

GUIDE FOR STUDYING IN FRANCE



France in General

Before you go

Getting to France

Once you get to France

University Life in France

Administrative Work in France

City Profiles

Chambéry 19

Grenoble 28

Lyon 35

Montpellier 41



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This brochure is the updated version of an original text written by Victoria Reep and several European Studies classmates after their experience in France (1996-97). It is written from a student's point of view. We hope you find its numerous hints and practical tips useful during your stay overseas. May it help you get past the "survival" stage quickly and contribute to your enjoyment of the French experience next year.

When you come back to Guelph, you will be expected to return this brochure (or a copy) to me, with appropriate corrections and additions, so that it can be updated for the benefit of the next group of outgoing students.

Bon voyage!

Margot Irvine

Coordinator, European Studies Program

(Responsible for ESP Students studying in France)

Documentation

Assembling all of the necessary documentation for a year abroad takes a fair amount of time and money. Start collecting all of these documents *early*. It is not possible to get all this done in the last three weeks before you leave!!! Here is a rough idea of what you will need.

In order to live in France for the duration of the academic year you must have:

- A passport; preferably valid for a few months after you expect to return from Europe
- A *Visa de long séjour*. Application forms for Ontario residents may be requested from The French Consulate in Toronto: 416-925-8233) The VISA branch of the French Embassy in Ottawa closed down, Ontario residents now must apply in Toronto and Quebec residents in Montreal. VISAs have also changed for students in the ORA program. Students staying for the full year with the ORA exchange program are now supposed to apply for the 2B VISA which is a 3 month temporary VISA with the expectation that the student will apply for and receive a Carte de Séjour (Residency Permit) within those 3 months.
<http://www.consulfrance-toronto.org/spip.php?article715> is a list of VISA's under The France-Canada Youth Agreement which includes the ORA program and <http://www.consulfrance-toronto.org/spip.php?article527> is a link to information on VISAs for Students over 18 who are not participating in an exchange program (Visa de Long Séjour). I don't like the 2B visa for reasons explained in the CAF section, but it's what the ORA program will tell you to apply for.
- The long form for your birth certificate, available from Provincial Records, Room M2-49, second Floor MacDonald Block, 900 Bay St., Toronto (open 8am-6pm, try to go before 10 or after 3 to avoid a *long* wait) This form must also be translated and certified by the 'Service Culturel' of the French Consulate (175 Bloor St. E. Toronto) The easiest way is to order it online at <http://fs19.formsite.com/appservices/form034834147/index.html>. I have not had any of my documents translated into French (including my birth certificate) and haven't encountered any problems. I don't know if other students have so perhaps it's still advisable to get things translated. The University in Grenoble will accept your Birth Certificate in French, English, Italian or Spanish.
- A letter of permission from the University of Guelph
- A letter of acceptance by the French university of your choice (within the limits of ESP partnerships, of course)
- A statement of financial support from your parents
- Proof of health insurance, which can be obtained from your OHIP office. You can also notify OHIP that you're going on exchange and they will extend your coverage and cover you out of country (not everything of course but it's free so you might as well).

Just before you go make sure your credit card will be valid for your whole trip. Phone your credit card company so that they know that you are going abroad and won't think that your card has been stolen and cancel it on you! Take your wallet to a photocopier and make 3-4 copies of everything that will be going with you to France. Leave two copies at home with your family and take a couple with you. This way, if you happen to lose your wallet cancelling cards will be much easier.

Banking

You might want to visit a lawyer and have power of attorney given to one of your parents so that they can access your financial matters. You could also consider opening a joint account with your parents. Make sure your visa/Master Card pin number is not longer than 4 digits, or it won't work internationally. It might be a good idea to set up Internet banking. This is the easiest way to keep track – not only of your home bank, but also your French bank account. You can also use your debit card to withdraw money from European bank machines but your bank will charge you a fee. Get a bank-authorized letter of support (for apartment and for opening an account in France). Having a debit card with a chip makes paying much easier, because automatic machines (when paying for train tickets and other things) only accept cards with chips. Do not leave Canada without a chip card. Also tell your bank that you will be overseas so that they don't freeze your account because of irregular activity. Check to see if there are banks in Canada that have agreements with banks in France. For example, Scotiabank has an agreement with BNP Paribas and you can use your Canadian Debt/Credit cards with BNP Paribas machines for free and avoid withdrawal fees. Also, wiring money from a Canadian bank account to a French bank account (and vice versa) is really expensive (I paid \$40 flat fee regardless of the amount) so I wouldn't rely on it for small amounts.

Things to take to France:

School Things

10-15 passport size photos

- These may be cheaper to do in France but do be prepared and have them ready. Professors do ask for them when you fill out a "fiche" about yourself.
- In Chambéry they were very cheap at the Photo booth in Monoprix, or at the train station while you are waiting for a train!
- There are photo booths everywhere, these are essential! I was never asked by my professor for any to fill out fiches though

BIC pens (ridiculously expensive! Everyone uses fountain pens.)

French grammar reference

French/English dictionary

- “Book’in” bookshop near the Theatre in Chambéry sells French dictionaries/thesaurus for 1.50 euros

Day-timer or calendar

USB stick

- Many profs will gladly let exchange students copy the PPT slides onto their USB stick

Clothing

Bathing suit

Hiking boots and gear

Light robe

Sandals or slippers

Winter gear if you plan to ski!!

- It is a lot warmer in late August-September than in Canada so I’d bring a pair of shorts and one or two summer tops as there’s a slim chance you’ll be anywhere that’s air conditioned.

Helpful Items

Blank book to use as a journal

Calculator and ruler

- French students are very neat note-takers

Money belt

- Make sure to use it if you travel!

Digital camera

- Invest in rechargeable batteries, makes life a lot easier... make sure to have a large SD card for the camera, you don’t want to run out of space for photos

Guidebooks

ISIC card, available free from our Travel Cuts

- This was pretty useless for the most part
- Don’t bother, your French student card works fine.

Towels

Travel alarm clock

Health and Toiletry Supplies

Contact lens solution (\$10 in Guelph, \$20-25 in France)

- Although it might be more expensive in France, liquids do factor into the strict weight restrictions for your baggage which could cost you more in the end!

Convertor/adaptor for hairdryer etc.

- Very important! These are hard to find in France. Get a good one!

- For hairdryers make sure it's a voltage converter otherwise they become dangerous to use. One suggestion I heard to save on adapters was to bring a Canadian power bar - so you only need one adapter to plug the power bar into the wall. Not sure if this is a good idea/safe.

Cough syrup, aspirin/Tylenol, Alka-seltzer

Prescription medicine, enough to last your stay

- If your insurance doesn't cover this, take as much as possible, then have it sent as you can (birth control packs fit in Hallmark cards, from Mom...!)

You might want to take your own music with you, given the price of CDs in France.

- You may also want to invest in *French* music. That's the point! They are pretty much the same price anyway.

Cigarettes are much stronger than in Canada but somewhat cheaper too

- Second-hand smoke will likely suffice and its free!

A map of Canada

- Brush up on your history before you leave home, because you WILL be asked... about the native issue, the Quebec issue and you will have to defend us against people who are convinced that Canada and the U.S. are one and the same
- Many people believe that anyone who speaks English is American! There were international fairs/nights during the year in Chambéry, so having Canadian information, photos, a t-shirt/flag would be very useful! The Canadians actually made "crottes de caribou" and maple syrup fudge for the fair
- Also be sure to bring some treats from Canada that you don't mind giving out when giving presentations to French students considering going on exchange to Canada.

Some popular imports

- Stuff we've had sent to us: Kool-Aid, peanut butter, Kraft Dinner, vitamins, Tim Hortons... although surviving on French food alone is quite possible and even highly recommended from a cultural point of view - especially the wine, bread and cheese.

Memory cards for your camera

If possible invest in a laptop computer AND external hard drive to back up files: it's no fun when your computer breaks in France.

You will have wireless connections at school and in libraries. This way you have a CD and DVD player, word processor, dictionary, etc.

Suggested Reading

First Time Europe (A Rough Guide Special), by Louis CasaBianca

This is a great guide for new travellers. I'd been to Europe many times before, but I still found tons of useful ideas here. At \$15, it's worth every penny. Routard Guides are good.

www.lonelyplanet.com is a great site to use when traveling.

You will need a good, thorough guide to France. Don't rely on the France section of a European guide; it will not be detailed enough for travel off the beaten path. All the travel guide companies will offer comprehensive guides; buy the one you like best. Read the introductory sections BEFORE you go. They are often full of good tips. The sections on history, art, and architecture will also give your trip more meaning. Michelin's Green Guides are excellent in this respect, but they usually cover a small region only. The library in Chambéry had fantastic guide books for all the regions/cities in France, plus other city/country guides within Europe. You can borrow for 3 weeks, not have to buy your own travel guides, written in French so you get reading practice! Most museums in France are free or very cheap (especially with a student card). The Louvre and Versailles in Paris are free to anyone under 26 who is a European Resident (and once you get your carte de séjour you qualify!) and I'm sure many other well-known historical sites in France and Europe probably have this deal too.

If you plan on travelling outside France, buy another guide for all of Europe. Phrase books are also not a bad idea. While you'll find people who speak English it's nice to be able to say a few basic things in a foreign language.

A Year in Provence or *Toujours Provence*, both by Peter Mayle

These amusing collections of short stories capture the stereotypical 'French mentality' perfectly and will illuminate the struggles of daily life in France. They are a great summer pre-departure read.

Merde: The Real French You Were Never Taught at School - not exactly high literature but it has reasonably good explanations of many familiar words and French slang that you'll encounter outside the academic world.

Also, we recommend watching *Auberge Español*, if you haven't already! And *Before Sunset*, *Bienvenue Chez les Chtis* and *Le Mépris*.

Airline Tickets

I did a fair amount of shopping around for the best deal on airfares and found Travel Cuts was the most reasonable. For other options, visit www.airtransat.ca,

www.kayak.fr, www.redtag.ca. It is best to book your flight as early as possible so you have the most choice of when to leave. Discuss options with your travel agent about changing return dates. If you plan on coming home for Christmas, book your flight as soon as you know when classes and exams will end. It's cheaper to get a return ticket and pay the fee to change the date (if necessary) than to get an open ended ticket.

Consider how you will manage your luggage - from airport to bus/train to taxi to residence desk, to room etc. If you are taking a lot of things, some airlines will give you permission to bring more than the normal weight, check it out before you get to the airport and are ordered to re-pack or stay home!

When to Arrive

Do not on arrive on a Sunday or a holiday because you could have difficulties getting into residence, negotiating bus schedules, etc. Find out when classes will start and plan to arrive a few days early. Taking an intensive language course for foreigners before regular university classes begin is a good way to ease into French life and to meet other foreign students. You will get to know your surroundings and improve your French before the real school year starts. In the past, Guelph students have received French-language course credits for this work upon presentation of the appropriate transcripts. This stage includes more than reading, writing, listening and speaking skills – you have tours of your town, the nearby towns/cities, and wine/cheese tasting outings, with 50 other exchange students in the same boat as you. At IAE in Montpellier there weren't any language courses before school as they were designated only to the Erasmus students at UM3. So, if you do arrive a couple weeks before school starts, then plan on travelling, applying for CAF, getting a bank account set up etc. The only intensive language courses I saw here in Grenoble that were before the school year started weren't free so I didn't partake; the FSL courses I took first semester were enough.

You will be very sorry if you do not have at least \$200 (CDN) worth of Euros in small bills when you arrive. Order this from your bank or currency exchange a couple of weeks before leaving Canada. The best rates are at Global Currency (Gordon and Kortright; Home Hardware plaza). This money will pay for your bus, cab, phone card (to let Mom know that you arrived safely), and perhaps a meal or two. Do not take travellers' cheques. They are not accepted anywhere.

Culture Shock

You may have done lots of travelling before but you will find that moving to a foreign country for a year is entirely different. You will feel tired and frustrated quite often during the first few weeks in your new environment. The mind tires quickly when trying to struggle with a new language and taking in a new environment. Things that are automatic for you in Canada, such as taking the bus to school or go-

ing grocery shopping, will be challenging at first in France. Relax. In time, everything will become more natural and you will begin to find some more energy as your French improves. Talking with other foreign students can be therapeutic, but be careful to keep an open mind and positive spirits. Things *will* improve by Christmas and the second half of the year will fly by.

