

## New look at top MBAs

Which is South Africa's best MBA? For the last four years, the Financial Mail's definitive survey Ranking The MBAs, has seen Wits Business School head and shoulders above the competition. But can it hold that position in 2004 after months of negative publicity, which resulted in its director, Adele Thomas, and her entire management team resigning this week?

The 2004 ranking, to be published next week in the FM, promises to look quite different from past years - and not just because of events at Wits and other business schools which have also struggled with governance and leadership issues. What makes rankings forecasts even more unpredictable is that the scoring process has changed. Instead of relying exclusively on the responses of employers, the 2004 version of 'Ranking The MBAs' also takes into account the views of graduates and business schools themselves.

Add to that the turmoil created in the MBA sector by the recent Council for Higher Education (CHE) reaccreditation process, and it's clear that nothing is as it was before. The aim of reaccreditation was to clean out poor-quality qualifications from the overcrowded MBA landscape. It's certainly done that, though there are some surprises in those that failed and those that survived. Of the 28 schools that offered MBAs before, only 18 may do so in future.

All these changes are reflected in responses and scoring for Ranking The MBAs. However, Financial Mail's David Furlonger says Ranking the MBAs in no way duplicates the efforts of the CHE, whose focus was on technical criteria and service provision. Ranking The MBAs measures course output in the most practical terms: what do graduates and employers get out of the qualification?

"What is clear from these rankings," says Furlonger, "is that despite the emotional issues that have overwhelmed MBAs in recent months, graduates, employers and even business schools have taken a measured look at their sector. The results are a true reflection of how the market sees business schools and their MBAs."

Ranking The MBAs appears next week, in the September 10 issue of Financial Mail.

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