a gap between their expectations, and what the course had actually delivered. More to the point, they felt there was a discrepancy: they had been 'led to believe' one thing, but something else had been done. They expressed a general reaction against the 'unhelpfulness' of course management for this reason.

This lack of coordination made them query the basis of the study programme overall. The institution-centred approach they met with was not how they conceived the scheme should work. Their perception here was that each country was interpreting the study according to what was happening in its own culture and society. Students considered this a flawed 'European' interpretation:

Frits: there must be some effort from the school itself they must put some effort to try change their course structures if need be adapt to the other schools and each school should be doing that towards the others so there they should be more fine-tuned towards each other the different institutions.

(Student Course B)
Another area that was important to them, and here they differed in their specific views from Course A, was that of languages. They were unanimous on this point, i.e., that the course gave insufficient priority to languages. They saw this as a serious weakness in its European dimension:

Marc: and if they want to promote a European spirit a European communication coordination they should also promote languages more.

(Student Course B)

Some of the German, French and Dutch students also identified an 'English difficulty in adapting to European feeling', related to their specific attitude towards languages, as central to this course problem.

Student commitment

By contrast, the student community on Course B was seen as being marked out by a feeling of 'togetherness'. One student referred to the atmosphere amongst students on the course as that of a 'family'. They firmly believe that they have a commitment to the programme not demonstrated by staff. This claim was made mainly by the German (and some of the Dutch) students, but there was agreement from the others. Their commitment to the programme was vibrant. Course promotion, students' association and representing on the Course Board of Studies were quoted as examples of this feeling. A good-humoured response to talk of these activities was shown by the other students, and there was agreement that 'the Germans are very motivated'. They referred to the fact that they are older than the other students. However, for the German students this was another bone of contention. They felt staff showed insufficient recognition of their maturity. This was exacerbated by the age of some of the staff who they said are 'younger than we are'. The students felt given their experience they were in a position to judge the quality of both staff and the curriculum. Lack of support for their activities (especially publicity) was yet more evidence of an unhelpful attitude on the part of staff as far as they were concerned. They compared such lack of encouragement with France and Germany where they had experienced entirely the opposite response.

This 'togetherness' and awareness of what was happening on different sites certainly stood out by comparison to Course A. Here students said that there was hardly any interaction between the different years of the course.
11.4 Learning process

In considering the course arrangement, students explored too the relationship between their interest, motivation, understanding and the specific teaching/learning style.

Development of Learning Style and its 'European' implications

The way in which the groups were set up on Course A was fortuitous in showing a clear progression (through Years 1 to 4) in the development of learning styles. Also the mixed composition of the groups in Year 4 of Course A, and Course B, gave rise to a natural comparison and exploration of learning style along national lines.

The students on both courses were very concerned with the intensity of their course, and the relationship of this to their learning. Some queried whether this was actually advantageous. Course B students commented that doing things under pressure was not really enjoyable or satisfying. An identical impression was given by the Fourth Year students on Course A who said the course had sped up 'as though it's gone up into fifth gear from the first'. The centre of this intensity was pinpointed in the assignment workload. This was especially noticeable by comparison with their experience in France and Germany the year before where the delivery was quite different (see below). Even though students in the earlier years of Course A were not experiencing quite the same pressures, they had heard rumours of the course's work reputation, and knew what was in store for them.

However, what was in common were the moves made towards greater independent learning, and how this affected their understanding. The First Year students on Course A were primarily concerned with adjusting to the demands of Higher Education, ie specifically to understanding 'hard' lectures. The Second Year students on the other hand, demonstrated a growing realisation of acquiring information from sources, other than lectures. They proudly showed off the discovery of learning from their own reading and research, and mentioned a heightened awareness of European issues since being on the course. The media gained their attention now and was significant to their understanding:

John: Yeah things on the news when you see the European stars 'Yes what's that all about'?... you've been drawn aware to things that are going on in the European Union and so you're keen to maybe look into it further and see what increase your knowledge perhaps or understanding.

(Second Year student Course A)
The point they made was that they were actively seeking European information, not simply because of coursework demands, but for their own interest. For this a national framework was not sufficient. They demanded and preferred a European perspective, which matched their needs and interests. The Fourth Year students had a sophisticated awareness of German, French and English media. From their discussion they demonstrated that their lively interest had been developed further by their time in different European countries.

Lecturers' enthusiasm and style was acknowledged by the students as a very decisive influence on them. If the lectures were unstructured they said they would rather work at home, in spite of what they perceived as underlying threats from Course management about attendance.

The students on Course B were of like mind. They too quoted a direct connection between the standard of different lecturers, and whether or not they go to lectures:

Hannes: The thing is the better the people are who present the topics or lectures to you the more you are motivated

Claire: You're enthused

Hannes: to their standard.

(Students Course B)

Course A students drew out what it was they admired and won their respect, and what caused them difficulties in their lecturers' styles. There were clear reactions to the lecturers for whom English was not their mother tongue. Open enthusiasm:

John: Ah I think it's great because we see the we get their ideas on Europe and their different mentalities on it.

(Second Year student Course A)

was tempered by recognition of the difficulty of understanding their English and subsequently the subject. There was a strong feeling that however enthusiastic they were about a different linguistic and cultural perspective they needed to understand the subject being presented. Picking up tips on good pronunciation for instance was not a substitute for appreciating concepts in the lecture. It caused difficulties later. This implicit contradiction troubled Second Year students and attempts were made to reconcile it. They were particularly anxious that voicing this concern did not place them in an anti-European light. They were on the whole supportive of the efforts of their 'European' lecturers (referring to German and Russian staff). They also showed an awareness of the linguistic difficulties they were encountering:
European Management Education

The student perspective

Emma: if you're trying to think in your head in your home language but lecture in a foreign language obviously the structures don't work ... and I think that's where some of the problem lies it's not it's not the accent.

(Second Year student Course A)

But the problem still remained for them that the lecture could hang in the balance on its linguistic platform. One sentence going wrong meant they lost the train of the lecture and were then dependent on the textbook for establishing the foundations of what the lecturer had been trying to say. This reversed the learning process for them. It was a negative aspect that they didn't have the answer to. They did however appreciate the joke against themselves:

Emma: I think it sounds funny here we all are 'Oh yes we're European

Others: laughter

Emma: we love it but don't let them over here to lecture us because we want English to lecture us'.

(Second Year students Course A)

In spite of these reservations, the Second Year students were more tolerant than their First Year counterparts. The latter were primarily concerned with the linguistic problems ('we could've done with a translator'), and not with the European value that might be obtained.

11.5 The European study experience

A difference was noticeable between the two courses here in terms of time scale. Course A students referred to their 'year abroad', whereas Course B students spoke of which site they had been in which semester.

Expectations

On Course A there were distinct differences in the perspectives of students according to what stage of the course they were at. The First Year students were not yet concerned about the details of their period of European study, and referred to them in passing only. They were not really sure what exact arrangements had been made for them, though they were aware of some activity. They had heard talk related to institutional efforts to do with Spanish and Italian:
Michael: 'cause they're still haggling with the we may not be going to P------ the Italian Department they're trying to see if they can contact other universities in Italy to give us a choice I know it's ... I think they're mucking round a little bit trying to get the best deal for us abroad.

(First Year student Course A)

Overall, they seemed to think that perhaps staff didn't want to worry them when students had 'plenty of other things which are more important' to do now. They were nevertheless in agreement that it was important to them. They were looking forward to 'the year abroad' which was seen as a 'main motivation' and a 'brilliant opportunity'. In spite of some apprehension about language because:

Dennis: It's true to spend one year out you're not talking about an exchange where it's a week or ten days

Simon: You've actually got to live out there and live in that society and culture and try and

Debbie: And go to the lectures

Michael: We've got to take our exams in Italian oral exams I mean.

There was also an equally light-hearted impression amongst them that:

Simon: It should be great fun

Dennis: Yeah it'll be great I'm sure

Debbie: I think it'll be different because you'll be with all your mates as well it'll be like a massive holiday (laughter)

Elena: Holiday.

(First Year students Course A)

In attaching this idea of 'holiday' to the time abroad here, students unwittingly confirmed the aspect of European experience Course Leaders said they were most anxious to avoid (see Subsection 8.2.4).

The Second Year students on Course A were critical of arrangements for the period of European study. Information was perceived as slow in forthcoming, and insufficient when they did receive it (just an information pack). Their own information-seeking attempts had not met with much success. However, what they were most vociferous about, was the fact that the course had changed the institutions they could study in from when they were first informed about the arrangements. The course priority, as they saw
it, was on setting up links 'chasing dual awards' (eg Italian route see above). The students had now been informed that places at the French institutions would be allocated on the best grades because they were limited. This matter of choice was vital to them, and they felt they had been let down.

Their attitudes to the course organisation were critical, but at the same time they recognised the Course Leader's efforts. They struck a balance between complaints and trying to take account of the position of course management. What eventually mattered to them most, however, was that they felt their study experience shouldn't be compromised, nor their opportunities. The fact that it was 'a new course' and this caused organisational difficulties, in their view did not mean excuses could be made on that basis. This is how they explained it:

John: -------- to be fair ------- [Course Leader] would argue that you know the French authorities are being slightly awkward (Others: Mm) and anti-Europe with this um this aspect and so he's got a hard job I mean to be fair to -------- and ah you know he's doing his best obviously but um and we realise that it's a new course but we don't want to be um you know treated like guinea pigs and maybe worse [referring to disorganisation with current Third Year students in France]

Emma: but you know it's our futures and we've never done anything like this before and to be honest I don't think it's any excuse to say 'Oh it's new you know we're not really sure what we're doing' surely it should have been sorted out before it came up with parameters of degrees and choice and it sounded like it was

Elizabeth: Yeah I appreciate there's a lot of uncertainty with like a new scheme like this but I feel that to find out about certain places and what certain diplomas mean I've had to go to this French girl to ask her because I'm not getting any response off any of the teachers here when I you know you ask them and they don't seem to know.

(Second Year students Course A)

So even though they were willing to try and understand why arrangements might have had to change, essentially they were quite dissatisfied, with what they perceived as lack of organisation and management not 'sorting out' the course links.

The time abroad

Students in the Fourth Year of Course A, and those on Course B drew attention to their experience of studying at other European institutions. Two aspects dominated discussion
in both cases: one was the mix of nationalities in their particular host institutions; the other was the difference in learning style.

The Course A experience was centred on France, Germany and the UK. Where they lived and with whom had affected their experience in speaking the host language. For instance, those students who had been to France had found it difficult to get away from people of their own nationality:

Louise: there were lots of us weren't there (yeah) lots of English people but not just my university ... there must've been over a 100 English people easily at the university (oh yeah probably) so you couldn't get away from other English people there were a lot of Germans and there were a lot of Dutch and Danish it was just there were more foreign students than there were French so it was difficult to mix but with the people we did mix with we got on well with.

(Fourth Year student Course A)

This difficulty with the sheer numbers of their fellow nationals was further exacerbated by the fact that there was no accommodation on site, and they had to find their own in the town. This meant that though they hadn't deliberately planned to do so, through a chain of coincidence they had ended up sharing with other British students. Even though they had good intentions towards improving their spoken French by practising conversationally on each other, in the end they hadn't done so. They admitted the reason why not was:

Louise: when you come home after (Mm hm) being in lectures for 8 o'clock in the morning and not finishing till 6 at night (mm) you come home and you do not want to speak any more French.

(Fourth Year student Course A)

Some practice at a normal pace had been gained on an everyday basis in the town chatting with the shopkeepers.

Students compared their experience and evaluated the rate at which their language had developed. At B------ in Germany, accommodation was in halls on campus, and a mix of nationalities lived in close proximity. A 'hothouse' social atmosphere and a different balance in the composition of the nationality mix led to different linguistic practice:

Alex: basically there were very few English people there were Irish and a few people from other institutions in Britain but a majority of people were Norwegian Danish (yeah) ... I tended to spend more time with my German friends ... we probably spoke 80 85% German for the whole year.

(Fourth Year student Course A)
In contrast, the French, German and Spanish students in the UK had private accommodation mostly sharing with other Continental European students. They found themselves in the position of speaking English as a common language, otherwise they could not communicate:

Chantal: It's like Simone and me we live together we live with two Spanish people right so when we're with them we have to speak English

Simone: All the time

Chantal: we try together to speak English it's so awkward so weird

Phil: You can't do it. (Fourth Year students Course A)

So they were firmly of the opinion that mixing with nationalities, other than their own, had a great deal to do with the sort of accommodation acquired. They were keen to improve their chosen language, whatever it might be, but from personal experience felt this depended on opportunities to speak it with people for whom it was their mother tongue. They had tried the route of practising another language with their own nationals, and abandoned it because of its artificiality.

Course B students did not comment specifically on accommodation in this context, nevertheless they were still very concerned with the influence of nationality groupings on students' attitudes. Sharing their thoughts on their course experiences sparked off a comparison of the group interaction at different sites:

Helga: we felt the same when we were in Holland

Frits: Last year yeah

Helga: all the foreigners just formed one big group and if you're Dutch you're just left out. (Students Course B)

Whereas, there was a consensus of opinion that in England the group interacted more because the course mixed the nationalities in the seminar groups.

What they saw as significant was the effect this had on their 'communication' with one another:

Marc: I think this is the communication is the biggest um quality that we learn from the studies
Lotti: Mm hm

Marc: and it's not just the theory because you can read the theory in the books you can get it in every country but it's how you work in groups

Katharin: Mm

Victoria: Definitely

Marc: you work with people and you see what you can learn when you work with Spanish people or with German people they work in different ways

Victoria: They have different attitudes to work

Marc: it's difficult sometimes

Victoria: Yeah

Marc: and you learn to cope with this and you know that probably it's going to be the same in business

Victoria: yes.

(Student Course B)

Experiencing 'difference' in learning style

The Fourth Year students on Course A, and all Course B students explored and compared their learning experiences in the Continental European systems within their experience and the British system. A change in attitudes with course experience emerged. Students' perceptions were similar to what Course Leaders had said in many details.

Students on both courses were in general agreement that changing over from one system to another because of the way the course was arranged had caused them to review their learning style. They contemplated how the changeover had affected them, revealing the adjustments made in the process. Individuals of different nationalities had faced challenges with different aspects, but collectively they drew out the implications for learning conditions and style. For the French students having fewer lecture hours ('we have 35 hours of lectures per week in France') had led them at first to think that they had a lot of 'free time'. They had found this was erroneous. They admitted it was not the habit of studying they found difficult, but adjusting to the fact that the course, here in the UK, expected a lot of 'personal work' from them:
Chantal: I mean we in France you sit down and you take notes and you learn the notes and that's it more or less ... it's different you have to get used to it (mm) I found it very difficult to spend so much time in the library see all those books getting so nervous about everything we had to do but it's good I find it the English system better than the one we have in France but we've got too much to do this particular term.

(Fourth Year student Course A)

Alex: 'cause in the German system it's basically your time's your own and you spend half your time labelling your folders (laughter) whereas over here it's very much set your assignments are in and you need to be doing the reading at the same time.

(Fourth Year student Course A)

Louise: in France you're virtually spoon-fed in your lectures you're sat for two hours (mm) go away learn your notes that's it we did three assignments in the whole year ... you've got no essay whereas we've got four essays where it says 'Analyse the situation of ..' in relation to what you've learnt.

(Fourth Year student Course A)

Even though the British drive to an independent, student-centred style was perhaps initially baffling, as the comments below show, students (A and B) were still positive about taking on this responsibility:

Hannes: Here [in England] the actual work to get the depth of topics is left to your own you have to sit in there [pointing at the library] and um in the lectures they give you more the incentives to learn.

(Student Course B)

The eccentricity of this approach from his perspective was commented upon by a Dutch student:

Frits: [in Holland] they're really precise here [in England] they say well they don't say.

(Student Course B)

For the Dutch students the major impact had been in the shift from a total seminar arrangement. Previously, they had been studying in one fixed 'class', and now in this semester they had 50% of the programme contact hours as lectures in a large group. This difference meant:

Helga: you intermingle a lot with the group as a whole.

(Student Course B)
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In spite of the difficulties most spoke favourably of the British system. A typical comment was 'I'm happy with it now'; and the reason singled out was taking responsibility for their learning. This was an exact confirmation of how Course Leaders reported their experience.

Course B students reflected too on which way round the course programme could best be organised to allow students to capitalise on the benefits of the different learning styles. However, on balance what they recognised as significant was that advantages and disadvantages of the different systems, and the conflicts that brought aside, they had learnt to appreciate different ways of being taught.

Feeling different

Students (Fourth Year Course A; and Course B) also emphasised that they felt different after being abroad. They offered virtually identical reasons for this: coping with travelling independently, having to communicate in another language effectively, and doing things that they'd never done before. Such experiences had increased their level of confidence, and their development was of great personal satisfaction. They were able now to reflect on the substance of the difference:

Phil: I felt more worldly-wise ... I'd never been out of my small home town and then I went to Germany ... and then when I came back I felt like I'd been round the world (laughter) and I'd only been across the North Sea you know (more laughter) it wasn't anything really but I did feel a lot better I felt a lot more grown up a lot more confident about myself.

(Fourth Year student Course A)

Students on Course B gave full and spontaneous expression to what being on a European programme meant to them. Some thought they were 'elite': on the course, and as a group in Europe. When they focused on what specifically they meant by this term 'elite', they talked about a range of effects on their attitudes, behaviour and development:

Hannes: the attitude you gain towards Europe towards foreigners towards ur other people's attitudes about another lifestyle another way of looking and all that makes you elite in some way.

(Student Course B)

To demonstrate how they had changed they compared themselves to how old friends were developing. They judged themselves as 'proceeding faster', and by this they meant they were maturing through their experience. They acquired this:
Victoria: because you have to adjust to so many different ways of life and you have to do things like finding accommodation and live in a different country and dealing with lecturers different cultures different people.

(Student Course B)

11.6 Their career objectives

There was particularly lively interest in this topic with students very articulate and keen to relate their individual future hopes and ambitions. The composite picture they created is vivid, and shows a high level of agreement between them on what they would like to do and why it was of interest. They also offered their opinions on what qualities and skills they might offer a prospective employer.

What type of work and where

On both courses no one specific job area was targeted, though there was some mention of Marketing and Finance. Several had decided on pursuing higher degrees: a Master's course in every case. Overall students had only vaguely realised ideas of what they would like to do, or whom they would like to work for. Comments ranged from 'a multinational', 'a pan-European company', 'the stock market' to 'I don't know exactly'. There were some things that they definitely did not want to do, and this was true of students on both courses; they did not find the idea of routine work 'just stuck behind a desk doing figures all day' attractive - 'not 9 to 5'. What was more important to them was that a job should offer the opportunity 'to see different cultures'.

This was a strong and unanimously expressed desire:

Elizabeth: um that I can travel and just look at things on a European-International level just broaden my mind just to have different cultures and societies doing different things.

(Second Year student Course A)

Debbie: New experiences aren't they? Like at the end of your life which is a long time away to look back on your life and see that you've done things and you've been places and seen different things.

(First Year student Course A)

For the most part, students on Course B supported this further. Their comments indicated a willingness to locate wherever a company might think necessary: 'it doesn't matter where'.

[11-25]
However, the main objective and what was most important to virtually all students was the idea of moving abroad. To them 'moving about/around' seemed to be intrinsically appealing. The First Year students on Course A were positively excited about such prospects. They embraced the thought that travel meant a different lifestyle and new experiences. Its attributions ranged from a change of scenery, people you meet, not the same routine day after day, novelty and cultural benefits.

This aspect was seen as a motivator. First Year students on Course A however, were undecided as to whether it was just a romantic dream, or it would actually happen. It was they thought a question of how you built your expectations:

Michael: in the back of your mind you try to envisage yourself you know ... it's about travelling and working at the same time.  
(First Year student Course A)

**Where?**

Most of the students on both courses did not see themselves locating their careers in their home countries, be it Britain, France, Germany, Holland or Spain. Their reasons were varied; some thought that they had seen enough of their own culture (at least for the present). The British students mentioned the lack of job security in the UK.

Overall, a Continental European location was preferred to Britain in any case. None of the students, whatever nationality, saw Britain as having good job prospects. Some of the students had in mind specific locations. Particular countries, such as France, Germany, Belgium and Italy, and cities Paris and Brussels. There was a clear link between these expressed preferences, and the languages students were studying on the course.

In this respect however Course B students were far more wide ranging than Course A students in their ambitions, naming continents rather than cities. Several students talked of going to Asia. There was a definite adherence to a wider perspective, sometimes claimed as International, or as one student expressed himself 'anyway more cosmopolitan than European'. This may have been a function of the group dynamics on these occasions, in that the discussions were more extended on this point. Perhaps it was simply the personalities of those students involved. One shared characteristic that emerged in the course of the discussions was that most of them had other experience of living abroad (not just on the course). It is difficult to say, but nevertheless the preference was marked.
What qualities/skills?

Students, on both courses, saw themselves having more or less the same qualities, on offer in their future careers. *Course B* perceived themselves as being open-minded, flexible, outgoing, mobile and mature. Also a lot of emphasis was placed on the fact that they would have linguistic skills. In spite of the impressive list they compiled, the students' intention was clearly not to impress, but to define their abilities as exactly as possible. Spontaneous reference was made to the course process in terms of how and where they were developing specific characteristics they had mentioned.

With *Course A* some specific concerns were aired. For instance, the Fourth Year students made the point that although the British students can now speak French or German fluently, they felt that the French, German and Spanish students had 'superior language skills'. Besides this the majority of them can also 'speak more than one language'.

It was not just a matter of how they perceived themselves, but also what they thought you needed. *Course A* First Year students emphasised you had to communicate, be 'able to talk to people' and have the confidence to do this.

Students from both courses were particularly concerned with their ability to adapt to new places all the time. There was a clear awareness that the type of career life they sought meant you had to be an adaptable person:

Elena: you need to be able to change your life go to new place left everything behind and start again and then once you get used to being there do it again and go to a new place and you definitely need to adapt to a new place and be able to left what you had behind and you start over and over and over again.

(First Year student Course A)

11.7 Students' European-mindedness

The students' view of their Europeanness overall was very positive. Expressing their personal attitudes about Europe, and being European, effectively led them into debating one or other European issue. In doing this they revealed strong feelings which were sometimes contradictory in nature. In describing what their Europeanness consisted of and felt like, they revealed a growing awareness which was attributed to the 'Europeanisation' process of the course itself:
HT: Do you think you are Europeans?

Elizabeth: I think with the nature of the course studying everything in a European context it becomes almost sort of in-built into you you know you tend to look (mm) at everything in a European

John: Mm

Elizabeth: manner

Emma: We'll soon have no other choice but to be European.