Meeting People

University and social life are not synonymous in France. School is for studying and socializing is really done outside. There is not necessarily strong bonding in residence because students come from all academic backgrounds, metal working to medicine. There is usually no equivalent to "The Keg" on a French campus. Student socializing is done in town. Try to meet French people by getting involved in student clubs or sporting activities. There are usually many private want ads from students of families looking for anglophones to practice their English with. Many language/conversation & babysitting ads are posted on bulletin boards all over campus. Use this to your advantage. They are usually interested in travelling to an English-speaking country and love to hear stories about Canada. They are also proud to be French and eager to introduce Canadians to their city and French traditions. If you make a contact like this early in the year, it may help you get used to French life. A "marraine" mentor may be assigned in Lyon. Getting to know a French family through babysitting, tutoring, or a church group is also a way to develop beneficial relationships. Be outgoing and try everything once; what have you got to lose? Avoid other foreign students or, if you hang out with them, agree to speak French! If you want to hang out with Americans, go to the States, not France. You have to make the effort to meet other French students. Ask them if they would like to "aller boire un coup". Chatting over a drink is very popular.

If you are female you might find French men to be quite annoying. You will likely be verbally harassed in the street quite often and perhaps even approached by unwanted suitors. Most will leave with a simple "I'm just not interested". Sometimes you have to say it twice. I can't believe that I'm saying this but...don't talk to suspicious strangers. You are probably best advised to tell people to go away and leave you alone. Ignore men who try to woo you with their savvy English skills; 'Excuse me, what time is it?' is an old favourite. The best way to avoid attracting unwanted attention is to be discreet if you are speaking English in public. Don't make eye contact. Watch for physical violence. As at home, keep an eye on your friends when out at a bar and only take drinks from the bartender. Walk home in groups if you are out late, or better still, take a cab or a bike. I can't stress enough how unnerving and completely normal it is to be bothered by French men at all times of day, and once they know you speak English it's even worse. I've had best results just ignoring them, you learn very quickly to stop being the polite Canadian. As for attracting them the criteria seems to be that you have to be female and that's about it - any woman who gets yelled at has NOT done anything wrong and shouldn't feel strange. It's NOT that

you're dressed too provocatively, look like a foreigner or have done something other than existing to attract their attention - it just happens and it's not your fault. Also be careful posting any ads if you're female offering English lessons - it's another good way to find creeps. Try to go through an agency of some sort.

In Chambéry, "Batiment 14" is a building for foreign students. There are many outings with this program, to the Chateau, to Annecy, to various sports & cultural events – this is how we joined up for a trip to Turin (Italy), and the festival for Beaujolais Nouveau (special wine).

In Grenoble the Integre club organises activities almost every week and there's an email list you can join. Most of the activities are relatively cheap. It's run by French students but most of the people who come out to the activities are foreigners so it's a great way to meet other international students but probably not a great way to meet French students. There are also reasonably cheap ski busses that are offered through various student groups in the winter.

Problems

If you lose documents, contact the police immediately and fill out the necessary forms. Under French law, all citizens AND tourists must carry some identification in case they are stopped and questioned by police. Don't forget that you will be hanging around bus and train stations in a country where police searches are not uncommon. Bring photocopies. Always bring your passport when you travel outside of France - even though your Carte de Sejour makes you a legal EU resident when you present it you may be asked for your passport as well.

Banking

Opening a bank account is the most practical way to deal with daily life in France. You will need cheques to pay your rent and a European bank card (Carte Bleue) is really convenient. Residence will allow you to pay by debit or credit cards – Canadian ones. Private landlords sometimes accommodate for cash payments. Get a bank-authorized letter of support for your apartment and for opening an account in France. Choose a bank that is near your daily route to school so that you do not have to go out of your way. You will likely need your passport to open an account but the requirements will change with each different company. Some banks may offer you insurance on your bank card and cheque book or even money when you open an account. This is done because the French do not check for identification before cashing a cheque. In other words, if you lose your cheque book someone could steal the balance of your account. You also need to show your banking information to get a cell phone contract. Report lost cheque books immediately. As I wrote earlier, see if your Canadian bank has any agreements with French banks. Don't expect the process of opening an account to be straight forward, chances are you'll have to visit the bank 2 or 3 times to get everything sorted out. French Carte Bleus are sort of like hybrid

debit/credit cards generally have a 500 Euro overdraft allowance which is a good thing to know.

Etiquette in banks and other service areas is a little different in France than what we are used to at home. In spite of the fact that there is a privacy line painted on the floor of the post office, people seem to see nothing wrong with crowding you at the teller's counter. Just get used to having someone peering over your shoulder to see how broke you are. (I've never experienced this and my French friends have said this is not true, in general.) Do put away any large withdrawals in your money belt before leaving the bank, cash machine, or exchange booth. Thieves love to hang around waiting for tourists to fiddle with their money near a currency exchange. Expect business to take *longer*.

You can easily withdraw money from your Canadian account and deposit it into your French account at the Satre machine. You can also have it sent from Canada but the service charge is expensive at both ends (a wire costs \$15.00, plus the exchange). Ask your home bank before you leave to find out how much this will cost. Your Canadian bank card *will not* work on all European machines (especially in England) in spite of what your bank will tell you, though it may work on most (with a charge each time). I find my debit card doesn't work on a lot of machines but my credit card does so if your debit card doesn't work try your credit card. Bringing a cheque or cash will cost you the least. Global currency services, on Gordon south of campus, will help you out. If you plan on withdrawing from a Canadian account, take out a lump sum so that you get charged all at once.

Telephones

Public phones in France are not coin operated. Instead, you buy a calling card at a *tabac* and use the pin code provided. The cards are available in different amounts of units. The phone display counts down the units as you are talking (really quickly if you are calling long distance). The public telephones were extremely annoying to operate and would cost a fortune for the calling cards. Getting a cell phone with "pay as you go" credit is recommended. Download SKYPE on your computer, one of the best ways to talk... once you have struggled through the internet issue.

The easiest and cheapest way to call home is Canada Direct. This service provides toll-free lines that give you direct access to a Canadian operator and then you are billed on your calling card at Canadian rates. A 'Call-Me' card is also a good idea. Call or write to Canada Direct for the listing of numbers or ask your travel agent (available at Travel Cuts). Keep this card with you when you are travelling to make phone calls easier.

Internet

In France you may have to sign up for internet independently from your residence. In Chambéry and I assume other universities computers will be available during the week but these will probably be inaccessible outside business hours. Still in Chambéry – the school library only has 5 computers, and the librarians are not the friendliest with computer usage! There are a handful of cafes/fast food places in town where you can use wireless on your own laptop/iPhone - McDonalds is a big one. There are many internet providers you can go to, but all that go through the phone line will pass by France Telecom, who has the monopoly on French phone lines. Fixed phone lines are not very useful anymore now that cell phones are popular; no point in getting one. Optic fibre cables, which are not available everywhere, are not run by France Telecom otherwise if you have an internet connection that runs through phone lines you will have to deal with France Telecom to set up the phone line. Internet services are provided by various companies including France Telecom (ie Numericable, Orange). Students often buy a wireless package in France that they are allowed to share with other inhabitants of their residence as long as the signal carries. The best advice I can give is to wait until the French students move in and post an ad looking for someone to share with; however this may take a little while. If you require internet promptly it is best to pay a bit more and get a reliable connection from France Telecom, because you may never be connected by other providers. Numericable in Chambéry is about \$19/month for internet. You can share with your roommate or neighbors to make it cheaper. In 2008/2009 they changed the internet cables in residence Comte Vert, so internet was down in September, but buying internet with Numericable is pretty easy.

Electricity

France uses 220 Volt power. You will need both a converter and an adapter to use North American appliances. **Buy these at home.** If you are paying utility charges apart from rent, budget for it! Have at least 2 or 3 adapters, since you will probably blow-out one for your hairdryer/straightener, and you can then use several electrical plugs at the same time. Make sure you also have an adapter for the UK if you plan on travelling, since it's different from continental Europe.

Libraries

Libraries are generally difficult but different in each school and city. Worthwhile books are usually in storage; fill out a request card and wait half an hour to an hour to get them. University libraries look more like high school ones at home due to lack of funding. They have short hours, limited computers/seating, strict no-food/drink rules... plus checking out books corresponds with your university level... you will miss the UOG library! But the school library in Chambéry does have a great view of the mountains. The best advice is to be patient and try using the Internet as an alternative. It's worthwhile to get a membership at municipal libraries as well, as they have a varied collection of local/national music etc., and guide books, so that you

don't have to bring them! There is an excellent city library in Chambéry, \$5 for the year, and you can check out various books, CDs, DVDs, guide books, etc.) Watch out for a different keyboard every time! Note that libraries are not open until 2 am as in Guelph. In the library at Montpellier, you have to be very quiet, no food or drink and no cellphones or else the librarians will yell at you. The Bibliotheque Droit-Lettres in Grenoble has a nice view of the mountains too. It and the Bibliotheque Universitaire des Sciences are pretty big but they're not amalgamated and you can't take out books from the library that isn't connected to your school (they're right across the street from each other, too, it's so frustrating!) Online Journal databases seem not to exist over here so while you can use the internet for sources my profs didn't quite understand the concept and thought I had just pulled my sources off Google.

Restaurants

Dining out in France tends to be quite expensive. The best bet is usually the fixed menu. Normally, it will include a salad, main dish, coffee or tea, and tax. Service is always included. Beef will usually be prepared quite rare. Be sure to sample local specialties as you travel. There are great bistros/cafes in Chambéry, the fixed menu is a good option. The portions are smaller than in Canada, but it is quality over quantity. Kebabs and panini are always cheap. Dining in University eateries can be really cheap (less than 3 euros for a full meal) but the hours are limited and the lines are long. The French seem to only eat at mealtimes, and society has sort of adapted to this quirk. Many sit-down restaurants and university restaurants don't serve food outside of mealtimes, so you'll have to go to a fast food place if you want food between 3pm and 6:30pm. University restaurants are only open during mealtimes. Dinner tends to be eaten later than in Canada, around 7:30-8pm.

Train Travel

The best deal is to order your pass from Travel Cuts and have them courier it to you. Get a *Carte 12-25* (\$70.00) for discounts up to 50% regular tickets during certain periods. This card seems expensive at first but quickly pays for itself. Always travel with it or you will be fined. There is also an *OuRA card*, an immediate 50% off tickets in the Alps region – useful if you think you will travel more frequently to Lyon, Grenoble, Chambéry etc than all over France. Before boarding any train in France you must validate your ticket using the machines near the entrance to platforms in all stations. You *will* be fined if you fail to do this. The same usually applies for city buses and subways. We were caught not validating our ticket on a short, 45 minute ride from Grenoble to Chambéry and our *Carte 12-25* was “branded” with a warning that next time we didn't validate we would pay a fine of 15 euros. It isn't worth it to skip validating, when the train ticket only costs 5 euros!

Biking

Helmets are not required in France, but riding bikes on the sidewalks is illegal- but everyone does it anyway. Apparently helmets have become obligatory but no one

cares. Get to know the rules of the road, or follow the example of the locals. In Lyon there is a great bike rental system where the membership for one year is 10 euros and you pick up a bike, ride it anywhere and put it down at a station, of which there are over 350 all over the city. In Chambéry you can rent a bicycle for the day for 5 euros, a great way to explore the town and ride to Lac Bourget on a weekend. Or you can rent one for the semester/year... be very careful of thieves. The tram in Montpellier, costs about 30 euros per month but is obviously cheaper to pay for longer amounts of time. Renting a bike from Velo Mag is also recommended if you're not afraid of the roads. It costs about 65 euros for the year and you receive free tune-ups. This definitely beats buying your bike, quite possibly stolen, from the Sunday market at Mosson and having your bike pedal fall off! In Grenoble we have Metro Velo which rents bikes for various periods of time, a year costs around 100 euros + a deposit which they return when you return the bike. Invest in a good bike lock if you live in Grenoble, people will try to steal your bike especially if you leave it outside overnight, it's a Grenoble thing. It's best to buy the worst looking bike that still functions to avoid thieves. If you're living in an apartment see if you can store it in the basement, it'll be safer.

Staying in Touch

School of Languages and Literatures main office at the U. of G. (519) 824-4120, ext 3883. Fax: (519) 763-9572 (Prof. Margot Irvine: ext 53182 E-mail: mirvine@uoguelph.ca)

Please send me a list of the courses you would like to take once you've chosen them, and let me know how you are doing! I love hearing from you and am always available for consultation.

