BIP- Winter "Driving Change: Innovation & sustainability in the Watch Industry"

General information
Objectives and Description: This two-week international BIP explores how the Swiss watch industry is responding to the challenges of innovation, sustainability and digital transformation. Through workshops, company visits, case studies and collaborative projects, students will discover the balance between Swiss watchmaking tradition and new technologies, while exploring topics such as circular economy, entrepreneurship, sustainable business and digital innovation. Students will also work on a real-world challenge with ID Genève Watches, developing innovative and sustainable solutions for the future of the luxury watch industry. The programme combines academic learning, practical experience and international exchange in Switzerland.
Methods and outcomes: The programme combines virtual learning with intensive in-person experience, using interactive lectures, workshops, case studies, company visits and collaborative project. Students work in interdisciplinary and international teams on a practical challenge. Outcomes: Students gain first-hand insights into the Swiss watch industry and apply their knowledge to a real-world industry challenge.
Field of Education: Economics
Target audience / Participants profile: Bachelor's and Master's students interested in entrepreneurship, branding and organisational transformation, with an interest in gaining international and practical experience.
No of ECTS issued: 5 ECTS
Language of instruction and requirements: English B2
Dates for physical activity: 01 - 05 February 2027
Location of physical activity: FRIBOURG, Switzerland (1h30 from Geneva / 1h30 from Zuirch by train)
Dates for virtual component: 25-29 January 2027 (on-line)

Virtual Component Description:

The virtual component consists of six online sessions (16:00–18:00 CET) designed to prepare participants for the physical week and facilitate networking.

The virtual component will include online expert presentations, interactive discussions, a business challenge, and networking activities. Participants will be introduced to the programme and the Swiss watch industry, explore entrepreneurship and circular economy, and connect with fellow participants in preparation for the physical week.

Organizing Board

Receiving/Host university:

School of Management Fribourg (HEG-FR), Switzerland (Andrea ROHRER → heg-international@hefr.ch)

Sending/Partner universities:

Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour (UPPA), France (Lorenda Amriou →lorenda.amriou@univ-pau.fr

Universidad Computense de Madrid/ Ces Cardenal Cisneros

Detailed programme

1. Planned activities during virtual component:

The sessions cover :

- Informal networking and practical preparation for travel and accommodation.
- Introduction to the programme, its aims and objectives.
- Introduction to the Swiss watch industry and its key actors.
- A business challenge presented by a watch industry professional.
- Swiss entrepreneurship and innovation.
- Circular economy and sustainability in the watch industry.

2. Planned activities during physical component:

1st day: Participants will explore innovation, intellectual property, data security and data protection through expert presentations and interactive sessions. The afternoon will also include the team activities.

2nd day: Participants will examine digital transformation and the Digital Product Passport, with a focus on transparency, traceability and sustainability in the luxury watch industry.

3rd day: A visit to a watchmaking company will provide practical insight into the industry.

4th day: Participants will address intellectual property, social responsibility and business and human rights. Teamwork and preparation for the challenge will continue during the afternoon.

5th day: Participants will work intensively in teams to develop and finalise their solutions to the business challenge. The programme will conclude with team presentations of the challenge results, followed by a cultural and social activity.
Application procedure
fill in application form available here: https://www.heg-fr.ch/fr/etudes/internationales/winter-school-driving-change/registration-innovation-sustainability-in-the-watch-industry/