

Program : Double Degree

Year : 2017/2018

Master : Majeur Entrepreneurs resp. Master in International Business

HSG Master : MBF

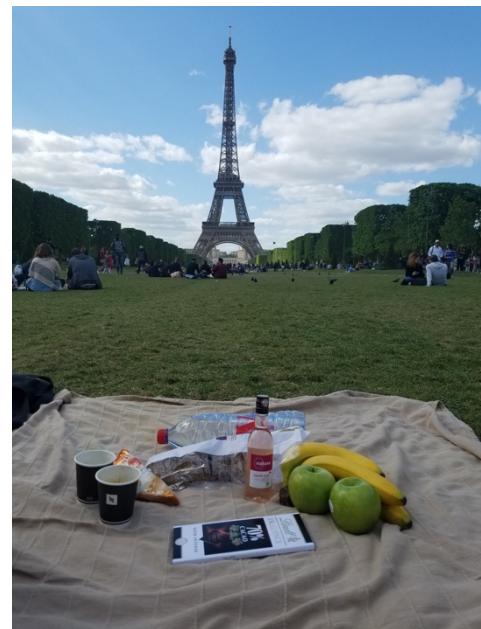
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Host University

HEC Paris is France's most prestigious business school with approx. 2'000 students. It is located in Jouy-en-Josas, a small town outside of Paris. The French graduates have two or three years of "prepa" after high school, after which they have to take a placement test where only the best 200 - 300 are able to join HEC. The university is therefore home to the most selected French as well as international students in Europe and separated in three groups: i) Grande Ecole "prepa" ii) Grande Ecole "non-prepa" and iii) Master spécialisé.



The campus is fully 'protected' and you have to enter through security check points. The small town and the area around the campus are very quiet, which strengthens the relationships between the students which almost all live on campus (by spending large parts of your free time together). There are two buildings dedicated for the courses: The T building where all the courses take place. There is also a library, open 24/7 (and you really find some students in the library, independently of time) with some study rooms to book for meetings. In the T building there are also most administrative offices. The second building S is mostly used by MBA students. The main entrance is situated in this building. You can get coins for the washing machine and the dryer there. Further there is a cafeteria (RU) building N (don't expect anything too crazy from there but it is cheap). Lastly the M building is the gym, the sports hall and also the location of the bar on campus. The rest of the campus is mostly covered by forest and two beautiful lakes, a football field and two tennis courts. This proximity to nature offers opportunities for running (Paris Half Marathon and Marathon take place in October respectively April), cycling and other outdoor sports.



How to get to Jouy-en-Josas?

The transportation from Paris to Jouy-en-Josas can be quite tricky. Depending on the date and time it can take from 30min (by car) to 1.5 hours (by public transport). There are basically 5 options depending on the money you want to spend.

1. You walk to the train station in Jouy-en-Josas (15min). From there you can take the RER C or the bus and you have to change 1 or 2 times depending on the hour to get to central Paris (cheapest option but very long 1.5 hour)
2. You can take the shuttle Savac (from the app Karos) or an Uber (EUR 15) from the campus to Massy Palaiseau (20min) and then from there take the RER B to Paris (40min)
3. You can join a Facebook group called co-voiturage HEC Paris. Where students that live in Paris and drive to Jouy share their rides (can be very useful)
4. You can rent an electric car (Autolib) in front of the campus and drive to Paris (30min - 1h depending on the traffic)
5. To get back from Paris on weekends, there are two late night shuttles leaving from Denfert-Rochereau at 01:30 and 03:00 in addition to the daytime shuttles
6. Lastly the campus has a LOT of parking spaces. Therefore, bringing your own car is not a problem and can be a big advantage depending on what you want to do during the weekend. Having your own car on campus also has the advantage of having dinner in Versailles during the week, travelling to one of the great sightseeing spots outside of Paris on the weekend or even living in the center of Paris

Sport activities on the campus are very good. There are many student teams covering a wide range of different sport activities including swimming, golf, rugby, tennis, rowing and many more. In the first week, the student body organizes an exhibition day where you can register for one of the several clubs. Unfortunately, the gym is quite bad and only accessible during four hours a week, why you should rather focus on body weight exercises at home or get a gym membership in Paris.