Centre for International Programs: goabroad@uoguelph.ca

The French University System -

In the last year of high school French students receive their baccalauréat once they've passed their exams. The old system was the DEUG which is your baccalauréat + 2 years of higher study. This can still be awarded to students who do two-year programs but isn't used very often.

The system used in France now is called the LMD system (Licence, Master, Doctorat). Most bachelors degrees here consist of 3 years of study - L1, L2 and L3. Masters programs are either 1 or 2 years and like the licence the years are called M1 and M2. You'll see these titles when you're signing up for courses. Like in Canada each school year is divided into two semesters. The length of Doctorat courses is generally 3 years in which you produce a thesis paper at the end.

Courses are measured in ECTSs (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System). 30 ECTS a semester is considered a full course load back in Canada.

A Few Words of Advice

As appears to be characteristic of the French university system, inefficiency and disorganization reign, despite the **valiant efforts** of the program coordinators. Don't expect things to work the way they do in Guelph. Try not to stress out over courses and don't take any of it too seriously. It is not unusual to find that a course you have been in for 6 weeks one day evaporates never to be seen again; to have room mix-ups; prof. mix-ups; class mix-ups.... CHECK BULLETIN BOARDS AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE. The only notification you will ever get regarding exams, room changes etc. will be postings on the bulletin boards. Don't expect anyone to tell you anything! You will have to sign up for exams in October. Classes often have 100% finals, sometimes as orals. Ask what efforts are made for foreign students. Lectures are usually 2-3 hours long. Be prepared to stay awake and tuned in. Reading the material before the lecture will make your life easier! Be prepared to have notes with many words missing. Many profs dictate notes, although commerce classes tend to have slides. Good excuse to talk to French students and ask to borrow their notes! French students pay at maximum 700 euros a year for public university - my theory is things are so disorganized because they don't really have the funds to create efficient infrastructures. Try to speak to your profs and let them know you're an exchange student - generally they're helpful and they'll be a bit easier on your grammar/spelling when you hand in papers. Try to get to know someone in each of your classes - French or foreign - so when exams/classes/profs do change unexpectedly you have someone to turn to. Good thing though - there are no \$200 textbooks!

Marks

All exams and assignments are marked out of 20. This scale will help you a little.

0-6	Better luck next time
6-7	Not great, not unusual
8-9	Okay, no need to panic
10	Class average
10-12	A GOOD mark
13-14	A GREAT mark
14-15	Top of the class
16-19	Extremely rare
20	NEVER

Don't convert your marks into percentages, you'll just get depressed. Remember that everything is supposed to be different.

Class Etiquette

Don't eat or drink in lectures, it's considered very rude. Although, having an entire conversation about your ski weekend doesn't seem to be frowned upon at all! Let the

prof be your guide, if the prof has a coffee or water, it may be OK for you to have one too. (Drinks were not a problem in Chambéry in 08-09 – although only exchange students will have a travel mug!) 2-3 hr classes will have a 15 min break, when many students go to the coffee machine... 40 centime espressos are popular and so tasty.

French students, especially girls, dress for class a little more than we do at home. Don't plan on wearing sweat pants, sweatshirts, shorts, etc unless you want to stand out. Don't wear baseball caps, or any hats at all, especially for girls – they'll think you're an American. In lectures, questions aren't asked. This is the prof's time. "Seminaire" does not mean seminar as we understand it. It is a 160 page report (thesis). The teacher's selection of readings to study is photocopied and given to you. That's right, no \$30 course packs! Books can often be borrowed second hand. Finding an advanced French student to lend you notes is great! Some students bring laptops to lectures, but most handwrite their notes. They are very particular about underlining! You'll encounter CM (cours magistral) which are like lectures and TD/TP (travaux dirigés/travaux pratiques) that are like seminars/labs. Attendance is pretty much always taken for TD/TPs and sometimes for smaller CMs. Since there are no textbooks the learning is done in class so French students skip class a lot less than we tend to.

Beware! You will have to stand in line for hours on end only to find out you are in the wrong line! This is part of studying in France. There will be endless amounts of seemingly useless paperwork to fill out. Make 5 photocopies of every important piece of paper you own; everyone will want one! Another possibility would be to scan your documents and keep electronic copies. Do not *expect* anyone to know anything. Keep asking until you receive an answer that you are satisfied with. And last but not least.... the rules can change! Bring *every* document you think you may possibly need (or you can easily find photocopiers there, and save carrying all that paper). Write down your questions so you don't get frazzled and forget!

Carte de Séjour

This is a residence permit for long-term visitors in France. You must have this permit or you *could* be kicked out of the country. You aren't supposed to leave France once you arrive without it, it is possible at borders that you will be asked to show it but I hardly ever was (maybe twice out of fifteen times, in 2008-09). Your initial 2B visa will only last 3 months and they'll warn you to get this. Check with your French university's foreign student advisor to see if they have scheduled a session for the *préfecture* officials to come directly to the school to register foreign students. In Grenoble the university was absolutely no help at all with the carte de sejour process. If they haven't, you will have to go to the *préfecture* yourself. They will make an appointment for you to come back another time. In Grenoble you could only make appointments online and you could not walk into the prefecture with all your documents and have your request processed like other nationalities. Request a list of the

documents required - these were emailed to us when we booked the online appointment - almost efficient! *Never* hand over irreplaceable original documents, photocopy everything and take the original to verify the authenticity - make sure you get any original documents you show them back (ie passport) - the agent tried to keep mine twice. You will be required to have a medical examination that costs about \$90 (This was free in Grenoble in 2007, in Chambéry students did not need to pay for the Medical exam but they did need to pay around 50 Euros for the Carte de Séjour). In Chambéry in 2007 the medical exam was scheduled by the Prefecture and consisted of a chest x-ray, a brief discussion with the doctor, a urine sample and a chest exam. In Grenoble in 2007 this was a tap on the knees and an x-ray of your chest. The medical exam is scheduled for you and you will be notified when you must go. This year it was scheduled by the prefecture, consisted of a chest x-ray to check for tuberculosis and then a few weeks later an appointment with a doctor for a basic checkup. However, they requested a vaccination card from Canada - I'm fairly certain if I hadn't have presented this they would have given me several vaccinations and done more tests. The officials will be very aggressive with you. It is their job to keep illegal and unwanted immigrants out of the country. It might be a good idea to ask a French friend to go with you to help you be assertive if you are not entirely comfortable with the language. Unfortunately, France is not as open as Canada. If you belong to a visible minority you will likely be hassled even more. Getting the *Carte de séjour* takes a ridiculously long time and you may never actually receive it; all you need is the notice stating that you are in the process of applying. In Chambéry in 2007 it actually came very quickly, even before the medical examinations (around November). In Chambéry in 2010, it took 6 months to receive for the 3 Canadians there. Expect endless amounts of paperwork and having to go back multiple times. Make sure to have proper financial records! The best bet is to have the statement from the bank and you parents that you filled out for the visa application and a statement from your French bank stating how much you have in your account. Ask for a "justificatif de ressources"

This list should give you an idea what French officials will require.

- Your passport and a photocopy of its main page, and the page with the student visa from Toronto
- Photo booth size identity photos or a smaller size (the same size you need for your visa).
- Photocopy of your French student card, inscription receipt and/or letter of admission
- Certificate of residence *Certificat d'Hébergement* from the secretariat at your residence - if you're renting an apartment they'll ask for various documents your landlord/agency should be able to provide you with
- *Attestation de Logement*
- A photocopy of your long form birth certificate

- *Timbre fiscal* for 55 Euros (a tax that you pay by purchasing a stamp from a *tabac*) or right at the prefecture) Do not go to the Tabac.
- Proof of financial means (bank balance in France, etc).

I was warned they would want these documents translated but I was never asked to present any translations

Caisse des Allocations Familiales

The French government will give all students a partial reimbursement of rent money, generally 40%, which is retroactive to your first payment (limited to three months before the application). For example, one student in 2007 in Lyon was reimbursed 150 Euros on 345 Euros rent as of the second month in her apartment. The amount you are reimbursed depends on marital status, dependent children, number of residents, number of square meters, fiscal earnings in the last year. The application process is relatively complex but definitely worth the effort. Pick up the application forms and list of required documents at the *Caisse d'allocations familiales* (CAF) office or your landlord may provide them for you and you can do the application process through him/her. You must wait until you have the *Carte de séjour* to apply but do all the other things while you are waiting. To apply for the CAF you will need:

- *Attestation d'hébergement* (a form from your landlord or the residence's *accueil* that proves you live there and states the cost of the rent)
- *A Fiche d'état civil* from your local *Mairie* (We didn't have to get this in Chambéry in 2007).
- Your official *carte de séjour* (you can't have the "in progress" sheet) I applied for CAF with proof that I'd applied for my *carte de séjour* and it was enough to get me one month's reimbursement. They've changed the rules recently so that it's retroactive from when you apply, not from when you moved in so this is good to know (especially since I didn't get my *carte de séjour* for 6 months!)
- *Relevé d'identité bancaire* (R.I.B). from the bank, which proves you have an account and provides the number for direct deposit
- A student card

It may take months to process, but then the retroactive pay will be deposited directly into

your account and you will receive the subsidy each month after that. If you go to the CAF office, they'll guide you through the application and print out all the forms you'll need signed. You can fill out all the forms for the CAF online if desired and mail or deliver it to an agency. Also, once you fill out the information on the website they'll tell you exactly which documents you need. There is nothing in France that has made me more frustrated than the CAF. If you have the 3 month 2B student VISA, the CAF will NOT pay you for any months before you get your *Carte de*

séjour: Your VISA is good for three months with the expectation that you will get your *Carte de séjour* within those 3 months. However, when you do eventually get your *Carte de séjour*, it will not be dated from the start date on your VISA but will be dated from whatever date they happened to have processed your application. That means you have no proof of being a resident in France before the date on your *Carte de séjour*, ergo, no money from the CAF before that date.

So, if you're lucky and get your application processed relatively quickly you may only lose September. However, if you fall into the rather large pile of people who, thanks to French bureaucracy, have problems with their *Carte de séjour* you could lose 3 or 4 months. I didn't get my *Carte de séjour* till February and it was dated December.

The CAF also only retroactively pays about 4 months, so don't submit an application in April expecting to get money dating back to October. However, if you leave France at the beginning of summer and don't tell them they'll keep giving you money until August, though you should probably tell them. I was only given 23% of my rent back, not sure why.

CHAMBÉRY

Region: Rhône-Alpes

Department: Savoie (73)

Location: 55 km N of Grenoble, 100 km SE of Lyon

What the guide books say:

- Ancient capital of dukedom of Savoie
- Was home to literary giant Jean-Jacques Rousseau
- Located at crossroads between Italy, France and Switzerland
- Architecture of the 15th and 16th centuries is abundant
- Major resort and holiday centre, both winter and summer
- 30 km from Albertville, home of 1992 winter Olympics
- 10 km from lac du Bourget, largest lake in France
- Skiing, hiking, climbing, sailing, and hang-gliding all located nearby

STUDYING IN CHAMBÉRY

The Université de Savoie

L'Université de Savoie is one of the most renowned universities in France. It is especially well regarded for its Tourism Management and Languages programs (The faculties of LEA and IMUS with which Guelph is affiliated (IMUS was formerly called IUP, name change in 2008-09) The IMUS faculty holds an international fair in October so you can showcase your country, you receive emails from IMUS about the

business clubs, tourism field trips, summer jobs, student-run events, etc. They also have course selection booklets that are VERY useful. The 2 IMUS buildings are on lower campus with a rather organized team of management/tourism profs. Tourism and management classes have many Erasmus/exchange students, and French students who have gone/plan to go on exchange. The university comprises two campuses, Jacob-Bellecombette (where LEA/IMUS is located) and Le Bourget (which houses the science and engineering schools). The Jacob campus is quite small, as are the library and athletic facilities. The Jacob campus is part way up a mountain. It is tricky to find the first time, but has a great view. There is a small green area on campus that we lovingly called “Mini Johnson” in remembrance of Guelph -great place for lunch with friends on a warmer day. However, time spent on campus is generally spent in class, and since there is very little reading required for most courses (whatever is required is generally supplied), the small campus and limited library aren’t as much of an impediment as they may sound unless you take History courses, then try the library in town. It is 5 Euros for a membership card.

