

## Preparing Project Managers for the Global Project Environment

*SKEMA Business School leverages its partnership with Project Management Institute to align its coursework, relationships and reputation with the demands of today's international business world.*

Born of a merger between two French institutions, SKEMA Business School was founded on a decades-long tradition of project management education. Yet it was clear the increasingly global project landscape demanded a fresh perspective. SKEMA's relationship with Project Management Institute (PMI) has proved effective in reaching this goal.

"We saw something was missing," says Christophe Bredillet, PhD, former dean and provost of postgraduate programs, and professor of strategy, program and project management at the school. "We played a strong role in Europe as far as project management education, but we were missing an international dimension. Joining forces with PMI brought us this global dimension. Today, we are not only preparing students with a more global perspective, but we are also able to better meet the needs of global companies."

SKEMA's project management curriculum includes:

- Master of science in project and program management and business development
- Specialized master's in project and program management
- Master of business administration in strategy, program and project management
- Doctorate in strategy, program and project management
- Executive education in complex project management

### BUILDING ON HISTORY

Although SKEMA Business School is only a year old, its roots in project management run deep.

"Project management is part of our DNA," says Dr. Bredillet.

SKEMA (School of Knowledge, Economy and Management) was formed by a merger of the Ceram Business School and ESC Lille School of Management.

Going back to the 1960s, ESC Lille had a storied history in project management education, research and contract work. Along with offering a master of science in project management, the school's faculty worked on major international development projects with the World Bank and engineering firms.

Thanks in part to the strong foundation ESC Lille built prior to the merger, project management programs are now among SKEMA's key offerings.

SKEMA currently boasts 6,245 students, 20,000 alumni, 138 professors and an annual budget of €55 million. It also has a strong global presence, with locations in Lille, Paris and Sophia-Antipolis, France; Casablanca, Morocco; and Suzhou, China.

### MAKING IT WORK

The goal for the school is simple: provide project management education that students can leverage across industries in the global project environment.

---

*"Project management is part of our DNA."*

—Christophe Bredillet, PhD

---

*“PMI is a leader in project management around the world, so being accredited by the organization and being an R.E.P. essentially advertises the value of our program worldwide.”*

—Christophe Bredillet, PhD

Once the school had established what it needed to accomplish, ESC Lille began to actively work with PMI and became a Registered Education Provider (R.E.P.) in 2001. The school also began offering a preparation course for the Project Management Professional (PMP)<sup>®</sup> credential examination. In 2005, the school’s degree programs in project management were accredited by the PMI Global Accreditation Center for Project Management Education Programs (GAC).

### Strengthening the Curriculum to Meet Business Needs

“Over time, it was a natural progression for us to build on our offerings,” says Dr. Bredillet, who also served as dean of postgraduate programs at ESC Lille School of Management. “When we became an R.E.P., we took the opportunity to redesign our courses and their content to align them with *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK<sup>®</sup> Guide)*, building out areas such as contract management, communication and integration management, for instance.”

In some cases, this meant developing new courses; in others, it meant adapting existing curricula to dovetail with PMI’s standards. Either way, Dr. Bredillet says, the redesign strengthened the school’s standing as a project management educator.

“The benefit for us was the development of programs and core competencies that were better matched to the needs of industry, which ultimately improved SKEMA’s reputation as a school.”

SKEMA also began offering its masters programs in English, and the school started gaining traction with students from around the world—China, North America and Europe.

“Many of these people were working for global companies located in France and Europe, and that helped us connect with companies like IBM Global Services, Boeing and major international banks,” Dr. Bredillet says. PMI’s standards have been adopted by both industry and governments worldwide, and “the affiliation with PMI really made them notice us.”

Since ESC Lille first gained GAC accreditation, 93 percent of master’s students report satisfaction with their experience.

### CONNECTING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

The affiliation between PMI and SKEMA extends beyond classroom training to further prepare students for the global business world. It’s a symbiotic relationship, with benefits for both organizations.

SKEMA and PMI reinforce their ties through PMI chapter events, conferences and research collaboration.

### WHAT IS AN R.E.P.?

A PMI Registered Education Provider (R.E.P.) is an organization approved by PMI to issue professional development units (PDUs) for its training courses. Courses offered by R.E.P.s are pre-approved for contact hours in fulfillment of certification eligibility requirements, as well as PDUs to fulfill the continuing certification requirements for PMI credentials. (The eligibility of contact hours/PDUs from other sources is the responsibility of certification candidates and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.)

The R.E.P. program has been designed to enhance the ongoing professional development of PMI members, those credentialed through PMI and others in the project management profession.

For more information, visit [PMI.org/REP](https://www.pmi.org/REP).