(Second Year students Course A)

They were keen to demonstrate that they appreciate the social and political complexity of what's happening in Europe. They exchanged views on aspects of European politics.

Some of the British students were very critical of the fact that their Government hadn't signed the Social Charter. They wished to make it clear that they identified themselves as separate from such action. In their view it was detrimental to Britain and its future in Europe:

Emma: I mean part of the reason why I'm doing this degree is because I am scared for my future in Britain.

(Second Year student Course A)

They clearly didn't want to associate with what they regarded as lack of Europeanness. They had heard, read and thought about European issues and were prepared to voice their opinions. However they also held the opinion that it was quite difficult for people to appreciate the different lobbies and debates. They attempted to explain to themselves why nationalistic tendencies arose, and why it was that people concentrated on details of EC policy that they saw affecting them. There was a strong concern to find a satisfactory explanation for people's behaviour in this regard. So even though students were consistent in seeing their future in Europe, they did make the point that others don't necessarily share their view:

Debbie: I think um that we're just going like an island we're just going to be on our own cos I think a lot of people have still got the idea that we're in like a strong Empire and we're just not anymore.

(First Year student Course A)

They considered whether this was a generational problem. Some students thought this was the case through their dealings with their own parents (see below).
On the whole though there was a consensus that for the British it was part of a wider problem. They were 'narrow-minded', didn't like change, and didn't want to make an effort to learn other people's languages. In short their insularity was a problem. The British students were concerned for their reception abroad if they were seen as British, given this perceived state of the British national reputation. They regaled each other with anecdotes of behaviour abroad, for example speaking French to avoid being lumped with the British; being embarrassed by the behaviour of British tourists and so on. This reputation was confirmed by the views of the Continental European students, especially so in the case of Course B.

Finally, students on both courses compared their Europeanness with the fact that others close to them did not necessarily hold similar attitudes. They extended their interpretation of their Europeanness by contrasting themselves with others, especially their friends and parents. This centred on them having European understanding and therefore the ability to analyse the lack of understanding shown about Europe by others. They were both sensitive and critical at once. Their descriptions of parents showed a certain amount of acceptance that these are their views and that there is no changing them:

Dennis: It is because my Dad is totally against the Channel Tunnel and like a unified Europe... he thinks it we're no longer an island as soon as we have the Channel tunnel... he's patriotic he said 'Why have a Channel tunnel what's wrong with the boat service?' he says 'We don't want to be linked with France' he'll come out with arguments like that and to me I just look at him and say 'Yeah right Dad' you know (in a conciliatory voice).

(First Year student Course A)

They, by contrast, do care about Europe and their European identity is personally important to them. They are making an investment in their Europeanness. They were agreed that friends and relatives, though they cannot completely understand it, are nevertheless impressed by the fact that they're doing this European course.

Conclusion

Students are agreed that one of the main reasons that these courses are attractive is because they offer eventual career relevance without being specific. Something European is 'in the right direction' but with the options left open. To them this means the course offers the advantage of time to make up their minds about what they would like to do, without losing out on competitive edge. The presence of language in the study combination was evaluated as particularly important, and attributed high motivational value by students. The dual award available was not instrumental by itself to students'
choice of the course; but students were concerned with the specific link between gaining two qualifications and obtaining a job 'abroad'.

Consideration of their career objectives shows clearly why this should be the case. There is a strong cultural imperative to be seen in their view of an ideal job. The opportunity to experience 'different cultures' is extremely important, and regarded as key to their motivation. Career ideas for most students, though unspecified in other respects, are not based on working in their own culture, but travelling and working in other cultures. Though they thought a range of qualities were important for such a career most emphasis was placed on the need to be adaptable, and communicate in other languages. A definite link was proposed by students between the course process and their acquisition of these characteristics. Being on the same course, and interacting with students of other nationalities, learning in a different way, reflecting on how they coped with the 'coming and going' involved with studying in another country were all contributing factors.

What students conversed about, and the manner in which they did so evidenced positive, and sometimes enthusiastic European attitudes. Their growth in European awareness was linked to the European context of the course, and specifically to the experience of study in another European country. From what students at various stages had to say there does appear to be an increase in a European perspective through their time on the course.

Students felt that their acquisition of European awareness and knowledge was heavily influenced by the enthusiasm of lecturers. Whether or not they are encouraged both at an individual subject level, but also at an overall programme level is a matter of significance to them. They want and need enthusiasm and commitment to be shown, both to them and for the programme identity.

A number of operational difficulties were identified in the specific coordination of the curriculum between partner institutions. Lack of correlation in the levels of subjects studied was the greatest problem; but some students on Course B also said actual overlap was a difficulty too. On both courses there were charges that they were being used as guinea pigs because arrangements were not in place, or changing them had led to disruption. Students said such 'mismanagement' compromised their particular learning opportunity, and they felt it was unacceptable. On both courses evidence of the course putting what were seen as their concerns in front of those of the individual student was compiled. This was particularly the case in terms of language 'quotas' and partnership links. Concern for coordination was raised particularly strongly by the students on Course B, who felt that the 'European' interpretation of the programme depended on it.
Overall, it can be said that 'difference' was quite definitely expressed and felt by students. In their view they were not the same as students on a straight Business Studies or Business Studies with Languages course. Though conscious of constraints, and in many cases critical of them, they felt that being on a European course and looking forward to, having had, or currently participating in study in another European culture set them apart. This attitudinal development was the central focus of their difference, as they perceived it, and the benchmark by which they compared themselves with others.
CHAPTER 12

The employers: a look at the potential employee

Introduction

In previous chapters the concentration has been on the academic perspective of European Business/Management Studies courses. In this chapter we cross over to the alternative viewpoint of Industry. The specific focus is on the graduate who is the product of this education and training.

Before doing this it is helpful to refer again briefly to the academic stance. Course Leaders (CLs) espouse strong vocational intentions for their graduates. They see them as destined for a job/eventual career in a European context. Value is placed on the graduates as having 'something extra', and CLs claim this leads to a definite competitive edge in the labour market. The substance of the 'difference' claimed for these graduates is that they study language and business and have European experience. A significant reported outcome is that typically such a graduate is said to offer competence in being adaptable/flexible, what is sometimes referred to specifically as 'being culturally adaptable'. A key theme expressed by Course leaders is that these are therefore 'useful' degrees: functional in helping graduates obtain employment, and relevant in meeting the needs of the companies for whom they work.

The chapter is in three sections and examines recruitment practice and policy; explores what perceptions employers have of these graduates, as well as looking at the pattern of graduate employment and development within the companies in the sample. The first section of the chapter reviews the pattern of European Business Studies graduate recruitment, and the perceptions held by employers of these graduates. From the Course Leaders' perspective (see above) there was a strong expectation that European Business Studies graduates would be regarded differently to other Business Studies graduates by
employers. One of the main objectives of this phase of the research then, was to find out how aware employers were of the education, experience and particular qualities of these graduates as opposed to other graduates applying for jobs. The actual differentiation perceived by employers, as revealed in the interview data, is discussed here.

The second section looks in greater depth at recruitment policy, again with specific attention to the applicant who is a European Business Studies graduate. The question being addressed here was: 'What skills, qualities and experience are employers seeking?' and what, if any, level of suitability does the 'European' business graduate have in relation to these chosen characteristics/criteria? A key theme emerging in the data at this stage was something representing 'added value', as opposed to being a specified requirement. Priorities attached by employers are delineated accordingly, and placed against those of Course Leaders to allow a comparative view.

The final section of the chapter is a brief look at the direction of graduate training and development on taking up employment. The interviews queried whether the expressed European interest and general orientation of such graduates (as expressed by students in Chapter 11) was likely to be consolidated. Particular attention was given as to whether a pattern of European management development existed, and what part a newly-recruited graduate might have in this. The data demonstrates a strong realisation of, and indeed tension between, what the individual wants, as opposed to what the company needs/requires. Also emerging very clearly from the interviews was a trend of fast-moving growth and development in companies' operations, especially in the Central and Eastern European areas. This pattern is examined for what it tells us about the ongoing needs for European business personnel.

In the following report, to comply with assurances of confidentiality, employers are referred to simply by a code number. Occasionally the industry sector is indicated to give substance and interest. The full composition of the sample has already been referred to in Chapter 7.

12.1 Background on company orientation

In order to set the findings in context interviewees were asked to allocate a term to their company. Company representatives for the most part gave a precise answer. Exactly one third categorised their companies as International, and over another third as Multinational. The remainder (under a third) described themselves respectively as European (2), British (2), Global (1) and Transnational (1).

For some of the interviewees the choice of description was clearly related to the company's markets and operations. They quoted the percentage of business centred in a particular area as an indicator of why the company fitted its category. For example,
'multinational ... about 40% of the total investment is in North America'. The sweep of a company's operations was also demonstrated, for instance, 'International ... we operate in about 50 countries worldwide' to support the chosen category. Other respondents were content to opt for one of the categories without further comment. Some added qualifiers to their choice, and these comments are of particular interest to us.

What they reveal is the existence, or planned implementation, of company ambitions in particular areas. Some representatives admitted achievement of International status was recent in nature, for example, 'we would call ourselves International just'; or indeed far from total.

The latter was the case for this representative:

E34: we're trying to be an International company but we're overwhelmingly British.

This desire to outstrip their British origins should be contrasted with the firm adherence to being British made by a tiny minority. As one representative in this group remarked the company's international needs were 'sporadic'.

In fact it is the exceptions to this fairly clear division into International and Multinational which offer a glimpse in another direction. They show that there are a small number of companies who prefer to categorise themselves primarily on a cultural/national basis. For instance one employer in the computing sector started his explanation along similar lines to other interviewees (see above), but then made a statement which distinguished his company in this way:

E7: I would say we're European ... trade in 80 countries but 80% of the business is in Europe ... absolutely not neutral on this ... see ourselves as part of Europe as a whole including Scandinavia and Central and Eastern Europe.

As did this representative:

E19: we're probably somewhere between International and multinational I think we'd like to be transnational ... really shouldn't matter to us which nationalities work in which country.

This handful of companies had very specific plans for company development strongly related to this expressed cultural orientation. This will be considered in detail later in Section 12.4.
12.2 Recruitment Practice

12.2.1 Pattern of European Business Studies graduate recruitment

The actual recruitment pattern was difficult to establish exactly. Despite having a precise framework to collect data, many interviewees were unwilling to be tied down to the specific listings on the schedule. However, with polite but persistent probing, more detailed information was gained. This included reference to particular institutions that the companies had dealt with. This was useful in that I was able to identify liaison with particular degree courses which had already formed part of the survey, and/or had been the subject of in-depth interviews with Course Leaders.

Some interviewees were confused over which were the European Business degrees. Some demonstrated by the institutions they talked about, that their interpretation of European Business was differently based to the one used in this study. A few grouped what were clearly recognisable to me as named European or International degrees together in their comments. For example, International Business courses at Aston, Bath, Loughborough and Strathclyde were mentioned by several employers, as European.

These points raise the issue that there is a need to consider that the industry perception and use of degree titles is somewhat looser, or at any rate less exact semantically, than that of the academic user.

Whether or not their companies have actually recruited personnel with these qualifications posed difficulties for many of the interviewees. With the occasional exception, very few interviewees gave a specific reply. This representative was one of those able to identify recruitment definitely:

E30: from the first category though not in any great numbers but not from the other three.

whereas this employer was apologetic:

E34: don't see the detail enough ... whether they're applying or not only see the successful.

and this employer was able to throw some light on why it was difficult to say:

E21: I'm sure that we probably have ... the system can only cope with a certain number of variations on degrees ... they'd all be listed as Business Studies ... I couldn't tell you how many people ... there's so many degrees around.
Partially this can be accounted for by the reasons already outlined. For some it was purely a matter of being unable to remember. The overall number of graduates processed was large in volume. References to records or a data base might provide more specific information. More particularly though, it was because this reference to degree discipline, was not how they referred to graduates in the recruitment context. Recognition of the degrees and diplomas listed was acknowledged, interviewees admitted that they were 'familiar with' this and that category listed. However, what was important to them was different. Their frame of reference was orientated not on degree discipline, in fact the opposite. They didn't discriminate on subject at all in the majority of cases, rather a 'wide range' was acceptable. High on their list were ability and skill, and this theme will be examined in the next section. Many described their company's policy on recruiting graduates, and discussion turned on the exact criteria they used in selection. In this respect they preempted the later question on the schedule which looked at this issue. A number of interviewees outlined their expectations of graduates with European in the title of their qualification. These centred on the assumption that there would be a strongly realised cultural dimension in the degree subject matter.

12.2.2 Perceptions of European Business Studies graduates and their degree discipline

Representatives' responses as to whether their companies were keen to acquire graduates from this type of programme can be grouped into three categories of roughly equal numbers. The first group consists of those for whom the subject from which the graduate comes is not the most relevant issue. Company policy was quoted to demonstrate that a broad range of backgrounds was acceptable. As one employer (an international management consultancy) explained, 'nothing is as irrelevant as what they have studied'. And yet another employer showed his firm was happy to recruit 'any type of degree' and what's more from either side of the traditional divide 'Arts or Sciences' was acceptable.

Yet another representative launched into an amusing account of why:

E4: we do not specify particular degrees to recruit from ... we're open to all of them.

As far as his firm were concerned they wanted people interested in becoming business people. If someone came to them having studied, for example Medieval Swedish, that was fine by them. They believed that people might demonstrate enthusiasm in different ways, as long as they were keen to learn.
Some interviewees in this category, *at this stage* chose to emphasise, that what was more important was the *quality* of the graduates themselves. This varied from recitation of preferred skills:

E6: we have our own competencies like leadership skills communication skills that we recruit against.

to the affirmation of a belief that 'all-round academic ability' was needed above all else.

The second group consists of those who occupied more or less a midway position. For them acquiring graduates from a European programme of this type held some interest. Most of the interviewees here pointed out that they would not set out specifically to look for graduates of this type, *but* that if they turned up the *European* aspect might be a 'differentiator' of interest to them.

The reason for this was that they felt their *European skill/experience* might be 'useful' to the company. It is important to note that these representatives spoke in a very matter-of-fact way; the interest in a European emphasis was not intentional, but neither did it go unnoted.

A typical example would be this Head of Recruitment of an international food retailing chain:

E30: we take graduates from any discipline but we are interested in the European experience.

Or a personnel officer of an international group in the raw materials sector who was quite enthusiastic:

E21: if we come across somebody that seems good and they've got European Business/Management background then that's OK ... if they've got an International background or Japanese or something ... all something that's useful.

The third group consists of those representatives who expressed an outright keenness to acquire graduates from this type of European programme. Representatives gave specific reasons for their action. They were actively seeking to recruit such graduates precisely because of their *Europeanness*, which was needed and wanted by their companies. There was evidence offered of deliberate company policy in this respect. We can sample this in the following comments; first an employer in the banking sector:

E14: already targeting ... the bank has gone through a process of finding business schools universities who had created programmes ... we thought that the specific output would be of use to our business.
and another employer from an entirely different area, an international fuel company:

E34: yes when we do have vacancies ... language and culture is quite important skills they have will help us to break into new markets.

This issue of academic ability irrespective of discipline, prioritised over an interest in a European dimension, was raised again by employers in more depth at a later stage of the interviews.

**Did employers perceive a difference?**

Nearly two-thirds of the interviewees thought that the *European* qualifications in this research study were different to degrees in other Business Studies disciplines. They did not perceive a huge difference. For some it was just that such a degree was broader-based.

Others directed their comments to particular aspects. What made the qualification different in their view was that graduates had been exposed to other cultures, had European awareness and linguistic skills. The perspective, experience or skills acquired in this process were spoken of as being 'useful' to the company. This was a key concept for employers and was to occur repeatedly throughout the interviews (see especially Subsection 12.3.1).

This is how various representatives described European Business graduates. For instance a Head of Recruitment in the petroleum sector found them:

E23: more worldly and switched on flexible can turn your hand from one job to another.

and a representative from a large computing firm which was just about to undergo a restructuring with increased emphasis on European levels of management said they had:

E20: more awareness ... [were] more and more attractive.

and again a large UK-based legal firm saw them as having:

E15: useful additional skills ... probably understand better the thought processes of the client.
Finally, yet another employer from the automobile industry focused on:

E27: linguistic skills more and more see it as a plus preferably German.

For the other third of the interviewees this was not the case. Their view was that effectively most degrees in some way or another have a distinctive emphasis, and that these were no exception. They would not in the words of one interviewee 'be different enough for us to sit up and take notice'. Even though some acknowledged that the qualification did have a different dimension, variously referred to as cultural or linguistic, it was 'not enough' for them to want to separate it from other Business Studies degrees. The emphasis might be valuable but that was all.

One interviewee shed an interesting light on this view of the European Business Studies qualifications. He spoke about his personal view, and that of his employer (an international banking organisation). For him there was a difference; but the organisation he said viewed all Business Studies degrees as one category of qualifications. He explained this lack of differentiation on the part of the personnel involved as partially engendered by the sheer numbers of applications being processed (as discussed in Subsection 12.2.1), but more particularly as a lack of perspective in looking in detail at what is the difference between a 'truly European qualification' and 'a degree course run entirely in the UK but with a European title added to it'. He attributed this lack of perspective to the training background of the managers concerned. They, because of their line management background, were not attuned to what he referred to as 'the necessary perspective for a European Recruitment Manager-type role'. This explanation helps to inform the gap between the academic modelling of these degrees, and industry's appreciation of the specifics of what the graduate has learnt and how, during their course of study.

12.2.3 Perception of students on work placement

Over two-thirds of the employers interviewed offered work placements, though one or two did say only small numbers were involved. Well under a third said that at present they were not giving work placements. The reason for this was usually related to downsizing. As one interviewee put it: 'We're getting closest to our leanest and fittest'. However, it must be stressed that this was a minority. Regardless of this, these employers still had comments to make about students on work placement from previous company experience.

On the whole employers were very positive about the students who came to them on work placement. Their comments show that they were pursuing two main lines of
thought about their performance. Roughly half of the interviewees prioritising one response, and half the other.

First of all, there was a feeling that having the students with them was a way of eventually 'getting value'. It gave them the opportunity to see students at work 'for real'. They prioritised this as a two-way learning process: students learnt about the business process, and they knew what students could deliver. This helped in their selection process, if the students then applied to the company for a permanent job. Generally the standard was pretty good. Some employers commented that, given they had already sifted work placement applicants at interview beforehand, this was in line with their expectations.

Secondly, employers concentrated on the wider implications of having European Business Studies students work for their company. What impressed them was the fact that they offered a different view. This might perhaps entail challenging why something was done in a particular way simply because it had always been done that way. In other words, the student brought the benefit of 'another viewpoint' to the company work process. More particularly, they offered something that was variously expressed as an 'International outlook', 'a wider vision', 'the breadth of cultural experience'. In the approving words of one employer in the telecommunications sector, just being exposed to this was 'good for their [colleagues'] souls'. Having people with such a broad orientation was seen as a definite strength as far as these employers were concerned. Besides the interpersonal aspect, some of the employers also mentioned that the students' understanding of different business environments was of benefit to the company.

Finally, it should be noted that just two employers drew attention specifically to students doing work placements outside their own country. In both cases they were referring to students from mainland Europe working in the UK. One employer focused on the adjustment to different managerial attitudes that occurred under these circumstances. This was what she called the realisation of: 'We don't work like that'. The other employer was very complimentary about the bonus of their 'broader insight'.

12.3 Recruitment policy

12.3.1 Recruitment process

In reply to whether the type of institution that granted the qualification mattered there was a virtually even split between those for whom it did, and those for whom it did not. In fact a close examination of interviewees' responses shows they range across a
spectrum, from being a critical matter eg 'it depends totally on the university' to, it was not at all important eg 'not at all'.

Those for whom the type of institution mattered made a clear link between their recruitment process and quality. It was not the type of institution, but the reputation of the institution itself that mattered to them. They were looking for consistent academic quality. In order to achieve this in their graduate intake, their practice was in most cases to target particular institutions. Some representatives referred to a 'defined group'; others offered examples of actual institutions with which their company liaised. Here one employer demonstrates this:

   E7: over the last 5 or 6 years about 35% of our UK-nationals have come from four polytechnics.

It was evident that the search for academic ability was the subject of considerable effort, and the compilation of a data base to this end was not uncommon. Further discussion revealed that whether the institution was an 'old' university or a 'new' university was not the factor of significance. Representatives indeed demonstrated through their comments that they targeted both. What matters is the standard of quality. As this interviewee from an international cosmetics company said:

   E19: we differentiate between the quality of institution irrespective of whether it's old redbrick or new.

It was not, as one representative said, a question of snobbery, it was simply that it was important to their company where the graduate gets the qualification. Several representatives gave an off-the-cuff example of the relative status of two institutions to make this point clear. Some interviewees had very pronounced views on this and in more than one case their lists of target institutions were highly exclusive. For instance this interviewee was completely definitive:

   E29: we have an interest in the brightest 1% ... we believe they are in two universities Oxford Cambridge.

but another interviewee, a Head of Recruitment in the petroleum field explained their policy was to focus on:

   E32: academic quality within the institution ie particular departments or particular faculties.

The other interviewees for whom the awarding institution was not important held the following views. The main response was that as long as it was a bona fide degree and a recognised institution, they were open to graduates from all institutions. Some
interviewees actually stated that they did not discriminate. Emphasis was still put on a good degree result, but it was the quality of the individual graduate that mattered, not the institution he/she came from. A representative from an international management consultancy expressed this as: 'we take good people from wherever they come'.

Another respondent, this time a Head of Recruitment of a company in the automobile sector said:

E27: our policy not too fussy ... relevant good standard degree good relevant experience.

This 'open' policy on recruitment did not however mean that these companies were unaware of the graduates' origins. Quite the opposite as can be seen from the following comments; firstly, a representative of an international IT company:

E20: it's probably about a 60/40 split between old universities and new universities standard's been quite consistent there's not a marked difference.

and secondly, another employer in an entirely different sector,

E4: we still find that quite a lot more people come from the 'old universities' than from the 'new'.

12.3.2 What were they seeking?

In trying to find out what companies looked for in a graduate seeking a European/International career in effect the question that I put to representatives was 'leading'. However, in responding, interviewees handled the question in such a way that compensated for this methodological lapse on my part. Without prompting, many of them prioritised, and/or commented on these characteristics, and some added to the list. As one representative prefaced his comments: 'I certainly wouldn't want to delete any'. In doing this some representatives also unravelled the assumptions underlying the 'European/International' career tag.

E6: Regardless of whether we are seeking someone for a European/International career or a UK career we would look at the first four [on the list].

