

# Academic Bulletin for ESSCA, Aix-en-Provence, France 2025-26

## Introduction

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The Academic Bulletin is the CSU International Programs (IP) “catalog” and provides academic information about the program in Aix-en-Provence, France. This bulletin supersedes any previous bulletin(s) published.<sup>1</sup>

CSU IP participants must read this publication in conjunction with the *Academic Guide for CSU IP Participants* (also known as the “*Academic Guide*”). The *Academic Guide* contains academic policies which will be applied to all IP participants while abroad. Topics include CSU Registration, Enrollment Requirements, Minimum/Maximum Unit Load in a Semester, Attendance, Examinations, Assignment of Grades, Grading Symbols, Credit/No Credit Option, Course Withdrawals, and other policies. The *Academic Guide* also contains information on academic planning, how courses get credited to your degree, and the academic reporting process, including when to expect your academic report at the end of your time abroad.

To access the *Academic Guide*, go to our [website](#) and click the year which pertains to your study abroad period. For general information about the Aix-en-Provence Program, refer to the CSU IP website under “[Programs](#)”.

## The Academic Program

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CSU IP is affiliated with ESSCA School of Management in Aix-en-Provence, France. ESSCA is one of France’s prestigious “*grande école*” schools, with six campuses spread across France and four abroad (and counting). ESSCA hosts international students from all around the world at several of its campuses. In addition to attending our CSU IP orientation and activities, CSU IP students will be welcomed by the ESSCA Aix-en-Provence team and receive a thorough orientation outlining their academic program and the organization of the Aix campus.

CSU IP students studying at ESSCA will be enrolled alongside French third-year university students, as well as fellow international student. Students enroll in courses covering business fundamentals, as part of ESSCA’s Grande Ecole Program designed for students in their third year of undergraduate study. The program is designed to prepare students for the real world of business, provide a solid foundation in diverse aspects of management, and offer an internationally minded understanding of modern organizations.

In addition to business courses, CSU IP students at ESSCA will also take a French language course at the level best adapted to their existing knowledge of French (if any). Students’ French language proficiency will be assessed by ESSCA’s language teaching staff upon arrival, prior to the start of the semester. Apart from the French language courses, all courses are taught in English.

The CSU IP study abroad program at ESSCA is comprised of the required components below:

- One French language course (2 units)
- Six business courses. These can be either core or elective business courses.
- A minimum total of 14 units.

Due to limited course offerings each semester, this is a semester program only and not available for academic year-long study.

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<sup>1</sup> This bulletin has been updated to clarify guidance regarding the assignment of the CSU grade of WU (Withdrawal Unauthorized). This clarification does not constitute a change in policy.

Admitted students will submit documents to ESSCA to gain access to their online portal. This is where students enroll in classes (prior to arrival in France), locate their class schedules and important documents, and receive information about housing and other relevant topics.

For additional information on ESSCA, visit their website at <https://www.essca.eu/en/> and their Aix-en-Provence campus webpage at <https://www.essca.eu/en/10-campuses-around-the-world/aix-en-provence/>.

## **Academic Culture**

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The ESSCA Aix-en-Provence campus is a relatively small campus, leading to a tight-knit culture and a strong rapport amongst students and between the students and their professors. ESSCA values exchange and collaboration very highly, so students work together often on group projects and other collaborative assignments. Exchange students are welcomed and encouraged to share their unique perspectives in class and with their French peers. Since all courses involve group work, regular attendance in class is essential and attendance factors into students' final grades.

Unlike at many typical public French universities, the ESSCA Aix-en-Provence campus offers a high level of support for students, with both professors and administrative staff making themselves largely available to students and seeking to personalize the student experience for their exchange students in particular. CSU IP students studying at ESSCA will be fully integrated into the school's academic program and will benefit from all the academic, athletic, social, student-oriented, wellbeing-related, and research-related facilities and activities available at this lively and accessible campus.

Classes are scheduled at various times each week and are typically not scheduled on the same day and time each week. Students must therefore keep a close eye on the semester calendar and their changing course schedule. CSU IP students are expected to attend all classes to get the most of their academic experience and engage with their instructors and peers. Attendance and timeliness are monitored, and in-class participation and group work are counted toward final grades.