Lunches on campus are at the RU (Resto universitaire). You load money onto a Moneo card to pay for any meals on campus. To get your card, go to the booth just after you walk into the building and ask for one, then go put money on it at the machines in the next room. A meal includes starter, main dish, dessert, and bread. Usually decent food, but a bit of a crowded lunch room.

LEA/IEA Savoie Mont Blanc (Institut d'Administration des Entreprises Savoie Mont Blanc)

The exchange between Guelph and Chambéry is an inter-faculty exchange, as opposed to an inter-university exchange. Thus, Guelph students are limited to the courses offered in LEA *Langues étrangères appliquées* and IEA – management, *tourisme, hôtellerie, transport, affaires internationales*. (not the case in 2010 - I registered with IEA but took courses in LLSH (languages and literature) without any problems). Both departments are situated in Buildings 22 and 23, a brand new addition to the campus with its own computer lab (with e-mail and Internet - but you can only log on once you get your Savoie email address/password near the end of September), study room, cafeteria (sandwiches and other quick to-go food) and pool table. IEA has a very active student association who put on frequent *soirées* in the main hall of the building, and organize seminars, ski trips, and outings as well as an orientation day and welcoming party for the international students. Take advantage of special student nights, parties, meet & greets... read the IMUS emails too, that is how I found a 2 month internship in the Olympic town of Albertville in 2008-09! You can also take LLSH courses – these tend to be a lot more work though (they are very reading intensive). Guelph’s current contact in Chambéry is Prof. Robert Tatham, who is of British origin. Don’t hesitate to visit him in case of difficulty. He is a very nice man, and is very approachable. Victoria Ginolin and Françoise Perret are also very helpful. The secretaries in building 1 are not!

IEA and LLSH both issued booklets for management/tourism courses, and they have great information on course descriptions, credit weights, etc. the LLSH courses were not so organized. I found IEA also accepted exchange students in a friendly way, emailing exchange students with class cancellations, exam sign-up/schedules, and the secretaries for IEA were very helpful (when they were there!) The LLSH classes give no notice to exchange students if class is cancelled, you'll have to look on the boards in building 2! Same goes for exams.

There are some interesting courses like business communication with a fabulous prof! The IEA profs were very aware of exchange students, often gearing remarks towards us and open to explaining/simplifying what they were saying if you asked. Sometimes they wanted your input about how business concepts were carried out in your country!

Courses

LEA focuses mainly on applied modern languages (English, German, Italian and Spanish) and includes courses in Culture and Civilization, Translation and International Relations. IMUS combines language and business, with an emphasis on tourism. IMUS is perfect for those in the European Business stream of European Studies. Students in Culture and Civilization will have to be a little creative in order to make their course selections work, but the language courses in both the LEA and IMUS are excellent and very worthwhile for those working on a third language. You do not have to enroll in specific courses, only in the exams (unless it is an 'optional' course in which case sign-up sheets will be posted on the bulletin board of the respective department). Don't expect a course outline with synopsis and mark breakdown, the majority of courses are strictly lecture/exam. Mme Thyss is a fabulous professor, look into courses taught by her! There are also courses reserved for exchange students. These are great! They will be advertised during the pré-stage.

- Monique BOULET with the IMUS/LEA courses has solid information presented on slideshows
- Pascal GAY teaches societal law, and he is a very witty, interesting prof... loves exchange students
- Véronique FAVRE-BONTÉ taught international strategy in 2010/2011 and her class is very easy to follow, with slides and lots of participation, very helpful with exchange students
- Christine HUCHETTE taught human resources in 2010/2011 and she really makes sure to get exchange students involved and interacting with French students, lots of hands-on group work
- Beatrice GALEY teaches organization theory, and while she is daunting she is also very fair

- Bruce FILLON teaches classes for exchange students, and his business French class is very relevant to current issues (crise économique anyone?!), and he's a great prof
- For Masters classes, TATHAM and BERTHIER teach interesting subjects if you can find their courses listed somewhere!
- Try to avoid TURLOTTE or BAILLY law classes – hard to follow the lectures, and the profs are neglectful of exchange students

Marks

Marks at the *Université de Savoie* are rated on a scale of 1-20. A 9 is a pass, and a 10 is considered an average and very respectable grade. French students do not have to pass all of their courses in order to pass their *module* (the programme is divided into sections), and if they do fail a course that they are required to pass, they have the option of re-writing the exam in the following exam period. French professors don't know that we can't rewrite the exams later with the French students – so study hard and be careful!

Arrival in Chambéry

Chambéry is readily accessible from Paris, Geneva and Lyon by plane and TGV (high speed train). Regular TGVs run directly from Paris (Gare de Lyon) to Chambéry. Otherwise, from Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris, there is a TGV to Lyon Part-Dieu station where there are regular trains to Chambéry. Trains from Geneva run daily to Chambéry as well. It is much easier to get to Chambéry from Geneva than from Paris. (Geneva-Chambéry or Lyon-Chambéry are relatively easy routes, and you will become familiar with these roundtrips since the low-cost flights with EasyJet leave from both Geneva and Lyon airports). There are also buses from Lyon and Geneva that each take about an hour.

Living in Chambéry

Chambéry is a beautiful city, full of foreign students, and wonderfully located for travelling and skiing in particular. It is so small and compact that the university, grocery stores, the train station etc. are all very easily accessible on foot. Despite its size, and apparent tranquility, however, Chambéry has its share of crime (mainly muggings and harassment) and care should be taken when walking at night – especially through the Jardins du Verney or up the Montée St Sébastien to the on-campus residences. Chambéry becomes like a second home in no time! It is a gorgeous city! The Elephants statue is like the Cannon at Guelph, everyone arranges to meet there.

- The small town feel is similar to that of Guelph, but on a more compact scale. Chambéry easily becomes your hometown after a week or so of carrying a map around with you!
- There is everything you want within proximity – grocery stores and cinemas in walking distance from the main residences, a mall, large cinema and Lac

Bourget only a bus ride away – plus Grenoble, Geneva and Lyon are only a few hours away for a larger city experience.

- Exchange students really become like family in Chambéry, and they will actively create events and organize trips since they will want to travel and explore the region as much as you do.
- The more French students you get to know the better your year will be. It is a good idea to get to know French students in your classes since they can help you with your notes, your presentations and give you an authentic French experience. They likely won't initiate conversation but don't be scared! They're fantastic and have a lot to teach you about French culture.

Accommodation

In Residence

Accommodation in Chambéry is varied in terms of type, quality and price. Foreign students applying to the University of Savoie will automatically receive material from the DRI (Département des Relations Internationales). They will send you an application for student residences with your registration package.

The options offered by the SCRI are University residences (dorms and ‘studios’ on campus), private student residence in town *la Résidence du Comte Vert, l’Hôtel de l’Arche*, or rooms in family homes. All have their advantages and disadvantages. The RU *résidences universitaires* are well located for classes etc., but don’t expect the same kind of campus life and atmosphere that we have at Guelph (there are no campus bars), and laundry and grocery stores are a bit of a hike downhill. Don’t stay on campus. Almost all foreign students who live there move out in the first month. It is dirty and old. Convenience over quality, don’t go for this option. It’s a dark, lonely walk back at night.

The private student residences are better in terms of location (closer to Laundromat, grocery stores, train station, etc.), and work well for international students since they are fully furnished, but may have less of a residence atmosphere.

Compte Vert is located about a 20-30 minute walk from the University and is pretty close to downtown. It is a 5min walk to the train/bus station which is very handy, plus many bank branches on the same street. It is slightly isolated as it is on the other side of the city from the other student residences. It is a short walk to the grocery store LeClerc. Best place to shop with many “Eco+” discount brand items. Don’t shop at Monoprix for everything. You also have Lidl near LeClerc for cheap items, but limited. You are in a mini apartment where you share the kitchen and toilet/shower with a French roommate. There are laundry machines located in the building. Save 3 euros for the washing machine, coins only... no dryer but there is a drying rack in your room. And there is potential for an amazing view of the Alps, if you don’t get a room on the side of the building facing the road. Here, the landlord also

acts as a type of agent for the CAF. He provides you with the application form and will process the completed form for you.

The landlord changed in summer 2008 – it is now run by CROUS, a Grenoble-based student housing group. The ladies at the reception are lacking a bit of friendliness, but you can get what you need and take care of rent relatively easily – when the reception is open... sadly, they no longer sell/rent kitchenware, microwave ovens, extra mattresses etc.

- Many foreign/French students live in Arpej/Laureades, near the Chambéry library. It is very handy since it is also near Charley's, a good pub, and Opera, the one disco in town. It is helpful to know people there and fun to hang out – we had Halloween/Christmas parties in the living room there.
- Decent little kitchens with fridge and two heating pads. Try to buy cheap pots & pans, soap, sheets, cutlery, trash bags etc. from LeClerc. Don't buy them more expensively than you have to.
- You will have keys for your apartment & bedroom which also open to the garbage room & laundry room. There is a badge attached to the key, since there is a swipe-pass for the front entrance. Losing your keys will cost you 200 Euros, since the badge is hard to replace. Try very hard to never lose your keys
- You don't really meet your neighbors in Comte Vert like you would in a Guelph residence. The hallway has about 8 apartments per floor, but you don't really hang out in the hallways.
- There are no communal rooms or kitchens in the residence which is a big shame.

Hôtel Curial is quiet and well-placed, but you can't have more than 4 people in your room at one time. Right across the street from Arpej so it has all the same amenities nearby.

In Private Lodgings

There are also many private rooms and apartments available. The majority are well priced and quite easy to find. International students are eligible for *Assistance personnalisée au logement* (APL) from the *Caisse d'allocations familiales* (CAF) – a monthly rent rebate of up to 40% depending on your type of accommodation. You can apply for this directly to the CAF, or through your residence. You should *relever un dossier* on your arrival, and then submit your *carte de séjour* once you have received it. APL is granted retroactively to cover your rent before the *carte de séjour* has been issued.

Boarding with a family can be an amazing opportunity to improve your language skills and become familiar with the Savoie culture, but it also has its risks (namely that it cuts down on your freedom and independence significantly).

Some useful accommodation addresses:

Association du Comte Vert
177, avenue du Comte Vert
73000 Chambéry
tel: 011 33 4 79 62 28 05
fax: 011 33 4 79 62 28 09

Université de Savoie, SCRI
27 rue Marcoz – BP 1104
73011 Chambéry
tel: 011 33 4 79 75 84 30
fax: 011 33 4 79 75 85 70

Transportation

Despite the fact that most of the city is easily accessible on foot, Chambéry has a very good and quite efficient bus system (some dispute this in 2007, but there are quite a few bus lines, with the schedules/map found quite easily at the bus station / tourist office). The main bus terminals are at Les Eléphants (near the old city), or next to the train station. Tickets can be purchased on the bus, at a *tabac*, or from the STAC counter at Les Eléphants (and have to be machine validated or *compostés* on the bus). Student (reduced) tickets are available in books (*carnets*) of 10 from the STAC, but not on the bus. Unfortunately, be aware of unannounced strikes that will disrupt the bus service. These generally last a day but are very inconvenient because they could happen any time. You probably won't have to take the bus anyway. The Jacob campus is a 20 minute walk from town. We didn't usually take the bus at all, since from Comte Vert it is a rather straight walk, although it does gradually become steep near campus, but the bus is useful to get to Lac Bourget or the mall/cinema on the outskirts of town... and also to the base of the mountain to hike up to Croix du Nivolet – a must-do activity in Chambéry.

Shopping

Groceries- *Carrefour* (at Bassens or Chamnord, two shopping malls – you must take the bus to get there) or *Leclerc* are best for quality, selection and price. *Monoprix* is a little more conveniently located, but is more expensive. For Comte Vert residents, definitely walk 8-10min to *LeClerc*, and also use *Lidl* which is right near *LeClerc* for simple, cheap items. *Monoprix* is better for occasion/specialty items... and does have great chocolate choices!

Markets- The market takes place Thursday and Saturday mornings. It is a colourful and lively event, and a great place to pick up everything from plants to perfumes and regional delicacies. A must-do activity for when you stick around Chambéry for a weekend, especially if you park at a café near the stalls and people watch while sipping on a cappuccino; pick up some food for a picnic in Parc Verney or Lac Bourget!