Given the way the question was framed in the first place, it is probably helpful to register the expressed level of agreement with those characteristics, before considering the wider interpretation offered by interviewees. An overview is as follows: the majority, well over two-thirds, regarded mobility as important. Just over two-thirds also
agreed they were looking for an active, adaptable person; with some commenting separately on 'active' as opposed to 'adaptable'. Exactly the same proportion thought the ability to work in a multicultural group was important. However only a minority, just over one-third of those interviewed, found 'an interest in cultures other than their own' something they would look for in graduates. Language, on the other hand was the ability which elicited perhaps the most comment, with exactly two-thirds of the representatives saying they would look for it, but with a particular reason for it being what was most important. Lastly, knowledge of European/International Business was seen as important by just over one-third, again a minority of those interviewed.

Quite a number of interviewees drew a distinction between being happy if a graduate had all or most of those things on the list, and specifically selecting for them. We shall now consider the substance of what company representatives had to say about what they looked for in a graduate seeking a European/International career.

Mobility

Over half (15 out of 25) of those who said that willingness to be mobile was something their company would look for in a graduate examined the importance of this characteristic further. For some it was very definitely important because of the nature of the company's work. As one representative in the computing sector commented, the fact that they were 'winning more and more contracts with companies' meant it was essential. Another representative from an oil multinational referred to the 'changing nature of organisational structures', which meant the mobility factor was very relevant. Yet another company representative this time in the fuel sector emphasised they had projects in different countries, for example Latin America, and this meant there was a 'need to pop over' and spend time working in diverse situations.

Such a need for mobility must however be contrasted with yet another interviewee in the computing sector, who said:

E7: We don't expect people to have a passport in their back pocket ..... we want mobility but it will be on a planned considered basis and for a minority of people ..... we're not trying to create a cadre of homogeneous, perpetually mobile people.

So being 'able and willing' in relation to mobility is very important, perhaps a necessity. But it is not, as many interviewees later pointed out, necessarily a foregone conclusion that a graduate will indeed work in European or wider spread International locations. For discussion of this aspect see Subsections 12.4.1 and 12.4.2 later in this chapter.

Nevertheless for many it remains a definite yes. This becomes clearer when we focus on the comments of several interviewees who reflected on the nature of their expectation in

[12-12]
relation to attitude. Age was explicitly mentioned in this context. As a representative of a multinational holding company said:

E10: Willingness to be mobile yes we would not want immobile people joining us that young.

So even though mobile people may be essential, or not, depending on a given company's operations, nevertheless there is still an assumption that 'at that age' the willingness to be mobile should be in place.

Some representatives said that in their companies there was an expectation that during the first few years of employment the graduate would be prepared to work anywhere. It was stressed that demands made on employees in this respect would be within reason.

Finally, of particular interest given the overall nature of this study was one interviewee in the financial sector who looked at willingness to be mobile in this way:

E14: we would make an assumption that if a person chose to do a specifically European qualification then by definition they want to be mobile.

**Active, adaptable**

Interviewees agreed, some quite emphatically, that they were looking for a graduate to be an active, adaptable person. Most of them then let this characteristic pass without further comment. However, a handful of company representatives elaborated on why they would look for such individual ability. What they highlighted was that change is a constant, and therefore as one employer said:

E4: They're [graduates] always working with new clients ... they have to be adaptable to different types of people different types of environment.

**Ability to work in a multicultural group**

Half of those who said this ability was important had more to say about it. One or two pointed out that this was something that 'almost goes without saying', especially given that Britain is 'to all intents and purposes' a multicultural society anyway. Even if this wasn't the case, as others commented, there is still an expectation of it because of the international working. As one company representative from a services sector multinational expressed it:
E6: We have a lot of managers on assignments from overseas etc ... they need to be able to work as part of a multicultural group regardless of whether they're based in the UK or abroad.

This emphasis on the team approach and the need to manage interpersonal relations was the reason why such ability was seen as important. This is highlighted by yet another company representative from the services sector who gave an overview of the way in which their markets were currently developing, and how as a consequence of this secondments would increase. However, what he emphasised they were looking for in personnel was not just an appreciation of the different markets, but in his words that:

E16: they developed a sense of the other contributors particularly in Europe it was important to understand the regional differences indigenous differences.

It is worth considering that several interviewees mentioned that this ability was very much to do with the individual. They endorsed its importance, but said they didn't specifically select for it, because it was difficult to measure and assess. Only two representatives stated that it was something that their companies would develop with graduates as part of a later development process. One representative remarked that it was of some comfort to them if the graduate had done 'a multicultural type of degree' because they would be 'good at those sorts of things'.

Interest in cultures other than their own

This was the characteristic least commented upon, as has already been noted. Even so, a small number of company representatives made observations about what this 'interest' would mean to them. There was no one consistent interpretation. They variously equated interest to be behaviour on the part of the graduate that 'respects', 'is comfortable with', 'has a larger awareness of', 'is sensitive to' or 'wants to experience' other cultures. These diverse meanings/descriptions suggest that I should have defined this characteristic more precisely.

European language skills

Interviewees had very definite views on whether or not they would look for language skills in a graduate. Nearly everyone who agreed they would look for such skills explained why this was the case. What emerges is a very clear pattern of response, and this was especially so by contrast with the preceding characteristic. Several representatives drew attention to a trend towards recruiting increasing numbers of graduates with languages. In the words of one representative from a European car
manufacuturer 'it's becoming more of a preferred situation'. Others tackled their explanation from a need perspective. They increasingly looked for language skills because it was critical to the company's operations.

Some representatives commented on the shift in the company's operations between parts of the world where English is spoken as the business language, and other places where opportunities were opening up and they needed other languages to do business. They therefore focused on the economic advantage to be gained in knowing the languages of emerging economies. For instance, this employer in the accountancy sector commented:

E4: we don't get enough people going to Western Europe Central Europe ... need more people to have been there because they're actually economically more important to the UK.

and another employer spoke of his company's deficiency in relation to language even more candidly:

E34: we need it in the company almost on spec we know that there isn't enough language capability in business ... an act of faith if you like pay us in the long time.

Consequently, companies were on the look out for graduates with appropriate language skills. They were 'more attractive' and tended to 'stand out' in relation to the company's processes. For instance as this representative explained:

E6: if we were looking to send a UK manager to France somebody who had French language skill would obviously be in a better position than somebody who didn't.

The line-up of languages is of interest in what these representatives say:

E14: Spanish because it's very portable in Latin America Eastern European languages ... I guess the others by default French German Italian and so on.

E15: French and German ... need Italian Spanish Russian.

For this reason several interviewees said that they encouraged graduates to develop language skills. How they viewed the usefulness of such skills was significant. Having two or more languages added an 'extra dimension' to the individual concerned. For instance, one employer in the manufacturing sector supported this claim by telling an anecdote about a graduate who two or three years ago had taken on a post with them. At that time she had well developed language skills in French, to which she had now added Italian and German. As Marketing Manager, she was now exploiting those skills in marketing the company in the European context. As the employer said it is 'much more prestigious' to do this in the client's own language.
However, the 'added value' of the language is not specified in recruitment criteria. For example, one employer who had experience of recruiting continental European graduates as well as UK European graduates pointed out the discrepancy in his firm's approach:

E7: we encourage people to develop language skills but we don't necessarily go and look for them with them ... with British nationals we rarely say you need a second language.

However, with Continental European graduates he went on to explain, they were looking for two or three languages.

**Knowledge of European/International Business**

Those who thought a knowledge of European/International business was important in a graduate again saw this as 'something useful'. For instance, in the context of expanding business in Europe and management development, it was mentioned as very important 'if you're going to be of value to the customer'.

Others (under one-third) said they wouldn't look for such knowledge specifically; they wouldn't assume or expect it. The reason it was regarded as less relevant was because they felt it was something that they could provide or develop with the graduates:

E13: I would've thought that's something we can develop with them.

E14: I think that the bank's own training programme will give that ... so wide an area ... difficult to do for one country let alone on a pan-European basis.

This reasoning is of interest as a contrast to the thinking of most of those who did say such knowledge in a graduate was very important. What this group of interviewees were primarily interested in was not so much the knowledge itself, but what it represented in terms of behaviour to acquire it. They were looking for awareness, understanding, liveliness of mind. The behaviour of the person demonstrated by their interest in acquiring such knowledge, especially their willingness to learn was what they viewed as really important. One employer was prepared to describe the level of such interest as 'maybe even a fascination' and another emphasised the constant updating aspect:

E4: to continue wanting to learn to build upon it [the knowledge] rather than just to have it.
And finally, as one other representative discussed, knowledge of this sort wasn't expertise you could describe in the generic sense. It wasn't a matter of saying to somebody 'Go away and acquire some European Business capability'. More to the point it was understanding that respects different cultures in business dealings.

12.3.3 The dual qualification

For the majority, well over two-thirds, a European qualification as well as a British degree was definitely of interest. The main view was that it added value. As some representatives pointed out, it was not a specific requirement and graduates still had to have the basic skills, but it was a useful indicator. It was 'something else' that helped them to assess the graduate's suitability as a job applicant. It told them more about the person, in particular it demonstrated their qualities and skills.

For many company representatives the European qualification was of interest for linguistic and cultural reasons. Most simply stated the qualification would indicate 'language ability and cultural awareness'. One or two representatives stated there was a definite company philosophy which valued multiculturalism and multilingualism. They were definitely looking for 'multi-skilled' people and the European qualification signalled this to them. Some said, that to them, the European qualification meant graduates had spent time 'overseas'. They were looking for people who had used such an opportunity to apply themselves, and gain experience. Insight and perspective might have resulted from this experience. They stressed this was of definite interest, and would be discussed in interview. For example, as these employers expressed it:

\[12-17\]

\[12-17\]

E19: they probably have made some observations already about working and living in different cultures.

E32: person has been able to see themselves from another perspective.

E20: perhaps done more than the ordinary [graduate].

Whether or not the European qualification (dual qualification) does indeed make a difference to the graduate getting a job is not at all clear. Several representatives said outright it was not the determining factor. Some said it would be of interest 'only if' certain experience was evidenced. As one representative commented 'we wouldn't necessarily take this one', ie the 'European' graduate. Some respondents returned to the fact that their companies wanted other personal skills as well. Yet another representative stated that they 'would take the candidate with experience'. One or two indicated they would treat it 'favourably'.
As this employer pointed out it was partly processing-related in that:

E14: if you see a hundred resumes a day passing over your desk a French diplome or a Spanish diploma does stand out ... you think this person has something has an added value an added extra.

A minority of company representatives said the European qualification was of no especial interest. They did not offer a consistent reason for this, but their comments ran along the same lines. Other things were more important. One or two mentioned the level of success, one or two experience, still another the quality of the graduate. The feel of this response is highlighted in the following remarks. An oil company representative said:

E23: It wouldn't matter in the least ... the linguistic and cultural agenda is a desperately sensitive area but [such qualifications] don't add a lot of value.

Yet another employer was of the opinion that if they saw the applicant had a European qualification on the form 'it wouldn't make us look more favourably'.

Linked to this, and indeed a notable exception two representatives raised the question of the standard of the European qualification. They voiced their lack of knowledge over the equivalence of such qualifications. In the words of one: 'What is it?'. This was a drawback as far as they were concerned to any proper consideration of the value of the qualification. They did not feel they were able to assess what the graduate might offer to their company. This contrasts markedly with the view expressed by the representative of a fuel international who thought that the European qualification 'would help us establish their credibility'.

### 12.3.4 Time spent abroad

Companies' reactions to graduates having spent time abroad as part of an ERASMUS scheme were mixed. It should be noted first of all that hardly anyone interviewed indicated an interest in ERASMUS itself. Instead they directed their attention to the significance of time spent abroad. Remarks were made about the experience generally, rather than directed specifically to studying or working. This was especially noticeable by contrast with the Course Leaders who were concerned almost totally with the academic environment and coordination of course curriculum in this context (see 10.2). There was the occasional exception to this, but these interviewees cannot be regarded as a representative group.
For nearly one-third of the interviewees time spent abroad was not regarded as particularly significant. They were looking for other things, as in the case of this representative:

E3: not especially - we are interested in all work experience but especially relevant work experience.

The underlying assumption here was that the time abroad was only about work. Alternatively, time spent abroad was 'not yet' a significant factor in company recruitment.

For the remainder of the interviewees (about two-thirds) time spent abroad was seen as having varying degrees of significance. Some were quite positive about such activity. It was an 'added-plus' because it demonstrated 'flexibility' and was a way of:

E6: providing evidence that they'd demonstrated various competencies so it's another string to their bow.

These employers felt time spent abroad meant graduates had faced up to, and experienced things that were different to their own cultural approach. They thought going abroad showed initiative, and it was a sign to them that the individual had developed flexibility. They were overall far more concerned with what graduates had gained from being abroad, than the fact that it was through, or recognised by, ERASMUS. A minority of interviewees commented further on what they saw as a discrepancy in relation to ERASMUS involvement in this respect. It should be more significant. They admitted that they didn't know enough about it, or even understand it. The following representative from the telecommunications sector was refreshingly honest in this respect:

E11: we may be doing more with ERASMUS than we realise I've always been dead confused about it.

From what they said most employers seem to treat ERASMUS in a general fashion, many lumping it in with any placement activity with which the company was involved. They thought that it wasn't well publicised. Furthermore, from their perception graduates might 'quote ERASMUS all over their CVs', but it was not one of their recruiting requirements. As one oil company employer, who claimed that he was reasonably familiar with ERASMUS, summed it up:

E32: it can be of value but it's not something we say is an absolute essential in someone's CV.
In this respect, ERASMUS was just a convenient peg for employers, on which to hang their opinions about time spent abroad. The latter was of value to them for what they felt students gained from such experience. These effects ranging from maturity to linguistic proficiency were relevant, and equated as significant to the company, not the ERASMUS recognition. Again this formed a point of contrast with the Course Leaders, who demonstrated a different orientation to ERASMUS based on their funding relationship. ERASMUS is not just a word in their vocabulary, but in many cases a determining factor in the study abroad process.

**Expectations of duration abroad**

For the most part employers had very definite opinions about how long they would expect a graduate to have spent abroad. Of those who commented, only a small minority (under one-third) had no special expectation in this regard. For the majority (nearly two-thirds) however, there was a definite correlation between the duration abroad and the related value, or achievement, of the experience. They were agreed that 3 months was not really long enough to get anything out of the experience. At best, in the words of one employer it was an 'absolute minimum', and several described it as 'too much like a holiday'. Six or twelve months was needed, and one employer from a travel multinational drew on her own experience at this stage (as she was Dutch), and said you needed a minimum of a year or 18 months:

E8: the only way you can really get grips of how different another culture is.

Over half of this majority saw 12 months as an appropriate duration for gaining 'useful insights'. One or two of the interviewees fine-tuned their requirements to whether the graduate had spent time in one, or two countries. If the latter, the minimum was 6 months in each country, in order to get 'integrated'.

It is of interest to note just two interviewees who were an exception to this overall pattern. Both of them made the point that they felt it was not a matter of length of time, but related experience. Development of personal qualities, and maturity came to individuals at a different pace, and this should be recognised. In the view of one of them:

E7: a lot of people who've done four five six months come away with the kind of maturity and better perspective on things.

They reversed the emphasis from actual duration abroad to the perspective/maturity acquired. Evidence of this they said was what they would be looking for, not the specific time period.
12.4 Graduate employment

12.4.1 Pattern of operations

In asking this question I tried to obtain responses to particular issues about work. I was interested in acquiring precise information from employers on how they deployed their graduates. I wanted to compare what they had to say, with data already collected on course objectives, and student ambitions in relation to their eventual employment. In retrospect perhaps this approach was too directive. In the event, interviewees treated the question in two distinct ways. Either they attempted to convey information on the categories I had drawn up, or they gave their own form to the information, sometimes commenting on one or more of my categories in the process.

For some of the employers how a graduate is employed immediately after recruitment depends on what opportunities are available, or arise in the company. For some a further qualification to this is that it may depend entirely on the role that the graduate is asked to fulfil.

European dimension

Some of the employers, just under one-third, indicated that graduates would be involved in working on European/International projects. For instance, it might be they had knowledge or skills that could be used. Language was mentioned in this context:

E4: clearly if they are fluent in European languages it's much more likely they will get involved in that type of work.

Some emphasised the UK base, and a few drew attention to the use of networking.

Others, just over a third, saw such work as a possibility, but there wasn't a guarantee on it. It would depend on the opportunities that arose in the company, and in some cases the role that the graduate was given. Not everyone would have a job with a European dimension to it, or for that matter an international one. One employer expressed what would happen or wouldn't happen as:

E7: very much a reflection of the realities of the business at local level.
and another employer in the retailing sector as:

E30: what opportunities there are ... it may not be the right culture [opportunities] may develop as businesses [eg Spanish operation] mature.

Some linked whether or not graduates became involved, with their level of individual interest, as well as the actual opportunities in the company. With most employers, this chance to start directing their involvement was not likely to occur until after their initial training period of two, or more usually, three years. Such training was given considerable emphasis, though it was not seen as excluding other interests (see below). As one employer said projects do come up, you can't plan for them, and students (training for the first three years) would be seconded onto such projects. Quite a few employers also discussed the developing nature of their company's operations, especially in Eastern Europe, as having an effect on graduate deployment. One employer explained their work had till now been typically for the UK market, but that there would be more possibility of cross-boundary involvement in the future. This inevitably meant there were more projects in Europe to be involved in.

A small number of employers responded negatively. Graduates would not they said be working on European/International projects in the UK or elsewhere for that matter, mainly because there was a set approach to their training. The reasons representatives gave for adhering to this were typically that graduates would 'need to prove themselves', get 'basic training', acquire 'solid business experience' or simply in their company they 'had to do 2 years first'.

**Working in Europe**

According to the majority, the likelihood of a graduate going to Europe in the short-term was fairly high. It might only be for business meetings, for a couple of days; what was typically described as 'a few trips' within Europe. Again, it depended on the job being done, but interaction with European colleagues would definitely occur in this way.

Being based in Europe long-term was a different proposition. Even though the majority said this might well occur, the emphasis was very much on the might. It would depend most of all on the needs of the business, not on those of the individual. The substance of what company representatives said shows a developing situation, but they clearly have distinct attitudes as to how personnel are deployed abroad:

E10: the person will have to be good and show potential we wouldn't trunk them round Europe just for the sake of giving them holiday trips.
Emphasis was also put on the individual's inclination for working in a European base, other than the UK. For some firms this was a question of 'if that's what they wanted'. A small number of interviewees were quite explicit that graduates would *not* work in a European office long-term. The reason why was because of the way the company's activities were organised. For instance, if on an international basis they:

E14: might go to the Far East or Latin America and never really focus on the European region.

In other words it depends purely on the company's operational requirements.

**Travel in Europe**

There was a mixed reception to the idea of travelling extensively in Europe. Perhaps a tighter term should have been used in the interview question posed. For instance, one representative queried whether this meant 'being perpetually mobile'. The response pattern is of interest. About half the interviewees did not comment specifically on this point at all. This is possibly because they felt that they had already covered it in their comments on whether graduates would be based in Europe short- or long-term. Only two employers gave an outright 'no'. The other half of the interviewees replied positively, some more so than others. For instance, this employer was very enthusiastic:

E34: there would be a real chance of them travelling abroad.

One employer in the finance sector made the point that they all travelled, it was simply part of the job which had a 'travel-orientated function'. One thing that emerged here was the interest of several companies in Eastern Europe (eg the former Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia). This had increased the amount of travelling by company representatives because of the setting up process. Some employers linked their comments about travel quite specifically to the use of linguistic skills. The substance of this will be expanded on in the next section.

**European linguistic skills**

Two-thirds of the employers commented on graduates using their European linguistic skills, and only one gave a negative response. Indeed this was the area where they were most definite. Other things might be dependent on role, but they seemed quite positive that language would be used *irrespective of role*. Only one or two employers referred to the use of English as a working language. For this reason as one employer said there was:
Some spoke about encouraging personnel to develop linguistic skills, even if only conversational. The social function was recognised, though it was clearly separated from the high level of skill needed to negotiate a contract. Those who discussed Eastern European developments (eg setting up in Poland) spoke about the lack of appropriate linguistic ability for these regions.

**Developing a European Business interest**

The opportunity to develop their European business interest further was far less well defined. A minority, only one-third of those interviewed, commented specifically on this issue. Most of these (about 7) said graduates would get to develop their interest further, and the rest (about 3) said this would not be the case. Instead they would expect them to develop an understanding of the company.

**12.4.2 Management development**

**Potential**

Employers were interested in the potential of graduates for European management, some more so than others. For some their interest was in the potential *per se*, whereas for others it was potential for *European* management that mattered most. One or two were a bit lukewarm in their response, and only mentioned their views because they were specifically asked for them.

Amongst those with the former response, some made an immediate connection with the fact that for them *potential* was what the recruitment process was all about. They were interested in the potential of *all* graduates they hired, and not necessarily European Business Studies graduates more so than others. For instance,

E31: try to run all graduate recruitment with the objective of producing leaders for the future.

Amongst those for whom potential for European management was an issue of specific interest, there were some employers who held strongly positive views. This was outstanding in the case of this employer:
They responded without hesitation, and expressed their views freely. They said that their interest lay in people who can operate cross-culturally. As one representative remarked getting such a linkage was the whole basis of the 'Free Market'. Again there was reference to the fact that they were involved in a developing area with overseas business growing. One or two were fairly critical of their progress; one employer referring to their systems as *ad hoc* and essentially *UK-based*, another commenting on the company's European style said it would take 'a long time to get there'. On the other hand, two employers offered a timescale in relation to such potential:

E7: within 5 or 7 years they'll be in positions of significant influence.

E32: 10 to 15 years time.

They were both particularly articulate in this respect. Finally, two employers qualified their remarks by saying that they were looking for European *and* International management, or International as distinct from specifically European. This was specifically in line with the company's preferred orientation.

**Management development and the newly-recruited graduate**

One third of the employers confirmed that they had a European Management Development programme. How well-established such programmes were varied considerably. Several, from the details offered by employers on what the programme consisted of and how it operated, appeared to be quite substantial. Others admitted that in their case the programme was just being launched or 'on its way'. One employer said that she thought it was more a matter of good intentions, and she was sceptical about how much was achieved. About half of this group said such programmes were open to, or intended for, newly-recruited graduates. The remainder indicated that such training would not include these recruits. Instead, their programmes were designed for a different level of personnel, either those 3-4 years into the job, or senior management. Comparing a typical comment from an employer in each group, it was a matter of 'right from the word go', or 'won't capture newly-recruited graduates'.

A small minority (below one third) defined their Management Development programme as International, of which European management was one part. Two of these companies were working with INSEAD, and two others with top Business Schools. None of these programmes included newly-recruited graduates. One or two employers said that they didn't exclude them; they just would not generally be included. The descriptions given
of the programmes showed that their emphasis was on developing middle and senior managers, mainly the latter.

