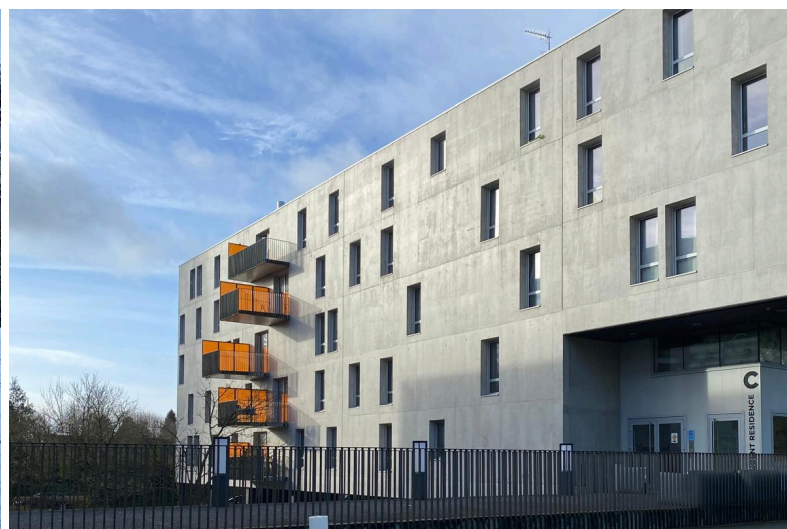


EDHEC BUSINESS SCHOOL, LILLE

Spring, 2024



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Introduction of EDHEC Business School

Founded in 1906, EDHEC Business School is among the best and most prominent business schools in France and Europe. EDHEC offers a wide range of training programs, including the undergraduate EDHEC International BBA, Master in Management, MScs, and executive education such as the Global MBA, Executive MBA, and executive training. EDHEC is ranked among the best business schools in France and the world. EDHEC regularly proves its worth: the Financial Times ranked EDHEC among the top 10 European Business Schools in its most recent ranking. These outcomes support the school's strategic approach and its emphasis on developing outstanding managers of the future who can positively influence both business and society. Both in terms of its academic structure and admissions procedure, EDHEC is unlike other universities. It is one of the few business schools in the world to hold the three most prestigious accreditations: EQUIS, AACSB, and AMBA. EDHEC has campuses in Lille, Nice, Paris, London, and Singapore.

This year, in 2024, I chose the Lille campus because I prefer a small city without bustling crowds. It's the school's birthplace and is close to Belgium, making it a convenient travel destination. Lille, the birthplace of EDHEC, which is eco-friendly, entrepreneurial, and within easy access of the city. The campus embodies the dynamism of EDHEC Business School and its innovative strategy. The campus welcomes 4,000 students each year, one-third of whom come from abroad, and provides cutting-edge facilities such as a digital networked library and a trading room, which is a key factor in the learning-by-experience system specifically implemented in France. Lille is also the headquarters of the EDHEC Young Entrepreneurs (EYE) Incubator, along with its network and partners, symbolizing EDHEC's commitment to encouraging and supporting entrepreneurial vocations.

The campus in Lille consists of three main buildings. The first is a classroom building that features many sloped classrooms. The second is an office building housing staff offices and rooms that provide support and services to students. This building also serves as the hub for the community and clubs, connecting to the student canteen and activity space, which offers amenities such as a table tennis desk, a music area, and a sleeping area. The third building is the gymnasium, which includes a basketball court, fitness equipment, a swimming pool, a yoga and dance room, and more. Additionally, the classroom building is just a five-minute walk from three buildings designated for student accommodations and a separate building for faculty or guests. There are two types of rooms: studio and KOT (shared kitchen and common space), operated by twenty campus agencies. Compared to NCCU, the campus is relatively small because it is solely a business school similar to the College of Commerce.

About the Master program in the Spring semester, Master Level 2 comprises MSc programs (all taught in English) designed for students who have completed their Bachelor's studies (180 ECTS). This is different from Master Level 1, which is the Business Management track suitable for upper undergraduate students. There are several Master Level 2 programs available, including:

- MSc in Marketing Management
- MSc in Management & Leadership
- MSc in Entrepreneurship & Innovation
- MSc in Strategy, Organization & Consulting
- MSc in Marketing Analytics
- MSc in Global Sustainable Business
- MSc in Creative Business & Social Innovation

After careful consideration, I decided to choose the MSc in Marketing Analytics. This program and its courses will enhance my skills and capabilities, allowing me to grow in my career path as a corporate marketer.

For the course selection, this program provides 5 core courses (CCO), 8 elective courses (ELE) and French Language (PDC) for the selection. Here is the list below.

