

Essechange

General information

University: ESSEC Business School
Country: France
City: Cergy
Period: 24th August 2016 – 20th December 2016

Preparation

Once I was accepted by ESSEC Business School, I received a confirmation email explaining all the administrative procedures that had to be completed before certain deadlines. The first task that had to be done prior to my arrival was to activate my online student account on a site called "myessec.com". They provided you with a password and your student email, which is simply composed by your student ID (B00XXXXXX). Once that was done, on a different website, I also needed to upload a copy of your ID/passport, a passport picture (for your student card) and a proof of English proficiency, which was given to me from ESE.

Secondly, the next step that needed to be taken of was accommodation. ESSEC proposes 3 residences: Les Hauts, Les Linandes and Le Port. I personally did not stay in any of these residences as I had found an apartment 5min walking from the school at a better price and location on a site called leboncoin.fr.

Les Hauts, residence is the one located furthest from the school, it requires you to take the RER train every morning and night. Honestly, I would not advise anyone to live in Les Hauts as this can sometimes be annoying if you decide to stay for a party or even spend an evening with your friends in the school's bar FOYs. Les Linandes is said to be 'older' looking than Les Hauts but in all honesty they are exactly the same except Les Linandes is cheaper and its about 15-20 minute walk from the school. The closest residence is Le Port which is also the most modern and most expensive.

Finally, the last thing you need to do is to register for your courses. They will send you links to the course catalogues and also a timetable with all the courses. For me this was the most annoying thing to do, as you need to fit in all your courses you decide to take in an efficient manner and make sure there are no conflicts with other courses. There will be three rounds for the registration during three different dates, during these dates you will be able to add and drop courses. The first round is in July, the second in August and the third in September. In addition, make sure you register for your courses on the first round at the exact time the registration opens because a lot of the courses fill up very quickly and then it is impossible for you to take this course anymore. This happened to me for 'Luxury Marketing', which was a highly demanded module.

Arrival

The exchange students as well as the third year students were required to arrive on the 24th of August for a mandatory week called the Imagination week. This week consisted of seminars by famous French icons and workshops. I personally arrived by myself to ESSEC on that date but ESSEC provides an airport shuttle that picks you up from the airport and brings you to the school. During the first couple of weeks the student associations had a lot of events organized for us (bbqs, parties, cocktail drinks...) in order for us to get to know more people and to get accustomed to the life on campus.

Courses

Inner management – 4 ECTS

This course addressed the question of wellbeing in and out of the workplace. It focused on methods for increasing and maintaining personal and collective wellbeing and for managing occupational stress.

We were taught how to meditate and were given home assignments such as keeping a daily meditation journal, which we had hand in every week.

Finance – 4 ECTS

The purpose of this course was to introduce us to the main building blocks of financial theory. The finance teacher seemed very strict and unpleasant nevertheless he was an excellent teacher and by far the best teacher of all of my courses. He was able to incorporate financial theory with real life examples, which allowed me to understand the financial concepts better.

Communication – 4 ECTS

The objectives of this course were to understand the role of marketing communication in the overall marketing strategy and how communications work and to allow us to design an integrated communication strategy using the main promotional tools learnt in class. The class was divided into two halves. The first half consisted of theory where the teacher gave her lecture and the second half we had to meet with our group members to work on a case study, which we would later have to present during the last 30min of the class.

French Civilization – 4 ECTS

This course was mainly about discovering French culture, history and diversity. Its really interesting if you wish to know more about France. During this class we have cheese-tasting, wine-tasting as well as discovering French patisseries.

Every 3 weeks the teacher would give us a quiz on what we had done the previous 3 weeks. The last exam was a mix of multiple choice and open questions.

Spanish – 4 ECTS

I chose this course as I already speak French fluently and really wanted to improve my Spanish. This is an ideal course for people who have some knowledge in Spanish or are just beginning as the teacher is very flexible and manages to adapt the content of class based on your previous knowledge of the language. Furthermore, several outings and interactive activities are organized in this course.

Web Marketing – 4 ECTS

This was an intensive course of three days (9hours) that analyzed the effectiveness of marketing campaigns and websites. Personally, I found the teacher very nice, but unfortunately she lacked teaching experience and was unable to keep the class captivated and motivated. 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 only counted for 45 % of the grade and was multiple-choice, done on a computer. The rest of the 55% of the grade was in class participation and presentations.

Finances

Income (Monthly)

APL subsidy	€120
Erasmus Grant	€270
Money parents send	€900
TOTAL	€1290

Expenses (Monthly)

Rent	€460
Phone contract	€20
Travelling	€300
Groceries	€200
Other	€310
TOTAL	€1290

Daily Life

A normal week consisted of attending classes (as they are mandatory), meeting up with friends at the end of the day for a beer (or more) at the university's bar, called Foy's, going back to one of the three residences' common areas to chill even more.

Since Cergy is a suburban town, the nightlife is very limited, even non-existent. To compensate for this factor ESSEC's student associations organize plenty of fun parties either in Cergy or close by where they plan for everything (alcohol, transport...). To go out clubbing it is necessary to go to Paris, where your choice immediately expands; there is a club for every taste. If you prefer techno then Concrete, Rex, or ZigZag are the clubs to go to. If you prefer commercial music and reggaeton then you should definitely go to Duplex (located right in front of the Arc de Triomphe).

Around Essec you have a park where you can sit in the sun, go for a run or even study. You also have a shopping mall called 'Les Trois Fontaines' where you can buy food, clothes, furniture etc. As we are in France everywhere around the town you can find a bakery where they sell fresh bread and croissants. By the end of your stay you will become an expert on the matter.

Although Cergy is not Paris, the time that I spent there was absolutely amazing, if I could, I would have had the option I would of stayed for a year. To sum up my exchange was a life changing experience filled with incredible incidences that allowed me to meet people from all over the world and make friends, which I will keep for the rest of my life.