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Degree Program at TAU: MBA

Host University: ESCP Europe - Paris

Exchange term: Fall 2018 (September - December)

About the country and city:

Studying in Paris was a great experience. The city has a lot to offer - well known tourist attractions, museums, restaurants, cafes, bars and vibrant arts and music scene. There is always something to do in the city and even after staying there for several months, I still managed to find new and interesting places.

About the Host University:

ESCP is one of the Grande écoles in France and is highly ranked in Europe for Master in Management programs. The campus is located in the 11th arrondissement, not too far from Republique square. The area of the campus is quite popular and has many bars and restaurants around it, so you can always find a place to hang out after school.

The campus itself is small, especially when comparing it to TAU, but it has all the necessary facilities - gym, library, cafeteria, doctor's clinic, etc. there are even some pianos on which you can play if you wish. The university offers sports classes and a gym, for which you can pay 80 euros for the year. This will require a note from doctor, so sign for a doctor's appointment at the university as soon as possible, it's free of charge. The cafeteria in school is subsidized, so you can get a very cheap lunch (for less than 5 euros), and the food there is decent.

The university is very international, in addition to the exchange students there are many students who come for a dual degree program, in which the students study one year on their home university and one year on ESCP and finally get degrees from both universities. ESCP has 6 campuses around Europe, so there are also many students from the other campuses. So you will get to meet many people from different countries and different programs in this university.

We were about 100 students in the exchange student program. Most students in the program, and in the university in general, are aged 22-25, some are even younger since there are some bachelor's degree students in the exchange program.

Courses and professors:

In addition to the courses you will choose, the university offers a French course for visiting students and a half an hour of tutoring per week. You can't get credit for this course but for me it was fun to learn the language.

Overall, the level of the classes in ESCP wasn't very high. Most of the courses required group work and a final group project, but the workload wasn't very high. I managed to continue working (part-time) during the semester and still have enough time to travel. During My semester in ESCP we had to take a mandatory class which included a one week seminar before the beginning of the semester and one class per week during the semester. The course was about different aspect of Europe - cultural, political, economic, strategic, etc. At the end of the course we had to submit a group project in which we compared our home universities on different aspects.

Costs:

I managed to find an apartment through a friend of mine, so for me this wasn't an issue. The university does send a link to a website in which you can look for an apartment. There is also a place called Cite Universite, which is kind of student residency for higher degree students. It is pretty cheap but it is also hard to be accepted to this residence.

Prices of apartments in Paris are about 1000 euros for a small studio apartment (18m). You do need to make sure that the apartment has internet because it's hard to get an internet contract that you can cancel after several months. If you are looking for an apartment in Paris, you can contact me about the apartment I stayed in.

Except for the living costs, I think other costs are pretty similar to Tel Aviv - groceries, restaurants, drinks, etc. Only the wine, baguette and cheeses are cheap. So in comparison to other European cities, Paris is quite expensive.

Transportation:

Public transportation in Paris is very convenient, you can use the metro or the bus to reach anywhere. One ride costs 1.90 euros in the city center, but you can buy 10 tickets for a cheaper price. You do have an option of buying a weekly or a monthly Navigo card, but it is worth it only if you use public transportation every day. Another option is using the shared bicycles or scooters,

which in total are cheaper than using the public transportation and are spread conveniently around the city.

Visa:

If you are travelling for more than 90 days and you don't have a European passport, you will have to issue a visa. The process is not complicated and you can get all the necessary information in the embassy's website. You will have to translate all the papers to English and to come for an appointment in the Consulate. The process should take about 2-3 weeks.

Tips:

I do recommend to learn some French if you are planning to go to Paris, just so you can manage around. The French people to appreciate the effort you make when you try to speak French and they are much nicer to you if you do. I started using Duolingo before I left to Paris and took the French class in the university so I could manage around.

General Experience:

I really loved my stay in Paris. The city is very vibrant and interesting and the food of course is amazing. I also took advantage of my time in Paris to travel around France and also to some other places in Europe. If you plan ahead, you can get some very cheap plane or train tickets to many destinations.

I think the exchange program is a valuable experience in which you get to meet many people from different backgrounds and work in an intercultural environment, which can only contribute to your future career. So I highly recommend to take advantage of this opportunity and go to a semester abroad, and Paris is a great place to live in for a couple of months.