For clothes shopping: Axo is hard to find but sells shoes for about 8 Euros. Stay away from it on Saturdays though, it is packed! Place St. Leger has good shops for clothes, bags and shoes.

Food and Drink

Try the local specialties like fondue Savoyard, raclette, tortiflette. The cheese Saint-Félicien is very good too! La Mondeuse is a fairly cheap red wine from Savoie – absolutely amazing! It is a good wine to send home as a gift.

Restaurants- There are many! Recommended are: *Le Sporting*, *La Frite Dorée*, *Le Cardinal* (a bar that serves lunch and mussels on Friday nights – very yummy!!) and *Le Savoyard* for delicious regional specialties (nice for special occasions). Street vendors (*crêpes*, *kebabs*, *sandwiches*, *pizza*) are good and cheap.

- Kebabs near Carré Curial and the train station, especially on a Sunday when you cannot shop or just came back from a weekend trip.
- Also along Rue Croix d'Or there are several nice places: a smoothie bar, *Vivaldi* (BEST food & service), *Arbre a Bieres* (an Alsatian pizza place with delicious menu items), *Table de Marie Ana* (British/French food, good prices), and a farther away a family-run Moroccan restaurant on the walk to campus!

Alcohol- This is France! Alcohol is cheap. A good bottle of wine will cost you \$4. Ironically the local wines (*Roussette de Savoie*, *Appremont*, etc.) are more expensive but worth trying. Don't drink in clubs. A mixed drink will cost you around \$12. Best bets are bars and cafés – or even better *Carrefour*. As for beer, a *sérieux* (about a pint) costs approximately \$5. At Opera, the main nightclub, you get a drink with cover charge. Try a “giraffe” when you go to a pub with a group, it's a 2/3L pitcher of beer in a metre-long tube. It's fun. Buy wine at the grocery store, and be grateful you don't have to go to LCBO separately. *LeClerc* usually has wine specials.

Entertainment

Night Life

Chambéry is not really known for its nightlife. There are a couple of clubs – *l'Opéra* and *Cocktail* (also *RDC*, *Melodie*, and salsa on Wednesdays at *Corsaire*) – that are ok for dance music. Otherwise, the nearby town of Aix-les-Bains has some good alternative clubs, as do Grenoble and Geneva. On the other hand, there are lots of bars in Chambéry. *Charley's* is the hangout for the international student crowd. *O'Cardinals*

is very popular! It has a nice patio and is always full of university students. *Le Chapon Fin* is good for pool. (Never went to Chapon Fin, or heard of anyone that did! Charlie's and Cardinals are the best places to hang out.) *Corsaire's* has salsa nights on Wednesdays. Dress nicely – it's fairly upscale. Drinks are very expensive too. Keep an eye out for special nights at *l'Opéra*. If you book in advance for some you get in free AND you get free drinks. One in awhile there are girls' only nights – lots of fun! *Mojitos* in Carré Curial is popular but Fridays and Saturdays are 25+ nights so they won't let students in. They have karaoke some weeknights though!

Cultural Life

Chambéry is well known for its cultural scene. The *Espace Malraux* has an excellent program of musical and theatrical performances, as does the *Theatre Charles Dullin*. The *Cinema Curial* shows a wide and interesting selection of art and international films. Students get a discount at the *Espace Malraux*, *Théâtre Charles Dullin* and the *Curial* with the Carte d'Adhésion available at the *Espace Malraux*. Chambéry is also home to an International Animation Festival, as well as festivals celebrating Celtic culture, jazz, summer music, and Medieval traditions. The local castle is quite cute. (Chateau des Ducs de Savoie – usually open on school holidays, and more often in spring/summer). There are performers there in period costumes if you go on the journée du patrimoine.

- There are works of art scattered everywhere, mural-type works called “Trompe l’oeil” which are quite neat to see – even in the Cathedral so it is worth a visit!
- At the end of September and April, there is a “braderie” on Sunday which is a big street fair/garage sale/flea market. People sign up to sell things they own, but there are also discount items like make-up, books, food stalls, etc. It is a lot of fun to check it out – plus shops are open on this Sunday, and usually at a 20% discount. Worth the look.

Additional remarks: Chambéry is a gorgeous little town surrounded by mountains. There are so many activities to do: rent a bike and go to Bourget, go hiking, just walk around, great shopping. In February there is a Carnival that consists of a great Parade and all the children dress up in costumes. You have to keep your eyes and ears open to be aware of special events not widely publicized. There are always student nights put on at bars, for example at *Hooligans* (not really at *Hooligans* in 08-09, more so at *RDC*, *Melodie* and *Opera*, all in the same building). Chambéry is also so close to Geneva that it is very easy to take a train to the Geneva International Airport and hop on an Easy Jet Flight and go almost anywhere in Europe. Geneva and Lyon airports have EasyJet flights, and Grenoble has RyanAir flights, but the airport is a bit outside the city. Chambéry has an airport near the lake with flights to the UK, mainly for skiers, but it is actually difficult to get there and you would have to take a taxi since the buses don't go there. The University can be the root of many headaches, though.

Sometimes you are actually stunned at the lack of organization and hassle you have to go through.

Useful contacts:

Lauren Van Rassel (2006-07): lvanrass@uwo.ca

Pascale Rabideau (2007-08): prabidea@uoguelph.ca

Fiona Simpson (2007-08): fsimpson@uoguelph.ca

Nicola Arnold (2008-09): narnold@uoguelph.ca

Sarah MacKinnon (2008-09): mackinno@uoguelph.ca

Elizabeth Ward (2008-09): ehood@uoguelph.ca

Annie Shepherd (2010-11): ashepherd@uoguelph.ca

GRENOBLE

Région: Rhône-Alpes

Département: Isère (38)

Population: approximately 300,000

Location: 104 km SE of Lyon

What the guide books say:

- The city with 'a mountain at the end of every street'
- Ancient capital of the Dauphinés
- Commercial, intellectual and tourist center of the Alpine area
- Sports capital in winter and summer
- The city lies near the junction of the Drac and Isère rivers, most of the city is on the south bank of the Isère
- The center of the historic section is the Palais de Justice and Pl. St. André
- Grenoble is a large, cosmopolitan city - its skyscrapers bear witness to Grenoble's fierce desire to move with the times (proof: the nuclear research plant!)
- -The birthplace of Stendhal, one of the most famous French novelists of the 19th century
- Host to the 1968 Winter Olympics; many of the venues have been put to good use

The *Maison de Tourisme* offers a student written guide called the "*Le DAHU Guide de Grenoble*" for only \$4. It has reviews of restaurants, bars, and information about sports and events in Grenoble. It's updated every year, and definitely worth the money!

The University of Grenoble is really 5 different schools: Université Joseph Fourier (Grenoble 1), Université Pierre Mendès-France (Grenoble 2), Université Stendhal

(Grenoble 3), Institut d'études politiques de Grenoble (IEP) and Institut Polytechnique de Grenoble (INP). Most European Studies students get placed in UPMF.

Université Pierre Mendès-France (UPMF)

The International relations contact for UPMF is currently Fabienne Chapelle, her office is on the 2nd floor of the UPMF main building. She will tell you who to see for your courses, help you with your student card, collect your grades at the end of the year and send them back to Canada and many other administrative tasks.

Courses

- You are a foreign student - you can do anything you want, as long as your courses fit into a schedule and you can get credit for them at home.
- The faculties and courses are organized very rigidly for the French students, which sometimes causes problems for foreign students. Learn to read the bulletin boards to find out if classes have been cancelled, changed or moved.
- There is no comprehensive course calendar for UPMF, each faculty has their own. You need to talk to the appropriate secretariat to get the course descriptions, etc.
- There are not a lot of assignments or essays to write, although it depends which courses you are taking. Lectures are important, textbooks are not, and final exams are usually worth 100% of your final mark (written and oral). Studying at the library or the médiathèque will be expected.
- Expect a lot of oral exposés, and oral exams for the main 7 credit “thématique” courses.
- Time-tables are not made up ahead of time - this makes scheduling courses difficult. Keep smiling and remember that as long as classes haven't started yet, everyone else is in the same situation!
- Registering for classes is not something to stress about either. Go to the classes you're interested in, check it out with the profs to see if there's room for you and once you've made your decisions, let the secretariat know.
- Office hours for profs (if they have any) should be respected, unless you want to ask an angry person for help.
- There tends to be a lot of emphasis placed on oral presentations.
- Classes don't usually start until mid-September
- Foreign students have the opportunity to take semester-long French courses for credit through FLE (Français Langue Étrangère) - at Stendhal. Try to take courses offered by M. Guichard.
- As exchange students, you can also follow courses in other faculties/colleges. For literature courses you can go to Stendhal, and for Political Science there are courses available at IEP (Institut des Études Politiques).
- In General, you will need a total ECTS credit weight of 30 course weights per semester, weights tend to vary (4, 5, 6, or 7 each). Pay attention to these differences when making your schedule. If you're missing credits Stendhal of-

fers many light 3 credit courses that have no exam and generally require a large paper or presentation and the end.

European Studies - Business Emphasis - European Studies does not exist in France - when you tell people what you're studying they'll give you funny looks. They will make you choose a faculty at UPMF, try to choose the one you think you'll be taking the most courses from, though it's not a particularly important decision. You will be given a list of International Relations Contacts for the various facilities when you arrive and can discuss your courses with them.

Arrival in Grenoble

If you land in Paris - there are frequent TGV trains to Lyon from Charles de Gaulle airport, and once you are in Lyon there are even more frequent trains to Grenoble. You may be able to find a direct train to Grenoble if you're lucky.

Cost: \$130 (4 hrs of travelling), but don't forget to get a *Carte 12-25*.

If you land in Lyon - shuttle busses to Grenoble from Lyon-Saint Exupéry airport run every hour.

Cost: \$20 (1h05 travelling time)

- It is also convenient to fly into Geneva, Switzerland, as it's only about 1h30 train ride from there to Grenoble, and there are quite a few trains every day. The train from Geneva cost about 12 euros.
- Do not fly into Grenoble airport, because it ends up costing more than going through Lyon

Where to live in Grenoble

It is possible for you to stay at the Condillac residence for 8 nights at \$10/night until you find permanent accommodation. It's not great, but it's better than the floor and cheaper than a hotel! (I don't think this is still true) It is wise to organize this before arrival (residence is likely to be full at that time)

Or you could stay at the one hostel in south Grenoble

<http://www.hihostels.com/dba/hostel020012.en.htm>. The South of Grenoble is not very nice at night however - there were riots there a few weeks ago.

If you are arriving in Residence for Sept 1st, either go *very* early, or wait until the next day, or you will wait in line for 5 hours... in the sun... dying....

Residence

When you move into residence, you will have to buy some things to make your room livable. There are no 'extras' provided, no blankets, pillow or toilet seats!

You will need:

- Cleaning supplies (for the bathroom)
- Room supplies (mats for the floor - very cold linoleum-on-concrete, hangers, pillow...)
- Cooking supplies (pots, pans, dishes, lock for your fridge locker...)

The BABOU discount store (bus line #8, stop Quinzaine) is a good place to buy all the house-wares you need, but don't want to spend a lot of money on! Closer to residence there is a Casino (chain of super market) a Lidl and an Ikea that's about a 15min walk.

On Campus - St.Martin D'Hères

These residences are about a 35-40 minute walk from downtown, but they are right on the B tram line. Trams run from 5:30am - 2am, every day of the week (with Sunday exceptions).

Résidence Ouest

- Rooms are 12m² with a bed, shelf unit, desk and closet
- Private bathroom in the room, with a shower, toilet and sink
- Communal kitchen for the floor - hot plates only (no ovens!) and refrigerators with shared locker spaces
- No phones in the rooms - there is a phone in the hall for incoming calls, and a pay phone to make outgoing calls
- \$360/month (before CAF)

Résidence Hector Berlioz

- You will be able to choose your building number (there are six) and floor number. I'd recommend looking around before registering so that you can choose a hallway that is not gross. Some hallways are 'darker' than others.
- There is a rather unreliable wireless internet connections in the buildings but it's really bad. 64bit computers don't work with the internet very well.
- Rooms are 12m² with a bed, shelf unit, desk and closet
- Private bathroom in the room, with a shower, toilet and sink
- Communal kitchen for the floor - hot plates only (no ovens) and little refrigerators in rooms
- Phones in the rooms which only accept incoming calls - but you can call other rooms in Berlioz (it's also possible to get hooked up to France Telecom... for a fee!)
- Pay phones in the lobby to make outgoing calls
- \$400./month (before CAF)

***DO NOT ACCEPT OLYMPIC VILLAGE.** It may sound cool, but it's in one of the worst areas of Grenoble. Muggings, robberies and car torchings are not uncommon there. Inquire about the other residences on campus and in town. Its also sort of in the middle of nowhere - busses don't come very often and stop running around 8pm and the closest Tram (Tram D) stops running at 9pm. I HIGHLY SUGGEST LIVING NEAR THE TRAM A B OR C if you don't want to get a bike, otherwise your transportation will be VERY difficult.

