ESCP Europe

SFU International Exchange Report

E H

Spring 2010
INTRODUCTION

Who I am

My name is E H and I am a 4th year Business major. In Fall 2008, I went on my first academic exchange to Singapore. In January 2008, I decided to go on a second exchange and I applied for a spring 2010 placement to study at ESCP Europe in Paris.

PRE-DEPARTURE

Applying for exchange

The application process is very straightforward. You can find more information in the following link:  http://students.sfu.ca/international/abroad/fromsfu/apply.html

One thing worth notice is the requirement of submitting two academic reference forms. The reference forms must be completed by professors or graduate-level Teaching Assistants (TAs) who are teaching you or have taught you in the past. Since the application package is due in mid January, it is always a good idea to start looking for referees early.

Students who submit the application package in January will generally receive an email from SFU by the end of February indicating the result of the nomination process. If you are nominated by SFU, you will need to attend a mandatory workshop during which you will receive your host university’s application package. The application procedure varies depending on the host university you are applying for.
Visa requirement and resident permit

There are several types of Visa available under the Canadian/French Student Exchange Agreement. Visa information can be found here: http://www.ambafrance-ca.org/spip.php?rubrique76
Looking for accommodation

ESCP does not provide students with accommodation on campus. If you are lucky, you may be able to find a private studio somewhere in Paris. However, the monthly rent for an average 20 m² studio may go from €600 to €1,500 depending on the district you are staying in. If you choose to go through an agency, you will have to pay a big upfront fee on top of your monthly rent.

If you want to find a cheap room but you don’t want to pay the agency fee, there are two options for you:

My Pick Cité Universitaire (as seen in Figure 1)

I lived in La Maison du Mexique (the Mexican Hall), which is one of the 40 residence halls at Cité Universitaire. Here are my top five reasons to stay at Cité Universitaire:

1) The rent is cheap! The average monthly rent of a room at the Cité Universitaire is €300-€470 all inclusive. La Maison du Mexique also provides the residents with new bedding sheets every other week.

2) The location! The Cité Universitaire is located next to the tram and RER stations. It is also within walking distance to the metro station and a supermarket. It is about 40 minutes away from ESCP by RER/metro and less than 15 minutes away from the Eiffel Tower.

3) Full access to the gym, swimming pools, banking services, and cheap food! There is a gym and a bank located in the main building of the Cité Universitaire. La Maison du Mexique also has its own gym and a table tennis table. A decent meal, which consists of a starter, a main course, bread, and dessert, at the student canteen costs only €2.90.

4) The opportunity to practice your French! Unless you choose to stay at la Maison des Etudiants Canadiens (the House of Canada) or the Fondation des Etats-Unis (The House of America), your neighbours and the staff speak very limited English.
5) The friendly environment! Despite the language barrier, the staff and the students at Cité Universitaire are extremely friendly and they are always ready to help.

The application process for accommodation at the Cité Universitaire is very complex. In addition to the application form, you also need to submit a copy of your transcript and a cover letter explaining the reason you want to stay at the Cité Universitaire. If you are a Canadian citizen, you must contact la Maison des Étudiants Canadiens (MEC) first. If you would like to stay in a different residence hall, you can state it in the cover letter. The application deadline for students going on an exchange in spring is November 15. It is worth notice that la MEC requires the student to submit a photocopy of the official acceptance letter from ESCP but ESCP will not send out the acceptance letter until late November. In my case, I sent ESCP at least three emails to request for the acceptance letter. Eventually, the study abroad program coordinator at ESCP sent me the acceptance letter via email.

_Le Vivaldi:_ If you cannot get a room at the Cité Universitaire, ESCP will guarantee you a studio or a studette at a student residence called “Le Vivaldi”. According to the ESCP Fact Sheet for Visiting Students, there is a direct bus running between the residence and the school. The rent is about €600 for a 19 m² studette and €700 for a 20 m² studio. In addition to the monthly rent, you will also need to pay a €300-€500 non-refundable application fee. Although both the studio and the studette are equipped with a bathroom and a kitchen, not all rooms at Le Vivaldi have hot shower or internet access and you will need to bring/buy your own dishes and linen. The detailed information can be found on the residence’s website:


**LIVING IN PARIS**

**Financial details**

Paris is arguably the most expensive city in Europe. One piece of advice I can give you is to over budget. Before I left for Paris I budgeted €5,000 ($8,000 CAD) excluding tuition fee and international flights. My actual spending was way beyond my budget and Table 1 below summarises where my money went during my exchange semester.
Table 1: Actual spending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Total (€)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent (5 months)</td>
<td>1,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cellphone</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveling (outside Paris)</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment, museums…</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6,950

1. I cooked a total of 3 times in 5 months because the food at Cité Universitaire is incredibly cheap. A set meal, which includes a starter, a main course, a dessert, and free bread (as seen in figure 1) is €2.98.

2. Prepaid cell phone plans are quite cheap in France because all the incoming calls are free of charge. I purchased a €100 pay as you go top up card from Orange. It is valid for 7 months and I received an additional €50 credit for free.

3. The student council at ESCP organizes free parties at least one or two times per month. Furthermore, all the national museums in Paris are free for European residents (including exchange students) under the age of 25. I went to at least 10-15 museums in Paris including the Louvre, Musée D’Orsay, Versaille…and I don’t recall ever paying for any of them.

Academic details

The course load at ESCP is not heavy at all. I took three 12-week courses and one 6-week course. All my courses were English-taught and the assignment methods were as follow:

1) Financial Institution Management
   - Final exam (50%)
   - Group essay: 10 pages, double-spaced (50%)

2) International Business Management
   - Group project: 15 page single-spaced paper and 5 minute presentation (30%)
   - Group case study: 15 minute presentation (15%)
   - Attendance (5%)
   - Final exam (50%)

3) International Finance
   - Final exam (60%)
B  Mid-term (30%)
B  Attendance (10%)

4) Mergers and Acquisition
   B  Group project: 15 minute presentation (60%)
   B  Class participation (40%)

**Good things to know before you leave**

1) Get a Eurail-Pass and a Lonely Planet travel guide before you leave. Although the pass can be purchased at major train stations in Paris, you typically need to pay €50 more.

2) Go to ESCP parties and try things the French way.

3) Beware of pickpockets/theft in Europe. My friend lost her purse when we were traveling in Barcelona; three weeks later, my laptop was stolen on the metro in Paris.

4) If you have any further questions regarding Paris, ESCP, Cité Universitaire, or traveling in Europe in General, feel free to email me at eric_he23@hotmail.com