



Using analytics to create a better world

Anne Vaxelaire explains how QTEM, a network of global academic institutions and international businesses, is training students to handle 'big data' and to become open-minded and strong leaders

Big data and analytics may bring to mind endless spreadsheets and massive mainframe computers but the new world of data analytics is dynamic, connective and rapidly evolving – and the QTEM network aims take it even further.

Founded in September 2012, QTEM – Quantitative Techniques for Economics and Management – is an international network bringing together outstanding students, academics and international corporations. Currently comprised of 21 universities and 13 corporate partners around the globe – and growing quickly – QTEM is poised to change the way its students interact with data. Says QTEM Chairman and Dean of the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management, Bruno van Pottelsberghe, “We launched this programme five years ago after many discussions with businesses and our founding academic partners, who adhered to the idea that there was a great opportunity to build a new stepping stone for global talents, grounded on the complementarities of the network. Innovation and technology are evolving so quickly and the need for understanding and acquiring strong leadership around data analytics and digitalisation has become crucial. We are training the next generation of leaders to root their daily decision making in strong analytic foundations. Our intention is really to use analytics to create a better world—and our students will lead the way”.

Each QTEM member university selects a maximum of 20 top-level students. Applicants are chosen based on academic excellence (especially for analytical coursework); their entrepreneurial spirit; English proficiency; a minimum GMAT score of 650; and approval of a panel of academic and corporate members. Of course students also need to have the basic prerequisites to acquire and strengthen key analytical skills but they first and foremost must show evidence of maturity, creativity, openness and dynamism.

During the QTEM programme students are required to complete one or two international exchanges and an international internship, ensuring the global focus and practical experience of QTEM graduates. Additionally, students have the option to participate in intensive summer



Above and left:

The graduation meeting in Monash, Melbourne, November 2016

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school sessions at QTEM academic partners around the globe, giving students yet another opportunity to expand their knowledge base and their world.

On successful completion of the programme students earn a degree from their home university and the QTEM degree. But that’s not all.

According to Deputy Dean Michaela Rankin at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, “QTEM students are not just academically talented; we find them to be motivated, entrepreneurial, open-minded and with strong leadership potential ...the necessary ingredients to build a more sustainable world”.

To test this out, we interviewed several QTEM students and graduates – read some of the responses over the page.



Axel Jacobson, BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo

Equity analyst for Arctic Securities in Oslo, Norway

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Through QTEM I've had the opportunity to tailor my education and I chose to focus on "core" finance courses. The courses have provided me with a strong background in analytical skills and financial theory, which has helped me in my job as an equity analyst – from financial modelling to building up an equity story in relation to IPOs, private placements, etc. For example, the salmon farming industry is very capital intensive and requires substantial investments in order to grow. At Arctic Securities we can help with this growth as our research is one of the key cornerstones in a private placement as investors use our research to make a decision. And raising money for a salmon company not only benefits the company but the entire region as it creates jobs.

Exchange(s):

National Taiwan University, Taiwan, and LUISS University, Rome

Internship:

Arctic Securities AS, Norway (www.arctic.com)



Lara Redmer, Goethe University, Frankfurt

Currently working as a Junior Marketing Analyst at About You, Hamburg, Germany

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At About You, we always base decisions on a solid foundation of data and insights. For example, we are currently investigating the incremental uplift in brand awareness that is generated by specific marketing campaigns based on statistical models. Ideally, this allows us to evaluate and forecast how media and marketing budgets are allocated most efficiently. It is so exciting to work with a team of highly motivated people [who] all share the same analytical mindset!

Exchange(s):

Universiteit van Amsterdam, Netherlands

Internship:

DekaBank, Germany (www.deka.de)



Julien Vennekens, Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (ULB)

Currently a student at Solvay

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The QTEM programme not only taught me quantitative techniques but also helped me to develop a strong analytical mindset to tackle complex problems with ease. Being data-driven is important at companies such as McKinsey or Google but what really matters is how you are able to use data to monitor [and] uncover relevant insights and measure impact. Right after my internship at Google, I volunteered at Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) to increase its digital impact thanks to the power of analytics.