Food: The RU is open for lunch and for dinner, but the quality of the food fluctuates from day to day. Besides that, there are possibilities to order food on the campus Bimbimgo or Uber eats, and there is a sushi and an Italian restaurant just outside the campus. If a car is available (can also be rented from Autolib), several restaurants and bars in Versailles can be reached within 15 minutes. The best option is the Auchan (similar to Migros and Coop) just 2 min walking outside the campus, where you can find everything you want. We bought a fridge and a small cooking plate which allowed us to prepare our own food in our room (despite the rather small rooms).



Academics: Entrepreneurs

This master is very special and if you decide to apply for it you have to be ready to live one year of new experiences. First of all, there is almost no optionality in this master. Everything is mandatory, and the courses are all pre-determined. Every course, event, seminar has an old school presence list and you will be penalized if you don't show up. **It is also the only master that has courses in the center of Paris (17eme arrondissement). I would recommend to NOT take a room on campus and rather stay in the center of Paris.**

The year is very intense and very exciting at the same time. You will meet a lot of very curious and intelligent people with crazy business ideas. You will travel around France and even to San Francisco during this program. You will have crazy seminars in the "Jura" and in the French Army. You will meet very successful entrepreneurs around the world. You will work at the French "Media Markt" (Darty) during high season as a TV seller and in 4 stars hotels in Paris.

The program is very popular at HEC Paris and very difficult to get in. It is designed for people that are curious and that are not scared of not sitting in a classroom for days. Don't expect to study books a lot or to pass tests. Everything in this program is business related and you will work as group to develop your business ideas.

The program is very helpful if you have a business idea or if you want to learn how to become a successful entrepreneur.

The curriculum of this master is special and is organized around three pillar missions. Mission Creation, Mission Scale Up and Mission Development.

The year starts with a team building seminar. We all go together in the Jura for a 100km walk. After this week of team building, the first mission is launched.

Mission Création

During the first two months, a successful entrepreneur gives a group of 3 students a potential start-up idea. With three different students you will work on this idea and try to develop a real start-up. You will learn how to design a business plan, and to present it in front of Venture Capitalists.

Mission Scale Up

After the mission creation, you will go to Brest in Bretagne for one week with the French Army. This seminar introduces the new mission; Scale Up. This 2-month project is a real-life project. You will work 2 months for a startup in the strategy department. There you will be responsible for the rapid growth of the startup. At the end of the two months

you will present your work in front of VCs. After this mission you will work 2 weeks in the Christmas period (until the 24th December) in a multimedia shop (Darty) in Paris. You will act there as a seller of either TVs or Microwaves.

Mission Development

This mission is the last mission of your master. It is also the most fun one. You will have the choice between 4 or 5 different projects. First, if you have developed a startup idea throughout the year, you will be able to work on your startup for the last 3 months (if agreed by the Jury of entrepreneurs). Second, you can decide to work for a project of another student in the master. Third you can apply to "Le Wagon". This project is a coding bootcamp in the middle of Paris. You will be there for an intensive 9 weeks but will have to pay around 1'900 Euros. Lastly you can decide to work for a successful entrepreneur in a growing startup.

At the end of the year will, you will also have to pass a little test. This test contains only 20 MC questions and covers all the courses you attended during the year.

Finally in April, you will go all together to San Francisco for two weeks. You will have to pay around 2'000 Euro for this trip. During this trip you will have plenty of different very interesting visits. You will have the chance to visit company such as Google Apple Facebook and also very successful growing startup in the Silicon Valley.

Lastly to complete your master you will be asked to do a 3 months internship as a "bras droit". If you have a full-time job, they normally accept that as your 3 months internship. You can also decide to further work on your startup that you develop during the last mission.