Code	Type	Course Name	No. Hours
7371	CCO	SOCIAL MEDIA OPTIMIZATION	24
7372	CCO	CONSUMER MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION BY MICROSOFT	24
7373	CCO	BEHAVIOR INSIGHTS FROM TEXT ANALYSIS	24
7374	CCO	REVENUE MANAGEMENT & OPTIMIZATION	18
1333	CCO	FAMILY BUSINESS	36
1652	PDC	FRENCH LANGUAGE COURSE	30
7547	ELE	IS OUR DIGITAL & TECH WORLD SUSTAINABLE?	18
6973	ELE	GLOBAL JUSTICE & HUMAN RIGHTS	18
6974	ELE	PRESS VS PUBLIC RELATIONS, NEW MEDIA VS SOCIAL NETWORKS	18
7305	ELE	MANAGING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY	18
6910	ELE	ECONOMIC CRIME, FRAUD AND MONEY LAUNDERING	18
6970	ELE	CUSTOMER & DATA ANALYTICS	18
7598	ELE	LUXURY BRAND MANAGEMENT	18
6397	ELE	MANAGING INNOVATION & DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION	19

The first course that caught my attention was 'Social Media Optimization' taught by DJEGUEDE Sem. This course offers an understanding of the business challenges and opportunities derived from social media, how to select the best social media platform for a business based on its activities, and how to establish a long-term social media strategy that serves the company's objectives. This course also covered the learning methods and technologies of collecting, handling, and analyzing data from social media in order to increase web traffic, convert prospects into customers, establish and maintain a solid reputation, and optimize ads. Having worked in media agencies for several years, I can honestly say that this course is particularly tailored for small and medium-sized businesses. Based on the lessons I learned from this course, it wasn't practical for a large company.

The second course, 'Consumer Management Certification by Microsoft', was self-learning and provided content through the Microsoft website and group project. The course took only three days to complete. The course content is about limitless opportunities for customer management

practitioners, customer management strategy, and personalized, ever-evolving, and lasting relationships. This course offered the latest customer engagement-related technologies, tools, and platforms in this Microsoft-sponsored course and the opportunity to earn the related Microsoft Certification (Dynamics 365_CRM). Most of the knowledge came from Microsoft content, which students needed to read and understand before the online exam. The passing score is 70%, which equals 10/20 of university grades. Fortunately, I passed it. And yes, I got the Microsoft certification.

Finally, there are a variety of elective courses available, with a maximum selection of five. Apart from my core courses and French language studies, I have taken courses such as 'Is Press vs. Public Relations, New Media vs. Social Networks', 'Our Digital and Tech World Sustainable?', 'Customer and Data Analytics', 'Luxury Brand Management', and 'Managing Innovation and Digital Transformation'. I chose a maximum of five courses. Overall, all courses were good; they provided diverse perspectives, insightful knowledge, and innovation.

Life and Cultural Exchange

School Dormitory

During my exchange at EDHEC, I chose to stay at the on-campus residence, a dormitory on campus run in collaboration with the school. I lived in a studio unit, where each person had their own room, bathroom, and kitchen area. The monthly rent for a studio is 535 euros, not including the monthly bill for electricity. However, I need to directly negotiate a contract with the electricity agency company, Alpiq. We advise moving forward with the contract before moving into the dorm.

The advantages of staying in a school dormitory include the proximity to classes, which are around a 5-minute walk, and the simple breakfast provided by the school on weekday mornings from 7.30 to 9.00, which includes bread, jam, milk, cereal, yogurt, and coffee. Moreover, the place is quiet and quite safe, protected by the university gate that requires a student card to attend. Living in a studio provides you with a cooking space and a refrigerator to keep food cold.

The disadvantage of living in a studio is the lack of opportunity to make friends, especially when you have only 4 months for the exchange period. There is no space for people to gather in the kitchen to eat, drink, and chat. Additionally, the on-campus dorm is quite far from Lille Center. It takes a 15-minute walk to the tram or metro station, and then around 30 minutes to get to the town center. And it is quite difficult to find restaurants around the campus, especially on Sunday.

After spending a semester there, I realized how fortunate I was to have selected the studio room as my living quarters. Furthermore, it allowed me to concentrate on my classes and assignments, as well as the opportunity to prepare meals whenever I wanted. Maintain as much cleanliness as you possibly can! Ensure not just the safety but also the ease of access to the classroom.

Language Exchange

During the exchange period, I took the 'French Language Course' in EDHEC school taught by Prof. Benjamin Murphy. She is a young, active person who always encourages students to speak French. It is a beginner level that is suitable for students who have never learned French before. However, most students in the class have some background in French, which leads to the quick pace of the course. Last but not least, the timing of the course is quite bad. It takes 5.30–8.00 PM every Monday. This is dinner time. So, you have to wait until the class ends before having a real meal because, for me, eating is a big deal.

