

Exchange Program Report

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Introduction of Partner School and Courses (1,000 words)

ESCP Europe is a European business school, with several campuses in different cities across Europe: Paris, Berlin, London, Madrid, Turin, and Warsaw. It has 2 different campuses in Paris. It is considered as one of the oldest business school, and regarded as one of the best business schools worldwide. ESCP Europe has 3 accreditations: AACSB, EQUIS, and AMBA. The program I took for my exchange was Master in Management (MiM), ranked 5th worldwide by *Financial Times* (2018).

The Paris campus I used to study in is not that big. It is separated into 5 buildings with 6 to 8 floors each building. It also has one library (this library is probably about the same size with the library on 4th floor in College of Commerce, NCCU.) There is also a spacious complex of canteen, cafeteria, gym and bar in the basement and an open space with chairs and table in the middle of all the buildings.

I took 4 courses: **International Human Resource Management, Philanthropy and Social Entrepreneurship, Excel VBA Level 1, Europe Does Matter**, plus **French course**. The courses in ESCP, same as other universities in Europe, are using ECTS system. ECTS is similar to credits in Taiwan. The only difference is the calculation of teaching hours. ECTS compare to credits is 2:1. So, 2 ECTS here is equal to 1 credit in Taiwan. For me, I only need 6 credits to graduate, so I need to take at least 12 ECTS. MiM program offers courses in 2 and 4 ECTS. 2 ECTS courses will end in 2 months with 5 weeks classes, 3 hours a week (total 15 hours). While 4 ECTS courses will end in 4 months with 10 weeks of class, 3 hours a week (in total 30 hours). Classes started by the beginning of January and ended by the end of April. In the middle of the semester (around end of February), there is a short break.

First course I took was **Europe Does Matter** (6 ECTS). This course was a required course for all the exchange students. This course was divided into 2 sessions. First session was held intensively on 4 days of the first week with total 15 hours. Second session was held regularly, 3 hours a week during 4 months (January to April) of the semester with total 30 hours. This course was talking everything related to Europe. The topics were so broad from history, economic, politic, government, education system, culture, and so on.

The first session consists of 7 classes (2 hours each) with the topics: (1) The education system in France; (2) Lobbying process in European Union; (3) Paris and the history behind; (4) Language and communication in France; (5) Dealing with French people; (6) Major Debate in Europe lately; and (7) European Values and Culture. There were 4 lecturers taught this course.

This first session ended with a final exam. The exam consisted of 7 essay questions, 1 for each topic. Students have to answer 5 questions. For me personally, this first session was interesting and a bit hard to follow because I did not have much knowledge about France and Europe. After this first session, I got some basic knowledge about Europe and that is very helpful.

The topics for second session were broader and more details. Almost each of 10 sessions was taught by different professors. All the teaching team were great and have expertise related to the topics taught in the class. The ESCP dean and MiM director were also invited to teach this course. Some of the topics were overlapping with the first session topics. The topics including: (1) The European Union; (2) Culture, Economy, and Society in Europe; (3) The Emerging World Seen from Europe – European External Relation; (4) Cultural Diversity as a Strategic Asset; (5) European Management; (6) European Consumer; (7) European Excellence Through Made In; (8) Managing Supply Chain in Europe; (9) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Europe. This course had a team work assignment with 3 deliverable report and 1 final report and presentation. There was also a final exam to conclude this course.

Second course I took was **International Human Resource Management** (2 ECTS). This course talked about how to manage people and how the culture of each country affected. The majority of the student in this class was the international students. The teacher always encouraged students to participate in the class. There were a few cases and group assignment and also final group work presentation and final exam. This class was always discussed and analyzed about the uniqueness and characteristic of each countries and student nationality in class. One thing that was so interesting about this course was the interview assignment. The professor required us to do a personal interview with one student she assigned before (from different countries) and predict their final exam score. If we got it correct, we will get bonus point.

Third course I took was **Philanthropy and Social Entrepreneurship** (2 ECTS). This class was a bit boring because the professor kept talking about something not so interesting. There was a final exam and final project. Final project was to make a 6 minutes video related to social project. The class was divided into 3 persons group to work on the project. The project was so interesting because my group and I got opportunity to involve in one social project in an American church in Paris. This social project we involved in was to provide food, hot bath, and place to sleep for 10 homeless in Paris during winter time.

Next course I took was **Excel VBA Level 1** (2 ECTS). This course was about programming behind Microsoft Excel. This course was designed for students who took information system specialization. This course required students to do before class assignment to make sure students could follow the next session. There was a final exam in the end and no group work. I got problems for this course because I have no programming background. Moreover, the keyboard design in France is different with the QWERTY keyboard. So, I could not use the keyboard in school laboratory conveniently.

Last course was **French course** (2 ECTS). International students could apply for credit or no credit class. If students apply for credit class, they have to take the exam. There was also a 30 minutes free French tutor session each week. This tutor session was so helpful to improve our French language skill.

Life interaction (1,000 words)

Life in Paris was challenging but worth it. I can say that life in Paris is different compare to life in Taiwan. Basically, all I need to do was go to class. The school calendar was divided into 3 periods, from January – February, March – April, and May – June. The first 2 periods were for classes, courses, and exams. In the end of every period, there was a short break (1 to 2 weeks). The third period (May – June) was for making up exam for those who did not pass courses. The 2 ECTS courses were only 2 months long, either in the first or second period. While the 4 ECTS courses were 4 months long during first and second period.

Almost all the courses required students to do group projects. I had chance to work in an international team. Almost all the group members came from different countries. I learned how every nationality had different habits, cultures, perceptions, and so on. The most important lessons I learned is how to adapt and deal with all the differences in order to finish the projects. I got a very unforgettable multicultural experience. I can also expand my network.