## SKEMA BUSINESS SCHOOL

SKEMA's project management curriculum includes:

- Master of Science in Project and Program Management and Business Development
- Specialized Master in Project and Program Management
- Master of Business Administration in Strategy, Program and Project Management
- Doctorate in Strategy, Program and Project Management
- Executive education in complex project management

Locations:

- Lille, Paris and Sophia-Antipolis, France
- Casablanca, Morocco
- Suzhou, China

For more information, visit [www.skema.edu](http://www.skema.edu).

Expanding the relationship outside the classroom helps:

### Meet real-world needs

In addition to serving as editor of PMI's *Project Management Journal*, Dr. Bredillet founded and served as president of the PMI Hauts-de-France Chapter and has served on a number of PMI committees and task forces.

"We have been quite active in PMI events, which gives us the opportunity to make sure we are updating our program on a regular basis in order to match with PMI standards and industry needs," Dr. Bredillet says.

"PMI has been integrated into the program to such an extent that we are involved in some kind of PMI event almost every week," he adds.

### Encourage research

Many schools with GAC-accredited programs realize that research is the future of the profession and support their faculty and students in conducting research and applying for PMI sponsored funding opportunities. "GAC accreditation also encourages researchers to participate in PMI research conferences, serve as subject-matter experts and get involved in the peer-review processes for conferences and for PMI's *Project Management Journal*," Dr. Bredillet says.

Together, these activities outside the classroom enhance the school's international reputation and support its research—building on its legacy in project management and its contributions to the field.

### Increase awareness

Another aspect of the school's alliance with PMI is its work with the PMI Educational Foundation, the philanthropic arm of PMI that promotes project management education through increased awareness and funding opportunities. Dr. Bredillet regards the foundation as a like-minded organization with goals complementary to SKEMA's.

"The foundation, coupled with the PMITeach.org website, really helps us further our own aims of spreading the word about project management education," he says. "We hope to leverage these resources even more to promote our cause and explain to colleagues in different fields the importance of what we are doing."

---

**AT LEAST 50 PERCENT**  
*The portion of students who reported that the PMI affiliation was their reason for choosing SKEMA Business School*

---

## WHAT IS THE PMI GLOBAL ACCREDITATION CENTER FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS (GAC)?

GAC serves two fundamental purposes:

- To ensure the quality of academic degree programs in project management globally
- To assist faculty and universities in the improvement of project management degree programs

Academic accreditation may be conducted at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral program levels.

Graduates of GAC-accredited programs receive 1,500 hours of project management experience toward earning their Project Management Professional (PMP)<sup>®</sup> and Program Management Professional (PgMP)<sup>®</sup> credentials.

For more information, visit [PMI.org/Accreditation](http://PMI.org/Accreditation).

## REAL-WORLD RESULTS

A strengthened curriculum, along with recognition as a GAC-accredited program and having R.E.P. status, has helped further SKEMA's goal of providing a global, multicultural education to its students. Benefits have included:

- Increased brand recognition
- A higher caliber of student applicants
- Expanded global reach
- Deeper ties to PMI and its resources

"PMI is a leader in project management around the world, so being accredited by the organization and being an R.E.P. essentially advertises the value of our program worldwide," Dr. Bredillet says. "Students recognize that our project management programs are of the highest quality. I would say that almost by default, the connection with PMI has increased our visibility."

SKEMA promotes the PMI relationship on its website and in its communications with current and prospective students.

About 70 percent of SKEMA's student body hails from outside France, including

countries such as China, Japan, India, the United States and Brazil.

Interest in SKEMA from students already in the project management field has also increased with the PMI affiliation.

"We find we are attracting more students with professional experience working in project management who are now willing to do a master of science or master of business administration program in the field. This is in addition to the pre-work-experience students," Dr. Bredillet says. "The connection to PMI brings a different level of maturity to the student body at SKEMA."

In the case of SKEMA's doctoral program, at least 50 percent of students report that the PMI affiliation was their reason for choosing the school.

Being part of the PMI network has enhanced SKEMA's status and helped the school align itself with the real-world needs of potential employers to create a better education for its students. The result has been strong rates of employment for SKEMA graduates in the global job market.

"With the last cohort of graduating students, which was in September 2009, there were no difficulties in finding project management jobs, even in a difficult economic moment," Dr. Bredillet says.

SKEMA students consistently and quickly find employment in areas such as consulting, IT, aerospace, retail and nongovernmental organizations.

"The system put in place through PMI is an extremely useful resource for schools," says Dr. Bredillet. "There is great collaboration and good spirits among schools in this network, and it has been a truly great experience for us to be part of it." ■