## **ESSCA Course Types**

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ESSCA offers French language courses, core business courses, and business elective courses. All courses are two units each. Business courses are taught in English and are upper division.

### **French Language Courses**

All CSU IP students are required to enroll in one French language course. French language courses range from beginner level (no prior knowledge of French) up to upper intermediate which requires four semesters of French language study or equivalent. Students are placed at the appropriate level by ESSCA staff upon arrival. French language courses are taught in small groups of international and exchange students. Beginner, elementary and intermediate French are lower division courses, while upper intermediate and advanced French courses are upper division courses. Refer to the course descriptions towards the end of this publication.

### **Core Courses**

CSU IP students join ESSCA business students in their 3rd year of undergraduate study. The core courses are designed to provide a solid foundation in business fundamentals and to develop students' international focus. See course descriptions below.

### **Elective Courses**

ESSCA elective courses offer an in-depth study of several specific topics related to business and marketing. Elective courses allow students to delve into subjects of contemporary and local importance.

## Grade and Unit Conversion

As is generally the case in France, grades at ESSCA are awarded on a scale out of 20 points. A final grade of 10/20 is a passing grade at ESSCA. This number is not a percentage like it might be in the US where 75% is considered a C grade. Rather it is more of a qualitative evaluation. Therefore, multiplying the number awarded by 5 to find the US equivalent will not work at all. For example, a grade of 12/20 would become 60% (a poor grade in the US) while it is a relatively good grade in France. Content, level, reputation of the university, and type of course can also factor in “translating” a French grade back to the US system.

Below is the grade conversion chart used to convert grades earned at ESSCA to the CSU grading system.

ESSCA Grade	CSU Grade
17.01 - 20.00	A
16.00 - 17.00	A-
15.00 - 15.99	B+
13.00 - 14.99	B
12.00 - 12.99	B-
11.00 - 11.99	C+
10.00 - 10.99	C
< 10.00	Fail
ABI ( <i>absence injustifiée</i> or unjustified absence)	WU*

Note that when converting French numeric grades to CSU grades, French grades are not rounded up. To receive the CSU grade, the student must receive the minimum numeric grade listed in the tables above. For example, if a student received 12.99, the student would receive a B- at the CSU. To receive a B, the student must receive at least a 13.00.

The CSU grade of WU (Withdrawal Unauthorized) may be given in some circumstances. Refer to the Academic Guide for additional grade information.

**\*Class attendance is mandatory, and absences are considered in final grades.** The attendance policy is very strict, and only a limited number of absences are permitted. All students are expected to be mindful of and adhere to attendance policies.

### Unit Conversion Guidelines

ESSCA assigns “ETCS” credits or points to their courses based on learning outcomes, instructional hours, and workload. ETCS is the acronym for the “European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System” which is widely used amongst institutions in European as the credit system.

Below are the guidelines, which are used to convert ESSCA credits to CSU semester units.

ESSCA Credits	CSU Semester Units
3 or 4 ECTS	2 units

For CSU students attending a quarter-based campus: To convert the value of CSU semester units into CSU quarter units, multiply the CSU semester units by 1.5.

## Program Structure

In addition to a one-unit seminar course on Contemporary France, ESSCA students must enroll in a combination of core and elective courses plus one French language course to total 14 units (seven courses in total).

Course scheduling at ESSCA is unique in that students' class schedules vary each week and students will not necessarily meet with each class every week of the semester. This allows ESSCA instructors and lecturers (many of whom also work in industry) to accommodate class time, but it also means that students will have more hours of class time in certain weeks than in others. Once you receive your weekly schedule, it is important to carefully note class meeting days and times and to keep in mind that class attendance is mandatory.

One of the benefits of attending ESSCA is joining a relatively small cohort of students from various backgrounds, all of whom take all their core classes together. Group work is encouraged and valued at ESSCA. Many class activities and assignments are carried out in groups, allowing students the opportunity to collaborate closely with one another.

In addition to a French language course, CSU IP participants select six business courses from the listing in the following table. Courses are worth two units each and are upper division.

The courses in the table will be offered in fall and spring of this academic year and are subject to change for subsequent academic years.

