

Experience report

(Erasmus+, Swiss-European-Mobility-Program,
TUM Exchange, Double Degree)

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Please complete a freely formulated experience report. The report should be 3 to 4 DIN A4 pages long, and may include some photographs (jpg format). Please do not exceed the maximum file size of 8 MB.

Provide details on:

Preparation

I took part in the exchange program at EDHEC organized via the QTEM network. Hence, the selection process was quite straight forward and well organized by TUM and QTEM. Nevertheless it might differ substantially from an exchange organized without the QTEM network, and thus I cannot further elaborate on it.

Studies at Host University

The most important fact studying at EDHEC is the required attendance to lectures. Every student has to batch-in 10min before class starts with her student ID. (At maximum one could miss two classes of one course before getting grade reduction.) This was new to me as TUM-student and it took me some time to get used to it. Although it is only one measure, it is representative for the French system of grand ecole education; it is very similar to schools, everything is predetermined and fixed with a lot of guidance for students. I personally think it should be every person's own responsibility to decide whether to go to lectures or not, but it's how EDHEC deals with it and one must know and accept it before deciding for EDHEC. On the other hand, you meet new people and as classes were only about 80 people, you have a fair chance to get to know many of them (especially in group works).

The second important particularity of EDHEC is that as an exchange student one has not the full choice out of the course catalogue, but you get assigned to one of their tracks depending on your level of studies. They divide into bachelor students (BA), first year master students (M1 or MiM), and second year master students (M2 or M.Sc.) Within a so called track the courses are more or less fixed and there is no possibility to change courses. Changes in the learning agreement are very hard to get through and it requires a lot of effort.

All courses were held in English and most of the professors had adequate English proficiency and accents.

The testing of the courses was also very different to TUM: most courses had a written final exam (not MC!) , which accounts for 70% of the grade and the remaining 30% were determined by group works. These group works could be reports, like small seminar papers, presentations, or both. The grades reach from 0 to 20 points with 20 marking the top grade, 10 points marking the pass hurdle. Although it should be quite doable to pass a course, it is almost impossible to get full marks. 18,19, and 20 are very, very rare and I don't know anyone who got one of those marks in a course as final mark. Hence TUM converts the grades accordingly with 16 equaling the highest grade (don't take this for granted, this is only what I heard.)

Accommodations abroad

EDHEC did provide platforms to search for accommodation, nevertheless, the rooms at student residences were quite expensive and also very quickly fully booked.

Hence, I had to find something else and I found a very nice small apartment in the middle of the Old Town of Nice, only 150m to the sea via **“apartager”** (“Wg-gesucht” in France). Friends of mine found a nice shared flat via **“ERASMUS U”**. Each of us ended up paying between **600€ and 700€ per month**.

Sounds like a lot compared to Munich? Yes. Nevertheless, you can apply for the **CAF housing money**, financial support paid by the French government, also for international students. After a quite complicated application process (EDHEC assists you tho), when living alone, you can expect **160€/month** and when living in a shared flat around **70-80€/month**. So it's not too bad anymore.

BUT be aware: If you get an AIRBNB, you will NOT be eligible for the housing money!

The best places to live are: Old Town, along the Avenue Jean Medecin, and Liberation. As they will finish a new tram line, which goes directly to EDHEC soon, the port of Nice will also be a nice place to live (and you will be close to nice restaurants and bars).

Everyday life and leisure

Nice is a quite livable city and you will be familiar with it very fast. Despite it has 350,000 inhabitants it really doesn't feel like it. The good life with bars and restaurants mainly takes place in or close to the old town. Good French restaurants and nice bars at the Promenade des Anglais, directly at the sea contribute massively to the French-riviera holiday-lifestyle.

Costs of living will be higher than in Munich. Especially supermarkets and groceries shouldn't be underestimated. I would guess, roughly 20-30% on top.

A beer in a bar (0.5l) will cost between 6 and 7 euros. A glass of wine is comparably cheap with about 4.50 (and the wines of *Cote de Provence* are really good!). Public transport (Tram to EDHEC) is quite cheap with 20€/month and there are also blue bikes available, where you pay only 20-30€ for the whole year to get access to the bike sharing system (every single ride is for free up to 30min). Cycling to EDHEC is pretty cool, as the path goes along the sea, without red lights, and hence only takes about 20mins (and thus is not even slower than taking the tram).

Nice is an absolute paradise for joggers, and also road cyclists. With a good bike you are in a couple of minutes in the mountains with beautiful views over the city and the sea.

Additional costs / Funding possibilities (optional)

- CAF housing assistance (see above): 70-80€ /month (shared flat) 160€/month (single flat)

Competencies and learning experiences

I can highly recommend to seek actively in the beginning for other nationalities and not end up in a “group of Germans”. Always speak English, even if you are talking with a German and it might feel weird at the beginning, but so you can allow other people to join and follow your conversation. At some point it will feel completely normal, no worries.

I found really nice people from Sweden, Finland, Belgium and Slovenia. It was great fun and good to forget about stereotypes and still learn about traditions and active culture. It was really nice to study at a Business School, because everyone has some kind of Finance / Economics background and I met many very similar people to myself! Across countries, across cultures!

Intercultural experiences

I thought Germany is very bureaucratic! Forget about it, if you go to France! Everything that has something to do with administration takes weeks (or months). Everything is organized, follows strict processes and is very structured.

A friend of mine summarized it fairly accurate (with a sense of humor): “In Germany we have defined rules and everybody follows those rules. In France everything has a rule, but nobody cares about the rules.” Of course this overexaggerates a lot, but in general I would agree that France has a tendency to regulate more.

Nevertheless, the French students were interested in “us” international students and it is highly beneficial if you speak some French. The French students are sometimes not confident enough about their English proficiency to reach out to you, hence you will make them feel more comfortable if you try to speak a little French and then you will make friends easier.

Intercultural Seminars at TUM before mobility

I did not attend an intercultural seminar before.

Conclusion

I truly enjoyed my time in Nice. Not only the lifestyle in southern France but also the possibility to do a lot of outside sports, enjoy the nature, mountains, and the sea made the stay unforgettable. Although at the beginning it was hard to get accepted by the Nicoise people because of the lack of French proficiency, at the end I felt home and that people were very friendly and helpful.

I personally think the intercultural exchange between other (non-) European countries made me understand and accept people from different origins and was also good fun.