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HEC Paris's Master in Management reinvents itself to tackle the ecological transition, civic engagement and the major challenges facing society

HEC Paris is rolling out its new Master in Management curriculum on the ecological and social transition. The program reflects the business school's awareness of its responsibilities towards the challenges facing today's world and its ambition to contribute to a more inclusive, sustainable planet that is respectful of life. The curriculum will come on stream in September 2023.

HEC Paris has embarked on a process of change driven by its values of assuming responsibility and making a positive impact on the economic world and society globally. The objective is to address the major challenges of our time from global warming to societal transformation and the latest technological developments. HEC Paris is entering a new phase with a **reworked Master in Management program** based on the **ecological, social and technological transition**, focusing its teaching and research firmly on the living world.

These profound changes are designed to train the leaders of tomorrow, inspiring men and women equipped with the skills to build a world which has a purpose for them and their peers.

To achieve this goal, the distinctive training program delivered at HEC Paris will give students the tools to:

1. Fully understand the vital issues facing society and organizations, such as planetary boundaries, societal change, geopolitical conflict and AI – all based on a systemic approach that is receptive to every form of knowledge.
2. Gain multi-disciplinary expertise for an in-depth appreciation of how organizations and society (and their stakeholders) function based on management and the behavioral, social and data sciences.
3. Look beyond critical methodology to address the challenges of our age grounded in an entrepreneurial, responsible approach, delivering solutions and harnessing the various actors in good faith.

HEC Paris is drawing on the excellence and great diversity of its research and students to claim its rightful place as a “school specializing in management, social sciences and data”, with the ecological transition and civic engagement at the heart of its three pillars: Think, Teach, Act. This development unites all HEC’s researchers in our nine departments and three centers and institutes (Society & Organizations, Hi! PARIS and the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Center) together with our community of internationally renowned experts and practitioners alongside our student and alumni communities.

The Master in Management program is structured as follows:

1. The Pre Master year is devoted to an open approach to social science and different strands of knowledge with a critical examination of life on the ground delivered via a course on engagement.
2. The Master’s Cycle is centered on management and developing a solution-oriented mindset via a course on entrepreneurship.

Pre Master year: engaging and tackling the realities of the climate, society and business

All students (around 400) will take the engagement course in the first year, which is designed to train the mature leaders of the future. It will encourage students to think about their commitment to preserving ecosystems and social cohesion, the purpose of their work and the role and responsibility of organizations.

Following an intellectually demanding preparatory class focusing mainly on academic knowledge, it is essential to give students an experiential training in openness, and community and corporate engagement.

The engagement pathway includes three new compulsory courses that are a prerequisite for obtaining the qualification: the **purpose and sustainability seminar**, **civic engagement** and a **hands-on internship**.

The pathway is launched with a seminar at the start of the academic year on **purpose and sustainability**, which starts in Chamonix. Here students take part in a core group experience where they focus physically, intellectually and emotionally on ecological, social and economic issues and the sense of purpose. Next come conferences on three key issues facing human society today: the systemic approach, international migration and water. This is followed by a major course on planetary issues led by **François Gemenne**, an expert in climate governance and **lead author for the IPCC, who will join HEC Paris’s ranks in September 2023**.

Just as teaching on ecological issues is becoming increasingly widespread in business schools and universities, the 30-hour course on planetary boundaries aspires to move beyond an acculturation approach: its goal is to offer a transformative vision of the economy and society as a whole. Accordingly, it concentrates on solutions and their systemic dimension (biodiversity, society, economy, law, finance, supply chains, etc.). It aims to go beyond the mere facts (which are now widely shared) and equip students with the knowledge and tools to help companies and the different actors transform themselves in order to respect the planet and the living world.

The civic engagement pathway consists of at least 30 hours of voluntary work in a community service organization. Our students take part in field initiatives and support the organization's beneficiaries. It is imperative that the assignment involves students in concrete initiatives on

the ground, such as street work, food distribution, environmental clean-ups or even help with homework. The goal is to give students a more mature understanding of social division and diversity, and to help them discover different causes and types of engagement.

The hands-on corporate internship is an assignment, free of managerial responsibility, that is more concerned with task implementation. Students are immersed in a team for three weeks in a company operating in one of the following sectors: industry, agriculture, mass markets, services or personal assistance. Here they act in a subordinate role: materials handler, storekeeper, cashier, order picker, kitchen assistant, maintenance worker, farm hand, etc. The objective of the internship is to enable students to discover the reality of a company in all its aspects, and to experiment with various work mechanics that challenge the purpose. The Pre Master year is also intended to be much more general and multi-disciplinary with classes in law, economics, accounting and data analysis together with a minimum of one compulsory elective course on the future of democracies, geopolitics, the AI revolution or human behaviors and psychology. Last but not least, students are encouraged to continue to broaden their curriculum by choosing further study as part of a university degree (philosophy, sociology, economics, math, etc.) or on a single-semester international exchange at one of the world's top universities (where they are free to choose courses). While Pre Master year is devoted to openness to other disciplines and tackling realities on the ground, the Master's in Management cycle begins in the second year (800 students) with a course on management science, a data science track, substantive work on managerial skills (team management, negotiation, leadership, etc.), entrepreneurship and personalization via a choice of courses from a catalog of over 100 electives organized as minors (Climate, AI and Technology, Entrepreneurship, Political Law and Society, Culture, and so forth). The purpose of this Master's cycle is to put students in a position where they can identify and deliver solutions to the key challenges that lie ahead. The cycle may include a gap year consisting of internships or dual degree courses with engineering schools in France such as École Polytechnique. It finishes with the M2 year (1,200 students) and in-depth study with over 20 majors on the HEC campus and French or international dual degrees (including Yale, MIT, Tsinghua, National University of Singapore and Sciences Po).

