

# Student Report

Fall 2015 – ESSEC Business School

## General information

University	ESSEC Business School
City	Cergy
Country	France
Period	Fall 2015

## Preparation

### Application

Congratulation with your nomination for one of the most prestigious university, “Grande École” in France! Now you have to wait for an email from ESSEC which allows you to apply for the academic semester and the housing in one of the university residences. I received this e-mail on May 4<sup>th</sup>. For the application, you need your ID photo, Copy of Passport and proof of English proficiency. Be careful that you’ve done your English proficiency test (IELTS in my case) before this date, because the waiting list for this test was more than 2 months for me (in 2015) and it also takes quite some time to receive the results by mail.

## Residences

ESSEC has 3 residences which are available for exchange students. Le Port, les Hauts and les Linandes.

	Le Port	Le Haut	Linandes
Price (Double/Single)	€734/774*	€539/602*	€499/589*
Distance to university	10 min walk	30 min by train	30 min walk
Facilities nearby	Restaurants (Port area), bakery	Train station	KFC, McDonalds, grocery store

\*This price can be reduced with the housing subsidy. This subsidy is applicable for (most) exchange students. The procedure is well written in the e-mails and documents ESSEC provides you. In my case (Le Port double room), the housing subsidy was around €220. But there is a chance that even if you apply for it, you won’t get it after all. This is all due to the slow and bad French administration. I got a week before I left France a mail by post that I have to hand in some documents again, because they couldn’t find it. This is normal according to ESSEC. If this happens to you after you leave, you won’t be able to reply to them. Therefore, the procedure will be canceled.

I would recommend you to live in one of the residences, because all the exchange students are new to France, it’s the easiest way to make new friends and have a lot of fun together! I had a double room in le Port with a German exchange student and it definitely made my exchange semester a much better experience! I talked to some exchange students who were living in the city center of Paris, they told me that although they had a lot of fun in Paris, they had less (international) friends than the residences people had.

The choice between le Port and le Haut is quite hard. Le port is closer to the campus, but le Haut had more parties and there are more international students living there. The decision is up to yourself!

The deadline for the residence application is before you arrive, but ESSEC will inform you about this. A last tip about the housing is that you shouldn't buy the welcome kit. The stuff in it is very bad and you can easily buy it cheaper yourself at the local supermarket.

### **Arrival**

I went to ESSEC by train from Rotterdam central station. This was fairly easy if you use the VIANAVIGO app (it's the 9292OV app of France) or the guide on the ESSEC website. Once arrived, you have to arrange a few things like housing insurance, getting your residence key etc. The first few days you've plenty of free time to explore Cergy and buy the necessary stuff for your apartment.

At the beginning of the semester, there is a mandatory introduction week. There are classes and parties where you can meet other exchange- and French students. The classes were quite fun and there were lectures given by professionals working for big companies. I also suggest you to attend the boat trip, where you can see the city from the Seine. After this, you have free time to explore Paris with other exchange students.

### **Courses**

Overall, are the exchange courses quite easy. But there are some hard courses if you want to challenge yourself. In general, management courses are the easiest and the economics courses are the hardest.

4 ECTS - European Economics (Interesting: 8/Workload: 8)

This is a good course if you're interested in macro-economics and European countries from an economic point of view. You learn about the individual European countries and some general functions of the European Union and the ECB.

4 ECTS - International Economics (Interesting: 5/Workload: 8)

This course is basically a macro-economics course with some in-depth about the financial accounts of countries and the relationship between them.

4 ECTS - Consolidated Accounts (Interesting: 8/Workload: 6)

As an econometrics student, we don't have any accounting courses. Therefore, I wanted to take this course to understand how it works. Although this course is not an introduction course, it was ok to follow. I suggest you to take it if you want to know more about consolidation of companies, which I think is really interesting.

4 ECTS - Lower-Intermediate French (Interesting: 7/Workload: 2)

If your intention of this exchange is to learn French, I suggest you to take some French courses at Alliance Francaise in the Netherlands or buy some books, so you can start in a higher French class. The lower-intermediate course I took couldn't be harder than A2 level (or upper A1, if that exists). In the end I'm not sure if my French had improved at all.

4 ECTS - Web marketing (Interesting: 6/Workload: 8)

You'll go through all the web marketing basics with this course. The teacher is a woman with her own consultancy company that helps businesses in online marketing. If you're interested or want to work in this field, this course will give you a very good 101. Although this course was very easy, the workload is high, because you have to hand in a presentation with your group almost every week.

4 ECTS - Geopolitics (Interesting: 10/Workload: 8)

This course is given by one of the best teachers I've ever had. Even if you're not interested in global politics or other cultures, you won't have a hard time following his lectures. He frequently asks students to explain something about their countries, so the class participation is very high and keeps it interesting.

This course is an intensive course, so you only have it for three days. On the last day, you have to present something about a subject with a group of 4, which makes the workload quite high.

### **Finances**

This is only an estimation, because I didn't write down my expenses.

Expenses per month	
Accommodation	730
Phone (+10 for the simcard)	20
Public Transport (Metro + taxi at night*)	80
Groceries	150
Dinner/Lunches	150
Going out	100
Total	1230**

\*TIP: In France, there is a cheaper version of UBER that only works at night. It's called HEETCH and it's very easy to use.

\*\*I also did some travelling to other countries. These trips are not included in the expenses.

### **Final note**

Choosing for ESSEC and living in France has its pros and cons. The cons are that NOBODY is willing to speak English to you, the French administration is extremely slow and Cergy is not the best place to be. But compared to the pros, it's negligible. The pros are that you're not alone, but with 120 other exchange students. You'll go through everything together, help each other and become very good friends. During your exchange, you'll travel, party and slowly but surely feeling more international and become a better version of yourself.