

# Exchange student report

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## General Information

<b>University</b>	<b>Essec Business School</b>
<b>Country</b>	<b>France</b>
<b>City</b>	<b>Cergy</b>
<b>Residence</b>	<b>Les Linandes</b>
<b>Period</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> August 2015 – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2015</b>

## Preparation

As soon as I got accepted to do my exchange in ESSEC Business School, I received an email in which all procedures prior to the arrival were explained. The first deadline is to complete administrative information on the ESSEC website by logging in with the details they give you. For this you will also need to upload a copy of your ID or passport and a proof of English proficiency (I did not need to do any additional proficiency tests and got a proof from the ESE, since IBEB is in English). The second step is to apply for housing in one of the three residence's of ESSEC (you can also find accomodation on your own, but most of the exchange students stay at these residences). For this you will need a copy of your birth certificate (translated in French). I stayed at les Linandes residence, which is the smallest and the cheapest of the three and about 15-20 minute walk from the school, but I think the best residence is Cergy le Haut, since it is the biggest and includes the biggest common areas too, thus you get to hang out more easily with other students. The most expensive one is le Port, which also looks the nicest and is closest to the school. The third thing to prepare for is choosing your courses. This is done online and once a course is full, you cannot register for it anymore, so doing this on the first possible date is recommended. You should choose your courses already before this date from the academic pack they sent to you, so that the registration will not take long. Lastly, check your email regularly during the summer in order to not miss any possible changes to registration dates. A few days after I registered for my courses, I saw an email, which said that the registrations were cancelled due to some error in the system and that they need to be done again. Being a few days late, I missed my chance to register for some courses and had to change my schedule.

## Arrival

The arrival was made very easy for all exchange students. On the ESSEC website you can find information for your arrival and also request a welcome at the airport (people guide you to the school from the airport). This is not even necessary though, since the trip from CDG airport is easy: A straigh bus that takes an hour and costs 2€. Once you arrive at Cergy Préfecture, you need to walk less than 5minutes to the school, where you will be guided further to receive some documents and keys for your residence. The first two arrival days do not include any events, but you can already get to know your roommates and the city while settling in. After everyone has arrived, the school's student organizations will start with tons of introduction events and parties.

## **Courses**

### Purchasing Management – 4ECTS

This course was about the main aspects of purchasing (Suppliers, Product, Transport and Price) and how to make decisions concerning different purchasing options. I liked this course a lot, since the teacher includes everyone from the class into discussions and keeps the class alive with some jokes in between. He gives a practical case to solve for each class, which helped to understand the decisions purchasing managers make in real life. For this class there is a presentation and an exam, which are both easy to pass.

### European Economics – 4ECTS

This course was about the financial crisis and how it affected European countries and what decisions were made by the governments and the European Union to recover. A presentation about a country's economy before, during and after the 2008 crisis was prepared as well as an open question exam. Most theory is already covered in the first two years of IBEB, thus the class was also quite easy.

### E-Business – 4ECTS

This course was about the emerging use of electronic business and how it has changed certain sectors. The classes were a bit dull though, since the teacher did not engage the students at all. A presentation about how e-business changed a certain sector (e.g. Airtravel) was prepared and an exam with multiple-choice questions and an open question was made. This course was the least interesting in my opinion.

### Web Marketing – 4ECTS

This course was about how to analyze the effectiveness of marketing campaigns and websites on the web. The teacher was very enthusiastic about the subject; she works with a web marketing consultancy firm while teaching this course. The course gave all necessary tools to understand what makes a good website and how to target customers most effectively through the web. The exam was only multiple-choice, done on a computer.

### Lower Intermediate French – 4ECTS

This course was fun and manageable for a beginner of French too. I did not study any French before knowing that I am going to Paris for my exchange, but I did do a beginners course at the Alliance Francaise Rotterdam before moving. We started with the basic conjugations of verbs and moved on to the past and future tense as well as some geography of France. The grading was based on a short presentation in French and a final exam.

### Geopolitics – 4ECTS

This course was the only intensive course I chose. The school has a one-week holiday in the middle of the semester, during which the intensive courses take place. The course

was 3 days long (9hours each day), and the only assignment was to write a report and to present it on the last day. The teacher was very good and enthusiastic and the 9 hours of class go very fast when listening to his stories about historical events from international political issues and conflicts. I would recommend taking as many of these intensive courses, since they are easy to pass and give you the same amount of credits for just 3 days of work.

## Monthly Finances

### Income

Study finance from Finland	€ 500
Study grant	€ 270
APL housing subsidy	€ 200
Savings	€ 320
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 1290</b>

### Expenses

Accommodation	€ 500
Phone contract	€ 20
Public transport	€ 70
Groceries	€ 200
Going out (clubs, dinners, school parties)	€ 300
Travelling in France	€ 200
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 1290</b>

## Daily life

Life in Cergy is not like in the centre of Paris; it is quiet with dull scenery compared to the centre of Paris, which is lively and beautiful. Nevertheless, the student residences make it fun! Everyone hangs out at the common areas and there are always some drinking and pool/ kicker games going on. Also the student associations organize many parties for ESSEC students in Cergy or close by, which are always great fun. In Paris there is a lot to see and visit with good clubs for anyone; techno lovers should head to Concrete and hip-hop lovers to the Social Club! Paris offers plenty of clubs and bars to choose from for any type of music.

All of the classes are mandatory, which means that most of the time will be spent in Cergy and in the student residences. Cergy does still offer everything else than the clubs; there is a big shopping mall next to the school, nice parks, a cinema and also plenty of restaurants. The cheap restaurants and hair salons can be found from Cergy Saint-Christophe, which also hosts a market for fresh food. Behind every corner you can also find a boulangerie (bakery), where you can get the delicious french croissants and other delights. The school also has one bar in it, where you can get 2€ pints, which is way cheaper than any other bar.

For travelling in between Cergy and Paris, it is recommended to get a navigo card, since the trip is between zones 1-5 and costs a lot otherwise (8€ one way). Do pay attention to strikes, which cause many delays, especially for the RER A train, if coming from Paris to school! When travelling further than Paris, like I did to Bordeaux, Nantes and Nice, you should prepare these trips in advance for cheaper train or bus tickets as well as getting a cheap airbnb apartment for a longer stay. The school associations organize many trips too for discounted fees, so they are good to check out!

In general the time I spend in Cergy/ France was amazing. Eventhough the school has a good reputation and all classes are mandatory, the courses are not as hard or stressful as at ESE, thus there is a lot of free time to enjoy. I made very close new friends from all over the world (220 exchange students) and can definitely say: Paris est Magique!