The majority of the employers (well over one third) had Management Development programmes which can best be described as simply corporate. There was no intention to be specifically European or International, or indeed both. As one employer from the automobile sector said, even though they had a well-differentiated management structure with local, European and worldwide roles:

E27: Management Development tends to be core curriculum.

Even though these companies emphasised the group nature of the management development, at the same time several of them drew attention to what they considered to be European aspects incorporated in their programmes. Usually this consisted of a placement abroad/overseas. For instance, one employer in the manufacturing sector explained that their 2 year Graduate Development scheme included a 3-6 months overseas placement. This she said was usually interpreted as European, because they had contacts with other companies particularly in Germany, and the rest of Europe, and were able to assist in gaining placements.

The other point several emphasised was that their management development programmes were run on a worldwide basis. There seemed to be an implication here, that even though they were essentially corporate training programmes, that simply by running them worldwide this gave them a wider perspective. Within this group, some included newly-recruited graduates, and some did not. A few employers in the latter category, said it was a matter of 'when they were ready' or 'when they attain management'. Others said that they were included 'from Day One'.

To conclude, only two employers in this sample provide a clear and unequivocal pathway for transforming the potential of the newly-recruited graduate into European management reality. Other employers definitely see development for European/International management as the province of senior management personnel, or sometimes those with proven management ability. There is sufficient evidence in what interviewees said to state that employers are becoming more aware of the need to provide development for European/International management at lower professional levels.

**Conclusion**

On balance what is getting European Business graduates jobs is not their European dimension, but strong academic performance and 'suitable' personal and other
European Management Education

The employers' perspective

characteristics. Ability and willingness to learn and to continue to learn is vital. The European element is secondary, of interest, an 'added plus' but not essential. Such things as linguistic skills, experience abroad, and cultural insight are seen as 'more and more attractive' and useful to the company, but they are rarely specified as definite criteria that must be met in the selection process. What is perceived by employers as being European (ie equated to 'difference') serves a purpose as a convenient indicator, that this particular graduate has/may have competence/insight/potential that another graduate does not. In employers' terms it 'helps him/her to stand out' in assessing suitability for employment.

In this respect what has captured employers' attention most is the relevance of language and time spent abroad. These two characteristics are represented for them especially by an applicant holding a second qualification, ie awarded by a European (non-UK) institution. This was equated by employers in the interviews with a number of positive qualities. For some, it had even more weight as a possible source of significant personal development. For this reason it held considerable interest for them. European business knowledge received little acknowledgement for itself, though some employers were interested in understanding or awareness of how to acquire such knowledge in the business process.

The academic quality of the individual is seen as important, and for half of the employers in the sample this is determined by the perceived quality of the institution at which the individual obtained their qualification. To this end, the recruitment activities of some employers are specifically targeting particular institutions, and sometimes particular courses.

Management training and development is specifically aligned to the European context of business in only a third of the companies in the sample. A further third follow an International orientation. The overall pattern however, is one of corporate training with distinct categories of personnel undertaking set stages. The newly-recruited graduate is usually 'segregated' into a graduate training programme or similar, and opportunities for European (or International) development in the first couple of years of employment are likely to be highly limited.

The changing scene of operations, particularly in Europe as well as internationally, for many companies is perhaps signalling the need for other competences (eg Eastern European languages; cultural awareness), but this is as yet only reflected in the recruitment practice and policy of a very small minority.
CHAPTER 13

Simultaneous and complex orientations: towards a different perspective for an international world

Introduction

The aim of the research was to examine the nature of management education and training for those undertaking courses with an explicit European dimension. In particular, the study focused on trying to establish to what extent this education process related to current orientations for management in the new European, and International, business context. The other main concern of the research, was to identify the specific relationship between the development of this form of European curriculum, and the 'Europeanisation' of institutions.

To this end research was carried out into the views of educational practitioners (here Course Leaders); some undergraduate student participants, and graduate employers. These groups were selected for two reasons: firstly because they are the main 'stakeholders' in the process; and secondly for purposes of methodological triangulation.

The following discussion is an interpretation of the research findings (see preceding Chapters 8-12) in the light of the literature as reviewed in Chapters 1 and 2. Moreover, selective comment is made on the research design itself, reflecting on methodological issues (previously outlined in Chapters 4-7) as they relate to this current discussion. Furthermore, ideas for future research are referred to in relation to some issues. There are three sections looking initially at the European dimension (espoused-enacted (Evans and Heinz, 1995:3)) of the curriculum; perceptions of graduate competence, and finally an assessment of the institutional perspective. The key questions that formed the focus of the research proposal (see Chapter 3) are revisited at this stage and act as a framework
for the sections. A few words of explanation are necessary here; there is no intention to interrogate the findings chapter by chapter, but rather to integrate the three perspectives (see above), and draw on them together for their contribution in informing the research problem.

13.1 Curriculum intentions: the European dimension

Why a European dimension to Business/Management Studies now?

It was difficult to substantiate the exact rationale of the curriculum development context, partially because the time dimension was typically now at a remove. Therefore, the likelihood of enhanced memory affecting the validity of the data must be allowed for as a real possibility. In some cases other personnel were now in role, with no direct link to those who initiated development. This is further complicated by the 'public relations' perspective of the Validation Document sub-sample.

The start-up rationales offered by Course Leaders (CLs) indicate a complex intermixing of contributory factors. However, the surge in the late 1980s is unequivocal, and taking CLs' reports at face value it was essentially a market-led response. Not specifically attuned to the Single European Market (SEM), but an interpretation of labour market needs for the combination of business and language within a European framework. This clearly supports several authors (Liston and Reeves, 1985; Hagen, 1988) amongst others. What is not so easy to establish is to what extent courses were distinctly a European educational initiative, as opposed to primarily a market opportunity response. The latter alternative is present in the data, but more as an 'underlying consciousness' than as an openly expressed theme. Even though solid evidence is not available here, we should nevertheless place this start-up activity against Linstead's (1990) comment:

A new course, be it a totally new departure or a new segment to an older Nautilus, springs up literally every month.

And at least consider that although it may not have been openly admitted, nevertheless market opportunity was quite possibly a prime motivation for many institutions.

One improvement that might have been made in the data collection here would have been to probe more intensely the ERASMUS connection to the start-up of the individual courses. This, particularly the first application made by the institution for ERASMUS funding, would have given a sounder indication as to the overall parameters of curriculum development. The other aspect that must bear consideration is the connection with partners and European links generally. This was volunteered by
a number of Course Leaders in the context of curriculum development, and the
catalytic nature of such activity does stand out. If a connection is then made with the
fairly substantial data on the establishing of international links (see Subsection
10.1.1), then the start-up context does appear in a slightly different light. Even though,
for the reasons already put forward it is difficult to substantiate this line of thought
conclusively, nevertheless it would seem that such a connection is relatively
inescapable. The competition between institutions was not referred to much when
start-up was discussed, but became very visible in the institutional policy data. The
ordering of topics needs referring to here in that the latter was talked about well into
the interview, and not at the beginning when the interaction may have been more
formal. This may well have affected the 'openness' of the data offered.

The data on targeting students for courses also shows institutions involved in intense
competition with each other. Certainly the surge of course start-up would seem to
justify the interpretation of a 'bandwagon effect', ie that there was a competitive
advantage to be gained in this area, and that it was worthwhile climbing aboard.
Though courses may have been responding to market opportunity, and allowing for
the fact that we are unable to pin this down conclusively, it is still possible to avoid a
totally cynical position on this issue (ie all bandwagon), because of the existence of
some Eurovisionaries (see typology later). The probability that some courses have
actually shifted from a pragmatic market position response, at the time of start-up, to a
more curriculum-based approach must also be a consideration. However, it is not
possible with the data as it stands to develop such an idea further. This would be an
interesting area for more research using an in-depth case study approach.

Notwithstanding this difficulty, the curriculum development context of the sample does
place emphasis on meeting demands for European Business education. In any one case
it seems that the mix of influences on the process was various. However, it can be said
that opportunity seems to have been instrumental in driving development forward,
equally or as much as specifically formulated curricular plans. The rationales offered by
Course Leaders in person, and supported by the Validation Document sub-sample, do
not indicate that they were looking to management education and training directives
(Constable and McCormick, 1987; Handy, 1987) specifically. Rather, institutional and
interinstitutional competitiveness appear to have been of more concern. This was to be
seen in references to the need to keep up with other courses in the business education
area, and to get links underway. It might be argued that forming European links amounts
to the same thing, but this must be countered by the observation that the perspective was
phrased as a specifically institutional concern, and not as one at a national level in
assisting the UK to be internationally competitive. CLs were concerned primarily with
the more immediate demands of their clients: students' and employers' needs.
What is espoused?

A European, rather than International, orientation is declared by courses. Though some admit exploiting 'European' for market advantage, equally some say their intention is to create a European curriculum with a view to being part of a European educational future. The 'European' philosophy of courses, as expressed by Course Leaders, is highly variable. Commitment to any European ideals, and broader aims of European development is the concern of a minority only. However, an adherence to the importance of the European labelling of courses is common to the sample as a whole, whether a wider philosophy exists or not. The reason claimed for this is that it lends distinctiveness to the course. Examination of the espoused aims and objectives of these courses supports this practice. Seeking ways of contributing to the 'competitive advantage' of students in the labour market is a central concern, and overall there is strong awareness of adding plus factors.

The main intention of these courses is to develop graduates 'who can operate effectively in a European context'. A strong vocational objective and belief in the usefulness of the combination of language and business and some European experience is constantly expressed. Also, the belief that this will confer competitive advantage on students in the labour market is present, for undergraduate and postgraduate courses alike. A value is placed on the European approach/perspective for future career potential, but the most weight is placed on having some European experience, ie this is where 'difference' is sited.

A clear belief in the benefits of cultural diversity is voiced. Developing some level of cultural adaptability through European experience is prioritised in course aims. This is accompanied, and underscored by, a clearly expressed belief in the need to recognise the presence of cultural diversity in study, work and in a wider societal setting. Such emphasis is particularly appropriate in view of the increasingly culturally diverse nature of both the European, and International business environment (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1989; Tayeb, 1992). Language study though seen as important is accorded an instrumental role in this process, ie it is to be the means to 'cultural adaptability'.

However, there is a noticeable preoccupation with establishing institutional conditions of study (harmonising/exchanging), rather than considering opportunities for individual immersion (Bowen, 1989; Mayo, 1992). Mechanisms for 'reflecting upon and reappraising' (Reisch, 1993) the period of being abroad do not receive similar attention. The only exception to this is the project/dissertation mentioned in the Validation Document sub-sample. However, it must be noted that this was scarcely referred to by CLs in their interviews.

Demand for the courses in the sample shows they enjoy strong popularity with oversubscription being the norm. However, the ideal student sought by undergraduate
courses is shown to be compromised by a number of factors. There is a noticeable tension between recruiting academically able, committed students and the constraints of balancing course language groupings. This balancing usually takes precedence over assessing whether students have a willingness to communicate in the language. In other words, students with the 'right language' rather than the 'right kind of language' are recruited (Ferney, 1991). This is further complicated for some courses by the perceived institutional reputation. Postgraduate courses it appears, though still under the same language constraints, are closer to achieving their target student (ie one with experience, strong motivation and with European career intentions).

The standard of initial quality does then seem to be a highly relevant issue in the case of undergraduate courses. The majority (two-thirds) of the sample indicated that their student intake onto the course had a motivation problem. This was specifically related by one-third of the Course Leaders to the students' lack of European awareness; and by the other third to the students' idea that language study is to be their sole European focus. The youth and immaturity of the average student was also seen as a problem to be overcome. Given the key cultural training objective, limited suitability to become culturally adaptable is a significant matter (Ratiu, 1983; Davison, 1990; Barham and Wills, 1992). In another respect perhaps this difficulty balances out to some extent as there is usually agreement that one needs to start on becoming culturally adaptable young (Bowen, 1989; Mayo, 1992). This difficulty over suitability however is not reflected in the postgraduate cases, where candidates often begin the course with 'cultural' experience and are 'mature'.

13.2 Curriculum Practice: the European dimension

What is enacted?

Interpretation and depth of European varies (see typology below) and this has marked implications for this analysis. The study identifies quite different strengths of European orientation in curriculum practice. These 'strengths' are shown in the relationship between rationale, the coherence of the elements of study, and the course learning experience actually delivered. In this discussion particular consideration will be given to two aspects of the curriculum: the content of language and business studies and their relationship to one another; and the nature of the European experience offered (work and study).
Language and business 'integration'

The integrated language and business arrangement regarded so highly by Linstead (1990) and the usual, and preferred, choice of most courses was not found to be strictly integrated at all. Language is high profile, extremely visible from every aspect as a component of study, but essentially separate. The findings show that both structurally and functionally, language differs in practice from the espoused course objectives. In general, language is positioned parallel to other formal curriculum business activities not integrated with them. Further, its role though conceived as secondary, is actually prioritised and valued as an end in itself.

It is attributed inherent European meaning as a course element, over and above its functional role. This has initial 'fit' with undergraduate student expectations (Evans, 1990). Certainly the undergraduate students who participated in the group discussions (though they cannot be considered representative) saw language in this way. The need for students to achieve a realistic standard of proficiency in speaking the language is the main concern. The concentration is on establishing the quantity of hours to learn the language, not on developing its cultural repertoire. Perhaps it might be said that this focus is not entirely the fault of the courses, and that they are effectively drawn into compensating for Britain's low competence in linguistic skills, at the expense of a wider exploration of the language-culture relationship (Evans, 1990: 276; Embleton, 1992).

Two main obstacles were identified to achieving the standard of language proficiency required (Hagen, 1988). The need to get students 'up to speed' ready for their European placement has led to a preoccupation with incorporating as high a quantity of hours as possible into the timetable. It may allow them to go on European study placement, remembering that they have to sit and pass the examinations in the foreign language in the same way as a native student. But this does not ensure that students are learning 'the right kind of language' for business (Fernley, 1991). The drive to become proficient in one foreign language means that tackling a second language is not always possible, or may be neglected. Language is typically taught by personnel outside the European Business courses, usually from the institution's Language Department (see also Subsection 9.1.2). This trend is contrary to that proposed by Linstead (1990), and suggests that either linguists with business experience or bilingual business specialists continue to be rare, or that courses have not been proactive in recruiting staff with such experience or qualifications. The data would certainly lend support to the latter view. It may be that both are true, but the present findings do not allow us to say definitively whether this is the case.

However, whatever the obstacles, the study of intercultural communication and of cultural aspects generally, seems to be missing. There is little indication that courses are using language as a cultural vehicle, despite their espoused aims. And in any event it would be exceptionally difficult to make a case that aspects of communication and
culture are *anchored* [emphasis added] in the curricula (Knapp, 1990: 60). Again, the student perspective of the research study helps to demonstrate this point. Understanding of one's own culture and its interrelationships with other cultures is shown developing *ad hoc* because students are involved in a European programme. Their attention to this is not guaranteed through a particular unit. In a gradual and haphazard way they start to piece together a sense of cultural difference. Relevance is sometimes elusive because they have not developed this 'lateralism' (Blackburn, 1988; Linstead et al, 1988). The use of multilingual groups as a way of organising students whilst on the course is perceived as one way of delivering the cultural objective. However, in appraising these groups what most Course Leaders pronounced of benefit was the increased linguistic proficiency, not noticeable cultural awareness.

Where the course is most reliant for the cultural aspect to emerge is through the European experience. Even then it is largely left to chance in the case of most courses. Given the comprehensive and detailed findings of Opper at al (1990) on study abroad, and their specific recommendations on how the student experience can be made more effective, it is surprising to find how little such advice has been heeded by most of the courses. Such a view can be counteracted by promotion of a 'sink or swim' approach, ie that it is an individual matter because it develops the capacity to cope in an unfamiliar culture. This perspective did emerge to some extent in the data from Course Leaders, and students mentioned it too. However, this aspect must also be considered in relation to publicised course intentions in relation to this period. With particular reference to the Validation Documents sub-sample, specific statements are made about the conditions to be met (eg multilingual groups; that 'students will be taught alongside' students of the host institution). Therefore it seems entirely reasonable to query how much responsibility the courses exercise towards these in practice. The nature of this European experience is considered in more detail next.

**European experience: scope**

The direct experience students have of Europe has clear limitations. These are particularly noticeable in relation to area (the EU); and countries (France, Germany, Spain). This is in keeping with the hub of ERASMUS activity since its outset in 1987. Alternatively, the possibility of students spending an period in Eastern Europe has been considered by some courses, but no actual initiatives existed in the sample at the period of data collection. The average European experience of these courses then, is in one country of 'the golden triangle', for a period of 12 months. The culture-specific nature of this experience is revealed in the findings (see Section 9.3).

However, what the data reveals strongly is that for the majority of courses in the sample this culture-specific experience can be construed more precisely as *educational institution-specific*. Reports of students' residence in the host countries...
concentrated on their encounter with the institution's pedagogy, virtually to the exclusion of other aspects. This centring of the European experience almost exclusively on the formal study environment is not the stated intention of the majority of courses. Apart from queries on how far curriculum objectives are realised it raises the issue of cultural immersion.

There is a huge variation in the depth of cultural immersion achieved by the formal curriculum of these courses. The link between a belief in experiencing cultural diversity as a learning process, the course arrangement chosen to progress this, and the degree of 'success' achieved is both various and complex. The degree to which the individual student has opportunities for nurtured cultural contact is to some extent governed by the course arrangement (see Subsection 8.2.4). Accommodation features in this too (Opper et al, 1990: 205), and the numbers involved. Students' views served to enhance this finding strongly.

Experience 'en masse' in another European country for 12 months may indeed it seems be a change of venue, but may involve limited cultural change. For a noticeable proportion of students, it appears it is time spent with colleagues of the same nationality in the host European country. Unfortunately this is an exact reflection of comments made by returning students in Opper et al's longitudinal study of study abroad schemes. Also, there is not much evidence to suggest that courses are working to ensure students have a wider cultural experience of their host country; and almost by default it becomes a 'sink or swim' experience. The pre-sojourn level of preparation is scant, and in the student view it is inadequate. What the 'sink or swim' response perhaps highlights is how far courses work to a fully coordinated programme, including the time spent in the partner country, or whether they regard the European experience as independent to the main programme in the home country, even though it is supposedly 'integrated'.

The emphasis on pedagogic differences emerges from the study fairly predictably, and is entirely supportive of the findings of Silver and Brennan (1988) and Linstead (1990). The lack of innovation in mainland European HE institutions; the large numbers, and 'stated view' are all reinforced. The UK's predilection for active and independent learning is comparatively reported. Two findings need specific consideration in this context: one is the fairly clear indication that although Course Leaders endorse 'cultural diversity' in theory as a worthwhile thing, and it is heavily espoused in course aims, in practice the level of criticism from the majority of them of others' methods is exceptionally marked. The other is that, in spite of these attitudes from staff, students' recognition of pedagogic differences between the UK and other European HE institutions is arguably their starting point for 'cultural' learning. The student perspective available from the group discussions shows that they do evaluate their study methods/learning process and adjust their attitudes accordingly. If insight from the experience does occur, the indications from the study are that this emerges
first in a recognition and acceptance of the academic differences of the educational systems, as represented by their courses. Such reflection is reported as an outcome of study abroad (Opper et al, 1990). However, the evaluation of this depends on self-reporting, and is therefore prone to the difficulties of such a method. Certainly the students in the group discussions reported a raised consciousness of one's own cultural deficiencies, and were especially critical of the UK's insularity.

In the outcomes of European experience reported by Course Leaders, priority was given to maturity and linguistic ability, as well as the overall impression that students were now 'different people'. However, perceived outcomes were reported very broadly, and were not precisely attributed to specific experiences. The data does not distinguish sufficiently between maturity gained in the normal process of being independent for the first time, and progress towards cultural adaptability.

The European study placement, when the communicative aspect in a real cultural setting is experienced does appear to see a shift in how language is viewed by the students. How total this is, must be questionable given the study's limitations in measuring cultural immersion. However, the research (especially the perspective offered by the group discussions) shows that the cultural impact on students is dependent on the opportunities they have for social interaction with both students, and other residents of the host country (Opper et al, 1990).

A way of moving on from these dilemmas is agreement with Reilly (1994) that what matters most of all is the 'multiplier effect'. Numbers of students are now mobile, and access to other European cultures is regarded as a legitimate aspect of study. 'European' beginnings have been made, and this intermingling may gradually generate a new cultural norm (Reisch, 1993). It is possible to take the view that linguistic competence for business can be further developed later.

European Business

The research findings show a variation in course practice in relation to how the business content is taught. For the most part an identifiably European framework is adopted by courses, but within this strong differences occur. Only a minority of courses are seen to have a holistic approach, the preferred method being a gradual European focus. The importance of the European relevance of the subject matter, and a sense of continuity to their programme studies are however critical from the student perspective. Students want business study to be explicitly European and designed especially for them, and they are impatient with what they perceive as lack of relevance. Their motivation to learn is driven by enthusiasm for Europe, and if this is not matched by their lecturers they are disappointed. They are definitely looking for such encouragement, and they do not
perceive themselves as the same as students on Business Studies, or Business Studies with Languages courses.

The actual business environment conceptualised by these courses is one with a clear EC (EU) focus. What was noticeable is how often this study (institutions and policy) is separated off into its own unit. There is ambiguity over where input on International business begins, but even so specific coverage is not really discernible, and in some cases it appears to be negligible. The study of European Business does not extend to Eastern Europe. The reasons for this are accounted for by Course Leaders by the need to form links with developed partners, or because they are receiving ERASMUS funding. In talking to employers it becomes obvious that in this respect courses are already out of step with one of their clients (see below). This also highlights the difficulty of trying to research a fast moving area. The different phases of data collection, Course Leaders first, and employers later (see summary of research phases referred to in the Introduction) should be allowed for in any assessment.

The economic, political and technical (ie knowledge) aspects of study appear to be prioritised over the sociocultural context. In the group discussions the students report increased awareness of Europe through their course studies and European study experience. The process of studying European units has led them on to an interest in European events, and they claim both the ability and the motivation to research independently. This fits well with the contention of Tijmstra and Casler (1992) that knowledge of Europe is 'based on learnable facts', whereas awareness of Europe, and sensitivity to its differences and similarities, is expanded 'through knowledge, exposure and experience'.

Does it really matter how much knowledge they acquire? It can be argued that the most important part of the process for European learning is establishing sufficient opportunities to acquire knowledge, exposure and experience, so that students can gain awareness and form attitudes. Knowledge defined in this way is therefore just one route to awareness. This is supported by the views of employers in the sample. They are not particularly interested in how much knowledge a graduate has about European Business. Of more interest to most of them is that the individual exhibits 'willingness to learn'.