Apartments

The earlier you arrive, the better your chances for successful apartment hunting. It gets to be very difficult after July, even if you go through an agency (which will charge \$500 to \$800 to find you an apartment). Avoid the *Logement 38* agency (Avenue Alsace-Lorraine), which tried to rip off one of our students in 2004. Another option is to hunt through www.appartager.fr; it costs 15 Euros to connect, but is well worth the visit.

Another French site, where a basic membership is free is Recherche Colocation:

<http://www.recherche-colocation.com/> or you can perhaps try Kijiji.fr

- Best way is to check ads posted on bulletin boards. You'll get information about the best places to look before you leave.
- Remember that you'll have to pay the value of 2 months rent upon arrival.
- Most of the time you need a guarantor before you sign your lease. A guarantor is someone who agrees to pay your rent if you do not. Some rental agencies will be really picky and only accept French Guarantors, make sure to be clear about this issue.
- Live near the tram lines - busses stop running at around 8pm. Living in downtown Grenoble is quite nice, there are many student apartments and you're close to everything.
- DO NOT LIVE IN THE SOUTH OF GRENOBLE: It's ok during the day but not a good area at night. I would not live anywhere south of the Tram A stop Albert 1er de Belgique.
- Sharing an apartment (colocation) with French students is a wonderful way to immerse yourself, improve your French and meet other French people. Your roommates may also appreciate living with an Anglophone as many French students take English courses and appreciate the opportunity to practice English as much as you appreciate the opportunity to speak French

Transportation in Grenoble:

TAG - *Transportation de l'Agglomération grenobloise*

There are three tram lines that cover the majority of the city

A line (blue) goes North-South through the downtown

B line (green) goes East-West, from the train station to the University and through the downtown

C line (pink) goes through the centre of Grenoble to Campus.

The Tram D line (yellow) goes from the University into Saint Martin d'Heres and is not very useful

- Trams run every day of the week (every 3 or 4 minutes!) from 5:30am – 2am, although the service is reduced after 8 pm and all day Sundays
- There is also a very comprehensive bus system which will get you just about anywhere in the city, but they stop running after 8 or 8:30 pm.
- A monthly unlimited-use student pass for the TAG network (busses and trams) is \$40. The annual pass is 180 Euros. Definitely worth it unless you

plan to ride without a ticket, risk getting caught and having to pay the steep fine- 40 euros. NOTE: with the large international population in Grenoble, the “I’m a foreigner, I don’t speak French” excuse doesn’t fly with the inspectors! You *should* pay for the trams, but there are very few inspectors and you can get away with hopping them very easily. I haven’t been checked once all year.

- Taxis in Grenoble are expensive, but there are always a couple waiting at Pl.Grenette for anyone who is having too much fun at the *Couche Tard* to run for the last tram!
- Your feet will serve you well as transportation, so bring comfortable shoes.

Shopping in Grenoble

Groceries

- If you live on campus, *Géant-Casino* (Av. Gabriel-Péri) is the closest super-marché
- If you live in town, *Carrefour* (Grand’ Place), *Casino*, *Attac*, *Prisunic* (more expensive) are all good options
- There are middle-sized grocery stores all around town which are alright as well, such as *SPAR* and *ED* (a discount store) and *Monoprix*.
- Of course, there are bakeries and patisseries around every corner where you can buy your daily baguette, (*Robert Plat*, place Notre-Dame, is highly recommended) and there are many weekly and daily markets to buy fresh fruits and vegetables.
- There are also *Restau-U’s* (*Restaurants Universitaires*) - you can put any amount of money on a free rechargeable moneo card. A full meal costs about 3 Euros, but the food isn’t great (dehydrated mashed potato powder anyone?) and the hours aren’t always convenient. Generally they’re open for an hour at lunch and an hour and a half at dinner time.

Food and Drink

Restaurants

- Along the North bank of the Isère river there are many pizzerias. Two of the best are *Dolce Vita* and *Chez Mickey* (excellent pizzas and crêpes for dessert)
- 3 well-recommended “French” cuisine restaurants: *Au Fin Gourmet* (4 cours Jean Jaurès) and *Chez Margo* (near Pl.Victor Hugo), *La Marie Morgane Creperie* (Place Notre-Dame)
- Best kebab joint in town: *Fraternité Kebab* (A little hole in the wall near Hubert Dubedout, the woman who owns it is lovely and they have amazing white sauce)

Cafés

- *Le Progrès* (Pl. Notre Dame) - large and open on Sundays, although it costs F2 extra, just because it’s Sunday!

- *Le Tribunal* (Pl. St.André) - young, student atmosphere
- *Le Glacier* (Pl. Notre-Dame) - try the gâteau au chocolat, it's worth every centime!
- *L'Atmosphère* (Pl. Aux Herbes) - the name says it all!
- *Café du Nord*

Nightlife:

For English-speaking people and North-American music...

Le Couche-Tard (1 rue du Palais)

London Pub (rue Brocherie) definitely a great pub, the bartender dress up as cowboys & policemen

Chorus Café (rue Brocherie)

La Bibliothèque (small, but where the Americans go)

O'Callaghan's

For more French people than English

Saxo Pub

Les Trois Canards

Les Trois Diables (Notre-Dame-Musée tram stop)

Le Bagatel (Pl.St.André)

Café No Name (Les Taillées tram stop)

Les Frères Berthom (rue Saint Hugues) a French beer garden chain with cool decoration (looks like outside/inside with trees, cobblestones, windows etc. with happy hour every night)

Any 'class sponsored' event

If you plan on spending a lot of time in the bars, plan on spending a lot of money too! Drinks are expensive - a pint of the cheapest beer is \$4, and a rum and coke can cost up to \$10. Some of the more popular student bars (like the *Couche Tard* and *Frères*) have Happy Hour a few nights a week when a pint is only \$2.50... Take advantage!

Skiing

Grenoble is the center of the French Alps, so downhill skiing is very accessible.

Cross-country skiing is also available at many of the ski areas. Chamrousse is good for cross-country skiing.

GUC (Grenoble Université Club) membership

École de Glisse membership

- Pay \$40 for the card, plus whatever insurance you want
- Once you're a member, there are regular trips (every weekend, some weekdays) to the mountains that are really cheap... discounts on transportation and lift tickets
- GUC card includes lessons at 5 or 6 different levels

- You can rent equipment in Grenoble by the day (\$15 for everything) or for the season (depending on the quality of the equipment, between \$100 and \$200). Borel Sports on rue Alsace-Lorraine is a popular rental place, and it's close to the bus station so you don't have to carry your skis very far. There is also a good rental store near the Grand Sablon tram stop (tram B).
- If you don't plan on skiing enough to make buying the GUC card a good deal, there are quite reasonably priced transportation and lift ticket deals at the bus station. From \$30 for the smaller 'stations de ski' to \$50 for the larger ones, for the day.

Other sports

There is a *Forum du sport* around mid-October where all the sports clubs are represented. Watch out for signs around the campus.

- Climbing up la Bastille is always fun and a bit challenging – or taking up les oeufs (bubbles) – on a clear day you can see Mont Blanc from the top
- You can earn credits for taking sports. I'm not exactly sure what the details are but it's possible.

Banking

If you live downtown, the *Lyonnaise de Banque* (boul. Edouard Rey) is recommended for its excellent service and friendliness towards foreigners.

Useful contacts:

Stephen MacLean-Rogers (2006-07): macleanr@uoguelph.ca

Ashley Moggy (2006-07): admoggy@gmail.com

Erica McConnell (2009-10): emcconne@uoguelph.ca

LYON

Region: Rhône-Alpes

Department: Rhône (69)

Population: 1 262 233, 2nd largest city in France

Location: 430 km SE of Paris, 310 km N of Marseille

What the guide books say:

- City at junction of the Rhône and Saône Rivers
- Second largest city in France (but close to Marseille!)
- Easy access to the Alps and Beaujolais region
- Centre of book publishing, banking and silk production
- Gastronomic capital of France
- Founded in 43 BC., became cornerstone of Roman Empire "Lugunendum"
- Home to the oldest veterinary school in the world, founded 1762

- Vieux Lyon is home to one of the finest collections of medieval and Renaissance buildings in Europe, to a Roman theatre built by Augustus Caesar in 15 BC., and to great *traboules*, covered passageways between buildings to protect silk as weavers carried it from place to place. These were used during the French resistance.
- Lyon, more than other cities in France, has embraced the monetarist vision of the European Union.
- Resistance Capital (the IEP is in the building which served as a hospital for Jean Moulin, now Musée de la Résistance).
- There is also la fete des lumieres each year on the 5th to the 8th of December which in its origins was a religious celebration. Now there are many spectacles all over the city where they decorate the buildings with spectacular light displays!

*There is an excellent student-written guidebook of Lyon released each fall called *Le Petit Paumé*. It has information on everything: stores, theatres, restaurants, clubs etc. Watch for signs advertising its release (usually at Bellecour). By the way, it's free!

Institut d'Etudes Politiques, our partner school in Lyon:

University of Guelph students take classes at the IEP, which falls under the umbrella of University Lyon Lumière II, but is also quite separate. French students need to take an entrance exam in order to be accepted; the IEP schools across France are quite competitive and well respected.

In spite of the fact that this is a political science institute, there are many courses available in other areas such as history, economics, international relations and communication. Although it may technically be possible for you to take courses outside of the IEP, each department works very independently and communication barely exists, if at all. It is very possible to get lost in the administration and switching faculties is generally not worth the trouble.

All changes of schedule, rooms and exam times should be posted on bulletin boards. Usually foreign students attend many different courses for the first few weeks and then decide on which are appropriate to take. Make sure you check with the ESP program co-ordinator in Guelph to confirm that your classes are going to transfer to Guelph credits.

The IEP courses are on a trimester system. Some courses run all year and have 100% final exams in May; others are only a trimester and are graded on various assignments. Each *cours fondamentale* has a 100% final exam; *cours optionnels* may require an essay instead, *conference de méthode* are based on assignments. Do not take too many year-long courses or you will find yourself writing too many finals. The final exam for a full-year course usually comprises one required essay question that you

write for 2 hours. Most foreign students seem to do better in courses that require individual assignments or a final project. It is much easier to work on a project over a long period of time than to recall a year's worth of information for one essay exam question. Some professors do not schedule office hours (called “permanences”), if they have offices at all, so you have to arrange a time to see them, catch them after class or email them.

Details on academic life and student life in general can be found on IEP's website: <http://iep.univ-lyon2.fr>. Go to “Calendrier”, “Programme des cours”, “relations internationales” – “Guide de l'étudiant ».

CIEF

An optional two-week long introduction course exclusively for foreign students, focusing on the methodology of French education (how to write an essay, what is expected from a *présentation* etc.) as well as syntax, vocabulary.

Tours of the city and Saturday trips on most weekends complement the academics and give an excellent opportunity to get to know both the city of Lyon and places of interest in the area, for a very reasonable price. Trips to Annecy, Avignon, and Dijon are only \$25 each. Take advantage of the bargains and the knowledgeable people working for CIEF who might lead you on a walking tour.

The greatest advantage of this course is having time to get to know the city, adjust to the language, and figure out things like banking, shopping and bus routes before the real academic year begins. The introduction course is strongly recommended, for language improvement and knowledge of one's surroundings. It is not part of the regular academic year and is therefore not covered by Guelph academic fees, although it will transfer as a 0.5 U of G French credit upon presentation of the appropriate transcript. The course costs around \$300-350. Details can be found at www.univ-lyon2.fr/cief Otherwise, follow the programme to get a Certificat des Etudes politiques, and you'll be put in a French language course through the CIEF, that runs over both semesters and counts as 1 full FREN credit. This is a great way to make friends and meet people.

