Law at the service of managers at ESSEC

I.1. The law is an essential component in the training of future managers

The law is a crucial element of business life. It is thus essential that future managers and professionals, who lead or advise companies, acquire a basic legal culture and develop an understanding of legal concepts, risks and opportunities.

The students of the ESSEC Grande École program receive an introductory legal education in the Pre-Master cycle. They also have to choose at least one complementary law course attuned to their career plans. A future banker, for example, will benefit from a course in banking and securities law. A future executive working in the distribution sector might want to choose a course in competition law. A course such as ‘Law and Entrepreneurship’ is designed to meet especially the expectations of budding entrepreneurs. An overview enables students to identify those courses that are most relevant to their professional career preferences.

Students from other ESSEC programs (undergraduate Global BBA, MS in Strategy, Management and International Business, Global MBA, PhD program, etc.) also receive legal training tailored to the precise purpose of each of these programs.

Students in the Specialized Master program ‘International Business Law and Management’ (MS DAIM) receive an intensive, high-level, applied legal training, complementing the initial legal education they have received in French or foreign universities.

An example of the Department’s innovative approach is reflected in courses that allow students to map fundamental principles and key questions structuring a topic such as financial regulation, or a domain, such as legal aspects of entrepreneurship.
The ESSEC Law Department also offers classes aimed at developing soft skills, such as the course ‘How to Give a Good Speech’ that provides useful tools to future litigators, public officials, or economic leaders—in short, people, who, during their professional career, will have to speak in public and will have to convince others through their spoken words. The course on lobbying at the European and national levels includes issues raised by E-lobbying (e.g. direct democracy, public opinion and protection of companies’ intangible assets) and gives students the theoretical and practical skills necessary to work in these areas.

I.2. The law is part of many specialized continuing education programs

In modern economic life, the law permeates all stages of design, production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. Ignorance of the law can become expensive—either directly (e.g. through the liability to pay damages, criminal sanctions) or indirectly (e.g. through the failure to seize business opportunities, competitive disadvantages in innovative markets and in incomplete regulation). The ability to capitalize on the opportunities represented by law and taxation allows businesses to secure and organize their activities efficiently. Business entities directed by managers who understand the legal world have a competitive advantage and will take the lead in the economic arena. This is the reason why many continuing training programs for professionals offered by ESSEC Executive Education include legal education.

All in all, the targeted legal education offered at ESSEC aims to treat the law and its practice as rewarding opportunity—not as a constraint imposed on business entities—and as a key to understand business life. This active approach is reflected in the teaching method, the curriculum of the students, and the nature of legal research carried out at the Department.

II. The law for lawyers—ESSEC-Law

II.1. The double qualification of ESSEC-Law

ESSEC allows students to acquire a dual qualification: law and management/economics. Today, this dual training is particularly sought after by law firms and companies. The dual qualification may be combined with a sectoral specialization offered by courses in finance, history of art (School of Louvre), media, etc.
II.2. The profiles of those studying at ESSEC-Law

Being an ‘ESSEC-Law’ means to be part of one of the three sub-families that form and animate the tribu droit of ESSEC:

Law course: nearly a quarter of the students offered a place at the School apply to this particularly selective course. In November of each year, approximately 60 students are selected on the basis of their academic performance and motivation. They start their courses in January (Comprehensive Introduction to Law). By that time, the majority of them are in their first year of the MSc program, but some MSc students choose ESSEC-Law only in their second year.

About 30 students receive a BA in law degree from Cergy-Pontoise University in the year following their admission to ESSEC-Law—generally with excellent grades (it is not exceptional for the student graduating first in his/her class to be an ‘ESSEC-Law’ student).

Each year, fifteen ‘ESSEC-Law’ students study for an M2 at the University Paris II Panthéon-Assas or at one of our other partner universities (Nanterre, Cergy, Sceaux, Aix-Marseille, etc.). Around the same number of students choose to take M1 courses by correspondence during periods of training or study abroad. The law curriculum and our partnerships with universities are a privileged route to acquiring a true dual expertise crowned by a double degree.

Law graduates may enter ESSEC through the admission process that takes place at a later stage in their university careers: each year, around twenty academically outstanding law graduates are accepted in the Grande École program. The very best students from our partner universities have privileged access to this program. The students who prepare a legal career hold an M2 before entering ESSEC. Each year, a small number of law students turn to management, finance or consulting.

Law graduates may also be admitted to the MS DAIM: around fifty lawyers, usually with some professional experience (particularly young attorneys, and/or those who hold Master of laws degrees) are admitted to the one-year MS DAIM program.
II.3. The ESSEC-law community

Each year, nearly seventy ESSEC-law students graduate from the School. They join the vibrant community of ESSEC lawyers from many different generations. On campus, the tribu droit regularly organizes meetings allowing students to interact with professionals—generally ESSEC alumni who are happy to share their experiences with the new generation of ESSEC lawyers. A dedicated annual job fair takes place in December.

The Club ESSEC Law Alumni also is a dynamic network. Their meetings are open to the current ESSEC-law students.

Each year the Law Department sends a team of ESSEC law students, coached by White & Case, to the Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot in Vienna.

III. The law professors

The team of law professors at ESSEC consists of faculty who have received a dual education in French law schools and in some of the very best Grandes Écoles (Sciences Po, ENS, ESSEC) as well as in some world class foreign universities (Columbia, Oxford, Cambridge). They maintain close ties with legal practice (e.g. law firms, lobbying, consulting). Their backgrounds and profiles complement each other which allows them to cover—as a team—the main fields of business law (civil law, comparative law, European law, economic, commercial and financial law, dispute resolution—particularly mediation and commercial arbitration).

- Viviane de Beaufort;
- Hugues Bouthinon-Dumas;
- Andreas von Goldbeck;
- Geneviève Helleringer;
- Alexandra Gattino-Policott, Director of the MS DAIM program, is an Adjunct Professor.

The teaching staff giving law courses at ESSEC also includes professors and university lecturers (particularly from our partner universities). They provide part of the initial legal training. Legal practitioners (e.g. lawyers, legal officers, judges), some of them ESSEC graduates, provide students with a training which is more focused on legal practice. This complements nicely the education given by the research law faculty.