Course Code	Course Title	Course Type (Core or Elective)
DR05-001-G	Business Law in the EU	Core
MK05-001-G	Consumer and Market Studies*	Core
FI05-001-G	Corporate Finance*	Core
IB05-001-G	International Business*	Core
MS05-001-G	Operations Management*	Core
EC05-001-G	Workshops in Economics*	Core
RS05-101-G	Ethics and Artificial Intelligence	Elective
HU05-001-G	From Geopolitics to Geoeconomics	Elective
MK05-101-G	Wine Marketing	Elective
HU05-002-G	User Design Innovation	Elective

\*Since the core courses are third-year courses of the ESSCA undergraduate business degree program, most core courses have prerequisites. Course prerequisites are listed in the short descriptions in the following section. Students can also view syllabi that list prerequisites and prerequisite courses using ESSCA's web-based syllabi database at <https://pcee.azurewebsites.net/Cours/Syllabus>. For courses including prerequisite courses that are not hyperlinked in the section below or available in their web-based syllabi database, refer to the [ESSCA Course Catalogue](#).

CSU IP participants are advised to read course information carefully and not enroll in courses if they have not met prerequisites.

**Registration**

Once admitted to ESSCA, students will receive an invitation via email to login to ESSCA's portal and submit their online application. As part of the administrative application, students will be sent further information on course details and registration, accommodation, and arrival information.

- For the Fall 2025 semester, the application deadline is May 15.
- For the Spring 2026 semester, the application deadline is October 15.

Once students have submitted their online applications, ESSCA will issue official acceptance letters, sent via email, to be used for visa application purposes. Please note that students can add and drop courses during the first two weeks of the semester.

**Contact Information**

For questions about CSU IP academic policies or academic program requirements, email [ipacademics@calstate.edu](mailto:ipacademics@calstate.edu).

## Course Descriptions

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### French Language Courses

All CSU IP students must enroll in a two-unit French language course at ESSCA. Students are placed in courses according to their language level, which is verified upon arrival before the start of the semester. Language levels vary from beginner to advanced.

French as a second language (FLE) courses are offered to all international exchange students at ESSCA, to enable them to develop language skills in each of the areas of competency (oral, listening, and written comprehension and expression), thus helping them to take full advantage of their study experience in France and also to take back some important cultural and linguistic awareness to their home countries, something that will always be useful for their future personal and professional projects.

#### **[LG05-004-G] French Language: Beginner**

The Beginner French course covers basic structures enabling communication (question forms, present tenses, etc.) and assists students in developing vocabulary in familiar areas to facilitate communication and allow them to convey meaning at the most basic level. The course will discuss ethics and cultural and international awareness so that students can demonstrate language proficiency in professional situations. Students will engage in teacher-directed activities using the websites of the principal French newspapers and magazines and other online sources together with documents handed out in class. A1 level. No previous language study required. Lower division.

#### **[LG05-005-G] French Language: Elementary**

Elementary French involves a review and extension of the basic structures covered in A1, followed by a study of the four language areas at an elementary (A2) level: hours and times of day, invite/accept/refuse, colors, past tense, quantifiers, articles, shops and the town, asking for directions, simple future, etc. The course will discuss ethics and cultural and international awareness so that students can demonstrate language proficiency in professional situations. Students will engage in teacher-directed activities using the websites of the principal French newspapers and magazines and other online sources together with documents handed out in class. A2 level. Prerequisite: One semester of French or equivalent. Lower division.

#### **[LG05-006-G] French Language: Intermediate**

Intermediate French is an extension of the vocabulary and structures covered in Elementary French. The course will discuss ethics and cultural and international awareness so that students can demonstrate language proficiency in professional situations. Students will engage in teacher-directed activities using the websites of the principal French newspapers and magazines and other online sources together with documents handed out in class. B1 level. Prerequisites: Three semesters of French language or equivalent. Lower division.

#### **[LG05-007-G] French Language: Upper Intermediate**

Upper Intermediate French is an extension of the vocabulary and structures covered in Intermediate French. The course will discuss ethics and cultural and international awareness so that students can demonstrate language proficiency in professional situations. Students will engage in teacher-directed activities using the websites of the principal French newspapers and magazines and other online sources together with documents handed out in class. B1+/B2 level. Prerequisite: Four semesters of French language or equivalent. Upper division.