My overall impression on this master is positive. You will have amazing opportunities to meet great people from different backgrounds. You will work on your creativity and develop skills that no other master in the world can teach you. On the downside, this master is very intense, and you will spend a lot of your time with the people on the master. If you don't speak French this can also be problematic as 98% of the students enrolled in this master communicate in French. The administration is also very attached to the values of the master and short-cuts are not permitted (for the 2 weeks in the multimedia shop for example).

Academics: International Business

The Master in Management Grande Ecole with specialization in International Business offers a wide range of flexibility: The courses in the first semester are rather intense and can be chosen from a list ranging at the beginning of the semester. I chose the following courses:

Management Buyouts (6 ECTS, recommended): Interesting topic with good teachers. Main grading based on modelling and pitching of a private equity investment idea to Managing Directors of private equity funds.

Strategic and Legal Aspects of Mergers (6 ECTS, recommended): If you are interested in M&A, this course is highly recommended. The two teachers introduce the key legal concepts of mergers based on case studies, landmark court decisions and comparisons between European M&A law and US M&A law.

Luxury Management (4 ECTS, recommended): HEC is the leading university in luxury management worldwide, given that it is located close to the most famous fashion city of the world. The course is suitable for people with interest but not a lot of experience in the sector and provides meaningful first insights into the world of fashion.

International Strategic Management of Innovation (4 ECTS, recommended): The teacher is a serial entrepreneur and introduces the concept and power of innovation in today's business world. Interesting in particular, if you want to found your own startup or want to learn from other people's founding stories.

Global Sourcing and Supply Chain Management (4 ECTS, partly recommended): The teacher is a former MBB consultant and presents frameworks around supply chain management. Might be interested if you want to go into this particular field, but neither challenging nor a big learning effect.

Strategic Issues in Services Offshoring (4 ECTS, not recommended): Tackles the issues around outsourcing (mostly IT outsourcing) with special focus on India. There were some new aspects introduced in this class but again, the learning effect was limited.

In the second semester, I decided to sign up for the M&A certificate which I can highly recommend. First of all, it allows you to learn about a broad range of topics in a particular field of interest (in my case M&A, other certificates are available). Secondly,

it allows you to travel in January until March (I discovered India, Spain and Lebanon), given that the certificate only takes place between April and May. Finally, the certificate is an opportunity to live in the center of Paris for the semester (especially if you have a car).

I lived in the 5th arrondissement between December and May and could enjoyed the full spectrum of the Parisian lifestyle.



The M&A certificate consists of several courses around this topic, mostly with teachers who are currently working in the industry. This certificate turned out to be very helpful during my internship after my graduation and it helps to ace all questions in aM&A interviews:

Finance: Very interesting course. Difficulty level depending on your finance level between rather easy and very challenging.

LBO: Modelling and pitching of an LBO situation. Teacher has worked for several years for a private equity fund and has profound knowledge about the topic.

Legal M&A: Probably the most interesting course, due to the teaching style of Michael Loy.

Public M&A: Case study about Vivendi's hostile takeover attempt on Ubisoft/Gameloft. Specific focus on large public M&A transactions.

Corporate Strategy: The teacher organized several guest lectures, mostly C-suite executives of French conglomerates, private equity funds and investment banks.

Tax M&A, Financial Due Diligence, Corporate M&A: Courses which are part of the M&A certificate but rather technical in a specific area and not as interesting as the other courses.

Generally, the courses at HEC Paris are only as good as you make them. Meaning that I highly recommend participating in (all) classes, try to participate in group discussions, gain knowledge by exchanging thoughts with the – undoubtedly – bright minds around you. The classes consist of the most intelligent and engaged fellow students you can find in Europe . HEC Paris is a great environment for inspiration, a place where

you will be challenged and where you will grow beyond pure academics. I warmly recommend HEC Paris.