Arrival in Lyon

From: St. Exupéry Airport (20 km SE of the city)

Don't panic. This is a tiny L-shaped airport and you can't get lost. Stay on the arrivals level and follow signs for information or the *Satobus*. It costs about 13 euros, 40 euros round trip regardless of where you get off. The bus stops at *Part-Dieu* (shopping mall and train station) and *Perrache* (train station: always travel north from here, the south of the *presqu'île* is the only sketchy part of the town!) and *Grange*

Blanche. If you will be staying at *Résidence André Allix*, go all the way to *Perrache* and then take a taxi, or a bus if you packed lightly.

From Paris, you can take the TGV (super-high-speed train) right from *Charles de Gaulle* airport to *Perrache* or *Part-Dieu* (a two-hour ride).

Accommodation

IEP lets students find their own accommodation, which becomes harder and harder as the beginning of the academic year approaches. Students typically rent an apartment (studio or collocataire) or find a room in a private residence close to the University. Make sure you apply for the *Aide personnalisée au logement*, which will considerably reduce rental costs. The following websites can be very helpful in your search for accommodation in Lyon: www.lyoncampus.org, www.adele.org, www.crous-lyon.fr, www.club-etudiant.com, www.colocation.fr

Residence

Résidence André Allix is in the 5th arrondissement, about a 40 minute walk or 20 minute bus ride from the IEP.

Rooms are at least \$500 per month (paid every three months) and include: bed, desk, end table, closet, sink, sheets, ugly wool blankets, and pillow. Co-ed toilets and showers are shared with your floor and there are also two hotplates where you may be able to do some simple cooking. Your sheets will be washed once every three weeks or so, but you are responsible for cleaning your own room. Building D is the nicest and definitely worth \$200 per month. It has more bathrooms, showers and kitchens for fewer people and the kitchens are also equipped with fridges. There is one telephone per floor that receives incoming calls only. All outgoing calls are made from pay phones right outside the residence. The residence reserves the right to inspect your rooms for vermin and electrical appliances (no, I'm not kidding). If the wattage of your appliances exceeds your allowed electricity limit, you will be asked to pay the difference at the secretariat. Keep money and documents tucked away from prying eyes by locking them in a suitcase.

Studios are available in the *Les Arches d'Agrippa* building and cost \$300 per month, which includes similar furniture plus a table, a fridge and stove, and your own bathroom with shower stall. There is a direct telephone line to your room. (Having a cell-phone is essential for your social life anyway, though!)

There is a cafeteria which serves meals during limited periods only and it is not open on weekends. Meal tickets can be purchased for \$4 (with student card) and provide a salad, main course, dessert, fruit and bread. The food is not great and it's rather

greasy (ten times worse than Prairie or Creelman!). Vegetarians will have a difficult time eating a balanced diet if relying solely on the cafeteria meals.

There are a couple of laundry rooms available for student use. There are only 2 washers and dryers in each room, so go at off-peak hours. Unfortunately, laundry is an expensive part of life in France; \$4 for a wash and \$0.50 for every 5 minutes in the dryer. You might want to invest in a drying rack or get used to hand washing some things.

Private Lodgings

If you wish to live in an apartment or take a room in a house, you'll need to go to the CROUS to get phone numbers and addresses. The best areas to look in would be *Croix Rousse, Vieux Lyon, Presqu'île, Part Dieu or Jean Macé*. These areas will be more expensive than others, but are much more convenient when the buses stop running at midnight. In my experience private lodging was much cheaper than living in residence, but if you are only staying for a semester it is better to stay in residence.

Apartment finding services are available, but are quite expensive. Start with the web suggestions offered above or try to find connections! You'll need to sign a "bail", and hand over a caution cheque worth two months rent. Finding an apartment is very stressful and Lyon has a shortage of housing. I found my apartment at the CRIJ, which has free listings for jobs, and apartments, Remember to look for a furnished apartment (meublé) if you do not want to buy furniture.

Transportation

Lyon's transportation system is excellent (especially compared to Guelph!). There are 4 main metro lines, dozens of buses, trams and two funicular lines to go up the col. A monthly pass is \$50 and is well worth the money if you take the bus to school each day. A single ticket is \$2 but a book of 10 is only \$12 if you have a student card.

To get the initial bus pass you must provide a photo, valid student ID for the entire year and proof of residence. You can get a residence card from *André Allix*. If you are in an apartment bring a bill with your name and address. During the week and on Saturdays buses run about every 10 minutes. Service is a little slower on Sundays and towards the end of the night. Service stops at midnight. Schedules are available at major transfer points.

Vélo V! Bikes are the best deal. They don't close at midnight and are what all the locals use. 1 euro buys you a week's pass or 10 euros for a year. There are stands at every turn, and rides under a half-hour don't cost any more! You'll need your carte bleue (debit card) from your bank to purchase at the machines, or go to the train station to get your year's pass. You'll need a 150 euro caution cheque.

Shopping

Carrefour - located at Part-Dieu shopping centre. A European-style grocery store, which means they sell everything from socks to refrigerators, including your food. A little inconvenient, as it is out of the way and you have to take the subway with your bags (bring your backpack). *Carrefour* is more expensive than other grocery stores.

Prisunic- located in the centre of town on rue de la République. Less selection and more expensive, but closer to the university.

Continent - A little more convenient for those living in André Allix. A bus goes directly there, but buses are infrequent. Comparable prices to *Carrefour*.

Leaderprice- the cheapest! Go here for your staples once a month. Rue Felix Faure.

Markets- Croix-Rousse has a market every day, but no food on Tuesdays; there are also markets 3 or 4 times a week along the banks of the Saône. Jean Macé, close to school, has one on Wednesday and Saturday mornings. This is the best place to buy your fruit, veggies, plants, herbs, jewellery, handbags, cheese and meats directly from the producers. It's a good chance to talk to some colourful French characters. If you want to attempt to prepare some real French cuisine, tell the vendors you are a foreign student and then settle in for hours of culinary explanations! There is a "Petit Paumé des Marchés" that you can get which tells you all the different markets going on in the city and what they sell.

Corner stores & Bakeries- Your local *boulangerie* is definitely the best place to buy your *baguette*. Small corner stores may also help you out in an emergency, but they are much more expensive than larger grocery stores.

None of the grocery stores offer bags for free. Bring your own!

Night Life

Be sure to go out in a group, as buses stop running at midnight and cabs can be very expensive if you can't share the cost. The cheapest alternative is to walk home (do it in a group and avoid troublesome areas) or wait until the first bus around 5 a.m. Or take a bike!

Pass Culture

The city of Lyon offers first-year students a special series of tickets for performances. The pass includes six tickets that must be used at six different establishments. Each venue offers tickets to selected performances throughout the year. Take advantage of this fantastic opportunity to see another side of French culture. Try to choose a variety of performances and be sure not to miss the opera (even if you hate it, it is an unforgettable experience to see an opera in Europe). Book early because only a certain number of tickets are allotted to pass holders for each performance. My cost for the opera was \$11 and the seat I had was worth \$120! The "Pass Culture" only cost about \$60 or \$11 per show. These are on sale for a limited time, early October. The Sunday markets are along the Saone River near the Vieux Lyon, and it is a great thing to do on a Sunday when many things are closed. There are different sections for books, food, clothes, and art/jewellery.

Movie Theatres

They show many typical Hollywood films that you'll be missing at home. Some films will be a few months behind North American release dates. Films are shown dubbed or subtitled so be sure to check (V.O. means *version originale*). Be sure to experience the French film industry or other European films that aren't featured at Cineplex-Odeon or Famous Players. Their style of films is very different from Hollywood - take advantage of it while you're there. The price will vary by day and time of day. For example, a weekday matinée is cheapest and a Saturday night is most expensive. Some cinemas offer student discounts. Prices vary from \$7 to \$12. About three times a year, they have a special called the "Rentrée du cinema" where all the tickets are 3 Euros only.

Bars

In Vieux Lyon check out:

Antidote

St. James

Smoking Dog

On the Presqu'île

Café Prosper (lots of French students)

La République (same)

The Albion (good for British soccer games)

The Shamrock

Vox

Ayers Rock (Tuesday nights are for students, international especially).

Going out on the boats permanently docked on the Rhone river is a great experience.

Useful contacts:

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MONTPELLIER

Région: Languedoc-Roussillon

Department: Hérault (34)

Population: approx. 350,000

Location: 750 km S of Paris, on the Mediterranean sea.

What the guidebook says:

- “The French California”, “The Rome of tomorrow”
- Very dynamic administrative, cultural and business center for the whole region
- Home to the oldest medical school in Europe (founded in 1221)
- If you are looking for a warm climate, beautiful beaches, great nightlife and a huge student population, this is the town for you.

University

There are three universities in Montpellier and they are not centrally located. Montpellier I is devoted to law and medicine, Montpellier II to science and Montpellier III to the humanities. The city is full of students (over 80,000).

Institut d’Administration des Entreprises (IAE), our partner in Montpellier

The IAE is part of Université de Montpellier II (Science and Technology). It is located 15 minutes by bus from the city center (lines 5 or 6), and is housed in the most modern and original building on campus. It is only suitable for “business” ESP students and no courses can be taken outside the IAE structure. Library resources are somewhat limited, but most of the work required of students does not even require trips to the library. Our contact person there is Mme Seng Bisiou. You can get her contact info from CIP. (Address: place Eugène Bataillon 34095 Montpellier Cedex 5, web site: <http://www.iaeinternationalrelations.com/siteiae.swf>), who will be happy to help you with administrative, academic or other problems.

Classes are attended by both international and French students, who are all expected to take the same program (including certain social activities), especially during the first semester. Fortunately the curriculum is similar to what ESP students would have done in Guelph. Required courses include marketing, advertising, human resource management, business strategy, law, European economics, international negotiations, Intercultural management, statistics and related courses. So this “one-size-fits-all” approach to studying is less a problem than it would appear, and it has the enormous advantage of rapidly integrating foreign students into a cohesive educational and social unit. French-language skills vary enormously among the international students group, the Canadians usually being among the most fluent and having the least trouble following the lectures. Textbooks are sometimes needed, but the most useful information is given during the 3-hour lectures. Teachers are lecturing to you and do not encourage participation. You are expected to take notes and remember most of them at exam time. You will not be writing essays or midterms, since students are normally evaluated during final exams at the end of the semester. You can expect therefore to have lots of time to travel, socialize, etc. at the beginning of each semester and pay for that with very hard work 4 times throughout the year (Nov., Jan.,

April, June). Because of the focus on lectures, and despite the distribution of class notes by the prof via the internet, it is definitely not a good idea to skip classes.

Canadian students willing to write a “mémoire” (50 p. thesis) on top of their regular program can earn a second-year European diploma (DUGCI), which may be useful for eventual business work/studies in Europe. It involves extensive research, an oral presentation to 4 professors followed by a question period. It’s quite feasible, but takes a lot of extra time and will not be recognized by the U. of Guelph and it is becoming less recognized in France.

ESP students typically earn 2.5 credits for their work during the first semester and 2.5 for the second semester, which is characterized by a much higher level of study, with courses at the French MA. level involving group presentations with the French students, who incidentally don’t tolerate slackers. Luckily the hardships of your second semester will be soothed by frequent holidays and the return of balmy weather, which can best be appreciated on a local beach, as early as March. You can pick up your marks from Yamina and they will be sent officially to Guelph at the end of the academic year. Equivalencies will be determined thereafter and communicated to you as soon as possible.

Montpellier II offers a two-week “pré-stage” in September for the foreign students. It consists of French-language classes and instruction on French political institutions and on the history and present status of the Languedoc-Roussillon area. Although not compulsory and not included in your Guelph fees, it is highly recommended because it gives you a sense of the region you are living in, improves your French-language skills (every little bit helps...), gives you time to adapt to your new daily life and to make friends before classes start. The U. of Guelph will recognize the 40-hour pré-stage as a 0.5 course in French if you can demonstrate that you have actually taken and passed it (get a “relevé de notes”, i.e. transcript). The cost is approx. 150 Euros.

In terms of costs, while your tuition has already been paid at Guelph, you can expect to pay a number of small “supplementary” insurance or enrolment charges, apart from the above-mentioned pré-stage. Ask for receipts in each case.

