

Dual Degree Report

School: Audencia Business School

Program: Master in Management (Grande École Program)

Major: Supply Chain and Purchasing Management & Marketing for Product Manager

Term: 202201-202212

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Audencia Business School is ranked among the top 10 business schools in France by various ranking institutions. The Grande Ecole Program is Audencia's flagship program and is a highly respected academic qualification in the French job market. This master program has different course design from other partner schools. The course selection process is simple: for the first and second semesters, students only need to choose an elective course and a major. Each major consists of seven fixed courses that will be automatically added to students' curriculum. Students are also free to take optional French and PE course each semester.

Upon arrival in France, there are a few important tasks to complete as soon as possible:

1. **Visa and Residence Registration:** Within three months of arrival, you must complete the online registration process with the French Immigration Bureau. This step is required to obtain legal residence in France. For further details, you can refer to the French Institute's website in Taiwan:
<https://www.taiwan.campusfrance.org/validerVLS-TS>.
2. **Telecommunications:** The four major telecom companies in France are Orange, SFR, Bouygues, and Free. After doing some research, I chose Free for its simple application process and lower rate. You can go directly to the Free store to use their machine, choosing a mobile number and paying 10 euros by card, and you will receive the SIM card on spot. The clerk can also assist if there is any question.

3. **CAF (Housing Subsidies):** The French government provides housing subsidies for students. Before renting an accommodation, you can check with the landlord if you can apply for this subsidy. If you are a CROUS tenant, you are eligible to apply. I advise the application can be done as early as possible, as the subsidy period begins from the month when the application is received by CAF. Required documents include a copy of passport, rental contract, student ID, French bank details, a birth certificate (certified by a French court-appointed translator), French visa, OFII attestation, and social security card. You can submit these documents online, while I think it might be more effective to submit the paper documents in person at the CAF office. I did the online application, but it was delayed for several months. I was notified to resubmit some missing documents until I went to the CAF office to track the status. It took almost 8 months for me to receive my subsidy. A classmate who submitted their documents in person received their subsidy within two months. On average, the waiting time is around 4~5 months. For CROUS tenants, the subsidy will not be transferred directly into the personal bank account; instead, it will be transferred to CROUS to offset the monthly rent.
4. **Health Insurance:** Students in France are eligible for free social health insurance (sécurité sociale). To apply for a social security number and health insurance card, you need to create an account on the Ameli website and provide several documents, including your school registration certificate, a copy of your passport, student visa, translated birth certificate, OFII certificate, and a French bank RIB number. Once completed, you should receive the official health insurance card in a short time.

Courses

The majors I took over the two semesters were “Supply Chain and Purchasing Management” and “Marketing for Product Managers.”

Supply Chain and Purchasing Management:

1. The class had around 60 students, mostly between ages of 23 and 27, with an equal mix of European and Chinese students. Due to the large class size, some

courses were held in two shifts.

2. This major covered fundamental knowledge of the entire supply chain, including production planning and forecasting, procurement, logistics, international trade practices, supply chain operations and strategies, and supply chain information systems (including SAP implementation). Throughout the semester, there were assignments, quizzes, or group reports for the mid-term, followed by written exams at the end of the semester.
3. Many professors placed a strong emphasis on sustainability or were conducting research on related topics. They would integrate sustainability into the courses. For example, the professor teaching Supply Chain Strategy had invited industry professionals to share their experiences in social procurement.

Marketing for Product Managers:

1. The fall semester lasted only 2.5 months, which was shorter than the spring semester, so the course schedule was quite intense. There were classes from Monday to Friday, and the first class of a day almost started at 8:15 AM. About 130 students chose this major, so we were divided into three groups of roughly 43 students each.
2. Most of the courses had two professors teaching consecutively. Each professor used their own materials and required group reports or individual assignments, which added up to a bit heavy workload. Since there were many professors and the course names were quite similar, many students initially got a bit confused. During feedback sessions, some students suggested that the course content could be structured in a more gradual manner.
3. Each semester, the school collaborates with a company to work on a marketing project. This semester, we partnered with SC Johnson to develop a product innovation, a go-to-market plan, and extended marketing strategies. Much of the coursework involved teamwork, and we often worked with the same group of classmates across various assignments.