Lille, which is in the northern part of France, experiences lower temperatures throughout the year compared to Taiwan. As an exchange student arriving in winter, I discovered that in January, nighttime temperatures could drop to around -5 degrees Celsius, while daytime temperatures reached around 5 degrees Celsius. Generally, you should wear a long-sleeved shirt with heat-tech and a jacket, and you can add an extra layer if the temperature drops. Lille typically sees one to two weeks of snow in January and February. Remember to wear gloves and suitable shoes to prevent slipping on icy surfaces. Otherwise, it can get extremely cold, and slippage accidents are common.

In addition, it's important to note that the majority of people in France speak French, while some individuals are not proficient in English. If you ask them for help and they don't speak English, they won't attempt to assist you or show any interest. This situation also occurred when I visited the mobile network system to purchase a new SIM card. They told me, 'I cannot speak English and just say no'. So, sometimes it is hard to communicate with people in English in a small city like Lille.

Weather in Lille

Lille, which is in the northern part of France, experiences lower temperatures throughout the year compared to Taiwan. As an exchange student arriving in winter, I discovered that in January, nighttime temperatures could drop to around -5 degrees Celsius, while daytime temperatures reached around 0 degrees Celsius. Thus, you should wear a long-sleeved shirt with heat-tech inside and a thick jacket, and you can add an extra layer if the temperature drops. Lille typically sees one to two weeks of snow in January and February. Remember to wear gloves and suitable shoes to prevent slipping on icy surfaces. Otherwise, it can get extremely cold, and slippage accidents are common.

For spring, I highly recommend you go out to get the sunlight. Most people usually go to the park with family or dogs. They generally wear a long-sleeved shirt and a light jacket. People love to get sunlight. They prefer to sit outside when they go to a cafe or restaurant. In the park, there are lots of trees, and flowers are going to bloom. So, during this season, I would recommend you go outside to do outdoor activities or hang out with your friends.

Food

Due to the high cost of living in Europe and the lack of dining options near the school, I typically went grocery shopping or to the supermarket every week and cooked my meals. I often visited the 'Paris Store', a large Asian supermarket in the Roubaix area. Although I never cooked when I was in Taiwan, I found that my culinary skills improved significantly after coming to France.

For those who prefer not to cook, there is a McDonald's near the tram station if you're willing to walk a bit further. You can also find a Japanese restaurant nearby. I would recommend another good place to have a meal: 'La Maillerie'. It is like a food hall that provides you with many kinds of food in one place. And 'Paddo Cafe' is one of Lille's favorite cafes. It is located in the center of Lille. It is a cozy cafe that serves breakfast and brunch menus with good coffee. I often frequented this place when I visited the central area.

Important considerations for future students

Safety Issues

First and foremost, personal safety is the most important. Although previous students have mentioned that the school is located at the border of Roubaix and Croix, which is considered a not quite safe area, there's no need to be overly fearful. You can manage it by keeping a close watch on your belongings, being aware of your surroundings, remaining vigilant, and avoiding unnecessary lingering outside. Of course, avoid going out alone after dark, and if you must, always stay in contact with friends. One key suggestion during orientation is to avoid walking through the park near the school at night except with your friends. Staying in a hotel is a better option. In my opinion, Lille offers a significantly safer environment than Paris. And it is not as dangerous as I thought before I was in Lille.

Additionally, when traveling abroad, it's crucial to know how to protect yourself. Europe has a reputation for pickpockets, which is not an exaggeration. However, if you take proper precautions with your belongings (e.g., not keeping wallets or phones in your pockets, dressing inconspicuously, not looking too much like a tourist), and stay alert, these cities known for pickpocketing are not as frightening as they might seem. I traveled alone on two trips abroad and never had a bad experience with them.

Managing Time

One of the most important things you should consider is managing your time. The exchange period will last only one semester. Therefore, it is crucial to balance your study schedule with travel plans to make the most of your experience. At EDHEC Business School, some courses are intensive, meaning it will take just one week of daily classes to complete each course. Additionally, the semester is divided into two cycles. The first cycle, from January to February, covers only core courses. These are essential

subjects that form the foundation of your studies. The second cycle, from March to May, focuses on elective courses, allowing you to choose subjects that interest you or that complement your core studies. The French language course spans the entire semester, from January to May, providing continuous language learning. Given the intensive nature of the courses and the structured semester, it is essential to plan your travels around your academic commitments. Once the schedule and exam dates are announced, you can organize your trips accordingly.

While staying in Lille, you have several exciting travel options. You can take a bus (FlixBus or BlaBlaCar) to Belgium, which is only about 40 minutes away. The Netherlands is also accessible by bus, taking approximately 1.5 hours. Paris is just a short train ride away, taking around 2 hours. If you're looking to explore further afield, you can fly to destinations like Spain, Switzerland, or Italy, all of which are highly recommended for their unique cultures and attractions.

Lastly, keep in mind that many shops and stores are closed on Sundays in France. This can affect your plans, especially if you need to do some shopping or visit certain attractions. Therefore, always have a plan B to ensure you can make the most of your weekends and free time.

