



The ECNU-ENS Joint Graduate School: Overview

East China Normal University (ECNU) was established in 1951 and was among the 16 Key Universities initially recognized by the Ministry of Education in 1959. Today, ECNU is listed in China's "Project 985" and "Project 211" as a research-oriented comprehensive university.

The ENS Group is made up of the four Ecoles Normales Supérieures in France: ENS Cachan, ENS Lyon, ENS Paris and ENS Rennes. With a history of development spanning several centuries, the Ecoles Normales Supérieures are among the most prestigious institutions of higher education and research in France. They are considered to be the pinnacle of the French system of higher education. The oldest one, ENS Paris, was created during the French Revolution and has been the *alma mater* of many famous intellectual and political figures ranging from Pasteur to Sartre, while the most recent one, ENS Rennes, was established in January 2014. The ENS Group enjoys a leading position in many fields and pursues its longstanding tradition of prestige and excellence by incarnating the hallmarks of high standards and quality of French teaching and research.

The relationship between ECNU and the ENS Group dates back to the 1980's, when ECNU Presidents visited ENS Paris and a group of advanced Chinese scholars were sent to France for training and research. This dynamic led to the creation of the ECNU-ENS Joint Graduate Students Training Program in November 2002, under the auspices of the Chinese Ministry of Education. In 2005 the ECNU-ENS Joint Graduate School was established, aiming to promote Sino-French graduate education in the fields of physics, chemistry, life sciences, sociology, history, and philosophy.

Since its beginnings the ECNU-ENS Joint Graduate School has enrolled a total of 289 students, including 8 students from Fudan University, Shanghai Jiaotong University and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. To this date, 115 students have obtained their Master's Degree with a Certificate from the ECNU-ENS Joint Graduate School. Among this group of students, 109 have been selected to further their studies in France, and so far, 60 of them have obtained their double Doctoral Degree from ECNU and one of the ENS. Twelve of these successful candidates later joined ECNU, with some already promoted to the rank of associate professor; 17 others have become faculty members of other domestic academic institutions like the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing Normal University, Renmin University of China, East China University for Science and Technology, Fuzhou University and Southwestern University of Finance and Economics; 13 are doing postdoctoral research in the United States and Europe; 5 work in multi-national corporations such as DOW Chemical, SCB and Rhodia, and 3 in domestic companies or public institutions.

Organization of Studies

The studies at the ECNU-ENS Joint Graduate School include Masters and Doctorate Degree levels. Students are enrolled for three years at the Masters level in parallel to their enrollment in an ECNU Masters Program and are later selected for the PHD level on the basis of their performances. The specific 3 year training received at Masters level is dispensed at ECNU and provides the background preparation for the doctoral investigation to be undertaken in one of the four ENS. The doctoral project is financially supported with a grant from the Chinese Scholarships Council.

The Masters training consists in a series of intensive disciplinary courses, taught in English by visiting ENS faculty members, as well as French language tuition. Outstanding candidates in physics, chemistry, computer science and the life sciences have the exceptional possibility to take a faster track and to apply for the PHD level after only two years of Masters training. All candidates admitted at PhD level study for a joint doctoral diploma which requires a double enrollment procedure and which delivers the double title of ECNU and ENS Doctor. Beyond the common requirement of dissertation completion, these students must also fulfill the specific requirements of ECNU in terms of doctoral publications, as well as spend one or two semesters of their overall doctoral time at ECNU. The dissertation can be written in Chinese, French or English (with an extended summary in one other language) and is defended either in China or in France before a jury composed of faculty members from both ECNU and the ENS involved. Students not selected



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for the PHD level benefit from automatic admission to a relevant ECNU PHD Program and receive their ECNU Master's Degree with an adjunct Certificate for their joint Masters training.

Master's Degree Admission and PhD selection process

1/ Admission at Masters level:

The program is open to all students, both those exempt from admission examinations and those having passed the admission examination, who enroll in the first year of an ECNU Master's Degree in the following disciplines: physics, life sciences, chemistry, computer science, history, sociology, philosophy and education sciences. Students admitted without examination can apply ahead of time. Application at the end of the first year of an ECNU Master's Degree in those disciplines is also possible, but reserved for students with a truly outstanding academic record during their first year at ECNU. Acceptance is pronounced for all applicants by a common jury composed of ENS and ECNU faculty members after an interview conducted in English.

2/ PhD Selection :

The ENS are among the most selective institutions of higher education in the world. French students must receive a two year long specific training after their high-school diploma and take a highly selective nationwide competitive examination before being accepted. Accordingly, at the end of their two or three years of Masters training, students of the ECNU-ENS joint Graduate School are submitted to an additional selection process before being accepted at PhD level and admitted to study at one of the ENS. Acceptance is pronounced by a jury made up of ENS and ECNU faculty members on the basis of their Master's Degree academic achievements and the quality of a doctoral dissertation project. Once accepted, students have to additionally apply for a grant from the Chinese Scholarships Council. By ENS rules, the dissertation must be completed in no more than 3 to 4 years.

This strict selection process on top of the high standards imposed on the doctoral dissertation contribute to making doctoral studies at the ECNU-ENS Joint Graduate School a uniquely challenging opportunity, rewarded by a diploma of the highest quality that represents one of the best assets for a successful professional life.