#### **[LG05-008-G] or [LG05-009-G] Advanced French – La France d’Aujourd’hui: Economie, Société, et Culture**

This course will cover contemporary political, cultural, and economic questions related to: the democracy and the sovereignty of the United Nations and the desire of people groups to reappropriate politics and public decision-making; the environment and sustainable development, in a context influenced by the climate crisis and demographic explosion; and the protection and promotion of cultural identities for a better social cohesion. Students will develop cultural and international awareness to demonstrate language proficiency in professional situations and in response to ethics

questions. Students will develop the capacity to analyze the economic, social, cultural, and political environment of a country or region. C1 level. Prerequisite: Five semesters of French language or equivalent. Upper division.

### **Business Core and Elective Courses**

In addition to the French language course, students enroll in six business courses which is a combination of core and elective courses from the list below. To view syllabi, go to ESSCA's web-based syllabi database at <https://pcee.azurewebsites.net/Cours/Syllabus>.

### **Business Core Courses**

CSU IP participants are advised to read course information carefully and not enroll in courses if they have not met prerequisites. For courses (including prerequisite courses) that are not hyperlinked in the section below or available on their web-based syllabi database, refer to the [ESSCA Course Catalogue](#).

#### **[DR05-001-G] Business Law in the EU (2)**

European integration has contributed to the creation of a new business, social, and political environment in Europe. The removal of regulatory barriers created business opportunities within the European Union (EU) and allowed for the emergence of global competitive advantages, while worldwide globalization increased global competition in Europe. However, today European integration must face new internal and external challenges and priorities that may affect its continued development. This course highlights the impact of European integration on business activities, particularly regarding Internal Market, Competition Policy, and Trade Policy. A special focus is placed on the withdrawal of the UK from the EU and its implications. The course equips students with knowledge and skills that enable them to understand the modern business world and to develop critical thinking. Previous knowledge of the fundamentals of law and of the EU institutional and legal framework is an advantage. Upper division.

#### **[MK05-001-G] Consumer and Market Studies (2)**

Understanding and studying consumer behavior is essential. This course aims to acquire the fundamentals of market study. It should enable students to master the concepts related to consumer psychology and to master techniques for the study of consumer behavior, in order to suggest recommendations on a given marketing issue. Prerequisites: [Fundamentals of Marketing](#), Mathematics, Decision-Making Statistics, [Psychology and Organizational Behavior](#), or equivalent courses. Upper division.

#### **[FI05-001-G] Corporate Finance (2)**

This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamental principles of corporate finance, including key concepts and techniques necessary for understanding a firm's investment decisions and equity valuation. The course will cover important topics such as the time value of money, risk-return relationship, cost of capital, main investment rules, dividend-discount model, multiples, and capital structure decisions. Additionally, the course will explore the impact of corporate social responsibility on a firm's finances. Students will be assessed based on their performance in group work, which will involve analyzing real firms, as well as a final exam that will test their understanding and application of the techniques covered in the course. By the end of this course, students will have gained a solid understanding of corporate finance principles and will be able to apply them in practical business scenarios. Prerequisites: [General Accounting](#), Fundamentals of Management Control, Financial Analysis, Financial Markets, or equivalent courses. Upper division.

#### **[IB05-001-G] International Business (2)**

The goal of this course is to provide students with theoretical and practical tools to understand how and why companies develop their business abroad. The course looks at the internationalization processes of the firms step by step, from the first decisions linked to internationalization to the establishment of a subsidiary in a foreign country. First, it introduces participants to the main international decisions companies should take in a global shifting world and provides them with a range of strategic tools for international business managers. Second, the course details different internationalization paths enabling companies to build up their international network. Then, it focuses

on the organization of firms abroad, illustrating relevant issues such as intercultural management and headquarters-subsidiary relations. During the course, apart from presenting theoretical elements and providing examples, participants work together to address real world situations and manage concrete issues in International Business. Prerequisites: [Fundamentals of Strategy](#), [Macroeconomics](#), or equivalent courses. Upper division.

