

Mobility Scholarship Report

My name is X and I am a fourth year Finance student at Telfer. I am currently on exchange at EDHEC Business School, Lille campus, for the Fall 2017 semester.

About EDHEC:

EDHEC Business School is one of the leading French “Grande Ecole”. Grande Ecole essentially means private school; French students pay 10,000 euros a year to go to EDHEC, which is considered a fortune in France. They have campuses in Lille, Nice, Paris, London, and Singapore, although your options are Lille and Nice Campus. It is one of the most respected educational institutions in France. The professors are industry professionals, so not only do they provide relevant insight, but they can serve as valuable references while searching for a job after graduation.

Course Information:

At EDHEC, I am taking 30 ECTS. I have six courses, each course worth five ECTS. Each course has 30 hours of class, very similar to uOttawa.

The course scheduling is very different from uOttawa. There isn't a consistent weekly schedule; the schedule changes every week. Some weeks there are no classes, other weeks, you have 40 hours of class. This schedule was difficult to get used to; while it provided free time to travel, the weeks of 30+ class hours were very challenging. It is common to have eight hours of the same class in one day. Class attendance is also mandatory; you will be provided a student card, which you must scan upon entry to class. The odd course scheduling is apparently because many of the professors are industry professionals and therefore the school must accommodate for their working hours.

The course format is quite like uOttawa. Most classes either have a midterm or a large group project, and a final exam. The marking system, however, is different. You are given a grade out of 20, and anything above a 14 is considered an “A”. Anything over a 16 or 17 is considered excellent, and is rarely given out.

General timetable:

Registration occurs in early May. The school will send you an email, and you will follow the instructions provided by them. This includes providing a copy of your passport, completing your EDHEC course choice form and providing your transcripts from uOttawa. The process is very simple, and the school administration is always there to help you.

For the fall semester, the official orientation day was on August 31st, 2017; however, the student union had events at bars and clubs beginning the 29th of August. The school's orientation and the events organized by the student unions (Open Up and Visa) are a great way to meet other exchange students. One third of EDHEC's students are foreign exchange students, so you meet people from all over the world. Become involved in the organizations, and make sure to attend their events.

Classes ended in mid-December, and exams started on the 18th of December and ended the 19th of December. The school will tell you that you must remain in Lille until the 23rd. I strongly advise you to do so, in the event of an exam scheduling conflict.

There are school holidays, which consist of a one-week break, during the last week of October / first week of November. Depending on your class schedule, you may have other periods of time where you have no class. Make sure to capitalize on these opportunities and travel Europe.

Procedures to follow upon arrival:

On orientation day, the school will walk you through everything you must do to ensure a pleasant stay in France. Banking and public transport representatives will be present to help you open a bank account and buy a bus pass (called a "Pass Pass"). Additionally, you must submit your OFII, and sign up for the housing allowance offered by the French government called CAF. The school will help you with all of this, so do not be worried.

Cost of studying abroad:

Studying abroad is expensive, so make sure to have a written budget to ensure you don't go overboard. The main expenses are flight, accommodation, food, health insurance and travel.

Flight: In order to get to Lille, I flew from Montreal to Paris, and from Paris took an approx. 45 minute train to Lille. The flight cost me 1,000 CDN, with return, and the train cost me 15 euros (about \$22.50 CDN). Flying to Paris and taking a train from there is your best option. Make sure to buy your train ticket from the Charles de Gaulle Airport station and not the Gare du Nord station located in Paris.

Accommodation: You can choose to live on the campus residence, in a student residence near the school or in the city, or in a private residence. I decided to live in the city, and the school referred me to a housing agency, called Colocation City. I paid 550 euros per month, all expenses included (water, heat, internet etc.). Note that most landlords expect rent payment as

of the 1st of August. There are very few who will accept rent starting later in the month; however, I was able to find one who was willing to start as of the 21st of August (it wasn't my first choice, but I refused to pay an extra month's rent). The place was fully furnished, with a dishwasher, washing machine/dryer, and cutlery (dishes, pots and pans, utensils etc.). I strongly suggest living in a housing share, as it gives you the chance to meet people, and they provide all the furnishings required. One important thing to know about EDHEC is that the school is in a suburb called Roubaix, just outside of Lille. To get from EDHEC to Lille city center, including walking, takes about 40-45 minutes. If you live near the campus, there is absolutely nothing to do nearby, so you will constantly be travelling into the city to go to the Student Union events and to enjoy Lille's rich culture. However, if you live in the city, you must travel 45 minutes to get to the school for class. Given the sheer amount of class, which I was not expecting prior to signing up for EDHEC, this is a hassle, especially for early morning classes. Depending on what you want out of your experience, both options have their pros and cons. The vast majority of the students lived near the campus: some liked it, and some regretted it horribly. It just depends on you. If you do decide to live in the city, choose accommodation near the Republique-Beaux Arts Metro station.

