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Press release

GEM Alpine
Business
School

2026 BACK-TO-SCHOOL CEREMONY: GEM STUDENTS TAKE THEIR FIRST STEPS ON THE ICE AND AT GRENOBLE CITY HALL

2,200 new students joined GEM this year, gathering at Grenoble's ice rink for the Opening Ceremony and later welcomed at Grenoble City Hall. For its 2026 intake, **GEM is placing elite sport and local engagement at the heart of its institutional highlights.** From the ice rink to City Hall, these two events set the tone for a new academic year combining performance, student life and immersion in a region recognised for its innovation and commitment to transition.

OPENING CEREMONY: NEW COHORTS WELCOMED UNDER THE SIGN OF ELITE SPORT

GEM's new students took part in the **School's Opening Ceremony, held this year at Grenoble's ice rink.** The formal start-of-year ceremony brought together **20 of GEM's 30 student associations** (20 based in Grenoble and 10 in Paris), GEM staff including members of the Executive Committee and programme directors, faculty members, as well as institutional stakeholders and representatives of the Grenoble ecosystem, who came to meet the future graduates.

The ceremony highlighted elite sport, bringing together several figures from Grenoble's sporting community and the GEM community. Following welcoming speeches by **Fouziya Bouzerda**, General Director of GEM, and **Philippe Monin**, Academic Director, **Emily Harrop, a GEM graduate and double Olympic medallist at the Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics**, spoke about her experience as an athlete and her academic journey at GEM.

This commitment to combining academic and sporting excellence was also embodied by **Maïa Mazzara, an elite figure skater and Bachelor's student at GEM's Institute for Sport & Management (ISM)**, who performed on the ice in front of the new students. The ISM welcomes more than 200 elite athletes every year who wish to combine sporting excellence and academic excellence.

The ceremony concluded with a show by the **Brûleurs de Loups, Grenoble's ice hockey team and nine-time French champions**, who came to share their expertise with the new cohorts.



"Elite sport and higher education have many things in common: rigour, consistency, commitment and the ability to push yourself beyond your limits. My years at GEM taught me how to manage high demands while juggling several projects at the same time. That experience has been very valuable throughout my sporting career, from my first training sessions to the Olympic Games."

Emily Harrop, GEM alumna and two-time Olympic medalist



From top to bottom: Emily Harrop, Maïa Mazzara, a Brûleurs de Loups player, and GEM students from the Altiglis association.

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EXPLORE BEYOND HORIZONS

FROM CITY HALL TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY: GRENOBLE WELCOMES ITS FUTURE TALENT

For the third consecutive year, GEM's new students were welcomed at **Grenoble City Hall**. Mayor **Laurence Ruffin** delivered a welcome speech and invited them to discover their new city. Fouziya Bouzerda then addressed the students, followed by an informal gathering bringing together students and local stakeholders.

The event was particularly meaningful for students from across France and around the world, with **130 nationalities** represented this year, as they discover Grenoble as both their university city and, for some, a place where they may build their professional future.



Reception at Grenoble City Hall: Fouziya Bouzerda and Laurence Ruffin at the center.

GRENOBLE, ALPINE CAPITAL AND A LIVING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR GEM

Nestled at the foot of the Chartreuse, Vercors and Belledonne mountain ranges, Grenoble is recognised as the **French capital of the Alps and as a pioneering region in transition and innovation**.

This mountain identity, which notably inspired the choice of the ice rink for the Opening Ceremony, also feeds into GEM's positioning, reflected in its new brand signature, "**Alpine Business School**", as part of its EAGLE 2030 strategic plan. **This strong local connection enriches GEM's teaching, research and projects developed with companies, institutions and public-sector stakeholders across the region**, as illustrated by the educational field trip that immerses students in real-life situations alongside local stakeholders.



"Welcoming our new students to City Hall is a meaningful gesture. For many of them, it is one of their first opportunities to discover Grenoble beyond their campus. It is important that they meet the people who bring the region to life and see themselves as part of its future."

Fouziya Bouzerda, General Director of GEM

2026 INTAKE - KEY FIGURES

2,200 new students welcomed for the 2026 academic year, in Grenoble and Paris
20 of GEM's 30 student associations mobilised for the event
Nearly 130 nationalities represented among the new students welcomed
Third consecutive edition of the institutional welcome at Grenoble City Hall

ABOUT GEM : Founded in 1984, GEM Alpine Business School is a triple-accredited institution (AACSB, EQUIS, AMBA) recognized for its academic excellence, technological DNA, and international outlook. As the first French business school to adopt the "*Société à Mission*" status, GEM places innovation, sustainability, and societal impact at the core of its strategy. Through its EAGLE 2030 strategic plan, GEM is scaling up to become a pioneer in sciences, immersive learning journeys, and the major transitions shaping the 21st century. The school trains agile, hybrid profiles capable of thinking and acting in a rapidly changing world. Each year, 7,000 students embark on a transformative learning journey across GEM's campuses in Grenoble, Paris, and Lyon, supported by immersive pedagogy and a network of more than 230 academic partners worldwide.

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