

Exchange Semester Fall 2023

EDHEC Business School, Nice Campus

Program of Study & Courses

I am currently specializing in International Management at the University of Ottawa. However, I had to choose classes from one of three minor options at EDHEC Business School – Marketing, Entrepreneurship, or Finance. I chose the Marketing minor, meaning that I had 3 marketing courses, as well as 3 common business courses. In order to fulfill the credit requirements (30 ECTS), I had to complete a total of 6 courses at EDHEC, which were considered equivalent to five university courses at the University of Ottawa (15 credits).

One major difference between the University of Ottawa and EDHEC Business School is that EDHEC does not have set a weekly schedule. Throughout the semester, one's weekly schedule is subject to constant changes, and it's necessary to check the timetable on a daily basis, as modifications can occur up to 24 hours before a class. It was recommended that we monitor the schedule daily to prevent missing any classes, although only a few adjustments were made to the original timetable. Additionally, attendance at each class is mandatory, students are required to sign in before each class with their student cards, with a limit of 1 unexcused absence allowed for classes with 36 hours of lecture time.

The class sizes at EDHEC are notably smaller in comparison to those at the University of Ottawa. My marketing courses had about 20-25 students in each class, while the remaining three courses had larger but still relatively small class sizes, with fewer than 40 students per course.

Here is an overview of the six courses I undertook, including details on the course content, expected deliverables, and the total class hours.

1. International Marketing (6 ECTS)

- 36 hours
- This course emphasizes the essential role of global marketing for businesses to achieve their objectives. It delves into the intricacies of navigating brand management across diverse cultures and borders, highlighting the unpredictability of consumer expectations. It sheds light on the need to reassess various elements when expanding from domestic markets to a global scale.
- Evaluations:
 - Case studies (completed in groups every class)
 - Final project + presentation
 - Final exam

2. Integrated Marketing (6 ECTS)

- 36 hours
- This course emphasizes the significance of communication in contemporary business operations. It focuses on the study of various theories and practices pertaining to

Advertising, Events, and Digital Communication, all of which are integral to a comprehensive marketing communication program.

- Evaluations:
 - Continuous assessment (in class work)
 - Final project + video presentation (in groups)
 - Final exam

3. Omnichannel, E-Commerce, and Web Marketing (6 ECTS)

- 36 hours
- This course seeks to offer a comprehensive grasp of the various channels and intricacies involved in customer journeys, particularly in the digital realm, such as web and mobile platforms. Students learn to critically assess existing brand strategies and devise their own recommendations, considering how customers might respond to these strategies.
- Evaluations:
 - 3 quizzes (multiple choice questions)
 - Group work (weekly case studies)
 - Final exam

4. Contemporary French Business and Society (5 ECTS)

- 36 hours
- The course will provide insights into the operations of French companies and overall business practices in France. Additionally, you will gain knowledge about the historical context of France, including the city of Nice, while also exploring various social aspects of French culture.

*This course addresses numerous delicate subjects, including the terrorist attacks that took place in France over the past decade.

- Evaluations:
 - Continuous assessment (participation)
 - Group presentation
 - Final exam

5. Leadership (4 ECTS)

- 24 hours
- This course focuses on recognizing and incorporating essential leadership skills, utilizing diverse frameworks to comprehend collaborative diversity, and understanding historical leadership eras and their contemporary management implications. It also emphasizes the ability to provide and receive feedback on specific leadership roles, engage in introspective conversations, and adapt leadership behavior to suit different contexts.
- Evaluations:
 - 2 one-page written assignments
 - Summary of learning journal (two-page written assignment)
 - Participation

6. Intermediate French for Visiting Students (5 ECTS)

- 36 hours

- This course caters to visiting students seeking to enhance their linguistic abilities. It emphasizes practical communication skills, cultural insights, and a deeper understanding of French grammar and vocabulary.
- Evaluations:
 - 2 grammar tests
 - In-class essay
 - French vlog (15-minute video)
 - Final presentation

Timetable & Schedule

The registration process typically commences in early May, initiated by an email from EDHEC containing specific instructions for submission, including a copy of your passport, a headshot, completion of the EDHEC learning agreement (course choice form), and submission of your official transcripts from the University of Ottawa. The procedure is pretty straightforward; however, it is best to start the process as soon as possible since you will need a signature from uOttawa's exchange office confirming your course selection, and that can take a long time to obtain. Also, it is important to note that there is no add or drop period at EDHEC, so your course selection is final.