Audencia offers a wide range of major options, with an entire semester dedicated

to courses in related fields. The overall curriculum covers a comprehensive range of topics, but I feel it was not very in-depth. It may be necessary to have additional learning outside of class if we would like to specialize in particular topics.

Life in Nantes

My first impression of Nantes was quite positive. The architecture is pretty, with its pleasant white tones, and there are plenty of green spaces and parks. Even the city center feels neither crowded nor rushed. As the locals say, it's a very livable city.

Food:

There is a CROUS cafeteria near the campus, where I often had lunch on weekdays. For the first meal at CROUS, you would need to go to the service counter to apply for an IZLY card, either in person or online, and add funds to it. Each meal like below pictures, costing around 3 euros, would deduct the amount from the card.



Occasionally, I would also eat out with friends in the city center. My recommended restaurants are Le Loup (Breton crepes and galettes), Village D'Asie, Les Pâtes Express, and La Grande Muraille (Asian food).

Accommodation:

I was lucky to rent a room of CROUS. The studio was nice, with a small kitchenette and a separate shower enclosure. My dormitory, La Haute Forêt, is conveniently located between the school and the city center, making transportation very easy. However, the dormitory doesn't have an administrative office on-site. When I encountered issues and needed support, I had to go to the office in another building, which was a few tram stops away. It was inconvenient because I couldn't get timely help from the administrator. I suggest to choose the dormitory with the administrative office.

Entertainment:

1. **Château des Ducs de Bretagne:** This is the signature tourist spot in Nantes. Many events are held here, such as movie nights, freshman orientation concerts, and light shows. Visitors under 26 can also enjoy free access to the exhibitions at the castle on the first Sunday of every month.
2. **John McByrne & Co:** This bar hosts karaoke every Thursday night, which made it a popular spot for many of my classmates after class. We would go for drinks and have fun singing songs together.
3. **Warehouse:** it is a popular nightclub in Nantes, though the transportation there isn't very convenient. I attended an event organized by Audencia, where the school booked the venue and invited students to join. I was impressed by that night—the music was perfect for dancing, and the crowd were all students for that event, so I felt the atmosphere safer. It's worth experiencing once.
4. **Secondhand Apparel Shops:** I occasionally visited secondhand stores, where sometimes I could find good clothes at great prices. There are plenty of secondhand shops in the city center, so if you're interested, you can check them out.

Travel

There is a beautiful beach called La Baule, where is just an hour train ride from Nantes. I highly recommend visiting when the weather is warm. Additionally, there are often cheap flights from Nantes to London, as well as to various cities in Spain and Portugal.

Conclusion

Living in France without speaking French can sometimes be a bit tricky, as most administrative officers outside of school still primarily use French. However, most people I met were quite friendly. Despite of the language barrier, I managed to live peacefully for a year with Google Translator. I've also developed more patience overtime because of the frequent strikes on weekends in Nantes. Buses or trams in

the city center were often affected by strikes and temporarily suspended, so people would have to walk to the farer stations. The administrative efficiency was also slower than in Taiwan, with processing time commonly exceeding a month. If things take longer than expected, I would proactively follow up with the administrative officer to make sure nothing gets missed. Additionally, Europeans place great importance on vacations. On Sundays and public holidays, such as Christmas and New Year's Day, most stores are closed.

At school, I had many opportunities to work with French classmates on group projects, and I felt the teamwork vibe in France is different from Taiwan. In Taiwan, many classmates might prioritize group assignments over personal matters, avoiding schedule delay to cause inconvenience to teammates. However, French students value their personal time and often complete their part of the project when they feel most energetic (for example, at midnight). They may prioritize their personal matters, and inform teammates of the time when they will be available to do their part of group work. The other members usually could also respect this reason. Experiencing the teamwork vibe in France is valuable for me. The curriculum design of Audencia allowed us to learn alongside a group of classmates for the whole semester, more easily fostering a deeper friendship. If you like green space and a slower pace of life, I think Nantes is a good city choice as well.



