



General

The exchange program was a great and unique experience, and a wonderful opportunity to live a short period in the magnificent city of Paris, as well as to meet people from all around the world dealing with similar dilemmas. Essec, which has a very high reputation in France and Europe, provides high-level academic environment including faculty and students, along with a lot of non-academic activities.

Visa Information

I have an EU citizenship thus I didn't need a visa. Only Students who are planning to stay in France more than 90 days are requested to apply for a student visa at the French embassy.

Housing

Students can choose between two alternatives, in the on-campus accommodation in Cergy, the city in which the school is located, or renting an apartment in Paris.

Cergy is a small town about 30 KM from the center of Paris, with nothing very interesting. There are a lot of activities organized by the different students associations such as parties or sports activities, the living expenses are much cheaper than in Paris and you could stay late in school if you need to study in groups. Most of the local students live here but the majority of the exchange students prefer to live in Paris.

The rent for an apartment in the dorms is around 600 Euro including electricity, internet etc.

Paris - renting an apartment in Paris is quite expensive, but if you have a reasonable timetable, it is absolutely the best way to enjoy this amazing city.

Finding an apartment from abroad could be a little difficult. Be aware that there are a lot of frauds so be certain before you pay any money.

The rent for a room is 600-800 in a good area. A studio or a 1-bed room apartment costs 900-1200 a month.

In my opinion, the nicest quarters are 1-7 and 10-11. I do not recommend living in the 19 quarter.

Transportation

The metro is a very fast and convenient way to travel around the city. The metro is connected to another express train network called RER which crosses the city and arrives to the suburbs as well. In order to get to the school from Paris you need to take the RER (express train) line A to Cergy prefecture station. The travel time from the center of Paris (Chatlet station) takes around 50 minutes.

The transportation in France and especially in Paris is very efficient but often there are strikes and maintenance works that cause delays and cancellations. The metro and the RER runs from 6:00 AM to around 1:00 AM.

Living Expenses

Living in France, and especially in Paris, is expensive.

Here are some approximate living costs (all prices are in EURO):

Food – sandwiches, salad, hot plates at the cafeteria: 3-6 EURO. Lunch off-campus: 7-12 EURO.

Transportation – single ticket from Cergy to Paris – 5.65 euro, 10 RER tickets: 45.20 EURO, monthly pass: 113 euro. Single metro ticket 1.70 EURO, 10 metro tickets 13.30 euro.

The supermarkets are much cheaper than in Israel, but, the bars and restaurants could be a little more expensive.

Courses

You can take courses from two different programs: the MSC program, in which most of the students are young (20-24) and French, or you could take courses from the GLOBAL MBA program, a full time international program with students from all over the world with 4-6 years of working experience. I recommend taking courses mainly from the Global MBA program.

These are the courses I took:

Financial statements analysis, Prof Cheng Lei –not the most interesting course I took, very technical, not too hard.

Introduction to private equity, Mr. Philip Nataf – great course, very recommended, a lot of guest speakers including senior managers from the leading PE firms in Europe, two projects during the semester.

Mergers & acquisition, Dr. Jose-Miguel Gaspar – interesting course, a lot of group assignments and presentations to prepare and an exam at the end of the semester.

Luxury retail excellence and merchandising, Ms. Nathalie Ramanantsoa – Essec is well known for its extensive expertise in the field of luxury and its strong binding with the industry. This course was a great opportunity to taste some totally different culture, in both academic and personal ways. It includes one quiz and one huge group project on which we worked on all threw the semester. Very recommended course.

Advanced Excel for managers, Mr. Christophe Harrer – nice course, not to hard but you must come with significant previous knowledge in Excel.

Summary

For me, Living in Paris and participating in an international program in one of the best schools in Europe was a unique and unforgettable experience, there are always a lot of doubts whether to go and stop the race for three months but I strongly recommend to do so, I'm sure you won't regret it.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

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