For the fall semester, the orientation week began on August 29th, 2023, and ended on September 2nd, 2023. Attendance to the orientation activities (except for the integration day on September 2nd) is mandatory. Therefore, you should try to arrive in Nice a few days earlier and explore the area a bit. Classes officially began on September 4th and the semester ended December 20th, 2023. It should be noted that BBA students do not get a reading week (only Masters students). Classes concluded on December 8th and exams began the following week. I had exams for 4 of my classes, and they were scheduled at the following times:

- Omnichannel, E-Commerce, and Web Marketing: December 12th (1pm to 3pm)
- International Marketing: December 13th (1pm to 3pm)
- Contemporary French Business and Society: December 13th (4pm to 6pm)
- Integrated Marketing Communication: December 14th (9am to 11am)

Procedures to Follow Upon Arrival

Before your arrival, the International Student's Office (ISO) will email you with information about what to expect in the next few months. They held 3 virtual meetings where they gave us information about housing, visas, travel insurance, banking, and much more.

The International Student's Office and the Study Abroad Coordinator planned many activities for the orientation week. This week is an excellent opportunity to meet the other international students. The initial day served as a comprehensive introduction to the school. They also gave information about practical matters (school, banking, insurance, visa validation, CAF, etc.). The following day, there was a virtual meeting with the BBA International program coordinator, where we got information about each of the courses. Then, on the Friday, there was a practical fair held at the school. Representatives from financial institutions, phone companies, and Lignes

d'Azur (public transportation in Nice) were available to answer questions and help set up accounts. Finally, on Saturday, there was an integration day. We got put into groups with other exchange students from the BBA and Masters programs and we played games together. At the end of the morning, there was a picnic, where we got to try many popular foods from Nice.

The ISO office also offered vouchers for an Uber ride from the airport to your accommodation if you arrived the last week of August. As I arrived with someone else, I opted not to use the voucher as it was only for a small car and our luggage would not fit in the car.

The ISO will email you with a deadline before which you must send them proof that you validated your visa and registered for French health care (or proof of private health insurance). The visa validation can be done online, and you will need to pay 50 euros. As for the French health care, it was quite simple (it is free). The ISO will send you a link to the website.

Most phone companies will require you to have a French bank account, but since it can take a few weeks to open an account, it might be best to find one that doesn't require one. I chose to go with the company Free Mobile. This company did not require a French bank account and did not specify a minimum duration for the phone plan subscription. The plan that I chose offered 250GB of data per month in France (35GB of data across Europe) with unlimited international calls & texts for about 20 euros/month.

As for social activities, as previously mentioned, the orientation week activities were a great place to meet other international students. There are also events hosted by ESN Nice (Erasmus events). These events were planned for all international exchange students that were studying in Nice (this included other schools in Nice). These were a fun way to meet more students and try new activities. Some of these events included a jet ski party, beach meet ups, events in bars, a trip to Gorges du Verdon, etc.

Budget

Flights:

- \$1500 round trip (Montreal to Nice – Nice to Montreal)
- I bought my ticket about 5 weeks before leaving for France, so the prices were a little higher. I chose to buy flexible tickets as I didn't know if I would want to change the dates of my flights. The price also included 2 checked bags (\$100 extra each way for the second checked bag).
- Dates: August 25th and December 22nd

Housing:

- I first found an apartment on Studapart (housing website that partners with EDHEC) and the rent was 570 euros/month. This apartment was located on Rue D'Angleterre (near Jean Médecin). I had a private room in a shared apartment with 2 other roommates. The security deposit for this flat was 500 euros. I paid about 300 euros in Studapart fees and an additional 150 euros for the Studapart Guarantee (they acted as my guarantor).

- There was a problem with my apartment when I arrived (there were bed bugs), so I quickly had to find a new apartment. I ended up staying in a hotel for 3 nights and stayed with a friend for another 3 nights before I found my new apartment. I was very lucky to find a new place so quickly as there is a housing shortage in Nice and most landlords don't want to rent to anyone staying less than 10 months (it was hard to find the first apartment as well, it took about 4 weeks of messaging landlords before I found a room).
- Although I informed the ISO about my situation, they were not able to help me find a new apartment as they were already trying to help other students who had been scammed. I was lucky to find this apartment myself and to be able to move in so quickly. From what I heard, about 5 students were scammed and did not have a place to stay when they arrived in France.
- My new apartment was located near Magnan station and cost 620 euros/month (fees included – Wi-Fi, electricity, heating, etc.). I did not have to pay a security deposit or any fees as I found this apartment on a different platform. This apartment was shared with 4 other people. This apartment also had a washing machine.
 - Magnan is located between EDHEC and the city center. It took about 15 minutes by tram to get to the school (about 7 stops), and about 5 minutes to get to Jean Médecin station (3 stops). Many other students lived in this area or in the City Center.