13.3 How 'useful' is the graduate for the European context?

Ball (1989) has suggested that the judgement of the 'enabling quality' of courses should be a shared matter between students, teachers and employers. However, the development and learning of students on these courses is clearly caught up in the British debate over management education and training. Lack of a definite approach is firmly reflected in the data which shows varying levels of integration of skills development in programmes. Whether course development should adopt an academic/practical approach
predominates, rather than consideration of what is effective competence for the European context.

Workplace experience

Practical experience in the workplace is sought after by the majority of courses. Here European comes secondary, almost by default, since obtaining placements is difficult in itself without adding further obstacles/conditions. It might well be subscribed to as an ideal, but pragmatism takes over. Why does this occur? Again the answer seems to be found in the particularly British difficulties of the education-industry 'partnership'. Comparing the respective viewpoints from the data collected in this particular study, there is little to support a 'partnership' being mainstream activity (CIHE, 1987). What does emerge is pockets of good practice, and attempts to create mutually useful relationships thwarted by constraints on one side or the other, sometimes both together. The Course Leaders' data is totally supportive of the view that they, ie Education, initiate (Kelly, 1989). One of the main problems is the numbers involved (ie the quantity), or to be more exact the expectation of the numbers that will be involved in the near future, as the intake for these courses comes fully on-stream. The Course Leaders' data demonstrates a fairly high importance attached to the mechanics of this issue; the findings from the employers considerably less so. This may well be explained as a function of the methodology, in that employers involved in work placements were insufficiently represented in the sample (see Chapter 12).

A limitation of the study is that a British workplace perspective only is available. This requires consideration as to whether this is a limitation of the data collection, or inherent in the situation itself, ie mainland European examples of work placement were not offered because the courses do not prioritise them. The Course Leaders interviewed were in charge of UK locations only, however, in the interview situation they did have the opportunity to comment on mainland European work placements, but only a minority of them did so. The Validation Document sub-sample offers the information that most courses intend a minimum mandatory period of work placement. Nevertheless, study experience dominates in spite of what is laid out in Validation Documents, and course aims and objectives overall. An alternative, and possibly more valid explanation, is the high proportion of 'new' courses in the composition of the sample. Therefore, the fact that they are just in the process of operationalising their 'European' arrangements could well have had a bearing on the representation of the work placement in their interview comments.

From the student perspective, work placements were not commented upon; the odd passing reference was made in the group discussions, but nothing substantive. This is probably explained for the two courses by different reasons. For one (Course B) by the level of the students on the course, ie Semester 3 (they had not yet done their work
placement semester); and for the other (Course A) that the work placement is not compulsory.

For whatever reasons, the opportunity for students to experience actual work orientations in depth, appears to be limited in more than one respect. So 'work values' are currently not receiving the 'access' seen as necessary (Knapp, 1990), if students are to develop such cultural awareness for a managerial career. In Britain, a European orientation was reported to be scarcely in evidence. This is as expected from contemporary surveys (Atkinson, 1990; Saxton Bampfylde, 1989), but again the time difference between different phases of data collection (in this case over 12 months between Course Leaders and employers) must be noted.

'Added value'

The research phase with Course Leaders noted the strength of the vocational orientation of courses in the study. The key to competitive advantage in the labour market is conceived as having 'something else' not offered by other graduates. In their view this is built round the knowledge and skills learnt and developed through the European dimension of the study. The focus of this is on the language and European study/work experience. The extent of this 'value added' is subsequently judged by courses in terms of graduate success in 'getting jobs'.

The student perspective highlighted an enabling quality in the breadth of course learning, but saw the career 'edge' located in the fact that on graduation they would obtain two degrees. They lent confirmation to the Europeanisation process of the course in both their attitudinal and knowledge/awareness learning and development. This was particularly attributed to the European experience, but study not work. Both Course Leaders and students are in agreement that students 'feel different' from their experience abroad. The substance of this is attached to coping with another culture, especially managing in another language. Students exhibit marked, indeed almost total, enthusiasm for a European, or international career. They are keen to be mobile, and experience cultural diversity in their jobs. Adaptability too was seen as an essential quality for such a career future, and the students nearing completion of their courses identified themselves as possessing such flexibility.

From the employers' perspective, European degrees are perceived as different (just); the European element being an 'added plus' that can be 'useful' to a company. In recruitment terms, in spite of the scarcity of personnel for the European environment (Hogg, 1989; Sedel, 1989) most employers are not actively seeking European Business/Management graduates. Those dedicated to such recruitment (one third of the sample) are however doing so specifically for their Europeanness. Employers are looking, first and foremost, for multi-skilled people with proven academic ability. Quality is important, and for a
significant number (half) of employers this means they focus on the awarding institution, not the qualification itself (Roizen and Jepson, 1985; Sadler, 1988). The end of the binary divide was not yet perceived as having any particular impact on employers' views in this respect.

Where employers site most interest in European Business/Management Studies graduates, is in the dual qualification. This is 'added value' as far as they are concerned, 'something else' with which to assess a graduate's job suitability. For them it is useful as a positive indicator of cultural and linguistic skill. The recruitment process highlights quite an information gap between industry and education on the nature of the European degree. More work is clearly needed on the part of Education to 'sell' such graduates to employers. Currently there is insufficient recognition of the 'Europeanness', and enthusiasm of graduates on the part of employers. The majority view, that graduates have to be trained first, may well be stifling future potential.

**Operational for what?**

In employment terms, Course Leaders speak of graduates obtaining jobs in multinationals and companies with European connections. But overall, they emphasise students getting jobs, not necessarily jobs in a European context. In fact, some Course Leaders particularly made a point of stating that they could not guarantee students would necessarily have the competence to operate in another European country. They would perhaps have a 'useful perspective' that could be utilised in a UK company, and then later, when they gained experience, they might be employed in another European country. The Course Leaders of some postgraduate courses differed in this respect, in that they for the most part felt that their graduates could operate immediately in a European context. It is worth relating that some Course Leaders reported dissatisfaction on the part of previous students that employers did not recognise the European dimension of their degree sufficiently on recruitment.

In the group discussions, students were very enthusiastic about possible employment in other European countries (other than the UK), but vague as to specific career plans. They voiced hopes and ambitions, and these were definitely related to European and international intentions. From the employers' viewpoint, the actual employment take-up rate was not easy to establish. Some respondents referred to constraints on recruitment, such as the recession, and recent downsizing in company structures. However, demand for the European Business/Management Studies graduates specific to this study was not as developed as might have been expected given the interpretation of industry's needs expressed by Course Leaders, and stated so prominently in the literature. Employers, fairly unanimously referred to the need for graduates to undertake training when first employed, and then maybe they would be specifically used in a wider (but not necessarily European) capacity. Graduates were
not regarded as 'operational' in terms of a normal workload, let alone one with a defined European/International orientation and responsibility. Much emphasis was placed on the need for graduates to have work experience, and only then would they be regarded as suitably operational.

Furthermore, relating this discussion of these courses and the graduates they produce to current orientations for European management, we find that the European context conceived by education is not necessarily completely aligned with that in which industry is actually operating. To be more specific, the context in which students have studied and worked is EU-based, and in most cases only a very partial coverage of this is achieved. The reasons for this can be found in the culture-specific experience which most courses are structured upon, and this focus is in turn strongly connected to EU funding sources, i.e. ERASMUS and ESF. It is of interest to then relate that student ambitions for employment in Europe were specific to EU countries, and nobody referred to Eastern or Central Europe. By contrast, employers are increasingly operating in an alternative European context, based on the fast changing and recent developments in the former Eastern bloc. Here, activity is proceeding at a rapid rate in response to market opportunities. Company representatives were articulate and emphatic about the continuation of developments in this area, and moreover, made a definite link to skills shortages observed in their current strategies, and for their future needs. It is worth reflecting that this is the same European context in which educational institutions are so very active in gaining contracts (viz TEMPUS) for training managers, though not in establishing particular partnerships. So, in summary, the courses in the study are constrained in producing/developing graduates with appropriate competence for the business context as it is being played out at this particular point in time. Of course, graduates are deemed to be suitable for positions in EU countries, particularly France, Germany and Spain, but employers do not see them as 'operational' until they have acquired their initial graduate training with the company.

The question to be raised is that, if graduates were to present themselves for recruitment complete with Eastern and Central European languages and experience of countries such as Poland, the former Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Russia and so on, what then would employers' reactions be? Would they see such graduates in a different light because they possessed competence which did not exist in their companies, and that would be immediately useful to them in their present market strategy? The question is hypothetical, but it poses a lively scenario, and one to which it would be highly interesting to have the answer. Unfortunately, we do not have the data to do this, and it would require further research to establish just what employers' reactions might be.

It appears that courses are producing graduates with appropriate suitability for the new European context. However, it also seems that research demonstrating that industry's
response is essentially market-led is strongly supported, in that companies have followed opportunities as they have arisen. The fact that they have not necessarily confined themselves to the boundaries of the EC (EU), but availed themselves of the chance to develop their markets in other geographical areas of Europe makes a strong case for this interpretation.

Characteristics

Course Leaders refer to a range of reasons as to why they think their graduates gain employment, and do not prioritise any one particular reason. Cumulative experience, linguistic expertise, experience abroad are all mentioned, as indeed are attitudinal skills. The latter come in for particular comment from some of the more experienced Course Leaders, and they refer to employers being interested in the types of skill encouraged by the study abroad element of these courses. Students also made particular reference to the competence they thought would eventuate from doing this type of course. They believe they are particularly adaptable, or becoming so, and have the necessary ability to change and be flexible in new situations, as one student put it 'over and over again'. They put considerable emphasis on the fact that they would acquire two qualifications from their study. This was not just attractive to them, but they strongly believed that a dual qualification would give them additional currency, not just in their national labour market, but in another European country as well.

The degree of fit with what employers are interested in from graduates needs to be considered here. The majority of employers are interested in academic ability first and foremost, and not particular competence associated with European experience. The indicator to many employers was not even the degree itself, let alone a particular discipline, but retrospectively to A-level points achieved. They were looking for intelligent graduates who were willing to learn, and for some companies the individual was not judged by the degree he/she had achieved, but the institution attended. In many respects, the 'European dimension' does not appear to have made much impact on the recruitment criteria of the majority of companies. Where it does seem to have gained recognition is perhaps in its more obvious attributes; linguistic competence and time spent abroad.

Attitudinally

From what the students say, there does appear to be evidence that they are thinking with an international perspective, or at least they entertain a wider outlook. They mentioned not just increased European awareness socially and politically through doing the course, but they referred specifically to an understanding of others' attitudes. It was particularly evident in the group discussions that erosion of ethnocentric
concerns has occurred, and this was demonstrated when students commented conversely on the presence of such attitudes in parents and friends (i.e., people close to them). At the same time they emphasised that they did not share their views, and instead looked to a wider European and international perspective. It would appear that students, and later graduates, if we project their views forward have made more progress attitudinally towards a European cultural base (Thurley and Wirdenius, 1989; Delors, 1992; Reisch, 1993) than the employers for whom they will work. Whereas the latter appear for the most part to be pragmatically driven, and what they interpret as a cultural dimension is simply an added plus, but by no means essential, students could be said to operate in reverse. Though this cultural difference is not nearly as fully developed as it might be, a start has definitely been made. Students do exhibit a preference for a wider thinking, a different outlook, and it is both important to them personally, and perceived as significant to their future. For the most part companies claimed a multinational or international orientation with specific market, not cultural, interest. The lack of transnational companies (only one in the sample claimed they wanted to be transnational) is particularly significant in the light of the work of Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989), and others who see this as the company structure most appropriate to the new international world. In summary, courses and students who are developed by them on the whole seem to have made more progress towards a different thinking process than the companies for whom graduates will work.

13.4 Institutional orientation

Resourcing and development

To what extent is institutional policy directed towards realisation of European curriculum development, or Internationalisation of the institution? What is developing and why? Very few courses could claim that they are part of a whole institutional policy. The findings demonstrate that without doubt institutions are involved in lots of activity, but the emphasis of this is on taking up international opportunities, and on making 'international links'. There appears to have been little thought on the part of most institutions to developing a coordinated policy/strategy. Piecemeal development based on chasing the resource seems to have been more typical. There is a definite pattern of concentration on management training where the income to the institution is substantial (viz. TEMPUS), and significantly less concern shown for the courses dependent on ERASMUS and ESF.

At institutional level the study shows nothing that could be interpreted as 'transnational' (Tijmstra and Casler, 1992). The identification in the data of a small group of courses self-styled as 'loss leaders' could be taken to suggest that in the case of some institutions
at least, there exists an ambition to achieve such status. This is reinforced by a pattern of the coupling of this forbearance of income on the part of the institution with other indicators of support for European development (see discussion of Eurovisionary in the typology below). However, it must be emphasised that this 'group' were heavily in the minority, and the norm was somewhat different. The more prevalent pattern was the opposite, one where institutional support was not guaranteed by any means, and consequentially the concern with resourcing was even more marked (Absalom, 1990).

The tension of institutional pressures on staff to drive this 'international' development is clearly represented in the findings (Bolton, 1993). Pressures on faculty are freely admitted by most of the Course Leaders' sample. For some they appear to be more severe than for others. What we must consider is the impact of such pressures (resourcing the course; time; coordination difficulties) in the totality of the course situation. From the student perspective comes a clear message that staff commitment and enthusiasm is of prime importance, not just to their overall perception of the course, but perhaps more critically to their learning process.

The CNAA (1992) recognises the significant contribution of the enthusiastic person in partner relationships. They point out that these activities need to be 'led', and that it is this element which makes the difference. In this observation they are supported by Opper et al (1990), who found the enthusiasm of programme directors to be a factor for success across a number of schemes. However, this study shows that there appears to be appreciably less acknowledgement of, and support for, the efforts of Course Leaders and their teams, at curriculum level, in what is demonstrated as a demanding area to work in (Linstead, 1990) than might be expected. As Funnell and Müller (1992) clearly pointed out, it is not just a question of finances, but rather of the human resource as well. Courses it seems are often fuelled by considerable personal commitment and sheer hard work (see also Appendix E5 Course Leader Profile). The fact that this is not necessarily recognised in some cases, let alone rewarded, may be standing in the way of promoting effective curriculum development and retaining commitment.

Another aspect of the human resource must be commented upon in this context. The lack of other European nationalities on course teams, and other nationalities generally, is in direct conflict with the necessary precondition for genuine internationalism, ie an international mix of staff (CNAA, 1992: 12). It is of interest to compare this lack with the institutional language policy, which showed up strongly across the sample. Here, no concrete results are visible, but one way of viewing this activity is that it is an easy way to flag up a European orientation on the institution's behalf. Whether or not this is having deeper institutional effects, it nonetheless provides an 'instant' and noticeable move towards an international profile. It also lends strong agreement to Embleton's (1992) view that language is seen as a panacea. However, this would need further research to establish, and all that can be said at this point within the limits of this study is that it does not seem to be having much immediate impact at course level.
It is of course not just a matter of nationality, but orientation. In this context, though they cannot be considered representative, the findings from the group discussions offer some insight on this point. Students were enthusiastic about business staff lecturing in their native tongue, be it German, Russian or another European language. They directly linked this to raising their level of motivation, and increasing their feelings of European-mindedness. Even though there were linguistic difficulties for them in this approach, they were on the whole still in favour of it. For some (though noticeably not Year 1) in their minds the cultural information they received was important. It extended their expectations, and helped their learning and development. From this, it would appear that more emphasis is needed on establishing a European context (ie organisational culture) for these courses. Though changes are appearing, as already referred to, the overall atmosphere in which courses are run is constrained by the nationality of the specific country, ie in the UK it is still essentially British, rather than European. However, this culture-specific course-institutional environment is also highly visible in the data relating to the actualities of partnership (see discussion below). It must be emphasised that, as the research study did not examine courses from the perspective of other countries involved, it cannot be definitive on this point.

Structures

There is little to hold up in the way of evidence of bona fide European structures completely in situ. There is however, data that supports a view of some attempts to realise such structures. If we adopt an ideal standard of a business education 'related to European expectations and needs' promulgated by Berry (1971), we can find some evidence of efforts to create it in the courses of the Eurovisionaries (see typology below). Their work is characterised by efforts to develop a recognisably European dimension to the curriculum and principles of course operation.

At the same time, there is further evidence that demonstrates that structures purporting to be integrated are in actuality not. This is very much in keeping with the findings of the CNAA (1992) that 'an apparently integrated system may in fact contain many differences' (and here the Euronetworker is a case in point). At this stage of the discussion it is useful to refer to the following typology, which has been constructed from patterns in the Course Leaders' data in an attempt to set the findings in a framework. Three different kinds of course characteristics can be identified as described below:

Eurovisionary espouses a philosophy of developing European understanding, and attempts to underpin the course on this basis. There is a determined effort to utilise specially designed European units on an integrated principle in the course of study. Both purpose-built common curriculum and mutual recognition models are to be found in this category. The course is accounted a 'loss leader' at institutional level, but continues to
receive resourcing, and both operational and moral support. It has a distinctive identity
in its own right, and course personnel exhibit enthusiasm for a genuine cross-cultural
perspective. Commitment to success and excellence is expressed face-to-face and in
publications. Development of teaching and research with other European partners is
promoted as a way of achieving 'another perspective'. Such courses are actively seeking
the 'integration of diversity', and tightly controlled multinational groups are used to
ensure cultural intermixing as a basis to curriculum activity.

Euronetworker places allegiance to the network in a prime position, and is concerned
with its identity as a pan-European body. The European dimension of involvement in
the network is attributed status at institutional level because of its contribution to
'international links', and typically an elitist identity is expressed. A 'fully harmonised' or
common curriculum is a standard feature, however, the validity of the harmonisation
must be questioned. Though validation and definitive course documentation promote a
joint/common approach, in practice what emerges is essentially a series of national
curricula with European labelling, and in some cases there is in fact limited realisation
of the European dimension.

Europragmatist is characterised by a topical, and usually opportunistic stance with only
surface orientation. Courses have limited ambitions and identity in relation to the
European dimension, and bolt-on, or modular elements of study are typical. A non-
prescriptive and 'hands-off approach to European experience is adopted, and it is there
'because it is the thing to do'. The Europragmatist has a strong eye on the market and
looks for a convenient way of activating a European dimension, with only limited
curriculum development.

Partnerships

The study clearly establishes that the majority of partnerships have not been established
on grounds of suitability. This in itself can be interpreted in two ways: firstly, it could
lend support to a sceptical view on international links activity proposed by Linstead et al
(1988), in that institutions have followed the path of availability of easy funding.
Certainly a concentration on ERASMUS partners is to be seen (Absalom, 1990; Funnell
and Müller, 1991). A case could probably be made that this is primarily resource-led
development, on the evidence of the sample as it stands. However, in the current
discussion what seems to be of more significance is not why institutions engaged in a
particular partnership, but what they are learning from the experience. The difficulties
and problems institutions have become embroiled in formed a strong pattern in the data,
and show that ethnocentric pedagogic concerns are clearly in conflict with the stated
cultural objective of the curriculum. Some insight into the extent to which this transfers
to students is gained from the group discussions' data. Here, students on both courses
commented at length on specific coordination difficulties, and their attitudes to them.

[13-19]
European Management Education Towards a different perspective

However, leading from this, was a dominant theme of a growing and developing out of their difficulties. Institutions appear to be learning from experience about the need for flexibility in handling their partnerships, and two sub-themes appear to be the need to choose on planned grounds, and an understanding that there is a need to work at the relationship. So what appears to be occurring is a learning process parallel to that of the student body, ie learning to adjust/adapt to a new educational environment. Recognition of ethnocentric perspectives, both theirs and their partners', forms an important part of this experience. In attempting to break down ethnocentric barriers, it might be proposed that institutions are becoming involved in a cultural process leading in the direction of a European perspective.

Whether such an evolutionary view can be fully established is outside the findings as they stand at present. Further research would need to be undertaken to see if this is actually the case. What can be said is that a fully academic partnership does not appear to be standard practice. Some teaching and research was being undertaken in conjunction with partners, and this was seen as important in offering a different perspective to students.

Conclusion

There is a definite pattern of courses starting up in response to perceived demand from both students and employers for a European dimension for Business Studies. Though it cannot be established conclusively, there does appear to be an underlying consciousness of institutions responding also to establishing competitive advantage, ie the time is right for such courses. There was not the same concern for International competitiveness as interpreted by government and training bodies. The espoused intentions of courses are very clear in terms of their vocational objectives, but correspondingly vague in relation to their European philosophy. However, this did not preclude the majority of courses from claiming that the European labelling was a deliberate and definite attempt to signal distinctiveness in this European business area. In terms of objectives, language is said to be instrumental to a wider cultural objective and both are placed within the context of a European period abroad. In enacting course policy, different strengths of European orientation are clearly visible. Only a minority of courses try to deliver a holistic interpretation of business for the European context. Language and Business Studies are not integrated, and the emphasis in studying language is primarily on proficiency and is not noticeably encouraged for its cultural 'enabling' factors. In fact, cultural awareness is largely an ad hoc matter, and though the majority of courses do offer study abroad, the depth of cultural immersion seems to be widely variable. Conditions abroad, though prioritised in aims and objectives and course validation documents, in attempts to embed the experience in the course programme, are not given the same attention in practice. Coordination
difficulties are prominent from the student perspective, though not referred to to the same extent by Course Leaders.

Furthermore, courses are constrained by the difficulties of the education-industry 'partnership'. This study shows the experience of the individual student is secondary in many ways to actually organising work placements with companies. European experience in a work setting is difficult to make a judgement on, as the data is very limited in this respect. In the British situation, it does appear that a European interpretation is largely missing. Course Leaders, students and employers refer to the 'added value' possible from these European courses, but there is some difference in interpretation of where this is actually sited. The dual qualification is given particular emphasis by students, and is indeed recognised by employers, but only in a secondary manner. It is not an essential requirement in the recruitment process, but rather a plus or 'something' which can be used as an indicator of cultural experience. The extent to which the European difference counts for anything in the recruitment process is debatable. It is important to students, but on the whole it is not recognised by employers.

In terms of the institutional perspective a picture of very recent and rapid development emerges. There is very little indication of a whole institutional policy, but rather strong indications that most curriculum development is resource-led. The institutional conditions for moving to an international status are fairly far removed from the guidelines of what is ideal in this respect. Staff are overwhelmingly British, and joint development with European partners in teaching and research is still relatively limited. There are signs of efforts to establish a European culture in some institutions, but equally there is insufficient recognition of enthusiasm and commitment at course level when it does exist. The data shows that the partnerships of most institutions have experienced difficulties, and are only gradually learning to move away from these problems and achieve a more flexible approach. A fully academic partnership is not standard practice, though one or two institutions had very specific ambitions to achieve this in the future.
CONCLUSIONS

The following is a summary of the conclusions of the research study that can be substantiated from the data as it stands. The study shows a clear vocational emphasis in the aims of the courses. Course Leaders (CLs) articulated a strong belief in the usefulness of the particular combination of language and business and some European experience. Gaining competitive advantage in the job market for their graduates is regarded as an important issue. Career opportunities were uppermost in Course Leaders' minds and they placed most weight on the students obtaining some European experience. This is perceived as the centre of 'difference' in their intention compared to other business courses.