Master's cycle: embedding the living world into teaching and research

The profound changes in HEC Paris's educational methods – fed by research and experiences in the field – are directed towards responding to the crisis that is the destruction of our ecosystems, which spawns social tensions.

HEC Paris has focused on ESG (environmental, social and governance) issues for the past 15 years with the creation of the Society & Organizations Institute. The great innovation now is to topple the research and teaching paradigms to ensure that these subjects are directly included in basic management courses.

“If we are serious about analyzing and tackling the evolution of ecosystems, we need to fundamentally rethink the paradigms in terms of accounting, supply chains, finance, economics, marketing and strategy rather than presenting the issues as a marginal problem”, says Yann Algan, Associate Dean of Pre-Experience Programs at HEC Paris.

One of the defining characteristics of HEC is its worldwide research reputation, which goes some way to explaining – in tandem with the excellence of its students – why it is ranked as Europe's number-one business school (*Financial Times* 2022). Our multi-disciplinary research helps students understand, anticipate and get to grips with ESG factors, with **43% of**

our tenured faculty conducting research and publishing specifically in this area. Every facet of ESG will be systematically integrated into the core compulsory courses. **The number of hours devoted exclusively to ESG themes in the compulsory courses in the first and second years of the Master in Management program will be doubled from the start of the new academic year, i.e. to more than 20% of the total time. The elective courses on ESG issues will be equivalent to 35% of the total portfolio of the electives.** In addition, there will be field experiences ranging from a half-day to one month (such as academies, challenges and boot camps); these will include the various transition stakeholders throughout the year, with the living world as the mainstay of student learning.

Master's Cycle: providing solutions to the challenges of our time with an entrepreneurial and responsible mindset

From the living world... to machines: In a systemic approach, the spotlight shifts from the living world... to virtual technology and the use of data. This means it is also important to train all our students in data science. Everyone takes a compulsory course where they not only learn the mechanics of code and machine learning but also the principles of ethics and regulation of algorithms in conjunction with our Hi! PARIS research center in particular.

"One of the enormous strengths of our students is that they combine knowledge in management and social science with a very good grasp of math and data science. This means they can speak any language as well as understand and tackle the major technological breakthroughs responsibly and ethically rather than merely submitting to them", explains Yann Algan, Associate Dean of Pre-experience Programs.

Entrepreneurship with a powerful impact on society: HEC Paris is also setting up a mandatory new course: Major Challenges and the Entrepreneurial Mindset, which is backed by the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Center and its experience as France's first SSE Accelerator. Students will be set to work on problems raised by companies or administrations with a powerful impact on society (disability, harassment, the elderly, and so forth). The course is intended to train students to identify the right problems and provide practical answers by harnessing the entire entrepreneurship, innovation and impact toolkit.

The living and human worlds: New scenario workshops on negotiating, teamwork and crisis management round off this vital training for future leaders armed with the ability to move groups forward. And the subjects related to the values that underpin the smooth running of these groups are also incorporated: human rights and peace, diversity and inclusion, business ethics, and so forth.

"This is in sync with another essential part of the overhaul of our curriculum and a hallmark of HEC: training informed managers who don't just know how to ask the right questions, but who can also deliver solutions that have a positive impact on organizations and citizens", concludes Yann Algan.

HEC's Grande Ecole Master in Management program currently count 2,000 students, 40% of whom are international. Every year, 400 after-prep students and 450 parallel admission students join the school. They come from a variety of backgrounds: one-third from engineering schools, one-third from international business schools, and the remaining third from universities and social science schools.

About HEC Paris

Founded in 1881, HEC Paris is a leading European Business School. Its ambition is to positively impact both businesses and society thanks to its three-pronged approach “**Think, Teach, Act**” and thus to contribute to a more inclusive, sustainable and prosperous world.

With 160 research professors from all around the world producing and teaching unique knowledge to **more than 4,500 students from 135 different countries**, the HEC Paris campus serves as a real laboratory for innovation and exchange which is open to the world’s diversity and challenges.

Inspired by its 5 core values -**Excellence, Curiosity, Entrepreneurial spirit, Diversity and Responsibility**- HEC Paris offers a complete range of training courses for the leaders of tomorrow: the Pre-Experience Program, specialized masters, MSc, the Summer School, the MBA, the Executive MBA, the TRIUM Global Executive MBA, the PhD, as well as a wide variety of programs targeted to leaders and managers.

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