

## Start of the 2020 academic year From September, EM Normandie Business School will be hosting students using its new 'phygital' learning system

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EM Normandie is currently implementing procedures for the start of the academic year, in accordance with the latest health guidelines issued by the French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur de la Recherche et de l'Innovation - MESRI). The Business School is making every effort to ensure the safety of its community, guarantee optimal learning conditions and provide a rich and formative learning experience with processes which include scheduled arrival of students, multimodal teaching, specific processes for international students and training of teaching staff.

Elian Pilvin, Dean of EM Normandie, says: "The start of every academic year is a new challenge, and will be all the more so in 2020 due to the health crisis. At EM Normandie, the academic year will begin on the dates originally planned, and we see the circumstances as an opportunity to participate in the writing of a new chapter for higher education. A new value proposition now needs to be defined for future generations. The 'phygital' approach needs to be developed to appeal to students in the short term, including international students."

### Multimodal and inclusive teaching

In order to comply with physical distancing measures imposed in learning spaces, EM Normandie offers multimodal teaching whereby students can attend the same class simultaneously, whether they are face-to-face or connected remotely. The teacher is physically present in the classroom. To implement this 'Simultaneous Delivery' model, the school has invested nearly €600,000 and transformed more than 100 training rooms on its five campuses into Flex Rooms.

### Flex Rooms for better collaboration and interaction

Flex Rooms are equipped with the latest educational technology, and adapted to all possible scenarios including face-to-face, remote or simultaneous. They promote discussion and interaction between students and teachers and links within classes, providing students with the full learning experience.

Flex Rooms ensure that students remain engaged using a variety of teaching approaches, and immersing them in active and experience-based activities which promote knowledge acquisition and skills development.

For example, the teacher may schedule a session of one hour 15 minutes with 10 minutes of QCM assessment, 30 minutes of work on new concepts with a presentation and/or screen sharing, and 35 minutes of individual exercises and group corrections on Zoom. A three-hour session can be enhanced with group work (case study, peer review, business game etc.) or student feedback reports.

### Support for teaching staff and external stakeholders

As coordinating the start of the 2020 academic year is not only a technical but above all a human challenge, EM Normandie is deploying a key training plan for all of its teachers, researchers and external stakeholders, who comprise a community of around 1000 employees.

They are each being provided with eight sessions of 90 minutes to master the digital tools available to them (Flex Room and SmartEcole® Campus). Sessions include: "Using Zoom hosting features", "Creating a virtual classroom session with

mediation and interaction", "Using a Flex Room in Simultaneous Delivery mode", "Ten key steps for preparing your SmartEcole® Campus lesson", "Preparing, correcting and marking continuous and end-of-semester assessments on SmartEcole®", "Using a graphics tablet to work with a digital whiteboard", "Using a virtual classroom hosting tool in Simultaneous mode" and "Managing your image and speech in a web conferencing session". Staff also have access to a Flex training area so that they can work individually on each session's content, share experiences through a discussion forum and exchange ideas at weekly Afterworks sessions.

Since June, 14 internal and external trainers have been leading this ambitious long-term training plan to ensure that all teaching staff are up and running at the start of academic year.

## Processes for welcoming new students

On the official start date of 3 September 2020, new students will be greeted on the Caen, Le Havre and Paris in waves of 100 every hour throughout the morning. In groups of 10, they will then be given a tour of the different areas including the breakfast reception, administrative area and classrooms. They will watch videos on the School's various services, find out about the School's digital tools (Intranet, Moodle and Zoom) and be introduced to the Welcome Week programme (which has been adjusted this year to comply with health rules).

The start of the Oxford academic year on 14 September 2020 will be based on the same process. As the 14-day quarantine for French arrivals in Ireland has not yet been lifted, the return to the Dublin campus will be organised at a later date.

EM Normandie has also put in place a strict system to limit the risk of a resurgence of the epidemic. The system includes mandatory wearing of a face covering compliant with French safety standards for students and staff in spaces where the physical distancing rules cannot be observed, availability of hand sanitiser stations, markings on the ground and one-way systems, displaying safety guidance in multiple languages and daily disinfection of work and communal areas.

## Specific measures for international students and programmes

The School is aware of the constraints imposed on international students, and is implementing various measures to meet their needs on a case-by-case basis. International students may join the School up to 15 October, and before that they will be able to follow lessons remotely, simultaneously or in their own time depending on the time difference, in the same way as students already on site. It is also possible that the start date for the Master's in Management (Grande Ecole Programme) and some MS or MSc courses may be deferred to January 2021.

EM Normandie has cancelled student travel to partner universities in semester one.

## About EM Normandie Business School

EM Normandie was founded in 1871 and was one of the first major French business schools. It has now built an international reputation, and has both EQUIS and AACSB accreditation. The School has five campuses (Caen, Le Havre, Paris, Oxford and Dublin), and 4,500 students and professionals are currently enrolled on the School's initial and continuous qualifying training courses. Its 18,500 Alumni Association members are based all over the world. EM Normandie trains both future managers and socially responsible leaders who will be equipped to drive change in a multicultural environment. It also supports company employees and executives throughout their careers. [www.em-normandie.com](http://www.em-normandie.com) | Twitter: @EMNormandie

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