

# EXCHANGE REPORT HEC PARIS, FRANCE



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"If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast."-Ernest Hemingway

# MONTHLY ACTIVITY LOG

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## AUGUST

I arrived at Europe around two weeks before school started. I went on an eleven-day holiday to Switzerland and Northern Italy with my parents before heading back to Paris. I stayed in Paris for another four days alone before finally settled down at Jouy-en-Josas.



## SEPTEMBER

I met my homestay family members in Jouy-en-Josas on the 1st of September. Orientation day composed of different information sessions and document submission sessions were held on the day after. I bought a SIM card and opened bank account during the first week of the month. I had classes on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday only, so there was plenty of time for me to travel to Paris and the towns nearby quite frequently. I visited Musée Guimet, an institution that owns one of the largest Asian art collection outside Asia, on one Saturday morning. The museum has later become one of my favourite place in Paris. Le Mont Saint Michel, Fontainebleau and Chantilly are all perfect day trip destinations near Paris. I visited these places with a friend who has been living in Paris since childhood.



## OCTOBER

A semester is consisted of two bi-semesters at HEC Paris, The first one ends on the second week of October. Since I had no exam for the first bi-semester, I went on a trip to the Netherlands during the study break. I visited Giethoorn, a small town known for its fairy-tale-like cottages and canals, Amsterdam, Den Haag, Delft and Rotterdam. Rijksmuseum and Mauritshuis are two wonderful museums that blow people's minds. After returning to France, I finished three presentations and one midterm. I went to Alsace afterwards.



## NOVEMBER

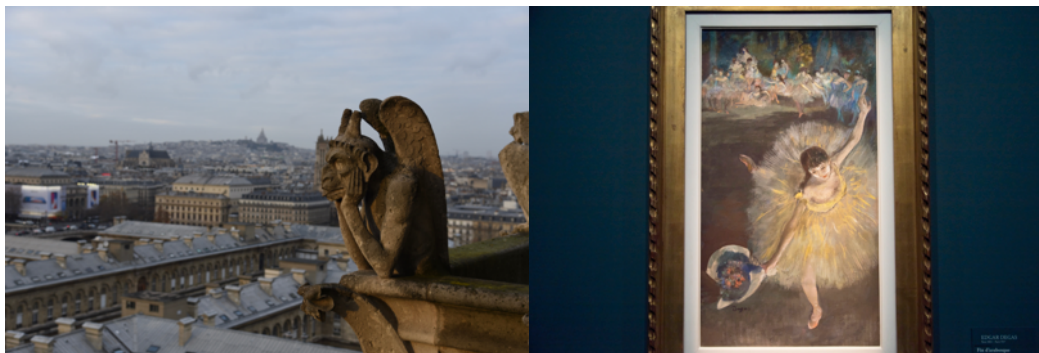
There is a one-week holiday starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November called "La Toussaint" in France. I went to Scotland to meet my UST friend who was on an exchange in Glasgow. I flew from Paris Charles de Gaulle to Edinburgh, stayed two days there, and then took train to Glasgow. Me and my friend went on a three-day Scottish Highlands tour afterwards. Scotland is an amazing country, I fell in love with the place in an instant. The friendliness of local people, gorgeous landscape and thrilling historical stories are elements that make the place so charming. After returning to Paris, I visited Musée du Louvre and Musée d'Orsay several times to admire the masterpieces. In the last week of November, my elementary English teacher travelled from Brisbane to Paris for the holiday. We went to Château de Versailles and had dinner at a bistro together.



## DECEMBER

In the first week of December, my UST friend came to Paris from Glasgow. We explored the city together and visited several

famous tourist attractions. My friend was stunned by the beauty of the French capital. The second bi-semester ended on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December. I finished two presentations and did two final exams before leaving Paris. I originally planned to take Eurostar to London and started the one-month trip to U.K. and Ireland on December 17<sup>th</sup>. However, I was suddenly informed to attend a job interview at HSBC in Hong Kong on December 16<sup>th</sup>. I decided to fly back to Hong Kong to attend the internship assessment and return to Paris later that night. I postponed my trip. The last month of my exchange was dramatic and unforgettable.



# GENERAL EXCHANGE INFORMATION

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## VISA PROCEDURES

A visa is required for students holding Taiwan (R.O.C.), H.K.S.A.R. or P.R.C. passports, who wish to stay in France for more than 90 days. We have to make two appointments for visa application. The first one should be made with the Visa section of Consulat général de France à Hong Kong et Macao. Make sure that all the documents required are prepared. Second, send an email to Campus France with all the necessary information (university, exchange institution, exchange period, date of document submission for visa application) to make an academic interview appointment. They will usually arrange the interview on the same day as visa appointment.

## ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES

HEC Paris will hold an orientation day in early September before school starts. There will be a few information sessions introducing the school, life on campus, course selection method and other important information. Several document submission sessions will be held afterwards. Students have to hand in all the required documents to the exchange coordinator in person.

## INTERNATIONAL SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

There is an International Student Organization at HEC Paris. The organization will hold several activities before the school starts. We could be acquainted to other exchange students worldwide.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

### **On-campus housing**

HEC Paris provides exchange students with on-campus accommodations. All the apartments are within 15 minutes' walk from the main academic building. The school offers two kinds of

accommodations, flat shared by two students or individual rooms with shared bathroom (Co-douche). Flats are much cheaper.