The student perspective obtained from group discussions, though not representative, adds insight to the Course Leaders' accounts. Students are in agreement in finding these courses attractive in offering future career relevance. They do have the idea of competitive edge in mind, and believe their course of study will help to obtain it. However, they are particularly keen on gaining two qualifications, and see these as highly instrumental in obtaining a job 'abroad'. These undergraduate students conform to Course Leaders' impressions that many of them do not have a strong idea of what they would like to do. They endorsed European as appropriate to their general feelings about their careers future; it was 'in the right direction'.

In attempting to trace the parameters of the curriculum development context, the need for labour market skills (language and business combination) was clearly present. However, to what extent it was the major determinant factor in shaping course intentions must remain questionable. This is because there is some evidence that other factors were at work in influencing course intentions, ie links with European partners. Competing in an educational market does emerge in the sample, but it has not been possible to establish what priority this was given. With the data as it stands, it can be said that a 'market' in European business existed, but the full impact in relation to course intentions has not been established.
Where the competitive element between institutions does become clear is in relation to course recruitment. Here the study found CLs admitting that acquiring prospective students with appropriate linguistic competence was made all the harder because they were all 'fishing in the same limited pool'. This was the case for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Moreover, Course Leaders indicated that attracting a quality student intake was influenced primarily by the status of the institution, and not by the status of the course. However, postgraduate courses appeared to have sufficient status in themselves to break with this pattern. Moreover, they are usually dealing with smaller, more manageable numbers, and this is seen as an influential factor.

Similarly, the postgraduate course participant is much more closely aligned to the 'ideal' sought, evidencing both motivation and European interest, compared to the undergraduate course participant. The latter displays varying degrees of European motivation, and there does appear to be a gap between students' expectations of their study, and those of the courses for them. The study shows this gap to be particularly noticeable in relation to the perception of language study. This then has implications for the way in which the stated cultural objective of the courses in the sample is met.

Course Leaders acknowledge their chosen course orientation to be European. Though an international orientation had perhaps been considered by courses, nonetheless the current orientation (and for the foreseeable future) was conceived as European. Overall, the most emphasis emerged on embedding the period of European experience into the course structure. However, the data shows that courses intend varying levels of integration of their course structure with regard to the period of European experience (study and/work). This was particularly noticeable in the attention given to formalising the exact terms of course conditions between 'partners', ie the duration of the time abroad, lecture arrangement and the formal assessment. The study conditions are given proportionately much more consideration, than any work placement to be fulfilled.

The study identifies different strengths of European orientation in curriculum practice, and Course Leaders' reports of their courses demonstrate a number of difficulties in operationalising aims and objectives. Firstly, integrated business-language study does not appear to be achieved in practice. Essentially language study is a more or less separate entity, usually taught by staff from the Language School who are not regarded as part of course team. The business content of the curriculum is treated in a number of ways, the more common arrangement being to provide a foundation of study first, then to introduce and gradually increase a European element through the course. It should be noted that students did link a growth in European awareness to the fact that they were studying in a European context.

However, the balance between skills development and the acquisition of knowledge is difficult to decipher exactly. Two main points emerge here; first of all there does
appear to be sufficient evidence in the study to show that at least initially, language is not perceived by students as having the wider cultural and communicative function envisaged for it by Course Leaders. Rather, it can be said that students categorise language as knowledge in itself. Secondly, the other area prioritised by courses in the study was that of work placements. However, Course Leaders' reference to work placements is mainly illustrative of the ongoing deficiencies of the industry-education relationship. Some good practice was quoted, however the main perspective here was not on the learning experience of the individual student, but on the workload of Course Leaders. Arriving at a common platform of 'value added', between themselves and employers, in this setting was problematic. It must also be noted that the data is firmly from a British perspective. So it must be said that skills development on these courses, from the findings is difficult to profile, and at best reflects the debate and controversy surrounding this issue generally. The only uniquely European skills development would appear to be language, and this in itself suffers from imprecise definition as previously indicated.

The European experience (study/work in another European culture) attributed such weight in the aims and objectives of these courses was reported in ambiguous terms by Course Leaders. It must be noted that there is a gap in the data on the exact levels of the confidence, interest and enthusiasm of outgoing students. A contributing factor here is that there are several 'new' courses in the sample, and hence Course Leaders were just sending out their first cohort. Therefore, how much cultural awareness students have before they enter the different cultural setting has not been demonstrated.

What however is revealed very clearly are Course Leaders' attitudes to the pedagogic arrangements at host institutions. On the whole Course Leaders are critical, and an ethnocentric emphasis is present. In spite of the strong endorsement of cultural diversity in course aims and objectives, in practice a British perspective is embraced. The study shows that many Course Leaders find it difficult to accept Continental European practice as valid. They appear to adopt an almost contradictory stance in relation to their publicised course intention of increasing experience of cultural diversity. The relationship between coordination difficulties and the different pedagogic traditions of partners was however traced as being instrumental in settling on an acceptable overall content and approach for the course in question.

For the students, the coordination of the curriculum between partner institutions was identified as problematic to their learning experience. They laid the charge they were being used as guinea-pigs because of course mismanagement. There was evidence of lack of correlation in the levels of subjects studied, and in some cases actual overlap. From the students' viewpoint there was the feeling that the courses were concentrating on their concerns, for example partnership links, and not on those of the individual
student. In the case of the fully integrated course, the students felt that the 'European' interpretation of their programme was particularly affected.

In spite of these inconsistencies, students are reported by Course Leaders as coping with the different environment. One of the factors which Course Leaders singled out as to why students were able to adjust was an extra-curricular factor, ie student support for each other. The extent to which students have become European is not fully established by the study. Course Leaders do however refer to the returning students as 'different', or sometimes 'completely different'. They perceive this difference primarily in linguistic proficiency and maturity, but also refer to an 'altered' outlook. In discussions, the students themselves endorsed these views. They recognised the changes in themselves and attributed them to coping with the 'coming and going' involved with studying in another country, as well as interacting with students of other nationalities. They drew attention especially to adjusting to different styles of learning, and saw themselves as acquiring flexibility in this way.

The study found the European orientation of all institutions in the sample to be very recent. Commitment to operationalising the European orientation is reported as variable, and far more emphasis overall is given to developing 'international links'. The frequency of such activity and keenness for it stands out across the courses in the study. However, what is also shown is that much of this development has been carried out in an *ad hoc* manner. Institutions it seems are only now starting to coordinate international activities and work out an overall strategy. The relationship between European curriculum development (as represented by the courses in the study) and the policy of their institutions seems to be involved, and the data does not show neatly definable patterns. More to the point, what is noticeable is the number of factors influencing the relationships. Funding and internal politics are seen as having a significant impact in this respect. European commitment at the level of course teaching does appear to be emerging, but constraints imposed by shifts in funding and pressures on time resources, are creating very real tensions.

This is particularly noticeable in the demand on Course Leaders themselves, and their attitudes towards the courses they run are shown to be increasingly linked to thoughts on their own career enhancement. The study shows that there does appear to be a growing European commitment at course level. However, the staffing composition is still overwhelmingly British, the amount of European teaching and research is as yet small, and the continuity of institutional support variable. Students placed particular significance on wanting and needing enthusiasm from lecturers. They felt that their acquisition of European awareness and knowledge was directly linked to the amount of commitment shown both to them and to their programmes.

Where Course Leaders report the most time-consuming problems is in maintaining partnerships. Frequent difficulties/problems with partnerships were cited by all
courses. The study indicates that there is no one root cause to their difficulties, nor is any one model of course structure immune from such difficulties. Nevertheless it does appear to be the case that 'fully integrated' partnerships running a common curriculum are experiencing the greatest operational difficulties. According to Course Leaders with such courses this may to some extent be intrinsic to the nature of the model itself.

The majority of Course Leaders of established courses saw their courses as successful in terms of graduates gaining employment. They went on record as saying employment was 'reasonably good'. Difficulties experienced because of the recession were mentioned, but on the whole, there was evidence found in the study to say that courses were meeting needs. Diverse reasons were offered as to why students obtained jobs, and the study did not identify one predominant factor. Various points were raised, including language, cumulative experience, and attitudinal skills. Whether the actual European title of the qualification counted in getting a job was not clearly defined. Overall, Course Leaders indicated that they did not think employers placed much weight on the European title. The same was true for the actual recruitment of European Business Studies graduates. Job opportunities were not always heard of directly, and there was no one pattern of recruitment. Some Course Leaders had established links with particular companies. What students emphasised in their career objectives was the opportunity to experience 'different cultures' and saw this as key to their motivation. They prioritised linguistic proficiency and the ability to be adaptable as important for their career future. They saw themselves as suitable material, and quite clearly felt that the courses they were currently engaged in were contributing 'difference' to them. They focused on their attitudinal development, and compared themselves favourably to others. They expressed positive views on their career future, and were keen on a European context, but not necessarily restricted to it. There was some evidence that an international context would be equally, if not more, acceptable as the eventual focus of their careers.

In consulting employers, it was found that only a minority are actively seeking European Business graduates. In fact, there appears to be quite a strong information gap between the academic and the industrial views of the qualification. Categorising of graduate recruits by companies is not based on specific degree discipline, and so from the outset of the process there is an information gap. What emerged in the study was that even if European Business Studies graduates are perceived as different (and they are, just) the recruitment process of the majority of companies is not devised to give emphasis to this difference. Employers demonstrate quite clearly that they are interested in academic quality, and the ability and willingness to learn on the part of the individual graduate. Furthermore, this academic quality for half of the employers in the sample is determined by the perceived quality of the awarding institution. There is some activity of targeting particular institutions to this end, but it was not shown to be a widespread practice.
The European element is perceived by employers in terms of a useful 'added plus', but it is rarely specified as a specific recruitment criterion. Employers did, however, admit that European 'difference' does have a role as an indicator in assessing graduate suitability for employment. In this respect their interest has been directed mostly at language proficiency and time spent abroad. As far as the majority of employers are concerned, these skills are indicated by the possession of a European qualification as well as a British degree (ie a dual qualification). This is where they cited added value, and moreover, it is seen as the repository of ability in language and cultural awareness. Having a dual qualification on your résumé or CV is instrumental in the employers' eyes in helping the individual candidate to stand out. Nevertheless, employers stated that they would still probe to evaluate whether the graduate possessed insight as a result of their experience. Finally, management training and development in most companies appears to be fairly prescribed by corporate ideas. However, the study does show that some companies are perhaps becoming more attuned to the need for cultural competence, but as yet this is not reflected in recruitment practice and policy as the norm.

Implications for improvement of practice

In relation to the conclusions, certain issues have arisen which have implications for the improvement of practice in this European area. This will be considered in the same order as before, ie curriculum, graduate competence and institutional perspective. To begin with the actual student concerned in this educational process. As more and more courses enter this area, the quality issue will become even more critical. At present, the language 'quota' required by courses is gaining a disproportionate amount of attention in selection of students. From the study, the implication is that suitability requires more emphasis; some initial interest in the European context really needs to be in place. Undergraduate courses especially need to find some way of assessing student motivation more closely.

Turning to the curriculum itself, several matters need work here. First of all, if courses are to genuinely realise the aims and objectives they set down, then much more specific work on training in cultural awareness needs to occur to bring students to a more receptive state of mind for their European experience (Embleton, 1992). Arrangements for study also need more attention if, as more and more numbers are involved (ie quantity), we are to avoid the 'let them go somewhere, anywhere' approach (CNAA, 1982: 45). This is a very likely scenario as numbers increase more and more, and the area becomes totally saturated.

Another aspect that could withstand immediate attention is to give a much more distinctive treatment to materials used on courses, and indeed to innovate pedagogically so that courses do embed European contexts into their teaching and
study (Knapp, 1990; Linstead, 1990; Bolton, 1993). It must be noted that the pressure of modularisation in the UK educational context may conflict heavily with such development. Courses may find that improving on 'European' relevance becomes more and more difficult, as they are faced with maintaining their identity.

The next area which will be considered is the relationship of industry and education. Here the study only served to reinforce some of the observations already made in the literature (Kelly, 1989). The resolution of difficulties needs to be tackled so that both sides can benefit. This recommendation is not at all new, but made because with the increasing numbers now in higher education, the pressure to find work placement experience will continue to increase and the problems outlined will simply not go away. Some resolution therefore must be reached for the well-being of all parties in this arrangement.

On another note, it would seem that the chances for a formal curriculum input from industry are being either passed over or simply not encouraged. In the telephone interviews the market opportunities companies indicated they were involved in showed a range and diversity which would greatly add to students' interest and knowledge in the European business area. The inclusion of this material would help greatly to add to the distinctiveness of these courses (see curriculum recommendations above).

Moving from the course to the eventual graduate, several points can be made. At a recruitment level, the need for both the course management and the graduates themselves to do more proactive work to 'sell' the difference of the European Business/Management qualification seems to stand out from the study. The other side of this is that companies need to meet the graduate more than half way by, first of all, recognising the difference, and then encouraging and nurturing their European 'approach' right from the start. At the moment, the majority of companies appear to take the opposite approach in expecting the graduate to assimilate to the corporate pattern.

The institution perspective highlights a number of implications for future practice. First of all, one factor that seems to be escaping the attention of all institutions is that perhaps the staff, of these courses and others, need cultural awareness training as much as the students themselves. Until now, the institutions have adopted a noticeable language policy as their major contribution to staff development in this area. It is suggested here that cultural awareness training should precede the learning of language, and that institutions are in danger of seeing language as a panacea (Ferney, 1991; Embleton, 1992). This type of training would benefit the overall 'culture' of the institution, and help to make the teaching atmosphere more receptive to the mix of students on these courses (CNAA, 1992: 44).
European Management Education

Conclusions

It perhaps goes without saying that the mix of nationalities within the institution towards a more international profile must be made. This recommendation is again by no means new, and simply repeats the documented guidelines of Lupton (1991), Tijmstra and Casler (1992) and others.

Institutions need to make much greater efforts towards a whole approach in this area to encourage the maintenance of the European curriculum. It is only with nurture that a European system will start to grow and develop, and it seems stating the obvious to say that European courses of the kind in the study are the first steps in that process. Resourcing is extremely difficult in the current climate, but courses need continuity, with less dependence on the greatly oversubscribed EU schemes. The resourcing dilemma is currently hampering these courses, particularly in the choice of student (language quota before European interest), and also in the way that staff are viewed. The time and effort of staff needs to be looked at in some way other than pure cost terms. The CNAA (1992) have emphasised that these activities (European/International) need to be 'led', and that the enthusiastic person needs recognition if they are to continue their work. Again, this recommendation is not new, and is simply a reinforcement of the substance of such statements that it seems has been largely overlooked.

Finally, several implications occur with respect to the partnerships themselves. Coordination, whichever model is adopted, needs much more thought and arrangement, in order to break down the degree of difficulties over level, overlap and omission. This is necessary if students are to receive a viable course of study. Another important area where more work needs to be done is that efforts must be increased to match courses for suitability, not just opportunity. The 'right values and culture' would seem to be vitally important if the partnership is to work (CNAA, 1992).
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European Management Education

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Covering letter to Questionnaire

13 January 1992

Dear Course Leader

EUROPEAN BUSINESS/MANAGEMENT STUDIES COURSES SURVEY

I am carrying out some research into the current orientation and pattern of development of provision in European Business/Management Studies courses in UK universities, polytechnics and colleges/institutes of higher education. This survey is part of an M Phil/PhD research project being undertaken at the Department of Educational Studies at the University of Surrey, entitled *Training the Euro-Manager: Curriculum Implications for the 1990s*.

As you are a professional educator working directly with students aiming for a qualification specifically in the fast-changing European business area, I am particularly interested in your views and priorities on these courses. I am sure you would acknowledge the importance of this study in the context of future UK and European economic success. I also intend to draw comparisons with UK/German corporate approaches at a later stage of the research design. For this reason your assistance in completing and returning this questionnaire would be much appreciated. Any information given will, of course, be treated as strictly confidential. Your institution has been given a survey number for data processing purposes only. Please feel free to answer without constraint because your responses will not be identified by name at any stage of the analysis.

I am aware that I am making demands on your time, but would encourage you to participate in the survey if at all possible. Obviously, I have a heavy vested interest in your assistance to my research, but hopefully the long-term implications of the study will be of practical interest and relevance to management educators and trainers.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the FREEPOST envelope provided by Friday 31st January 1992 if possible; otherwise as soon as is practicable in early February.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Heather Thorp BA Dip Ed (Univ of Sydney)
Dip Lib (PNL) ALA
Follow-up letter to Questionnaire

13 February 1992

Dear

EUROPEAN BUSINESS/MANAGEMENT STUDIES COURSES SURVEY

I recently wrote to you about the research I am currently engaged in on the pattern of development in the provision of European Business/Management Studies courses in UK Higher Education institutions. This survey is an important preliminary part of my M Phil/Ph D thesis entitled Training the Euro-Manager: Curriculum Implications for the 1990s.

I am particularly interested in obtaining as wide and as up-to-the-minute a picture of the views and priorities of the professionals actually running these courses as possible; before proceeding further with the research design. For this reason I do value each and every response, and would appreciate your assistance in giving the enclosed questionnaire your urgent attention. Your replies will, of course, be treated as strictly confidential and the survey number identifying your institution is for data processing purposes only.

If this letter and your completed questionnaire have crossed in the mail, or I have not received your reply because of the vagaries of the post please accept my apologies. I have deliberately chosen bright daffodil yellow for printing the questionnaire on this occasion - a touch of spring! Please don't let it linger too long on your desk but return it in the FREEPOST envelope provided as soon as possible.

Thank you for your help

Yours sincerely

Heather Thorp BA Dip Ed (Univ of Sydney) Dip Lib (PNL) ALA
APPENDIX A3

Questionnaire

EUROPEAN BUSINESS/MANAGEMENT STUDIES COURSES SURVEY

PLEASE TICK THE BOX \[ \checkmark \], FILL IN A NUMBER: 1 2 3 4 5 FOR EACH ITEM AS REQUESTED OR WRITE YOUR COMMENTS AS APPROPRIATE. PLEASE ANSWER AS MANY QUESTIONS AS YOU CAN. IF YOU CANNOT MAKE A DECISION, PLEASE LEAVE THE QUESTION UNANSWERED. IF YOU COULD USE A COLOUR OTHER THAN BLACK FOR YOUR ANSWERS IT WOULD BE HELPFUL.

You have been selected as one of a sample from 1990/91 and 1991/92 prospectus literature. Your identity is known, and will remain known, only to the named researcher.

QUESTIONNAIRE NUMBER: 01

ABOUT THE COURSE

1. Which year did the course begin? PLEASE TICK THE APPROPRIATE BOX.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Box</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Which of the following best describes the aims of the course? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY.

To produce business graduates who

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Box</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>are able to operate effectively in an international environment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have the ability to work effectively abroad</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have a European business perspective</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can operate freely in a foreign business environment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can operate effectively in a European context</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.

a) In your opinion which of the following types of course arrangement gives the best framework for training the Euro-manager?

b) What type of arrangement does the course have?

PLEASE TICK ONE APPROPRIATE BOX IN RESPONSE TO (a) AND (b).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(a)</th>
<th>(b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Do you work with a partner institution? YES □ NO □

If YES, indicate how the partner institution was chosen by ticking ONE box below:

- convenience
- because of their reputation you sought a partnership
- the opportunity arose to collaborate
- they contacted you
- keen to work in a particular country
- other (specify) ...............

5. How many places were offered on the course in 1991?

        ..........
6. Is the course over-subscribed? YES □ 1 09
   NO □ 2 10

   If YES, please state by how many ...........

7. How many of the students on the course are?
   MALE ...........
   FEMALE ..........

8. How many students are?
   UK ...........
   EC ...........
   Other European ...........
   Overseas ...........

COURSE DESIGN

9. Rate the importance to the course content of the following using 1 to indicate of little or no importance, 5 to indicate very important:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOW</th>
<th>&lt; = &gt;</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management philosophy</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on preparations for 1992</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language training</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of technology</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring specific management competences</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please comment on any other items you feel should be included in the above list:

.................................

.................................

.................................

[App-5]
10. Which of the following teaching strategies do you use on the course? PLEASE TICK AS MANY AS APPLY.

- Multilingual study groups □ 1
- European work placement □ 1
- Continuous study in a foreign culture □ 1
- Other (specify) ............................................. 1

11. Rate the importance of the following to the skills profile of a Euro-manager using 1 to indicate of little or no importance, 5 to indicate very important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>LOW</th>
<th>&lt;</th>
<th>=</th>
<th>&gt;</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic competence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint (dual) qualification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural adaptability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management experience in a foreign culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European business perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

12. Is the course involved in the ERASMUS programme?

- YES □ 1
- NO □ 2
13. If YES to Q.12, what was the main objective behind this? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY.

- Availability of finance
- Academic co-operation
- Increased opportunities for student mobility
- European integration
- Other - please write in your own words

14. Do you have other funding, either YES EC or otherwise? NO

If YES, state funding source

15. Which of the following systems to encourage European developments exist in your institution? PLEASE TICK AS MANY AS APPLY.

- European research programmes
- Specialist language centre
- Centre for business/European research
- ECTS (European Community Credit Transfer System)
- COMETT (Community in Education and Training for Technology)
- LINGUA participation
- TEMPUS participation
- Other, please specify

Appendices

[App-7]
INDUSTRIAL LINKS

16. Do local companies have any involvement with the course?

  YES □ 1
  NO □ 2

If YES, what form does the involvement take?

............................................
............................................
............................................

FUTURE

17. Does your school/department plan to start any other European-based managerial courses within the next 2 years?

  YES □ 1
  NO □ 2

If YES, specify ............................................
............................................
............................................

18. Are mergers of your institution with other institutions, UK and/or European, planned for the next two years?

  YES □ 1
  NO □ 2
**PERSONAL**

Please could you let me have a few details about yourself to enable me to classify your answers. PLEASE TICK THE APPROPRIATE BOXES.

19. Please indicate your age group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 44</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 54</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 64</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Are you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. Which of the following educational and professional qualifications do you hold? PLEASE TICK AS MANY AS APPLY.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGCE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate diploma</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other qualifications (please specify which)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22. Do you belong to any of these professional bodies? PLEASE TICK AS MANY AS APPLY.

