

Université de Strasbourg

Sciences Po

2014 – 2015

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After graduating from a bachelor programme at the Institute of Economic Studies, I decided to continue my studies with a two-years double degree master's programme, Corporate Finance and Strategy, of the Institute of Economic Studies in Prague and Sciences Po Strasbourg. Within this program you will be required to spend the first academic year in Prague and the second one in Strasbourg.

1st Year: Institute of Economic Studies in Prague

The first year you will spend in Prague is basically the same as if you would have chosen any other master's degree programme at the Institute of Economic Studies. Same as for all the other master's programs at IES, there is a list of mandatory, elective and optional courses you have to / can take. And same as for all the other IES master's programs, the content of the studies is rather quantitatively and theoretically based. There are no additional requirements to finish the first year of the double degree programme compared to the other master's programmes. The first academic year lasts two full semesters (winter and summer).

2nd Year: Sciences Po Strasbourg

In the second year, you will enter Master 2 of the Sciences Po Strasbourg, which means you will enter the second year of master. The whole Sciences Po is divided into several specialisations and sub-specialisations, one of which is Management, Economie, Entreprises: Corporate Finance and Strategy in Europe. Differently from the first year (at the Institute of Economic Studies), the list of courses for every sub-specialisation is fixed. This also means that you will spend all your courses with the same classmates (group of approx. 30 people).

The schedule differs every week, you will not have a certain course at a certain day and time every week. The majority of lecturers are working professionals coming to Strasbourg for a limited period of time, often only to give a lecture, which means one lecture may last two hours or the whole weekend (yes weekend). Regarding the fact that one course consists of 15-20 hours, after the full weekend session you are done with this course, if there are 2-hours sessions, you will have several. You are given your schedule in advance, which allows you to plan your time.

The content of the studies at Sciences Po is much less theoretically and much less quantitatively based than at IES. The content of particular courses depends on the lecturer. As I have mentioned, the majority of the lecturers are working professionals. The way how the lecturer presents the issue highly depends whether he or she is of finance, accounting or for example of law background. In general, the aim of the courses is more to understand the issue in a wider perspective than to go into details and proofs. You will also come across more team working, presentations and case studies than you are used to from IES.

The courses are divided into several units: Corporate Finance and Strategy, Business Law and Accounting, International Banking and European Finance and Corporate Compliance and Communication, every unit consists of 4 – 6 courses. To finish the second year of your double degree, you have to pass exam in each of the units (one exam per unit). All the exams are passed in one specified

week in March. In addition to those four units, there is one more: Case Studies. There is no exam for this unit, you have to successfully solve the case studies given to your team during the academic year.

Students attending the regular master's programme at Sciences Po are required to do a 3-months internship after those exams. This is not obligatory for you (you are obliged to pass the final exams and write the thesis instead, mentioned below).

Finishing the Programme

To successfully finish the program, you are obliged to submit and defend your master thesis and pass the final exams at the Institute of Economic Studies. The requirements for the master thesis and the final exams are the same as for the full two-year master's program at IES.

Application

The application process is open until the end of April. However, if you want to apply for a scholarship, it is much better to start the process earlier. The application process is quite simple, the required documents are following: completed application form (you can find it on the website), copies of all the relevant diplomas, academic CV, letter of motivation, proof of your competence in English (at least C1 level) and proof of your mathematical ability (GRE, GMAT). Other documents, you can also include to your application are: letters of recommendation and writing sample (some academic text written by yourself).

I received the letter of admission within one month after the application deadline.

Tuition Fees

The tuition fees (including administration fee of approx. 500 EUR) are 6,500 EUR. As I have mentioned, there are several possibilities for a scholarship. I was forgiven the tuition fee directly by the Faculty of Social Science in Prague, which means I only paid the administration fee.

Strasbourg

Strasbourg is a mid-size city with a beautiful historical city centre and parks. The campus of Université de Strasbourg is huge, especially regarding the size of the city. If I remember correctly, it is the second largest campus in France. The city is always full of students and there is always something to do. Another highlight of the city is for sure Christmas time. During the Christmas time, the city becomes even more beautiful, the Christmas markets are literally everywhere in the city centre, make sure you will not miss them. Strasbourg is considered (at least by the locals) "Capitale de Noël".

The easiest way how to get around is to get a bike. Depending on where you live, tram or walking is also possible.

Regarding the accommodation, the dormitories are usually more reserved for exchange students (Erasmus or other programmes from outside Europe). However, from my own experience, it is quite easy to find a nice room in a shared apartment. The price per room should not exceed 500 EUR / month. I was paying 450 EUR / month for a really nice room in an apartment located 5 minutes walking from the main square.

Highlights / Recommendations

- As the schedule and so the number of credits is fixed in the second year, count properly the credits, you have to pass during the first year. You will not be able to take additional courses in the second year, at the same time, you will not be able to take less.
- It might seem, that it is better to find your master thesis supervisor in Strasbourg as you will spend there the second year. However, as your thesis has to comply with IES requirements, it might be a wise decision to choose somebody in Prague.
- Even if you are not required to do an internship to finish your degrees, it might be a good idea to do so. As all the other students are required to do so, the lecturers / university might help you to find interesting opportunities.
- Try to find an apartment nearby the city centre or the university. It might be little bit more expensive, but it is much more convenient, the surrounding is nicer and it might pay off in the end (see the following bullet point).
- Go to get the rental assistance (CAF or Caisses d'Allocations Familiales). As you are a student without (or with a low) income, you will be eligible for that. It basically means that the French government will be sending you certain amount of money every month to help you to pay the rent. According to what I experienced, the higher the rent is, the more you will receive.

Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to drop me an email at t.tachovska@gmail.com, I will be more than happy to help! Tereza