### **Off-campus housing**

HEC Paris offers students who are not able to live on campus an online accommodation-searching platform called "Studapart". Student could find different types of accommodations on the website. All the communication records between the owner and the tenant will be monitored, which is more secure for a foreigner trying to rent a place in France. I found a homestay option near Gare de Jouy-en-Josas through Studapart. Generally speaking, it will be more expensive living in Versailles or Paris than living in Jouy-en-Josas.

### **COURSE REGISTRATION**

Course registration is done on an online system linked to each individual's HEC credential. Course list and registration method are provided in different PDF documents. Each semester in HEC Paris is composed of two bi-semesters. Students could earn 3 credits for normal courses, which last for one bi-semester (18 hours). Exchange students should take at least 24 credits for one semester. We should pick as many courses in the system as possible, prioritizing them from top to low. The system will process the selection and build-up a list made of a student's choice.

### **TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS**

There are usually around 30 students in each class. Many instructors will try to interact with students. Most financial and marketing courses do not have final exams. I took 9 courses at HEC Paris, 4 of them evaluate students mainly based on a group project, 3 of them have a final exam and 2 of them require us to hand-in a ten-page essay after the last class.



## **SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

Indoor sport facilities include a 1600 square meter gymnasium, an artificial climbing wall, fencing rooms, ping-pong tables, a weight lifting room, a room for judo/karate and studios for dance/aerobics/yoga. Outdoor sports facilities include a rugby field, two soccer pitches, four tennis courts, an athletics field and a golf driving range.

## **FINANCE & BANKING**

On the first two weeks of September, large banks like BNP Paribas, Société Générale and LCL and will set up temporary booths in the concourse of Bâtiment T. I opened a Société Générale account. Students will receive a chip-and-PIN card from the bank soon.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

There is an infirmary on campus.

## **FOOD**

### **In HEC Paris**

The main canteen on campus offers western cuisine, Asian cuisine, pizza and vegetarian cuisine. A meal generally costs around 2-5 euro. The café in Bâtiment T provides some snacks and coffee.

### **Around HEC Paris**

There are two Simply markets near HEC Paris, one next to the school and the other one right across Gare de Jouy-en-Josas. Few dining options are provided near the campus.

In Paris

There are some Japanese/Korean/Taiwanese restaurants around Pyramides metro station. Some Chinese restaurants are located in the 3<sup>ème</sup>, 13<sup>ème</sup> and 19<sup>ème</sup> arrondissements. Michelin-starred restaurants could be found in luxury hotels or in small alleys. I tried several and my personal favorites are L'Orangerie and Le Cinq on Avenue George V.

## TRANSPORTATION

### From CDG to HEC Paris

Take **RER B** from *Aéroport Charles de Gaulle 2 TGV* to *Massy-Palaiseau*, then switch to **RER C** direction *Versailles Chantiers*, get off the train at *Jouy-en-Josas*. Take the bus (**GHP**) in front of the station to HEC Paris.

### From Paris to HEC Paris

-Via Versailles Chantier

From *Paris Montparnasse*, follow the sign "Île-de-France", take **Transilien N** or trains (usually direction *Dreux* or *Rambouillet*) that stop at *Versailles Chantiers*. Switch to **RER C** (usually voie J) direction *Versailles-Château-Rive-Gauche* and get off the train at *Jouy-en-Josas*. Take **GHP** bus to HEC Paris.

-Via Massy-Palaiseau

From *Châtelet - Les Halles*, take **RER B** direction *Massy-Palaiseau* or *Saint-Rémy-lès-Chevreuse*. Switch to **RER C** at *Massy-Palaiseau* direction *Versailles Chantiers* and get off the train at *Jouy-en-Josas*. Take **GHP** bus to HEC Paris.

## CLIMATE

Temperature in Paris

	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
High	25	21	16	11	8
Average	20	16	12	7	5
Low	16	13	10	6	3

Temperature in Jouy-en-Josas is usually 2-3 degrees lower than that in Paris. In 2017, autumn in Paris begins in early September, temperature dropped immediately. I suggest you bring few summer clothes and prepare more autumn/winter clothes instead.

## COMMUNICATION

### Mobile Plans

Free launched a 19.99 euro plan with unlimited calls/SMS/MMS/internet. I filled in the form online (website: <http://mobile.free.fr/>) and received my sim card the day after.

### Language

When talking to a French, "Bonjour, est-ce que vous parlez anglais?" (Hello, do you speak English) should always be a good start. Even if you don't know French at all, a single "Bonjour" will make the situation a lot better. In areas where tourists gather, people speak English and English signs are usually available. Learn to know a few common French vocabularies helps.

## ITEMS TO BRING

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Passport	Necessary documents
Passport-sized photos	Clothes
Adapter	Cash
Credit card	Stationary
Laptop	Medicine

## USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS

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French consulate: <https://hongkong.consulfrance.org>

Campus France: <http://campusfrance.org>

HEC Paris: <http://www.hec.edu/>

Free Mobile: <http://mobile.free.fr/>