French people, including the French student, are a bit hard to mingle with. They hardly open for new friends, especially foreigner. They tend to only hang around with their close friends. They also prefer to use French for their daily communication. Most of the exchange students, including me, felt that they did not have a very close French friend after this program. This is maybe because of their culture and education system. The professors and school staffs was very nice. They always tried their best to make us feel comfortable. They prepared a welcome party for welcoming all the exchange students and let us know each other. Then, they also held a farewell party to say thank you and wish us a good journey ahead.

I went to church every Sunday and in some other days when there were special events. Majority churches in Paris use French for their service. Luckily, I found an American church that offers service in English. I became part of their community even for only a short period. In this church, I met many people from other countries. They all are so friendly. They always try to reach and welcome as many Christians in Paris as they can no matter from where they are. They also have different activities and communities for different communities.

In this church, I got very good friends from China and US. One Chinese friend even invited me and some other friends to celebrate Chinese New Year together in her house. She cooked many kinds of Chinese food. I was so happy because that time was the first time I

celebrated Chinese New Year not with my family. But because of them, I felt like I have a new family abroad. I got chance to also practice my Chinese.

During the first school period, I was more focus on school. I also went strolling around the Paris, visited a lot of tourist attraction, and explored each district in Paris. Some museums and tourist attraction places are not free. Ticket price are varied from €10 to €25 depend on the day and the place. Student under 26 years old and those who come in group (at least 20 persons) will get different rate. I also joined a few events held by Indonesian embassy in Paris. I got chance to meet many Indonesian people lived in Paris. I could learn more about Indonesian foreign diplomacy policy and other concern.

After the first school period, I have more free time. I used most of my time to relax and enjoyed my life. I travelled to other cities and countries. I explored new places in Europe. Travelling within Europe is so convenient because I can use my exchange program visa to visit almost all countries in Europe. The transportation is also convenient and affordable especially if you buy the ticket in advance. I got chance to go to Toulouse, Bordeaux, Lille in France. I also got chance to visit some countries in Germany, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Netherland. I got to know more about other countries, the history and how people in each country are different from other.

Living cost in Paris is higher compare to other smaller city in France. The transportation there is convenient because they have bus, metro, and train to almost everywhere. The only problem is sometimes there are unexpected problems with the bus, metro, and train. Paris and the area around (called: Ile de France) is divided into 5 areas. The transportation fee are different depend on the areas. For me because I stayed least than 1 year, I use monthly navigo card cost €75.20 per month or €22.80 per week (cover area 1 to 5). For student who will stay for at least 1 year, they can apply for yearly navigo pass in advance with half fare.

Living in Paris also made me improve my cooking skill. Eating outside is very expensive in Paris. Food price in restaurant is about €10 to €25 depend on the area and what kind of food. I did grocery shopping at least once a week. By doing this, I only need to spend around €50 to €70 per month for eating. My monthly expense was about like this:

Category	Expense (€) / Mo.
Rent	450
Food	80 – 120
Transportation (Navigo)	75.20
Phone & Internet	10 – 20
Monument / Museum tickets	50
Other	80

In Paris there are many telecommunication providers. They offer different packages. Mine was cheap €10 per month with 10 GB internet and unlimited local call. This data internet package can also be used in other Schengen area countries. Sim card can be bought in Tabac or convenient store.

Paris is also very famous for its luxury brand products. The price is indeed cheaper compared to the price in Asia countries. Moreover, you can get 12% tax refund if you spend minimum €175 in one store, every store and brand has different policy on this one.

Notice for future students (500 words)

Living in Paris was challenging. Paris is a city full of history and also one of famous tourist destination city. To be able to live in Paris is a privilege that not everyone can get. Paris can be nice or bad depend on you. You need to learn and adapt fast. Paris can be very dangerous if you do not pay attention to some important things. There are many pickpockets, immigrants, and manifestations in Paris during my exchange period. You need to be aware with your surroundings. Always follow the recent news and use your common sense.

Prepare and plan well before you go. Give some time to look for the accommodation room. Rent a room in Paris is a bit complicated and you will need more time for that. Learn to speak French before you arrived in France will be very helpful for you. You at least need to learn the basic conversation vocabulary. Some people in Paris, especially those in rural area, cannot speak English. Moreover, they will treat you differently if you can speak French, even if it is only the basic.

As the living cost in Paris is relatively expensive compared to other cities in France, you have to be smart and use all the offers you have as student. If you are under 26 years old, you can get half fare price for transportation fee. You can also access all museums and some tourist attraction in France and some other cities in Europe for free. Museums in Europe are amazing. Go and explore as many places as you can. Some museums and tourist attractions in Paris are also offered free admission for everyone during a certain period of time (first weekend of the month). If you are going to other cities or countries, the student ID card given by ESCP (ISIC) also offer special discount for transportation and accommodation within Europe countries.

Talk and communicate with as many people as possible. You will always learn something from others. Join and attend as many activities as you can. You can use Facebook event function to search for any events you are interested in. Some of the events are open for public. You can join and meet new friends there.

If you like to shopping, especially for branded stuffs, Paris is the best place for it. There are department stores (e.g. Gallery La Fayette, Printemps Haussman) and also the outlet called

La Marne Village, nearby Disneyland Paris, where you can get branded stuffs with a good price. You can also claim for 12% tax free if your visa is not a permanent residence visa.

I remember a quote said “Life always begins with one step outside your comfort zone”. This exchange program to Paris is indeed one step out of my comfort zone. This experience is changing my life and also my own self. Be brave to take one step outside of your comfort zone. Go and enjoy all the processes. Learn and grab as many knowledge and experience as you can. Try your best on everything you do. Work earnestly. None process will betray the result. It may be hard and challenging in the beginning but you will not regret it in the end.