Interview: Frédéric Jallat – Academic Director, Specialised Master's in Biopharmaceutical Management, ESCP Europe, France



19.04.2016

Tags: Pharma, Pharmaceuticals, Frederic Jallat, ESCP, ESCP Europe, Education, Master, Biopharma, Executive, Exclusive, Management, Free, Interview, Insight, France

The dynamic Director of ESCP Europe's Master in Biopharmaceutical Management talks about being the reference higher education institution for programs catering to the biopharma sector, plans for more international visibility, and some notable alumni of the university's executive level curriculum.

ESCP Europe appears to have a special connection to the biopharmaceutical industry, as evidenced by the niche executive education programs offered. Could you please provide an introduction of some of the programs you offer?

At ESCP Europe, we have various different programs in our Executive Education curriculum dedicated to the healthcare and life sciences industry. These programs range across various disciplines, providing students with a thorough understanding of the scope of strategy, business, marketing & finance and its relation to the industry.

Our programs have evolved over the years, catering to more specific niche areas. Whereas we used to offer programs specifically related to the medical and pharmaceutical industries, we have now expanded to include specific specializations and today have four fields of expertise: Pharmaceuticals, BioTechs, Medical Devices, and Patient Data Analysis. We offer two major

specialized Master's; the first one that I handle called *Biopharmaceutical Management* dedicated to students in their mid-twenties at the onset of their careers; and the second one targeted towards mid-career professionals, from 30 to 50 years in age: the Executive Master's in *Healthcare Management*, headed by Professor Ms. Carole Bonnier. This part-time Master's is specialized for professionals in leading hospitals in France and has an interesting partnership with SPH Conseil -a subsidiary of the Fédération Hospitalière de France (French Hospital Federation) dedicated to consulting, training and promotion. This federation has a leading role in the French healthcare system by representing the interests of almost all the public healthcare facilities to the ministry of health and other institutions.

We apply different philosophies to our Master's programs to best cater to the needs of our prospective students. These different program offerings are complimentary, and cover the full spectrum of the healthcare industry. For our programs, ESCP Europe maintains two main research centers, one of which is devoted to the biopharma sector, called the Institute for Research & Health Education (Education, Recherche et Santé – ersinnovation.com). The Master's in Biopharmaceutical Management is primarily for students who have a full background in Life Sciences, but need some concrete business expertise and education. There is an increasing focus among potential employers in the industry on hiring applicants with a fundamental understanding of marketing, corporate strategy, market access, digital communication, finance, etc. Our programs are fully comprehensive, designed to equip our graduates to work in multiple channels of the field, not only as product managers in big pharmaceutical companies, but also for external service providers such as special advertising agencies, venture capital, or consulting companies.

Do you believe that your close partnerships with different companies in consulting and venture capital are a competitive advantage for the school?

One of our strengths is our strong and extended network throughout the industry. We encourage our students to have a practical understanding of the field, and to foster this understanding, a component of our Master's in Pharmaceutical Management and Biotechnology includes internship opportunities at one of the several companies with which we have established special relations.

Further emphasizing the intimate correlation of our programs with industry professionals, 60 percent of our program is taught by specialists or practitioners of the industry, as opposed to a purely academic faculty member. These privileged relationships with CEOs and influencers make our program unique, and we are proud to have been the first program in France to develop such a curriculum. Our program at ESCP Europe has been around for 28 years already.

ESCP is a very European school with branches in Berlin, Madrid, Turin, Warsaw, and London. Is the Master's in BioPharmaceutical Management primarily a French program?

Up until present, this program was exclusively offered at ESCP's campus in Paris. We are excited to share, however, that we are planning to extend the reach of our program at the beginning of next year, when we will be offering the curriculum in both London, and in Paris. The nature of the six months program will entail one month of classes in London, and the remaining five months in Paris. For the initial launch of the program, there is still only a light presence in the UK, but the advantage is the proximity to large UK pharmaceutical companies such as GSK and AstraZeneca. The pharmaceutical ecosystem in London will provide unique learning opportunities for our students. To further stress the exclusivity of our program, even in North America there are no programs dedicated to biopharma but rather programs predominantly related to healthcare economics or public policy as a whole. This emphasizes the special bridge of science, technology, and management that we are able to establish through our programs at ESCP Europe.

Are the programs currently bilingual or only in French?

Currently the courses are bilingual. However, we plan to convert to an English only format in order to facilitate the internationalization of our students. Currently, only 20 percent of our student body are international students, although many come from French-speaking countries, such as Lebanon, Algeria, and Morocco. Another portion of our international student body is from European countries such as Spain, Belgium and Italy. Therefore, we plan to do plenty of promotional efforts in the near future to continue to expand the international presence of our program.

We are a top-ranked university in the biopharmaceutical field and have become the reference in this industry, yet what is important to note is that we are also becoming increasingly popular among engineering schools and life sciences doctoral programs. As we are looking more towards being known in the medical field, we have made efforts to encourage further integration between the pharmaceutical industry and medical practitioners in recent years.

What do you believe is the main value that this degree offers its prospective graduates?

Firstly, given that our programs are very renowned, our potential candidates not only see this as an accelerator for their careers, but as a requirement for career advancement. Some potential employers require a diploma from a specialized degree with no negotiation.

Secondly, we have built a strong network of professionals cultivated through 28 years of existence, which enables our students to have privileged relationships with these influencers. Some notable

alumni include Thierry Poiraud, European General Manager of Menarini, Didier Dargent, President of Servier China, and Antoine Bernasconi, General Manager of Orphan Europe. Our alumni are in very respectable positions in their respective companies and many of them sit on the Board of Directors of global biopharma players. We also have people who head major venture capital pharma companies. Delphine Dubois, the President of Omnicom Healthcare Group in New York, is another proud alumni and is now currently teaching Digital Marketing. As a prime example of our alumni maintaining their connections to our program, Ms. Dubois and Mr. Poiraud also hire some of our students for internship programs, which is a testament to the privilege that we can provide for our students given these corporate relationships.

What would you like to share as a final promotion of your program offerings at ESCP?

We are a very specific program, exclusively devoted to the BioPharma industry. This is unique both in the European and North American context. We fully integrate different streams that are necessary for this industry, for which we have built both a network and an expertise.

Right now, we have a focus on promoting our programs internationally. Regarding our patient process of offering more English-language curriculum in our program, it is not necessarily because we do not have a large international student body. Historically, many of the French pharmacists, MDs, PhDs in life sciences and biotech engineers that have enrolled in our programs, and some that have taught classes in our program, have not spoken English. However, with globalization and European-wide programs such as ERASMUS gaining increasing popularity, students are encouraged to interact in a multilingual setting. Therefore, most students are now dealing with an environment where English is a core language, which will therefore facilitate the transition to more English only programs. Adding the London location will bring several advantages to us, not only for the language, but also the exposure amongst the venture capital and consulting companies that work closely with large biopharmaceutical companies.

In brief, there are several attributes that make our Executive Education programs at ESCP special. First and foremost, our programs are specific, and exclusively devoted programs in the industry. We have a global focus, and we offer a program that is unique not only in Europe, but in North America as well, as the United States currently lacks any special program correlating business and biopharma. With 28 years of existence, we have had much experience perfecting our program, and allowing for it to mature and adapting to student needs over the years. Throughout this time, we have proudly established a positive reputation for our program and our institution, and we look forward to educating the best and brightest of the next generation leading the healthcare and life sciences industry.

Click here to read more articles and interviews from France, and to download the latest free pharma report on the country.

See more interviews