

The End of Studies Project (PFE)

You have to do an End of Studies Project and you will be starting to set out the broad outlines once you begin your third year of the Grande Ecole Programme.

The context of this project can be defined as follows :

- The PFE must represent a **considerable investment by you**. To complete the project you will need a **period of about 6 months**
- It should enable you to **strengthen your vocational focus**. By this we mean that both the subject and the methods should be defined so as to increase your skills for the professional path that you are developing (don't forget that a PFE that has been well designed and properly dealt with can also become a relevant aspect in the context of your future employment).
- It gives rise to **the writing of a dissertation** (50 to 60 pages - 25000 to 35000 words).
- **There is no viva for the PFE**, but you will have to justify the choice of your PFE and the conclusions that you have drawn from it in the report and the viva for your Personal and Professional Project.
- **The PFE must be done in sets of twos or threes** as this allows a group of diverse students to propose varying opinions and problem-solving methods when addressing the key question. The subject of the PFE must be coherent with the projects and study paths of the students involved in the pair or even the group of three. However, the team must be established from the very beginning of the project. It will not be possible for a new student to work on the project once the process is underway.

The most usual approach adopted for the PFE is **research work** : you define a key question (not too restrictive : there must be considerable investigation work and construction, not too ambitious : this is not a PhD thesis). With the help of your professor you identify the appropriate theoretical contexts to analyse the key question. The investigation work focuses on both a review of the relevant literature and a field study. The methodology for this work will be ratified with the professor.

If you are involved in the process of creating a company or an activity (and only if you are really involved in this type of process), you can use the time allocated to the PFE to complete the business plan, under the supervision of a professor who specialises in entrepreneurship.

Finally, in very specific cases that require the formal agreement of the company and the interest of a professor, working on the writing of a case study (case + teaching notes) may be envisaged if you have been confronted with an original and innovative pedagogic situation during a company assignment.

The theoretical part of your work must of course use the methodological knowledge acquired during the Literature Review exercise. How you handle the field work depends on the methodology agreed with the professor supervising your work and it can be very much improved by your observations and achievements during one of your internships.

As soon as the process starts, you need to find a professor to supervise you and who will validate the relevance of your project (degree of commitment required, coherence of the subject in terms of your project), who will establish with you the precise specifications for the work, the work schedule (with the finishing date plus the intermediate stages) and who will evaluate your work. You will find information on the fields of expertise of emlyon business school professors on the site : www.em-lyon.com ; « *Faculty and Research* » ; « *Faculty* ».

During your first request, you need to give the professor :

- the title of your subject,
- the underlying issue described in a few lines
- the methodology that you are thinking of following to direct your work and provide an answer to the key question,
- an outline of the plan.

Once you have obtained the agreement of a professor to supervise your work, you need to send the PFE contract straightaway to:

Delphine TROYANO – Office 1062 – Building A (troyano@em-lyon.com)

Be very careful with the planning and completion of the work on your PFE :

➤ First rule

A PFE cannot be started until a professor has validated the key question and has agreed to take on the supervision of the work. The PFE contract must be sent to the Programme as soon as this supervision agreement has been obtained.

Knowing that this work has to be spread out over a certain length of time and cannot be started without a professor giving his agreement to supervise it implies that the PFE contract will have to be signed :

- **on March** for presentation to the diploma jury at the end of September.
- **on July** for presentation to the diploma jury at the end of January.

Any PFE contract signed beyond **these two periods** may lead to a postponement of the awarding of the diploma to a jury session at a later date.

➤ Second rule

A PFE requires considerable investigation work and original production, that is to say a minimum of two months which is the equivalent of working full time spread over a period of 4 to 6 months.

It is therefore illusory to imagine that a PFE can be carried out at the same time as a timetable that is already full. Using evenings and weekends may enable you to finalise the work but certainly not do all the work involved. Thus starting a PFE when you are beginning an end of studies internship or even your first contract will put you in an extremely tense situation and will impose numerous postponements before the work can be finalised and presented to the diploma jury. Be careful and learn how to anticipate. You need to start a PFE no later than the very beginning of your last period of courses on the campus.

➤ Third fundamental rule

A PFE must be an original production, respecting to the letter the regulations pertaining to Intellectual Property.

- All the PFEs are subject to a plagiary detection tool.
- If plagiary is discovered, sanctions will be applied and can go as far as your exclusion from the programme and therefore your diploma not being awarded.

Failure to abide by the contract agreed with the supervisory professor (a change to the key question without discussion, a modification to the methodology without discussion, failure to meet the intermediate dates, failure to meet the finalization date without prior agreement) can result in the professor questioning his commitment to you.

You have to have validated your PFE (return of the mark to the Programme) :

- ***no later than the 31st of July*** if you wish to be presented to the diploma awarding jury at the end of September

otherwise :

- ***no later than the 31st of December*** for a presentation to the diploma jury at the end of January.

This means handing your report to your professor well in advance so that he can complete the evaluation form and hand it in to the Grande Ecole Programme within the time allowed.

Reminder: it is the professor supervising your End of Studies Project who also carries out the evaluation of your Personal and Professional Project viva.