Daily travel:

- Lignes d'Azur monthly pass: 25 euros/month
 - This gave me unlimited access to the buses and trams in Nice.
- ZOU Études card: 90 euros for one year.
 - This pass allowed unlimited travel by bus and ZOU! train from September 1st 2023, to August 31st 2024, including weekends and holidays, for both school and leisure trips. This allowed me to travel all along the Cote d'Azur (Cannes, Monaco, Menton, Ventimiglia, etc.).

Phone:

- Free Mobile: 20 euros/month

Textbooks:

- I did not need to buy any textbooks for my courses.

Food:

- 100-150 euros/month.
- Not including any meals at restaurants or cafes. Restaurants in Nice were quite expensive (15-25 euros for a main dish), so you should put some money aside for that if you plan to eat out a lot.

Vacation:

- Approximately 3000-4000 CAD
- I travelled to quite a few destinations during my exchange semester with friends from back home and with other students from EDHEC. I went to Barcelona, Rome, Bordeaux, Budapest, London, and Milan. I stayed at a hostel in Barcelona, but I chose to stay in hotels or Airbnbs in the other cities.
 - o My travels could have been cheaper, but most trips were planned at the last minute, which raised the costs.
 - o I also did many tours and activities while travelling. Some of those were quite expensive.

Application Procedures Before Arrival

As previously mentioned, the course registration process began in early May and the deadline was May 31st. As there is no add or drop period at EDHEC, your course selection is final. Therefore, you need Telfer's approval before registering for your courses.

EDHEC's ISO team held a virtual meeting at the beginning of May to discuss housing and visa requirements. The following week, they gave us access to the housing portal. EDHEC does not have student residences, but there are a couple student residence buildings across Nice that are available to all students in the city (this includes other universities). This means that the demand is very high. It should also be noted that some residences are only available to students staying for a minimum of 9-10 months. If you plan to stay in a residence, you should act very quickly.

EDHEC's ISO team also recommended certain housing platforms to help us find apartments with private owners. They partnered with Studapart to offer a selection of apartments in Nice. Although it may look like there are many options, you will quickly find that most of these are not available for 4-month rental periods. This can be a very frustrating process as you will need to message each landlord. It took me close to 4 weeks to find a room to rent. Then, I paid my deposit (first month's rent), my Studapart guarantee, and Studapart fees (about 1000 euros total) all on the Studapart website (never send it to the landlords). Once this was completed, I got a certificate of accommodation on the Studapart website, which allowed me to begin the visa process. You will also need to find housing insurance before you move into your accommodation (about 60 euros/year).

I highly recommend finding accommodation as soon as possible since you need proof of accommodation before you can begin the visa process. I found my apartment at the end of June, so I couldn't start my visa application until then. This caused me a lot of stress as I was not sure if I would get my visa in time.

When I arrived in Nice, I discovered that there were bed bugs in the room that I rented. I immediately ended my lease and had to find a new place to stay. I was very lucky to find an apartment through 'Appartager' that I was able to move into right away. There is a severe housing shortage in Nice so it can be extremely difficult for students to find housing. Also, it took many weeks of arguing with Studapart and the original landlords before I got a refund on my original deposit. In the end, I was lucky to be reimbursed for the first month's rent and Studapart fees.

As for the visa process, I started by completing my application on Études en France (150 euros per application). This required proof of registration at EDHEC, a CV, information about my previous studies, and other information about my trip. I received confirmation about 1-2 weeks after submitting my application.

Once this was completed, I started my application on the France Visa website. The online application also required proof of registration, information about my trip (dates, flights, etc.), proof of accommodation, proof of sufficient financial resources (bank statements), certificate from Études en France, and more. Once this application was completed, I had to book an appointment at a visa office through VFS Global. At this point, it was early July and the earliest available appointment was August 15th, 2023, in Ottawa. My flight was scheduled for August 25th so I tried to get an earlier appointment (in either Ottawa, Montreal, or Toronto), but there weren't any other dates available. I tried calling, emailing, checking the website regularly for new openings, but I couldn't find anything else.