Exchange(s):

LUISS University, Rome, and Monash University, Melbourne

Internship:

McKinsey & Co as a Summer Business Analyst. Last semester, I also joined Google as a Business Intern



Kifei Zhao, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

Currently working for IBM as a business transformation consultant in Shanghai, China

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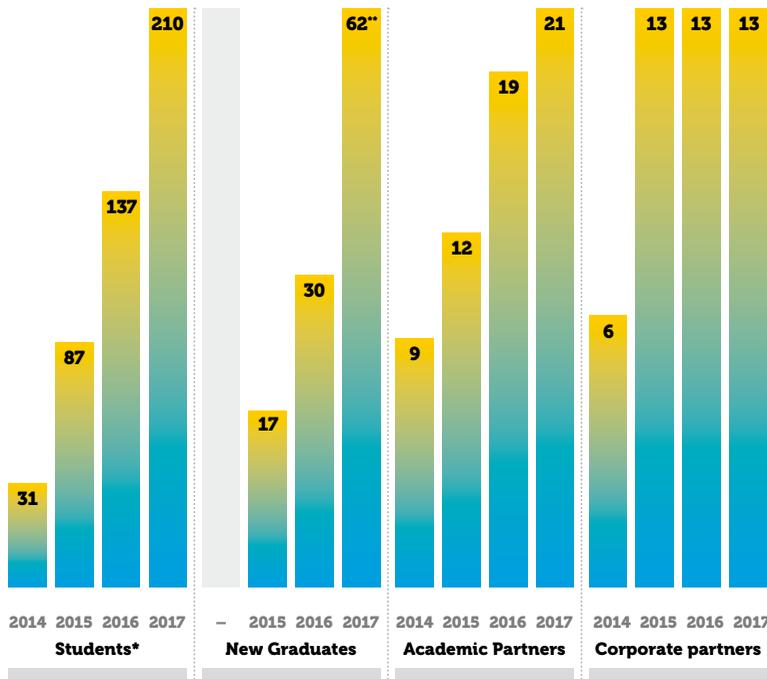
I started my career as a consultant by joining a phase 3 finance transformation project for my client, the top dairy company in China. Our company has built up a Finance Shared Service Centre for this client, and phase 3 project focuses on process utilisation, process performance and quality control of this FSSC. I have implemented data analysis skills in calculating income of process utilisation of FSSC, as well as presenting a series of statistics training lessons for my client. It gave me a great chance to help my clients to use statistics tools in quality control and process management, and to enhance trust between our client and my company.

Exchange(s):

Goethe University

Internship:

IBM, GBS China



*Students enrolled in the QTEM Masters Programme
 **Projected number of graduates

Figure 1:
 On the right track – QTEM in numbers

A key feature for training future business leaders is QTEM's strong network of universities and corporate partners around the globe. Rector Karen Spens from Hanken University in Helsinki, Finland, comments: "We saw the opportunity to exploit the complementarities of other leading, academic institutions who wanted to accomplish the same things. Being a member of the QTEM network allows us the chance to offer more global options – academically and professionally – to our top students, prepare them to meet and exceed the expectations of their future employers, and contribute to thought leadership on analytical topics".

A newly formed Selection Committee of several deans from QTEM member universities is tasked with reviewing university applicants and ensuring quality based on international accreditations, implementation capacity, appropriate course offerings and commitment to the ideals and values of the network.

To manage this growing global network, QTEM has a small staff – "the QTEaM" – in Brussels, Belgium, at the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management in the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB). They facilitate corporate affairs, communications, academic and student affairs as well as group work throughout the QTEM system.

At the 2017 Annual Meeting and Graduation Ceremony hosted at HEC-Lausanne, Switzerland, QTEM will launch its annual analytics conference on the theme "Industry Meets Academia." Here, students and participants can learn first-hand from industry and academic experts about the intersection of cutting edge theory and practice.

Says Dean Jean-Philippe Bonardi of HEC Lausanne: "We train our students with practical, valuable and sometimes life-changing experiences. Being part of the QTEM network connects all of these important facets: rigorous academic programmes, a strong analytical focus, a truly international experience and hands-on learning through internships with top corporations."

What's next for QTEM?

As the student body and partnerships grow at a brisk rate, QTEM has turned its focus to continued innovation in its offerings and expanding its network outside Europe.

"We really see the QTEM network as an innovation in education which exploits complementarities on several levels: among universities and between universities and the business world, all while offering greater opportunities to students. For EDHEC, this fits well within our mandate to 'make an impact'," states Dean Oliver Oger of EDHEC Business School.

It is just this type of innovation that QTEM fosters and will bring to every corner of the globe. "We've got our eyes on Asia Pacific, The Americas and Africa," says Dean van Pottelsberghe. "We are truly dedicated to creating a unique global tribe of motivated and entrepreneurial students who want to use analytics to create a better world".



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anne Vaxelaire is the Communications Manager for the QTEM network and is based in Brussels with the QTEaM.