Arriving in Montpellier

If you are flying from Paris, take a taxi at the airport. It will cost you about \$25 to get downtown. Don’t leave a tip because the driver will probably add \$7 - 10 for a “baggage fee”. A shuttle (*navette*) to the *gare routière*, when available, offers a cheaper alternative. After settling down in your temporary accommodation, it’s a good idea to contact / visit the IAE to get your student card, which will be useful in subsequent transactions (bank account, bus pass, etc.). You may not receive your student card until classes officially start.

I took the TGV from the train station located in CDG airport to MPL's train station and had my landlord pick me up. If not, you can always take the Tram since it's almost right across the street. Be careful though, as there are gypsies hanging around the train station.

Accommodation

There are several ways to set up your accommodation for the year.

1. You arrive in France, tired and disoriented, with huge luggage in tow, and stay in a hotel or hostel until you find a place to live. Cheapest hotels (Hotel des Etuves is a good option) are around the *Place de la Comédie*. Added to the culture shock, this can be a very stressful experience, but you may end up in a great apartment in the beautiful downtown area by hiring the services of an (expensive) agency, which can provide you with F1, F2, F3 (1,2,3 bedrooms) furnished accommodation at reasonable rates. You'll need either a bank account or a certified cheque from "La poste" to pay the agency fee and your initial payment is usually for 1.5 months rent. The cost of any damage will be deducted from that deposit when you leave; so make sure the initial report on the "good" condition of your apartment is not exaggerated. One student recommends the FIAM agencies (yellow diamond logo) and suggests to stay away from single-fee agencies like LOGICA who ask you to pay before they find you accommodation. Another student had a bad experience with the MIL agency on St-Guilhem. In Montpellier, it is no more expensive to live downtown than on the outskirts.

2. Alternatively, you might want to save the cost of an agency and go apartment hunting yourself with the help of such free publications as *Bonjour* or *Top Hebdo*, which open a "student" section in September. Or go to the *Corum* where they have a *Service logement*.

3. You make important arrangements beforehand. A good way to start is to register with www.appartager.fr before leaving Canada. One past student recommends *Résidence Le Clémenceau* located 1 rue Bourrely, Montpellier 3400 (tel 04-67-92-93-84; fax 04-67-92-96-84). This is a private student residence offering single and double suites, each equipped with a kitchenette, bathroom and shower, dishes and utensils. Other supplies can be purchased at *Tout pour 10F*, the equivalent of our dollar store. The buildings are clean and modern, close to banks, stores, etc, but not centrally located. You can count on friendly and helpful receptionists, room (plus sheets and towels) cleaning every two weeks, laundry facilities and a bus stop to the University. Rent was \$600 / month in 2000, of which 40% was reimbursed by the Aide Personnalised au Logement. Check their internet site www.residences-etudiantes.com for information if this option appeals to you. *Le Clémenceau* can also give you information on another similar private residence, *L'Observatoire*, which is cheaper and more centrally located, but offers smaller rooms (504 euros a month/ 10 months). Depending on your lifestyle, you may appreciate or bemoan the fact that residence life tends to be very quiet in France. Upon discovering that hanging out in common areas was not enough to meet the locals, one Guelph student resorted – successfully – to knock-

ing on everyone's door and introducing herself... another suggests eating dinner on the patio at *Le Clémenceau* around 8 pm.

4. If you want to immerse yourself completely in French culture, you might consider living with a French family, despite the constraints that this formula implies. Mme Gouirand's office is the place to start if this option appeals to you.

Whatever your approach, returning students are unanimous in recommending that you look for something in the *Centre-ville*, since no-one lives near the University and there is nothing to do there except take classes. Also public transportation stops at 1:00 a.m. and you will no doubt want to stay downtown occasionally bit later than that. Try to find a place where utilities are included so that you won't have to be dealing with paying bills.

I stayed in an apartment which cost about 465 euros per month, but I received 170 euros back from CAF, so it made food and rent roughly the same price as it would be in Guelph for me.

Transportation

All of Montpellier is accessible by foot, and vehicles are not allowed in the core. So walking or strolling will be your main means of transportation. For longer distances however, the city has everything you might need:

An efficient and easy-to-understand bus / streetcar system, with its terminal at the end of rue de la République. Ideal to go to the University or to the beach. You can get a student pass (*carte à puce*, \$300 for the whole year) or pay \$1.50 per ride. Remember, however, that buses stop early, and service is reduced on Sundays. One student notes that the tram system is very good. She writes that it may seem that one can sneak on the tram for free, but it's not worth the risk. There is a steep fine and checks are very random.

An efficient train system to connect you with most cities in western Europe. For instance, Paris is only 4 hours away by TGV. The "12-25" youth card from the SNCF (about \$70) will give you 25 to 50% discounts on most trips, depending on day and time of departure.

Coaches, located near the train station, can be used for trips to Nîmes, Béziers (12 euros round trip) and other places not easily accessible by train (Barcelona is 30 euros round trip at certain times of year).

An airport, 8 km away (take shuttle in *gare routière*), used by Air France, British Airways and Air Littoral. Cheap fares can be found by visiting www.ryanair.com or www.easyjet.com.

Banking

Watch out for monthly or hidden fees (to close an account or to transfer branches, which costs about \$40 at Credit Lyonnais). With the appropriate bank card, it is quite easy and inexpensive to withdraw money from a Canadian account. Withdrawing large amounts each time saves money on bank charges. Avoid *Société Générale* and its exorbitant service charges. One student warns that you should be prepared to have troubles getting your residence deposit transferred back to your Canadian account. Another student recommends PNB Paribas. You're better off not getting cheques unless your landlord prefers cheques to automatic withdrawal, as anyone can steal and use them.

Shopping

For the best prices, consider *Monoprix*, *LIDL*, *Inno* (city centre), or megastores selling everything but located on the outskirts, like *Carrefour*, *Auchan*, *Leclerc*, *Géant* (rue de Lattes). If you stay in *Le Clémenceau* the *Intermarché* grocery store is right across the street – bring your own bags! *Le Polygone* is a big shopping mall which can meet most of your needs. Also consider the morning *marchés* for fresh fruit and vegetables: Place de la Comédie, Place Jean Jaurès, Halles Castellanes, Halles Lais-sac, Plan Cabannes. There is an interesting flea market (notably for supplies and used furniture) at Espace Mosson on Sunday mornings. For emergencies, there are small stores which never close, but selection is limited and prices rather high. And of course, if you can afford them, there are numerous little shops and boutiques full of treasures in the downtown core.

Night life

Some favorite cafés and bars: *The Bière Académie* (for beer and moules frites), *le Café Joseph* and *le Café Leffe* (place Jean-Jaurès), *le Caveau*, *le Macadam*, *le Cubanito*, *le Circus*, *le Peanuts*, *le Mex*, *Barberousse*, an underground rum bar made to look like the cabin of a ship, and *Au Bureau*. If you desperately need respite from speaking French, there are a few English / Irish pubs: *O'Carolyn's*, *London Tavern*, *Fitzpatrick's*, *Vert Anglais*, and *Auer's Rock* (Tuesdays in Antigone).

Bars/discos close at 1:00 a.m., except for *le Fizz* and *le Rockstore* (4:00). Try also *Nitropolis*, *Pulp*, *Souleil* (unspoken dress code), *l'Isis*, *El Pincho Pingo* (very young crowd), *Nitro* (techno music). The big clubs tend to be out of town, near the beaches. Go to *La Dune* before winter if you want to dance all night under the stars, thereby experiencing a “*nuît blanche*” in France. Also check out *Matchiko*, *Contact*, *Villa Rouge* and *The Palace*. Beware: there usually is a cover charge (at least 13 euros) and drinking can be very expensive in French discos. The further out of town you go, the more expensive it is.

Recommended, reasonably cheap, restaurants include: *le Bouchon St-Roch*, *l'Escalier*, *le Boeuf agile*, *l'Entrecôte*. Look for the local specialties: *cassoulet*, *magret de*

canard, foie gras. Past students give mixed reports on the kebabs, one student says they made her sick, another highly recommends them! Up to you to try!

Tourism

For those who enjoy cycling, bike paths are great and it is easy to buy a second hand bike at the Sunday morning *marché aux puces* located by the World Cup soccer field. But most sightseeing should be done on foot, with occasional rest periods in a café or in a park. You might want to start with the Place de la Comédie, which is home to the fountain of the Three Graces, the Opera House, various bourgeois buildings with domed roofs, two cinemas and great cafés and restaurants. You will also visit the Antigone, a massive restaurant and housing complex inspired by Roman architecture, and the various fountain-filled parks, in particular the Jardin des Plantes and the Promenade du Peyrou, with its Arc de Triomphe beautifully lit up at Christmas. A mini-train leaving from Place de la Comédie will spare you the walking part of the visit for about \$8. There is also the Musée Fabre.

In terms of entertainment the Opéra Comédie stages operas and theatrical performances, often available at reduced rates with a special Carte Pass and popular singers and bands perform at the Zénith amphitheatre. I went to the Zenith for the Break-dancing Battle of the Year in May and my other friends went to see Lenny Kravitz. Also do not miss the Festival International Montpellier Danse in June or the Fête du Beaujolais in mid-November. Where else do they shut down everything one day because people had too much wine to drink the day before?! There are also indie rock shows at Rockstore. There is the wine festival at the beginning of September called “Les Estivales” and “Les hivernales” also, where there is a Christmas market.

Apart from the many attractions offered by the city itself, you have easy access to the sea. The closest beach is Palavas, but La Grande Motte, although a bit further away, is worth the trip for its futuristic architecture. The water is clear and warm, and the beaches are clean, with many little shops, ice cream booths and restaurants. Bikini tops are optional, just in case you wanted to know...

Venturing further, you will find ample reason to travel, starting with the Pont du Gard, the best-preserved Roman aqueduct in the world. Provence, the Massif Central, the Pyrénées and Spain, are all within 2 hours of Montpellier, and Bordeaux, Italy and the French Riviera are about 4 hours away by car.

In the city or while travelling, watch your belongings more than you would do at home. Also, the French homeless (“sans domicile fixe” or SDF, but usually “avec chien”) are bolder and more numerous than here; you will often be solicited for change. And those cute gypsy kids may not be as innocent as they look. Better avoid contact.

At *Tourist Information: Allée du Tourisme* (04-67-58-34-78), just off the Place de la Comédie, or at the train station, they have a hotel reservation service, offer tours of the city in English and French on Mondays, and organize trips to towns around Montpellier. For tourist information, contact the **Office du Tourisme de Montpellier**, 30, allée Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, 34000 Montpellier (tel 04-67-60-60-60; e-mail: office.tourisme@mlrt.fr).

Cost

Bring lots of extra cash for your first month. After that \$500 / month should easily cover living expenses. Here are some unavoidable costs you may not have considered:

- *Certificat de scolarité*: French money order of \$20
- *Sécurité sociale* (compulsory): \$250
- *Carte de séjour: timbre fiscal*: 55 euros; medical exam: \$90
- Bank fees for your account, your cheques and debit card. Overdrafts can be very expensive. With BNP Paribas, it was free for one year.

Miscellaneous

- Although the weather is mostly great, the temperature drops from November to February, and you will still need a winter coat, hat and gloves. Bring an umbrella as well, because it will rain during those months. There can even be flooding which will cancel class!
- Leave mini-skirts and other skimpy attire at home, unless you want to be leered at or harassed, and note that what would be considered sexual harassment at Guelph is often acceptable flirting in Montpellier, especially in its verbal aspects.
- Surveillance cameras everywhere are supposed to deter crime. To be on the safe side however, don't walk home alone and stay away from the train station at night.
- Money or cheques mailed to you may never arrive, there is even regular mail that you may never see.
- A lot of people smoke heavily, own a cell phone and a dog. Get used to it.
- If you get sick, try the pharmacist before calling the doctor. The pharmacists are very helpful!
- Except for movie theatres, several bars and a few buses, all Montpellier shuts down on Sundays.
- There is a good internet station near the Prefecture. Friendly staff, fast computers.

Useful contacts

After their return from Montpellier, the following ESP graduates have offered their help to outgoing students. They'll be happy to share their experience with you, beyond the above guidelines.

Megan Seale (2004-05): meggers_13@hotmail.com
Lisa Whittaker (2005-06): lwhittak@uoguelph.ca
Ginny Baxter (2005-06) vbaxter@uoguelph.ca
Nadine Leboeuf (2008-09): nleboeuf@uoguelph.ca