- BIM (British Institute of Management)  □ 1
- IPM (Institute of Personnel Management) □ 1
- Euromanagers Association □ 1
- EBM (European Association of Business and Management Teachers) □ 1
- SIETAR (Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research) □ 1
- EAPM (European Association for Personnel Management) □ 1
- The Modern Language Association □ 1
- Other (specify) .......................................................... □ 1

23. Please indicate your Nationality

- British □ 1 66
- Other EC □ 2
- Other European □ 3
- Other □ 4

24. Please state which European languages you speak fluently. TICK AS MANY AS APPLY.

- French □ 1 67
- German □ 1 68
- Spanish □ 1 69
- Italian □ 1 70
- Other (specify) .......................................................... □ 1 71-72
25. Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. If you have any further comments to make about the course please add them here:
26. I intend to carry out more detailed work on this subject in the near future.

If you would be willing to be interviewed or help with further information PLEASE TICK THIS BOX
AND COMPLETE CONTACT DETAILS BELOW.

Name ............................................
Address ........................................
................................................
................................................
................................................
................................................
Telephone number .............................
Fax number .................................

27. A short interim report of the survey findings will be available. If you would be interested in receiving a copy PLEASE TICK THIS BOX.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS RESEARCH. PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM, IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED, BY FRIDAY 31st JANUARY 1992 IF POSSIBLE; OTHERWISE AT THE BEGINNING OF FEBRUARY.
### APPENDIX A4

#### Questionnaire data

| 1 Date course began |  
|---------------------|---
| Pre-1986            | 9  
| 1986                | 7  
| 1987                | 2  
| 1988                | 4  
| 1989                | 9  
| 1990                | 6  
| 1991                | 5  
| Post-1991           | 1  
| **Total**           | 43 |

| 2 Course aims        |  
|----------------------|---
| International environment | 12  
| Work effectively abroad        | 4  
| European business perspective | 8  
| Foreign business environment   | 0  
| European context           | 18  
| **Total**                  | 42 |
### 3 Course arrangement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course arrangement</th>
<th>Preferred</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language + business (not necessarily connected)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language + specialist business discipline</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated language + business (general/specific)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4 Do you work with a partner institution?

| Yes | 39 |
| No  | 5  |
| **Total** | **44** |

### Criteria for choice of partner institution:

| Convenience                  | 1 |
| Reputation                   | 1 |
| Opportunity                  | 30 |
| Response to contact          | 0 |
| Particular country           | 3 |
| Not applicable               | 1 |
| Other                        | 4 |
| **Total**                    | **40** |
### 5 Places offered 1991-92

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-30</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-60</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-100</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100+</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150+</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6 Is the course over-subscribed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Over-subscription

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-10%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-50%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-99%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300+%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 7 Course composition by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly male</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly female</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male and female approximately equal</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8 Course composition by student nationality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other European</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 9 Importance to course content:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>low</th>
<th>↔</th>
<th>high</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management philosophy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on preparations for 1992</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language training</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of technology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring specific management competences</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 10 Teaching strategies

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multilingual study groups</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European work placement</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous study in a foreign culture</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 11 Importance to the skills profile of a Euro-manager:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>low</th>
<th>↔</th>
<th>high</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic competence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint (dual) qualification</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural adaptability</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management experience in a foreign culture</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European business perspective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 12 Is the course involved in the ERASMUS programme?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 13 Main objective of ERASMUS involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of finance</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic cooperation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student mobility</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European integration</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 14 Other funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes state funding source</td>
<td>(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1'Funding sources named

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC schemes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government funds</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial sponsors</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas students' fees</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 15 Which of the following systems to encourage European developments exist in your institution?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European research programmes</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist language centre</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for business/European research</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECTS (European Community Credit Transfer System)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMETT (Community in Education and Training for Technology)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUA participation</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMPUS participation</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European office</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 16 Do local companies have any involvement with the course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Form of company involvement in courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company visits</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultative</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course design and monitoring</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student research projects</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting speakers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work placements</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17 Does your school/department plan to start any other European-based managerial courses within the next 2 years?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Courses specified:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Master's</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Marketing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European specialist discipline</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate degree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HND</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Business</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 Are mergers of your institution with other institutions, UK and/or European, planned for the next 2 years?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (confidential)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

[App-20]
19  Age of course leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 44</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 54</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 64</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20  Gender of course leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21  Educational and professional qualifications of course leaders:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGCE</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate diploma</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 22 Course leaders' membership of professional bodies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIM (British Institute of Management)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPM (Institute of Personnel Management)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euromanagers Association</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBM (European Association of Business and Management Teachers)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIETAR (Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAPM (European Association for Personnel Management)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Modern Language Association</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Course leaders' membership of other professional bodies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 23 Nationality of course leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other EC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other European</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 24 Course leaders' competence in European languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B1

Course Leader interview appointment letter/fax

NAME OF THE COURSE LEADER
ADDRESS

You recently completed a questionnaire for me on EUROPEAN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT STUDIES COURSES. You indicated that you would be willing to be interviewed; I would now like to avail myself of your offer.

I propose to explore the subject matter of the questionnaire more intensively and so would require between 1 and 1½ hours of your time. I would like to tape record the interview. I do assure you that confidentiality will be maintained, and the transcript will be available to you to approve before being used further in the research.

As I am a full-time lecturer doing this PhD research part-time I thought the easiest way to arrange the interview would be to give you a range of dates and then we could agree a mutually convenient time. Would you consider the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 June</td>
<td>am/pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 July</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Alternatively if you were available anytime Mon-Thurs am/pm w/c 13 July.

Please fax me at home: 0483 302265 or ring 0483 68222 (This may be answered as my husband's business name: TOR Translation Services). I will confirm as soon as possible. Thanks for your help.

Heather Thorp
APPENDIX B2

Statement of interview aims and approach

Survey of European Business/Management Studies Courses in UK Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges/Institutes of Higher Education

1. Aims

The advent of the Single European Market (SEM) has focused attention on Europe and all things European in ever increasing measure. In this Higher Education has been no exception, and there has been a great deal of activity in providing more undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to meet the expected demand for graduates in this new European context. This research project is concerned with curriculum implications for training Euro-managers in the 1990s. It is being undertaken for MPhil/PhD at the Department of Educational Studies at the University of Surrey and is unfunded.

My purpose is to:

- establish the relationship between aims and objectives and curriculum practice.
- identify what is leading the managerial input of these courses
- establish what notion of the 'Euro-manager' is held
- identify how Europe's changing dimensions are incorporated into the curriculum
- identify whether these courses are contributing to the creation of a European perspective

2. Approach

The work will involve:

- a survey of UK European Management/Business Studies courses from prospectus literature to establish the range and types of courses involved.
- a postal questionnaire to selected Course Leaders of these European Management/Business School courses to gain an overview of their course aims and objectives, and as a means of generating further lines of enquiry.
- three pilot and ten substantive interviews with Course Leaders to explore the "European" nature of the course.

A synopsis of the interview will be made available to all interviewees for comment and review before being used further in the research.

Heather Thorp BA DipEd (Univ of Sydney) DipLib (PNL)
APPENDIX B3

Interview guidelines (rev. version)

INvolvement/Commitment

Were you actively involved in designing the course curriculum?

How long have you been with __________?

Probe: industrial/business background qualifications at this stage (if appropriate only)

subject specialism

Respondent's Background

Have you travelled/resided extensively in Europe internationally?

Could you talk a little bit about your European background?

Either You don't speak any languages fluently ..... or I know you speak _____. How did you become fluent?

Staff Development

Is such experience typical of the course team?

Do you have any non-British lecturers on the course team?

Policy planning linguistic skills enriching and developing the curriculum greater understanding of European business
Staff work in business?
expertise of Europe?
initiatives in Europe?

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Identify start date of the course (from the questionnaire)
Why was the course started up at that particular time?
Reasons?

"CULTURE OF THE COURSE"
Probe: 1992 - spur to activity?
other institutions seem to be active in this area?
did you look to any particular models?

LIFE OF THE COURSE

Would you say there is any conscious view on the part of the course team of the course being "an investment in in European (British) success [to quote from the 1987 Government White Paper]
Probe: how would you describe the "culture" of the course?
do you think it encourages the development of a European perspective?

DEMAND FOR THE COURSE

Trends
Do you think demand for the course will continue at this level?
Nationality?

STUDENT COMPOSITION

Gender pattern - why?
Age pattern - identify this.
Experience of business. How many (if any) of the students have business/industrial experience?
Probe: quality of entry qualifications
talk a bit about the student body as a whole; "feel" of them
What do you look for in prospective students?

REPUTATION
OF THE
INSTITUTION
How attractive do you think the institution is to prospective students?
Quality of the degree?
Probe: what are they looking for?
Why do they want a course with a European dimension?

PLACEMENT
CASE STUDY
What is the CORPORATE view of the institution? EXAMPLES

ORGANIS-
ATIONAL
ETHOS
Can you talk a bit about the ________ policy on Europe?
Does it overall encourage a European orientation?
Probe: by what means does it do this?
resources? identify details
inter-faculty activity?

Is the presence of "Europhiles" noticeable?

THE COURSE
PHILOSOPHY
I’d like next to talk with you about the underlying philosophy of the course.
AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Area of study  Why this title? Identify - define the essential difference between your course and a Business Studies degree.

Probe: what is meant by Europe?
(if applies) why such a specific title?

how do you allow for the massive transition currently occurring in Europe?

Aim to produce: _____?

What notion of a Euro-manager is held?

How do you view the relationship between "European" and "international business in the context of this course?

European/international? Why not global?

Probe: is there a dividing line?

familiarity with an economic bloc?

what is the overall priority of the course in terms of objectives?

Business environment/managerial skills (business techniques) balance?

Which is the most important? Why?

COURSE

You have an ______ arrangement for the course delivery; why this approach?

Probe: what strategies do you use for achieving integration? get details.

what are the benefits?

Probe: can you identify any disadvantages

get examples of any problems
Do your think this is the ideal way of training a "Euro-manager"?

EXPERIENCE  I know you work with partner institutions in _____ +
IN A FOREIGN _____.
CULTURE  What is achieved by this _____, of _____?
(EUROPEAN Probe: why this long (quantify)?
STUDY/WORK  value?
PLACEMENT)  what do students gain?
is it essential?
does it encourage cultural adaptability?

What’s the student response like?
Probe: do they experience any particular difficulties?
finance?
would you say they get real opportunities for ’intimate personal contact’ as opposed to simply making acquaintances?
are you consciously trying to create ’peer networks’ for the future - when students take up their career?

PARTNER  How did you establish yourself with these partners? -
INSTITUTIONS  details of history, of relationship, how crucial are they
to the success of the degree?
Probe: is it a genuine two-way commitment?

Do you and your partners feel that you are consciously moving towards/creating a European education system?
Did you have a preference for a particular country that you weren’t able to fill?
Probe: funding difficulties?
   Eastern Europe
   Spain, Portugal
   Greece?

ERASMUS You’re involved with the ERASMUS scheme - how significant has this been?
Probe: Does its make any difference?
   Do you feel that you had to compromise the course design in any way to meet the ERASMUS objectives?
   what’s its main value? - identify in student and institutional terms
   how does the institution interpret the aims of the scheme?
   test 'integration' angle.

SUPPORT Can you talk about the European Support Systems that the institution has developed - identify nature of the support.
Probe: how important?
   does the course draw on them frequently?
   link into staff development - pref. indicator to 'good practice'

Have any ideas for curriculum development/current/in the future stemmed from these sources?

Do they encourage a network of personnel across the faculty?
Do you think there is a particular kind of person who could be described as 'culturally adaptable'?  
Probe: identify characteristics  
how is this anchored in the curriculum?  
specific/general argument.

What use is made of students culture-specific experience? On the course/future?

You place a lot of importance on linguistic competence?  
Why?  
Probe: exact reasons

What % of contact teaching time is spent on language?  
Any view of this mainly as a route to cultural adaptability?

Whose philosophy/style of management underlies the course?  
Probe: national / British?  
institutional?  
American influence?

Is there a conscious move towards creating a European style of management?  
Probe: new style for a changing & developing context  
Has the course tried to incorporate a transferable skills base?  
What sort of balance is struck between academic/practical management
skills?
Has the MCI had a significant influence?

PARTNERSHIP
BETWEEN
INDUSTRY AND
EDUCATION

How supportive is industry to the course?
Probe: who initiates? liaison arrangements?
what form does support take?
any sponsorships/prizes?
live projects get details examples
do you have any students who are sponsored by firms?

Do you see it as a mainstream activity or an optional extra?

Industrial placement get details

Do you think the course meets corporate need for international experience and mobility?

FUTURE
BUSINESS
TRENDS IN
EUROPE

How are these envisaged and incorporated into the curriculum?
Probe: increasing globalisation and position of Europe
timescale: reaction to change
test take-up response to European developments

SEM (1992)
How much attention does the course give:
- to the EC
- actual details of legislation eg Social Charter
Probe: is it a spur to the course?
What use is made of government programmes and initiatives (DTI etc)?
Any funding opportunities?

OTHER COURSES/FUTURE
with a European base in the institution

Why this course?
Where did the idea/drive come from?
Personal involvement?
Effect on current work?

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS
Any particularly relevant to this work?

What was your _____ in?
Publications?

PROFESSIONAL BODY
Do you think this contributes as a forum for the exchange of ideas?
Any particular forums feeding these types of courses?
Probe: Conferences?

OVERALL
Success to date?
Potential for the future?
Problems?
Rewards?

Request other materials/Publicity brochure/Validation Document
APPENDIX C1

Letter arranging group discussion

18 November 1993

Dear [name of Course Leader]

[name of the degree] : group discussions

Further to our quick chat the other Monday, here are details of what I would like to do.

My PhD research on Training the Euro-Manager has progressed to the stage where it would be illuminating to include the student perspective on their courses. I am particularly interested in your course because it follows a 'common programme'. I propose to hold group discussions with students on a small number of courses, and would very much like to include [name of course] as one of these cases. The normal regard to confidentiality would of course apply, and the specific identity of both the institution and the students would not be used in the thesis. As you suggested a Wednesday afternoon would be the ideal time from the students' point of view to hold the discussions, but I am open to ideas on this.

The approach planned is as follows:

I envisage holding group discussions with students drawn from all 3 years of the course. I realise that you have a transitional group (1991 intake) and that students from this group may not be available. I would of course be dependent on your advice overall on recruiting the groups. The groups would consist of 6-8 students, and the discussion for each group would last about 1-1+ hours. In practical terms this would be arranged by having one discussion, a break, then following with a second discussion group. I would of course arrange for and cover the cost of refreshments.

I would moderate the discussion myself, and would also want to tape-record it. It would also be helpful if students were willing to fill in a brief self-completion questionnaire to be used in conjunction with the recorded data.
Finally, a broad topic guide for the discussion 'territory' would consist of the following:

- Attractiveness of the course to the students
- Their experience of selection for the course
- Students' European-mindedness generally
- Their career objectives
- How they find the arrangement of the course content
- Expectations of and preparation for the European placement
- How they rate themselves on cultural adaptability
- The most important aspect of the course to them
- Students' views on the course commitment to a European perspective

If you are in agreement with the above can we consider a date before the end of term? I am attaching a copy of my current timetable which might help in finding contact times/planning. I appreciate your involvement and thanks for your time on this.

Yours sincerely

Heather Thorp
APPENDIX C2

Group discussions: topic guide

Preliminary 'warm-up' questions - introductions

Remember:
Men and women to sit alternately
Everyone to identify themselves by name at the beginning

1 Attractiveness of the course to the students

Why did you choose this course?
What was attractive about it?
How important was the double qualification?
What was important to you?
How 'intensive' or 'demanding' have you found the course so far?
Would you call it challenging?

2 Their experience of selection for the course

How were you selected?

Were the course aims & objectives discussed?
Were you aware of what would be expected of you?

3 Students' European-mindedness generally

How keen on the idea of European Union are you?

4 Their career objectives

On graduation, where would you prefer to work:
Why?

What career ambitions do you have?
5 How they find the arrangement of the course content (UK)

Do you get sufficient opportunity to put theory into practice?

Does the course material you use offer the chance for a European perspective?

How do you find working in mixed nationality groups?

6 Expectations of and preparation for the European placement

How do you properly prepare for the placement?

Has your outlook changed as a result of this experience?

7 How they rate themselves on cultural adaptability

8 The most important aspect of the course to them

9 Students' views on the course commitment to a European perspective

Is there a "European" drive to the course? If so, does it come from one member of staff (or several) who are particularly enthusiastic / the students themselves / both staff and students / the university demands it?

Has the course met your expectations for a European approach to your training?

Do you feel more or less European in your outlook since being on the course?
APPENDIX D1
Introductory fax requesting telephone interview with employer

H M Thorp
49 Levyldene
Guildford GU1 2RT
Tel/modem 0483 68222
Fax 0483 302265

FAX MESSAGE

To:

Fax:

From: Heather Thorp

Date:

Number of pages (incl. this cover sheet):

Subject: PhD Research

Dear

Recruitment of European Business/Management Studies Graduates

I am involved in research in this area for my PhD with the University of Surrey. The working title of the thesis is Training the Euro-manager: a long-term cultural project. I am by profession a university lecturer (Portsmouth Business School), but I must point out that this project is self-funded and is on a part-time basis. I do not have, nor do I intend to develop, any commercial agenda from it.
To date, the research design has followed three main lines of inquiry. Initially a survey of named European Business/Management Studies courses in UK Higher Education institutions was carried out. This led on to a series of in-depth interviews with selected Course Leaders, and group discussions with some of the students themselves. Having gained data from the academic direction, I am now keen to complement the picture by including the employers' perspective. My main concern is to ascertain the take-up rate of first-time graduates, and newly-qualified postgraduates, who declare a firm European career intention and hold a named European Business degree.

As far as I can gauge you would seem to be a person who is in the position to know how these young professionals fare in their career ambitions. I am therefore asking if you would be prepared to take part in a short telephone interview on the subject. Any information given, will of course, be treated as strictly confidential. Your responses will not be identified by name at any stage of the analysis.

I am aware that this is yet another demand on your time, and that you no doubt receive more requests than you would ideally like, but if you can participate obviously I would appreciate it.

Yours sincerely

Heather Thorp

Research Procedure

If you are able to help would you please fax me on 0483 302265 and say if it is convenient to phone you. Please suggest some other times when I might reach you if this is not appropriate. Ideally I would like to talk round these issues rather than see them as exclusive in themselves. The interview would take approximately 15 minutes. I can usually guarantee a straight research run on a Thursday.
APPENDIX D2
Telephone interview schedule

RECRUITMENT OF EUROPEAN BUSINESS/MANAGEMENT STUDIES GRADUATES

Company orientation

1 Would you describe your company as an International, a Multinational, European, or British?

Educational Background

2 Have you recruited personnel with any of the degrees or diplomas listed below:

- BA (Hons) European Business/Business Studies/Business Administration
- BA (Hons) European Management
- European Diploma in Business and Management
- Diploma in European Business Administration
- Pg Diploma in European Enterprise Management
- European MBA.

3 Are you keen to acquire graduates from this type of programme?

4 Do you think these European qualifications are in any way different to degrees in Business Studies; Business Administration; or Business and Languages?

5 Is this type of graduate different to other graduates?

6 Does the type of institution that granted the qualification matter to you?

7 Is it of interest to you if a job applicant has both a British degree and a European qualification (eg German Diplom; French Diplome; Spanish Licenciatura)?

8 What would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of having these European Business/Management students on work placement with your company?
European Orientation

9 Do you look for the following in a graduate seeking a European/International career?

- willingness to be mobile
- active, adaptable person
- ability to work in a multicultural group
- interest in cultures other than their own
- European language skills
- knowledge of European/International Business

10 The majority of these graduates have spent time abroad studying and/or working as part of an ERASMUS scheme. Is this significant to the company?

11 How long would you expect the graduate to have spent in another European country?
   - 3 months
   - 6 months
   - 12 months
   - 2 years

12 If you employed such a graduate would they immediately do any of the following in their job:

- work on European/International issues, projects in the UK
- go to Europe in the short-term
- be based in a European office long-term
- travel extensively in Europe
- use their European linguistic skills
- develop their European business interest further.