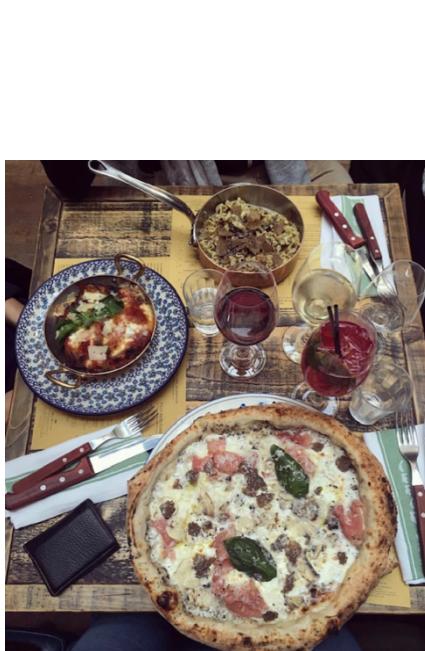
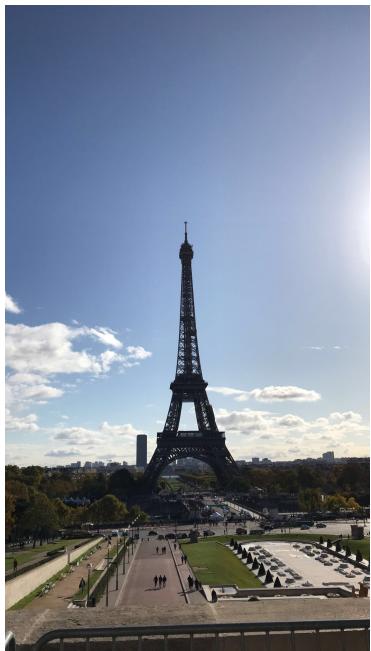
Important information:

Prior to arriving to France there are only little administrative work you have to do. You have to register to various online platforms and – if you plan to live on campus – to register for a university accommodation. If you decide for the center Paris option be prepared to spend some hours to find a suitable accommodation.

As soon as you arrive on campus, we recommend doing the following:

1. Get the SEMP learning agreement form sorted out
2. Open a French bank account (banks are present on campus during the first week)
3. Get a sim card from a French mobile provider. You can order a sim card online from Free (20 Euro for unlimited calls and messages, 100GB internet)

Concerning the **monthly budget** for living on Campus and traveling. It can vary a lot depending on your activities. All you have to know is that on campus the RU is very cheap you can eat there for 3.5 Euro per meal. For the rest of your costs everything (transportation, restaurants, sports, theatre etc..) is around the same price as in Switzerland. If you want to save money don't go to Paris on the week-end! ;)



Ober Mamma Restaurant in Paris

Overall evaluation of our exchange:

Both of us can highly recommend HEC Paris as the host university of the double degree program. The university is by far the strongest compared to all the other universities which offer a double degree program with the University of St. Gallen. You will meet brilliant individuals and will have the chance to work on very interesting projects – fostering your interest in your respective field (entrepreneurship in case of Benjamin and M&A in case of Michael). Further, the HEC Alumni community around the world is VERY powerful and putting the name of HEC on your CV will help you a lot. During our year at HEC Paris, both of us received several offers from our preferred future employers, presumably also to a certain extent due to the strong brand recognition of the business school.

Be aware that Jouy-en-Josas is not Paris. But this is in our opinion not a disadvantage of the school: The proximity to your fellow students certainly creates a cooperative environment, which – in our case – resulted in a lot of friendships which will last for a lifetime. If you like sports, the nature around the campus and the student clubs at the university offer a variety of different activities throughout the year. Furthermore, we showed that living in the center of Paris is also a viable option, in particular if you want to have the full Parisian experience and want to benefit from the wide range of cultural and musical activities in the city.

In summary, we highly recommend HEC Paris as the host university of your double degree program. The university gathers the brightest minds in Europe, inspired us during our year in France and served as an excellent final year of our academic career before entering into the business world.

