

# Driving adoption to ensure educational continuity at Université Paris Dauphine



Founded in 1968, Université Paris Dauphine has over 9,000 students and has earned itself a prestigious reputation for academic excellence. In 2008 “Le Nouvel Economiste” ranked it within the top 6 business schools in France, and in 2010 it was ranked amongst the 4 best French institutions according to the “Challenge - Who’s who”-ranking. The establishment teaches at undergraduate and postgraduate level, in addition to offering MBA courses through its executive training centre.

Paris Dauphine needed to free the IT department from the time consuming task of having to continuously develop and maintain its e-learning environment. The institution has been using the Blackboard Learn™ platform for almost 10 years enabling the team to focus its attention on helping students and teachers use the e-learning technology to its fullest potential. The university has always strived to enhance teaching through its effective use of technology and prides itself on facilitating an easy transition for students from higher education to the workplace.

## Ensuring effective continuity of teaching should the inevitable occur

Following the outbreak of the H1N1 Swine Flu pandemic, The French Ministry of Education wanted every establishment to ensure that an academic plan was put in place that would enable teaching and learning to continue if lessons were suspended at short notice.

Recognising the value Blackboard Learn already brought to its distance learners on its MBA courses, Paris Dauphine decided to move other courses online to ensure educational continuity going forward. The university recognized that it needed

to focus on driving adoption of the Blackboard Learn platform amongst instructors to be able to offer a greater percentage of its courses online.

## Senior-level commitment creating the right atmosphere for change

Using the H1N1 threat as an impetus for change, Paris Dauphine’s president Laurent Batsh personally encouraged all instructors to visit the institution’s Centre d’ingénierie Pédagogique to learn how to put their courses online. This senior level buy-in prompted a record number of instructors to request help on how to use the e-learning solution more



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effectively and Paris Dauphine soon realised it would need support to rapidly meet this unprecedented demand.

Paris Dauphine therefore recruited 30 students to help secure more courses online. Their primary role was to teach tutors to use Blackboard Learn's basic functionalities such as uploading course material and to promote Blackboard Learn within the teaching community by distributing flyers and demonstrating particular applications. Through this exercise it became apparent that the students were best placed to know which course materials should be made accessible via Blackboard Learn and which features of the Blackboard Learn platform would be of most value to tutors. The students' role was soon expanded to survey their peers on how they wanted Blackboard Learn to be used and communicating this information back to instructors to help enhance the platform's usability.

### **Blackboard Learn platform a key contributor to its institutional success**

Paris Dauphine cites choosing the established Blackboard Learn platform as a key contributor to its institutional success: "We wanted an e-learning environment that was simple to use and which we could implement immediately" says Cecile Chevalier, Co Director of the Centre d'Ingénierie Pédagogique at Paris Dauphine. "We've spoken to other universities who are using open source solutions. There are good Open Source solutions but the universities which implement these products all have to spend an incredible amount of time and money developing and maintaining the solution before they can use it the way they want to. In addition, Blackboard Learn allows us to easily integrate



with other solutions such as the assignment tool and the anti-plagiarism tool SafeAssign™ which makes our instructors' lives much easier. If we were using open source and wanted to take advantage of these types of software we would have to look at freeing up additional finances to try to integrate them with our existing system."

### **Greatest percentage of courses online of any French university**

Paris Dauphine's initiative has been a great success and it now has one of the highest percentages of courses online of any French university. The huge increase in the adoption of e-learning over a three year period means the institution now has almost 50% of its courses online and expects to increase this to 70% within the next two years.

## **For More Information**

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