13 Is the company interested in the potential of these graduates for the sphere of European management?

14 Do you have an in-house European Management Development programme or similar training?

15 Are newly-recruited graduates and postgraduates included on such programmes?
## APPENDIX E1

### Context rationale of courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Excerpts from Validation Documentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Existing provision consists of two postgraduate diploma courses: for <em>Languages for Business</em> and in <em>Administrative Studies and Practice</em>, both met with increasing popularity. It is now appropriate to offer a <em>more demanding</em> programme of study and create a dimension of achievement beyond the secretarial nature of the present 2 courses (and replace them with a course that offers greater <em>career opportunities</em> in the long term).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Invited to join an existing <em>network</em> (4 partners) for an <em>integrated</em> dual award course. Already in another network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>European Business degree has existed within the <em>Combined Studies</em> degree programme with a European prescriptive package of units. There is a lack of harmony between the two cohorts, and with the submission for a 4 year degree, the difference would become too pronounced to reconcile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C8</td>
<td>The department has a long <em>record of interest</em> in teaching and researching in European and '1992' issues. Nine other departments are involved. The necessary expertise and skills have been provided which allowed the development of this proposal. Sought partners for links on the basis that it is: 'important that the institutions should offer appropriate units which correspond with the <em>ethos</em> of the degree'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Developments within the EC and additional experience in running the course have led us to believe that <em>further adjustments</em> are required. Plan to introduce a second language, further emphasis on <em>European integration</em> and a wider choice of electives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C10</td>
<td><em>Links</em> now strong enough to permit us to base a degree programme upon them. Original network (exchanges), and in the process of becoming founder members of a second network. Need to reciprocate student exchanges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C11</td>
<td>Recognised Inter-university Cooperation Programme (<em>ICP</em>) under ERASMUS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C12</td>
<td>Review (2 cohorts have completed the course). Formal revalidation: <em>additional partners</em> being introduced to enhance the Pan-European nature of the diploma. Also incorporating European experience in other degrees, use as a route for this course</td>
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## APPENDIX E2

### Study/work period abroad

*Source: Validation Document sub-sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of arrangement and role in the course</th>
<th>Course 1</th>
<th>Course 2</th>
<th>Course 3</th>
<th>Course 4</th>
<th>Course 5</th>
<th>Course 6</th>
<th>Course 7</th>
<th>Course 8</th>
<th>Course 9</th>
<th>Course 10</th>
<th>Course 11</th>
<th>Course 12</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No partners</td>
<td>Network</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>European partner</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>Network</td>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>No study abroad</td>
<td>2 years, ie 4</td>
<td>Whole of third</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1 year</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agreed principles of partners</td>
<td>between partners</td>
<td>institutions</td>
<td>arrangements</td>
<td>Principles of</td>
<td>(cooperation agreements) with</td>
<td>institutions</td>
<td>1 semester in total</td>
<td>semesters in total</td>
<td>year abroad</td>
<td>Third year of the</td>
<td>Year 3 of the</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Programme of exchanges</td>
<td>Key feature of course</td>
<td>Student exchanges</td>
<td>collaboration</td>
<td>each partner</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Opportunity to absorb realities</td>
<td>course</td>
<td>1 semester</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Crucial to aims and personal development of student</td>
<td>Considered to be essential</td>
<td>Exchanges</td>
<td>university</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Counterbalance to UK insularity</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Language fluent</td>
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<td>Culture, business practices: well versed</td>
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### Details of arrangement

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<th>Course 1</th>
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<th>Course 7</th>
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<th>Course 9</th>
<th>Course 10</th>
<th>Course 11</th>
<th>Course 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No study abroad</td>
<td>2 years, ie 4 semesters in total 1 semester in each year of course</td>
<td>Whole of third year abroad</td>
<td>2 semesters Part II (semester 4)</td>
<td>1 year Third year of the course</td>
<td>1 year Year 3 of the course</td>
<td>1 year postgraduate diploma</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning: required to do so in foreign language</td>
<td>Opportunity to absorb realities</td>
<td>Opportunity for different learning experience</td>
<td>Aims require; necessary for study of language, business and European business environment</td>
<td>One purpose: enhancement of students' language competence</td>
<td>1 semester</td>
<td>2 languages</td>
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## Study/work period abroad

**Source:** Validation Document sub-sample

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<th>Course 1</th>
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<th>Course 3</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Multinational groups of students studying together</td>
<td>Study alongside foreign counterparts</td>
<td>Should be treated as a 'native' student</td>
<td>Taught jointly in fourth year of course</td>
<td>Students will be integrated within existing courses and classes in the host institutions</td>
<td>Students to remain in a mixed nationality group throughout</td>
<td>Where appropriate study alongside host country students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Required to complete same in-course assessment and exams</td>
<td>Examined by the foreign institution</td>
<td>Assessment pattern that of partner institution</td>
<td>Requisite to proceed to semester 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>End of semester 8 exams will be fully harmonised across all 5 centres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work placement</td>
<td>No placement</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>6 weeks minimum</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Year 3 abroad</td>
<td>Minimum of 12 weeks business placement</td>
<td>3 months in the host country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>Not compulsory</td>
<td>partly work placement</td>
<td>Normally in a host country</td>
<td>Unless this placement is satisfactorily completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment of performance</td>
<td>Recognise finding short-term placements may be difficult</td>
<td>Eager for students to be placed in an industrial/commercial organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>two reports and viva</td>
<td>(Reports on the placement by students and employers will be used to achieve a comprehensive assessment of the student's performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contributions to Finals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

[App-45]
# Study/work period abroad

Source: Validation Document sub-sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course 1</th>
<th>Course 2</th>
<th>Course 3</th>
<th>Course 5</th>
<th>Course 8</th>
<th>Course 10</th>
<th>Course 11</th>
<th>Course 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project/dissertation/report</td>
<td>Group project</td>
<td>Project in foreign language Major opportunity for student's self-development Link with placement <em>not mandatory</em></td>
<td>Report in the foreign language based on the work placement</td>
<td>European project dissertation plus viva</td>
<td>All honours students must do detailed study of project European topic <em>where possible</em> to be linked to any work placement <em>Compulsory for German route Diplom award dependent</em></td>
<td>No specific details on project General teaching strategies notes final year research-based work carried out by students and based upon their previous year's work experience</td>
<td>Prepare and present a report Assessed as a requirement for both diplomas</td>
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APPENDIX E3

Prospectus information on admissions policy and entry requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Code No.</th>
<th>Course type</th>
<th>Open Day/open interview</th>
<th>A level language</th>
<th>GCSE English and Maths</th>
<th>Bachelor's degree suitable language</th>
<th>Alternative evidence of linguistic competence</th>
<th>Qualifications BTEC/Access Non-standard</th>
<th>Mature students welcomed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pg</td>
<td>O*</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Work experience</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ug</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>BTEC</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ug</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>BTEC, Access Non-standard</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ug</td>
<td>O*</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ug</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ug</td>
<td>O*</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ug</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ug</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ug</td>
<td>O &amp; I</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>Good O level, GCSE or AS level standard</td>
<td>European and Int. qualifications accepted</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Pg</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>One GCSE (or equivalent) language</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Pg</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>BTEC Higher</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ug</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>BTEC</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Pg</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Pg</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pg</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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### APPENDIX E4

**Prospectus information on courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Code No</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Overseas experience</th>
<th>Work placement</th>
<th>Assessment/ syllabi</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>European Business Diploma</td>
<td>Pg</td>
<td>1 year full-time</td>
<td>To acquire a broad-based European focus - likely that demand for good graduates with a European business perspective will continue.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Term 3 Company Project</td>
<td>Continuous assessment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ESF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>European Business BA (Hons)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 year sandwich</td>
<td>To combine business education with the study of languages ... to take an active role in the increasingly international business environment of the 1990s.</td>
<td>France Spain Germany The Netherlands</td>
<td>2 years total (including 6 months work placement)</td>
<td>1 x 6 months (UK) 1 x 6 months (partner institution)</td>
<td>Integrated common exams</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>European Business BA (Hons)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Managers and executives with a thorough training in business plus fluency in at least one of the languages spoken within the EC.</td>
<td>France Germany Spain Italy</td>
<td>1 year (including work placement)</td>
<td>6 weeks (min) in the foreign country</td>
<td>Integrated common exams Industrial project</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>European Management BA</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Designed to meet goals of post-1992 Europe ... technical expertise but also fluent in a second language. Further advantage: good knowledge of the society and culture.</td>
<td>France Germany</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Company project</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>ERASMUS (bid pending)</td>
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</table>
### Prospectus information on courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Code No</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Overseas experience</th>
<th>Work placement</th>
<th>Assessment/syllabi</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>European Business Studies</td>
<td>BA (Hons)</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Designed to combine the study of business disciplines with languages, to produce a qualification which is relevant to the Europe of the 1990s.</td>
<td>France Germany Spain Italy Holland Denmark</td>
<td>2 semesters (Stage 2) (including work placement)</td>
<td>Stage 1 (UK) Stage 2 (abroad)</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>European Business Studies</td>
<td>BA (Hons)</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>For people who wish to pursue a career in business and want a broad-based degree together with European language tuition and business experience in Europe.</td>
<td>France Germany Spain (Italy)</td>
<td>1 year (including a period of training with a company)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>European Business</td>
<td>BA (Hons)</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>To equip students with the appropriate knowledge and skills for a career in European business.</td>
<td>France Germany Spain</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>6 months (partner country)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>European Business</td>
<td>BA (Hons)</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Seeks to equip students with a knowledge of the business environment in Europe consistent with the needs likely to emerge as the Single European Market develops.</td>
<td>France Germany Spain Italy</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Opportunities to be placed in company while studying in Europe</td>
<td>Mutual recognition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Prospectus information on courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Code No</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Overseas experience</th>
<th>Work placement</th>
<th>Assessment/ syllabi</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>European Business Administration</td>
<td>BA (Hons)</td>
<td>4 years sandwich</td>
<td>To present specialised business and administrative knowledge within a broad and integrated European context.</td>
<td>France, Germany, Spain</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>1 x 6 months (UK), 1 x 6 months (partner country)</td>
<td>Integrated syllabi, Common exams</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>European Management</td>
<td>BA (Hons)</td>
<td>4 years sandwich</td>
<td>Preparation for a career in the management of any enterprise either based in one of the EC countries or having extensive dealings with those countries.</td>
<td>Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Netherlands</td>
<td>1 year (including work placement)</td>
<td>1 x 6 months (EC)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>European Enterprise Management</td>
<td>Pg Diploma</td>
<td>1 year (calendar)</td>
<td>Able to operate effectively in an international environment ... good business skills and a working knowledge of at least two European languages.</td>
<td>France, Germany, Spain</td>
<td>7 months (including work placement)</td>
<td>1 x 3 months (abroad)</td>
<td>Common programme</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>European Diploma in Business and Management</td>
<td>Ug Diploma</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>To help to produce 'European managers' who will have an active part to play in the further integration of the EC as a trading entity.</td>
<td>France, Germany, Spain, The Netherlands</td>
<td>1 year (including work placement)</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
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</table>
## Prospectus information on courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Code No</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Overseas experience</th>
<th>Work placement</th>
<th>Assessment/syllabi</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>European MBA Programme</td>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>4 terms</td>
<td>To develop managers: management studies with a focus on international business and includes continuous foreign language training</td>
<td>France, Germany, Spain</td>
<td>1 term</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>European Business</td>
<td>BA(Hons)</td>
<td>4 year sandwich</td>
<td>To prepare you for a wide variety of careers in European business.</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>1 year in partner country</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ERASMUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>European Management</td>
<td>Pg Diploma</td>
<td>1 year full-time</td>
<td>Designed to provide the business training necessary to gain employment in Industry and Commerce. For language graduates in French, German or Spanish.</td>
<td>France, Germany, Spain</td>
<td>1 year (including work placement)</td>
<td>1 x 3 months</td>
<td>Integrated assignments Continuous assessment No exam</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ESF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E5

Course Leader profile

Rationale

When writing up the Course Leader interviews I decided to attempt an illustrative case of a Course Leader. The intention was to identify the characteristics of the 'enthusiastic person' referred to in the literature (CNAA, 1992), and by the participants themselves. Bill Goodacre (pseudonym) seemed to typify this particular individual in the role of Course Leader. This was my first attempt at qualitative writing, and I was reliant on the examples of writers such as Yin (1989) and Patton (1990). The resultant profile of Bill Goodacre is offered here in support of the analysis, and as a record of my early learning in this area. The case was intended to exemplify not just the character of the individual Course Leader, but also the relationship between the individual and his course programme, and the programme and the institution, ie the levels of analysis in what eventually became Chapter 10.

Bill Goodacre: profile of a Course Leader

Bill has the appearance of a man firmly settled in middle age and would happily fit the stereotype of a typical academic. The role of academic is one he would willingly claim for himself if circumstances permitted:

I'm a very busy man I also in fact am looking to lay down a lot of the administrative load I've got more interest in research and I've got about 15 articles up here which I can't get time to do down so if I did get a bit more time I personally wouldn't go for professional qualifications I would go into research and in that sense I'm more of an academic than anything else, and that's what's important to me.

Bill's strong research interest in the Single European Market (SEM) has been the direct cause of his involvement in the European Business Degree. His European commitment runs strong and is comprehensive. He holds a Master's in East European Studies. His actual fluency in another European language is on self-admission debatable, but his effort in learning is definitely European in spirit:

Heather: You're fluent in French.
Bill: Well I wouldn't say that but I can speak French (laugh)

Heather: You ticked my box (laughter)

Bill: I can speak French yes

Heather: A few people put on it how do you define fluency which I thought was just being obstructive (laughter)
How did you how did you become fluent in " ------- "?

Bill: Um hard work laughter) it was I had done some at school and I didn't do it when I studied my O levels and A levels French and I started off with these um ah tapes BBC tapes and things

Heather: They're very good

Bill: they're very good excellent I can thoroughly recommend them.

Fortuitously, I tracked down one of his publications in the journal European Business Review. Dealing with the economic implications of the Single European Market [SEM] by examining selected studies its conclusions are illuminating in view of the philosophy expounded for the degree. Bill it seems is an academic who practises what he publishes and vice versa:

- co-ordination being necessary only when it affects the competition requirements of the SEM. Mutual recognition is generally advocated as the requirement in this area. However, as Pelkmans and Winters imply, this question of where mutual recognition is sufficient is one of the key questions.

An economic theorist by training, Bill had 'got into European work by applying my theory to the study of Europe, particularly the Single European Market'. However what emerged early on in our interview and I think really only because of the easy atmosphere we had established between us, was the story of his own entry into Higher Education by what would now be termed a non-traditional route. His adherence to a very strong academic approach to management training was then expounded:

Heather: You said 13 years here (yes) all told (yes) you must have had industrial or business experience as well (ah..) I'm doing mathematics on your age (sure, sure, sure)

Bill: Well that's because I mean I come from rather a peculiar start into higher education. I actually left school at 15 and I worked for 6 years (mm) in an engineering company in the Midlands in the Cost Office and whilst I was there I studied ah at night school A- levels and things and then I went to university and then I came into teaching (mm) that method. So I entered into higher education teaching quite late I
think I was about 28 so the experience that I've had working was when I left school at 15 (yes) I haven't been working in industry since then I've done consultancy and things but I haven't been in industry since then.

Heather: Given that background how do you feel about the all the classic arguments about how a manager's made you know is it a practical route or is it an academic route?

Bill: Sure. Ah no I've got quite strong views about that and probably has an influence in the way that the European Business degree's been developed here. (mm) I have a view that the British view of practical on the job training is very harmful for management in Britain ah I'm also very impressed by the way that the Continentals do it when we've talked to our partners (mm) and it seems to me quite crucial that in the training of management there's a need for a very sound academic base to managers (mm) ah that's not to say that practical things are not unimportant they are important but they need a sound academic and analytical base they need certain academic and analytical skills and I've frequently given talks to British business people that's in the European market and I've also done that to German business people and to French business people and I'm always more impressed by the knowledge and analytical abilities (mm) and grasp of things of Germans and French managers as compared to British managers. I'm talking here about middle management (yes) I'm normally on the few occasions when I've come in contact with top British management quite impressed by them.

Bill's admission that his strong views on the way to train managers probably has an influence on the way the degree has been developed is indicative of his relation to the programme as a whole. On meeting Bill what is immediately noticeable is his good humour and his energy - he is dynamic. It is this quality which is the key to his connection with the programme and its development. His is an active leadership:

and from there I've um developed other interests but I've drawn round myself a team of people and we're very fortunate here ah Marketing people Accounting people who have a strong interest in Europe and have those sort of business skills from which I must admit I'm still not strong in

Bill: Ah I haven't resided in Europe I do an enormous amount of travelling to Europe I've been four times this term last week I was in France ah I'll be returning to France in about three weeks currently because we're also beginning to establish an Italian and a Spanish route (mm) to Business in Europe I'm on an average term doing about four trips to the continent of Europe a term.

Bill: But we've been pushing at this thing for a long time and I interviewed them all [the students] personally just on Monday as a prerequisite before they were going and I was saying to them 'Are you looking forward to it?'
The composition of the team is of interest. Inclusion of European nationals, other than English speakers, has been deliberately sought after:

Another thing that we're trying to do for these languages we're trying to hire native speakers not just in languages but in the business area. So we have two Germans currently and an Italian.

Heather: And you actually recruited them deliberately?

Bill: Yes

Heather: for that reason?

Bill: Yes. We encouraged applications from Community assistants because we don't have work permit problems with Community assistants and we feel it's important that we have native speakers who are economists or accountants or marketers or whatever.

Heather: What sort of background did your Germans have?

Bill: The Germans are very similar both of them (mm) ah they have done um joint degree with in one case a Fachhochschule in the other a University with British polytechnics and they both also had done British Masters' degrees one in Reading and one in the LSE and they'd both worked in the German financial services sector so by accident they're very similar (mm) in background.

But, as Bill amusingly recalls not always quite in the way they intended:

We also had as I think I said to you before two native two fluent Italian speakers both one's an accountant and one's a marketer so we thought we must take advantage of their linguistic skills as well.

Heather: How did they come in your direction?

Bill: Well um the accountant came basically as an accountant and when he arrived his mother's Italian (mm) and we discovered he is he's also very interested in European Accounting research and that whole area and then we discovered he's fluent in Italian ah the marketer also came just employed as a marketer ah he was employed primarily to teach Marketing and Business in Europe ah and I don't think anybody ever asked him about whether he could speak Italian although he's called Elio Medici (laughter) because he was brought up in Lancashire so he's got a strong Lancashire accent but when he arrives lo and behold we find he is he is also fluent in Italian (oh, hidden talents) hidden talents absolutely s::o I mean that wasn't the determining focus at all but what we're saying is now we've got (mm) the language expertise here let's make use of it and we were looking to Italy anyway.
Another point that arose in the context of discussing the fact that the participants are 2:1 female is that the course team itself is all-male, and the language staff are seen as separate.

Bill: Sure I mean I must admit as a course team we haven't given a lot of thought to it which may well be because apart from the language teachers we're an all-male group ah that might be why we haven't given any real thought to it (mm) ah but what we have given thought to is we have seen to pick up your point (mm) that when these people graduate and enter into management careers our view is certainly my view is that the males are going to possibly more than the females although they're not necessarily better.

So there is a drive to secure the specialist business skills with an appropriate linguistic orientation and commitment to the idea of the course. You get the impression that this is a team which actively works to make the statements in official documentation actually happen in practice. The fact that the course has yet to achieve the graduation of its first cohort must be kept in mind. It is new, feeling its way and positive comment on its design is seen as premature:

Heather: You've meshed them in fairly thoroughly.

Bill: Well we have we haven't taught this course yet so that the implementation of it will have to be worked through (mm, mm) but in our planning and our design we're trying to mesh it all together yes.

Heather: Good yes it seems to reflect a much more thorough thinking through of the course philosophy than some other courses.

Bill: We spent a lot of time (mm) we still spend a lot of time on developing the basic philosophy which I hope I've outlined to you.

The course is 'developing' not just in its own academic terms but has benefits to offer to the institution in other ways. Resource support has been forthcoming and Bill has the ear of influential people. He himself recognises that the cost of the programme must be offset by other, more tangible benefits to the Polytechnic. In this case it seems international links are that asset. This is in line with the polytechnic's strategic aims as outlined in their Mission Statement\(^2\). However, it also seems the polytechnic is willing to pay a high premium to realise this aim:

Bill: So we have support I think from the highest level in the polytechnic right up to the Director of the polytechnic who's been very successful and the course has not been cheap to develop and to implement it's involved a lot of foreign travel and it's also involved the hiring of staff some months prior to them actually being required for teaching and the polytechnic has been prepared to do that so the polytechnic has
devoted significant resources to developing this course and it's also spilling out now into other courses so we're developing from the European Business model other degrees who'll be linking on a similar sort of model with double qualifications and we're starting an Accounting link in September 1993 ah so the Accounting degree will have a similar arrangement with French and German students (mm hm) and we're hoping to develop a Master's degree and a DSS with the University of ----- [French institution], so the investment if you like could be seen as seedcorn in a way to develop ah from that using the basic model of ......................... and that is happening.

Heather: Mm do you think that's how your Directors are seeing you?

Bill: Yes I think so. They want to see a fairly strong base and of course the um key word that's always used these days is a Centre of Excellence³ and they would like this to be developed into a Centre of Excellence in this area.

Heather: So you use the word model so you're consciously being seen as a model.

Bill: Within the polytechnic yes and I've had some feedback that I think other polytechnics are interested in the way that we've done things not so much the content but our double qualification is not based on joint courses but on mutual recognition

Heather: So who can give you the money that you really need?

Bill: We have to go the Polytechnic basically. I mean we get an odd bit of money, and I mean I was awarded a Jean Monnet option money (oh right) which was 5000 ECU or something I don't think it's that much, so we can get a little bit here and there (dribbles and drabs) dribbles and drabs (yes) but on the whole the poly the Faculty of Management and Business has to find the money em.. and in some ways I think we are a bit of a loss leader certainly the margins on our students must be fairly narrow (mm) because it's expensive to.

Bill's own career advancement is intimately bound up in this equation. He has recently been made Director of the newly formed International Business Unit. This administers the European Business degree but is intended to have a wider orbit covering study and research exchanges. So, not just as the prospectus says 'Europe and 1992' but International development is on the agenda.

The programme's relationship with industry is officially underwritten in the Course Brochure in these words: 'Companies such as [multinational chemical products manufacturer], [European computer manufacturer] and [financial services multinational] have indicated that they regard the BA (Hons) European Business degree as an excellent base for access into careers in management.'
Bill however reveals the reality of the relationship behind this statement as one of hard work, which is education-led, and not quite as depicted in the prospectus:

Heather: I wanted to turn towards the corporate sector generally (mm hm) How supportive is industry to this course in particular?

Bill: Verbally and in writing very (mm) they're very interested in the course they're very interested in the graduates when they come out can't say that it's led to any funds ah

Heather: Because you're already quite well supported, you've got this rather impressive list in the Prospectus of Chamber of Commerce and Industry's support (mm hm) building in a cross-curricular

Bill: Yes we've got um the pres the Chief Executive of the Chamber of Commerce is one of our governors I think (mm) but often ah a lot of this is at fairly superficial level once you start talking to them about I want placements I want ah .. it's easy to get people to come and talk to us I must admit that is not a problem the big banks the big manufacturers Chambers of Commerce and so on we can easily arrange and normally they don't charge it's good (mm) and some of them send some very good people sometimes so that's not a problem it's more a problem when you start talking about placements is the big problem.

Heather: The recession's really hit.

Bill: In the recession particularly short-term placements because what we're after was 3-month placements and that is hard work.

Heather: Imagine how the people with one year are getting on.

Bill: Sure but British firms are more willing to take somebody for a year because they can train them up and then they think I've got 9 months to get something out of them (mm mm) whereas 3 months they think well by the time I've trained them to do something useful they're off. So we've been trying to push to them the value they could have because these are foreign students they can use them to particularly if they're wanting to penetrate the country's market the countries they come from and do some research in the language (mm) something like that but that's hard work. I remember having an amazing conversation with a Director of a manufacturing company in .......... saying what could I do with a German student who had worked in the engineering industry who's fluent in English and he says 'What could I do with him?' and I thought I says to him 'Do you sell in Germany?' he says 'A little bit' 'Do you want to sell more in Germany?' he said 'Oh yes' and I said 'You still can't think of anything you could do with a fluent German speaker?' (laughing) 'A fluent German who's worked in the German industry' and he says 'Well perhaps'

Heather: Back to our original conversation about British management.
Bill: Yeah sure ... so it's hard work and often you see the links that you referred to in the prospectus are high level the operational things that we're talking about again we're having to deal with middle management and it's hard graft.

On this note we leave Bill immersed in a demanding role, but with his humour intact, and in spite of the 'hard graft' working *enthusiastically* to develop a European future.

**Notes**

1. Such an approach was confirmed by a job advertisement for a L/SL in *European Business* in the *Guardian Education* January 12 1993, which reads: 'We welcome applications from nationals of other European states.'

2. Excerpt from the Polytechnic's Mission Statement: 'To contribute to the economic, social and cultural life of the region, whilst seeking to enhance its national and international role and reputation.'

3. Excerpt from the Polytechnic's Mission Statement: 'To be a centre of excellence in its teaching, scholarship and research.'