Food: As you probably already know, cost of living in Europe is considerably higher than in North America. However, Lille is a relatively affordable city. After considering the exchange rate, I found that most items were about the same cost. I lived near a discount grocery store called Lidl, and saved a lot of money on groceries shopping there. I would also shop at the Carrefour in Euralille (A major shopping center in the Lille city center). The cost will vary depending on how much you eat obviously, but will be similar to what you pay in Canada. Eating out, on the other hand, is expensive, like anywhere, so make sure not to get carried away and eat out too much.

Health insurance: It is mandated that you buy EDHEC's school health insurance. I suggest you buy some additional health insurance in Canada. If you are covered under the school's insurance, they will cover you for up to 90 days. For remaining time, you will spend in France, you must "top-up" your insurance. Green Shield recommended AwayCare who are a health insurance agency. They essentially find the best policy for you. My health insurance covered me up to 5 million dollars. It is worth paying for good health insurance for peace of mind.

Travelling: The cost of travelling varies greatly depending on how you want to travel. You can travel very cheaply, or splurge a little more and have a better experience. My approach was this: I'm only here for four months, so I'm going to enjoy it. When travelling, money really wasn't a major concern, and I was willing to spend money to be able to fully enjoy my experience. There is a low-cost airline called EasyJet that will fly you around Europe from Lille

for a few dozen euros. Take a shuttle from Euralille to get to the airport, it will cost you 10 euros back and forth. I mostly stayed in Airbnbs, but to save money, you can stay in hostels. Take full advantage of Lille's amazing location for travel. It is one of the main reasons why I chose it.

Student Visa: You must get a student Visa from the French consulate if you are studying in France for a period of more than three months. Do not leave this to the last minute and most importantly, you must go in person. As of March 31, 2017, all students signing up for a French student Visa must be fingerprinted at the consulate in Toronto. I did not know this and wound up having a last-minute scare. I was incredibly lucky to have found a cancelled appointment, and got my Visa on the last possible day (I had to go in person to Toronto to pick it up, because there was not enough time to mail it). Four months before your departure date, schedule an appointment on their website. There is a document outlining what you must provide; follow it carefully. Once again, make certain to go in person, or else you will be rejected.

City of Lille:

Lille is located in Northern France, about 30 mins from the Belgian border. It is a student city, with over a dozen universities and 36% of the population is under the age of 25. It is a fantastic location for travelling. You are 1 hour by train from Paris, 40 mins from Brussels, 1.5 hours from London and 2.5 hours from Amsterdam. It is truly the center of Western Europe. Lille has a population of about 230,000, making it the 10th biggest city in France. It was renowned for its textile industry, but was hit hard with the outsourcing of labour. It is now a center of agriculture, tourism and new technologies.

Given Lille's young student population, the nightlife there is great. The streets with the bars and clubs are called Rue Solferino and Rue Massena. These streets will be packed with party goers any day of the week. Clubs close at 7am, a far cry from the 2am in Ottawa. If you enjoy going on a night out, Lille is incredible.

Lille's weather is quite wet and rainy. Make sure to bring an umbrella and a good rain jacket/wind breaker.

The first weekend of September, the Lille hosts the biggest flea market in Europe called "La Braderie". It attracts over 2 million people from around Europe and is not to be missed!

Personal excerpt:

My experience with the foreign exchange program has been incredibly enlightening. Living in a different country, experiencing a different culture and meeting people from around the world provides you with a new perspective and unique insight that will change your life entirely.

The best aspect of my exchange was undoubtedly travelling; I had the chance to go to places I had been dreaming of since I was a kid. Europe is so small, is it easy, quick and cheap to get anywhere. From the south of France, to Italy, to the fairy town of Bruges, I could visit every single place I ever wanted to go to.

Going on exchange is an insane adventure, where you will step out of your comfort zone, learn more about yourself, and grow as a person. You will not regret it!