



ESSCA

Press release

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Cybersecurity: standards of leading consulting firms are now being adopted by Junior Enterprises

A global first: ESSCA's Junior Enterprise (a student-run consulting organisation) has just obtained ISO 27001 certification. It becomes the first Junior Enterprise worldwide to reach this level of requirement, currently held by around 800 companies in France. Usually reserved for large corporations, consulting firms or technology players, this certification governs how an organisation manages, protects and controls its data.

Beyond recognition, this initiative reflects a broader evolution: data security is becoming a decisive criterion, including for student organisations. Junior Enterprises are no longer assessed solely on their ability to deliver recommendations. They are also evaluated on their ability to secure the information they handle. To meet these expectations, ESSCA Junior Conseil has chosen to structure its practices according to the standards used by consulting firms.

"Reaching this level of requirement also means assuming responsibility towards an entire ecosystem. Our ambition is now to contribute to advancing the whole Junior Enterprise movement by sharing these practices and raising teams' awareness of information security issues," says Timothé Pouliquen, President of ESSCA Junior Conseil and a fourth-year student in the Grande École Programme.

Data security is becoming a prerequisite for access to assignments

In calls for tender, criteria relating to data protection are now central. For certain clients (public sector, healthcare, large corporations, for example), they determine whether an organisation can even participate in the bidding process.

"Client expectations are evolving rapidly. They no longer assess us solely on the quality of our recommendations, but also on our ability to protect the data entrusted to us," explains Timothé.

Even before obtaining certification, ESSCA Junior Conseil had already significantly strengthened its information security standards, reaching the levels of requirement expected by major clients. The certification now formalises this increased maturity. It is based on an Information Security Management System (ISMS), which governs the entire data processing lifecycle, from collection to storage, following a risk management and continuous improvement approach.

Accessing assignments previously reserved for consulting firms

This evolution is not merely about compliance. It opens access to assignments that were previously difficult for Junior Enterprises to obtain.

ESSCA Junior Conseil now works on projects involving sensitive data, particularly in the healthcare sector or in the context of public procurement. In these cases, the ability to demonstrate a robust information management framework becomes a determining factor. Major organisations have already placed their trust in them: Michelin, Crédit Agricole, L'Oréal, ADEME, Coca-Cola and Galeries Lafayette.

Behind this transformation are nearly 80 students mobilised across six ESSCA campuses, including a “senior” team of 24 members responsible for strategy, compliance and operations. Led since 2021 by a Risk & Compliance division, the project has engaged Grande École Programme students over several years around an unprecedented objective: designing and deploying an information security management system aligned with consulting standards.

Internal structuring aligned with consulting standards

To reach this level, ESSCA's Junior Enterprise has thoroughly reviewed its organisation. Already ISO 9001 certified since 2021, ESSCA Junior Conseil has integrated information security as a central pillar of its operations. This transformation is based on:

- The analysis of more than 300 risks related to information systems, identified using the EBIOS method;
- The formalisation of new internal procedures to govern practices;
- The systematic integration of GDPR requirements, with the implementation of strict data management, access and sharing rules;
- The regulation of artificial intelligence use to ensure ethical and responsible data processing.

While ESSCA Junior Conseil is the first Junior Enterprise to obtain this certification, the trend goes beyond this single case. Client expectations are evolving rapidly, driven by regulatory requirements, increasing cyber risks and the growing sensitivity of processed data.

A Junior Enterprise with numerous distinctions

In 2025, ESSCA Junior Conseil joined the “L6”, which brings together the six best Junior Enterprises in France out of nearly 200 structures (corresponding to the semi-finalists of the Prix d'Excellence, which rewards the best Junior Enterprise in France and is awarded by BNP Paribas, Alten, EY and ENGIE). This recognition was renewed in 2026, confirming ESSCA Junior Conseil's position among the elite of French Junior Enterprises. It was also awarded **the Saint-Gobain Prize for the Best Junior Enterprise in AI and Innovation** and received the **“Most European Junior Enterprise”** award at the Excellence Awards organised by Junior Enterprises Europe.

“Junior Enterprises are often seen as a first professional experience. For us, they are also a platform for innovation, responsibility and transformation. This certification shows that students can uphold standards usually associated with leading consulting firms and contribute to transforming an entire ecosystem,” concludes Timothé Pouliquen.



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About ESSCA Junior Conseil

ESSCA Junior Conseil has been ESSCA's Junior Enterprise since 1972. Based in Angers, Paris, Bordeaux, Lyon, Aix-en-Provence and Strasbourg, it offers a wide range of consulting services: market, image and satisfaction studies, mystery shopping surveys, business plan development, communication plans, employer branding support, employee engagement surveys and export diagnostics.

As one of the oldest Junior Enterprises in France, ESSCA Junior Conseil has developed recognised expertise in managing consulting assignments, enabling it to rank among the six best Junior Enterprises in the country. Thanks to the presence of students across six campuses in France, studies can be conducted at national level. ESSCA Junior Conseil supports professionals from all backgrounds, from SMEs and start-ups to large corporations such as Canal+, Galeries Lafayette, Coca-Cola, OCP and American Express. The quality of its management has been recognised through ISO 9001 certification.

www.esscajuniorconseil.com

About ESSCA

Based on its rich 117-year history, ESSCA School of Management is a renowned and firmly established French and European institution. A pioneering school in terms of teaching innovation and social and economic inclusion, it has striven to evolve on a permanent basis to incorporate the demands and challenges of the modern world with a will to train responsible leaders and assist organisations undergoing change.

A private higher education institution of common interest built upon a not-for-profit associative structure and a member of the Conférence des Grandes Ecoles, ESSCA School of Management delivers an officially recognised 5-year postsecondary Master degree and also offers a fully accredited Bachelor in International Management degree programme, an MBA Business & Technology and Master of Science programmes. The school also offers a range of training programmes designed specifically for senior executives, managers, and operational teams, with degree-awarding training (including an Executive Master in Global Management) and custom programmes. ESSCA is also developing online designed by ESSCA online campus.

Thanks to its AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS triple crown accreditation, a status held by only 1% of business schools around the world, the School is an internationally renowned institution. It features in the top 100 Masters in Management programmes in the world in the 2026 Financial Times ranking and 37th globally for custom programmes in executive education. In terms of impact and research, ESSCA is ranked by Times Higher Education and ARWU (Shanghai Ranking).

Strengthened by a multicampus structure that helps consolidate its appeal to local regions and the showcasing of French expertise in the areas of higher education and research, ESSCA can call upon a network of almost 22,800 alumni working all across the world and currently welcomes over 500 faculty and staff and 7,800 students on its campuses in France (Aix-en-Provence, Angers, Bordeaux, Lyon, Paris and Strasbourg), China, Hungary, Luxemburg and Spain.

www.essca.eu/en

ESSCA
Marguerite Moulin /
Cloé Bousseau

Tél. : 02 52 09 40 27 / 02 44 01 51 40

marguerite.moulin@essca.fr

cloe.bousseau@essca.fr

Communication
Myriam Boukaïa /
Stéphanie Masson

Tél. : 07 50 69 52 56 / 06 84 65 17 34

mboukaia@madamemonsieur.agency

smasson@madamemonsieur.agency