I attended my appointment on August 25th, where they took my application and passport and shipped it to the French Consulate in Montreal. Once you submit your application, you cannot get anymore updates. At the time, the French Consulate said that the wait time for visa applications was about 30 business days, but that they try to prioritize the applications by departure date. This was an extremely stressful process as I did not know if I would get my passport and visa before my flight. In the end, I contacted Marie-France Lalonde's (MP) office and told them my situation. They contacted the French Embassy and got my application expedited so that I could leave on time. Without their help, I wouldn't have gotten my visa before EDHEC's orientation week started. For this reason, I recommend finding housing as quickly as possible so that you can start the visa application early on.

Physical documents required for visa appointment (there might be a few missing, check the VFS Global and France Visa websites for list of required documents):

- Passport
- Copy of passport (including copies of stamped pages)
- Visa photos (specific picture requirements can be found on France Visa website, I got mine done at Shoppers Drug Mart)
- Birth certificate
- Health insurance (some sites list this as a requirement, but they didn't check mine during the appointment)
- Copy of back & front of uOttawa student card
- Proof of registration at EDHEC (with semester dates)
- Appointment confirmation
- Receipt of visa application
- France Visa application form
- Études en France certificate
- Proof of accommodation
- Bank statements (to show sufficient funds)

I paid about \$45 CAD for my visa application and had to pay another fee at the visa appointment.

As previously mentioned, you must validate your visa after you arrive in France. This can be done online and costs about 50 euros.

Other Comments

Language: I speak French fluently, so I did not have many issues in Nice. There are some places where the staff only speak French, so my friends struggled a bit. However, I found that most restaurants or tourist locations had English speaking staff.

Airport: Getting to and from the airport is very easy by tram. Tram line 2 'Aéroport' takes you directly to terminals 1 and 2 of the Nice Cote d'Azur Airport.

Attendance policy: EDHEC is very strict about attendance, which can impact your travel plans. They don't excuse absences unless you have a doctor's note, so you must plan your travels accordingly.

Travelling: I travelled with other international students that were on exchange. It was hard to schedule certain trips due to the varying schedules, but we found certain weekends that worked for us. All of the other exchange students were very friendly and open to traveling with new people! I was able to forge really strong friendships with some of the other students during our weekends away or even during day trips to surrounding areas. I highly recommend reaching out to the other students and planning some activities!

My Overall Experience

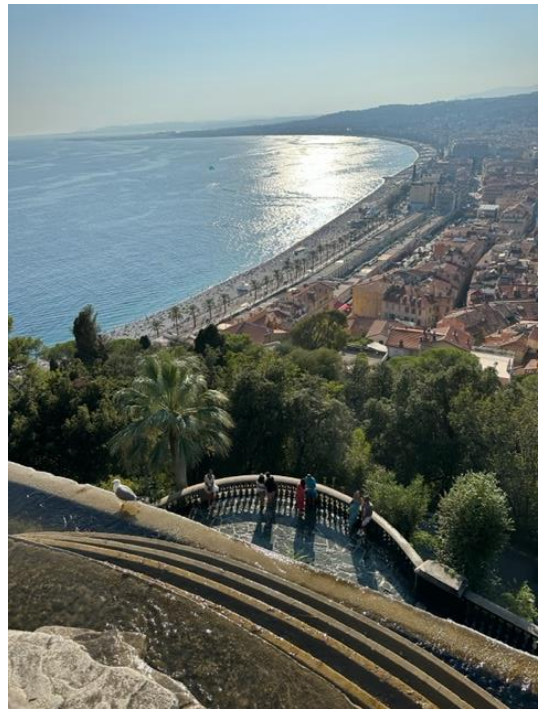
In hindsight, this has truly been one of the most enriching experiences I've ever had. Initially, leaving behind my friends and family in Canada made me apprehensive, but I'm immensely grateful that I decided to take this leap. It has allowed me to cultivate new friendships, challenge my boundaries, and become more independent. Also, I've gotten to travel to many beautiful places in Europe! Moreover, the quality of education at the school has been exceptional. I've found my classes enjoyable, and the campus is simply stunning. I wholeheartedly recommend EDHEC Business School!

Pictures from my exchange

View from 2nd floor terrace at EDHEC



View from Castle Hill in Nice



View from Coco Beach, Nice



Gorges du Verdon



Cannes



View from Jardin Exotique in Èze



View of port in Nice



Menton



Sunset view from beach in Nice



Beach in Menton