**[MS05-001-G] Operations Management (2)**

The main goal of this course is to provide students with a sound conceptual understanding of Operations Management (OM), its strategic importance, and its links with other business functions. The course emphasizes OM applications by using theory in conjunction with problem-solving tools, so students may apply their acquired knowledge to real business problems and work better with people from other departments of the firm. Emphasis will be placed on the application of OM concepts to business situations. Particularly, we will focus on demand forecasting methods, inventory management systems, and their associated costs. We also highlight some concepts of quality management through business games. Prerequisites: Fundamentals of Data Analytics, Mathematical Analysis, or equivalent courses. Upper division.

**[EC-05-001-G] Workshops in Economics (2)**

The course introduces students to how economists mobilize instruments from their “toolbox,” including theories, models, statistical tools, and more, to assess a situation and then to address and offer solutions. The Workshop’s topics vary from one group to another and may vary from semester to semester. Each Workshop introduces the specificity of the economists’ perspective and toolbox. Students are also introduced to the nature of the global issue at stake and its economic aspects. At the end of the course, students are expected to be able to characterize the specificity of the economists’ look at the issue as well as the main instruments employed, to illustrate with actual experiences, and explain the strength and limits of economic solutions. A significant part of the course deals with how to make an economic argument and develop academic reading and writing skills applied to policy briefs. We apply tools from the economists’ toolbox to specific problems defined as global issues or as issues of sustainable development. To define global issues, we reference the United Nations’ definition: “issues that transcend national boundaries and cannot be resolved by any one country acting alone” (<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues>). Prerequisites: [Microeconomics for Managers](#), [Macroeconomics](#) Upper division.

**Business Elective Courses**

**[HU05-001-G] From Geopolitics to Geoeconomics (2)**

Influenced by Brexit, the US-China trade war, COVID-19, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, populist politics, technological competition, and other factors, economic instruments have been used to serve geopolitical interests, challenging the neoliberal order of global market integration and corporate development. ‘From Geopolitics to Geoeconomics’ highlights the macro-impact of geopolitics on financial markets and international business and introduces cases to explore coping strategies from the micro-perspective of enterprises. The course introduces the fundamental concepts, theories, and ideologies of geoeconomics. It explores traditional and new geopolitical and geoeconomic themes, including armed conflicts, human rights, great power competition, infrastructure, resources, and advanced technologies. This course also helps students to build knowledge and critical thinking of business-government relations by comparing the business and political systems and lobbying politics of the U.S., Europe, and South Korea, to identify and analyze geopolitical and geoeconomic factors. Upper division.

**[RS05-101-G] Ethics and Artificial Intelligence (2)**

The purpose of the Ethics & AI workshop is to raise students’ awareness as to how AI is shaping the world and its impact on different aspects of the economy, society, and more. The class will lead students to reflect on the role of ethics when it comes to the development, implementation and use of AI/digital tools and apps, as well as reflecting on their own added-value as human beings vs. AI and the importance of soft skills. Classes will focus on active learning and critical thinking. Upper division.

**[MK05-101-G] Wine Marketing (2)**

The objective of this course is twofold. First, it aims to give students a broad overview of the world wine market and of its economic, social, and regulatory patterns. Based on a description of the functions performed by the various members of the wine supply-chain – illuminating what makes it unique as compared to FMCGs – it then explains the need for an adapted marketing mix. Case studies and real-life examples serve as guidelines to explore wine consumers' behavior and to study the relevance of the marketing strategies and techniques wine producers and retailers use to brand, advertise, and sell wine. Upper division.

**[HU05-002-G] User Design Innovation (2)**

The general objective of this course is to bridge the gap between design and management issues. It allows students to practice, on a concrete case of innovation, the methodology of Design Thinking. The course is divided into two parts. First, the method is described. In the second part, it is applied to a project related to a concrete company. This phase will lead to group work. The project also allows for questioning, reflection and perspective-taking at different stages of the project. From the formulation of an idea to the implementation strategies, the project encourages students to reflect in order to be able to make choices and to argue for them, in a process of exchange, constructive criticism and self-justification. Upper division.