

FRANCE

Bordeaux and Lyon



2012-2013 Program Guide



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*Pregnancy includes pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth.



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YOUR UCEAP NETWORK

Local UCEAP Support

Campus EAP Office

The Campus EAP Office coordinates recruitment, student selection, orientations, and academic advising; and serves as your primary contact during the application process.

UCEAP Systemwide Office

The UCEAP Systemwide Office establishes and operates programs and coordinates UCEAP administration for all UC campuses from its headquarters in Goleta, California. You will work closely with the following Systemwide Office staff:

Program Advisors provide academic and operational program information to you and your campus as well as administrative support for all aspects of your participation.

Operations Specialists manage the logistics of the program. They coordinate document requirements, visa application instructions, health and safety precautions, acceptance and placement by host institutions, arrival and on-site orientation, and housing arrangements.

Academic Specialists advise on academic policies, review courses taken abroad for UC credit, and document your registration, grades, petitions and academic records.

Student Finance Accountants assist primarily with UCEAP statements, program fee collection, and financial aid disbursements (in conjunction with your campus Financial Aid Office).

Contact Information

Program Advisor

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► **Join the Conversation!**
 Meet fellow UCEAP participants and alumni on Facebook.



UCEAP Online

Bookmark your **Participants** program page. This resource lists requirements and policies you need to know before you go abroad, including your Predeparture Checklist, *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*, Program Calendar, UCEAP Student Budgets, and payment instructions.

Connect with us! Join our Facebook network via the **UCEAP France page**.

Study Centers Abroad

UCEAP programs in Bordeaux and Lyon are directed by a UC faculty member. The Study Center Director and staff at each site advise students on academic matters, assist with housing, plan field trips, and provide information on cultural opportunities.

Bordeaux Study Center

Centre d'Etudes de l'Université de Californie
 Université de Bordeaux 3
 Batiment E, Domaine Universitaire
 33607, Pessac Cedex, France

Phone (calling from the U.S.): (011 33) 5 57 12 44 88

Phone (calling from Bordeaux): 05 57 12 44 88

E-mail: centre.californie@u-bordeaux3.fr

Lyon Study Center

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 16 Quai Claude Bernard
 69365 Lyon, Cedex 07, France

Phone (calling from the U.S.): (011 33) 4 78 58 35 52

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E-mail: christine.ebnother@univ-lyon2.fr

Phone Number Codes

U.S. international code **011**
(dial this to call from the U.S.)

France country code. **33**

City code: Included in city phone number (drop the initial 0 when dialing from the U.S.)

Approximate Time Difference

Add 9 hours (September 30–October 30, add 8 hours)

Office Closures

The Study Center offices in Bordeaux and Lyon are usually closed from the first or third week of July until the student arrival day.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

A fair amount is required academically in French Universities, but the competition between students isn't as present as it is at UC.

French university students are independent and responsible. There's no regular control over their workload. They have fewer assignments, but that doesn't mean they don't work. They're expected to work at home on their own and the bibliography given by each professor helps enrich the course.

”

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Academic Culture

French Universities

Departments at French universities differ considerably in size, structure, and offerings. The beginning and end dates of terms, vacation periods, and exam times can vary by department. The Study Center will help you obtain information about courses, including their locations, schedules, and how to enroll.

You may select classes from different departments and programs. However, you may find it difficult to accommodate your schedule choices if you take a variety of classes from different departments, which are frequently located a good distance from one another.

Course Structure

French classes are organized into cycles for first-, second-, and third-year students. Classes are usually large. There are two main types of courses within the French university system. One type, called *cours magistraux*, consists of a series of lectures held in amphitheaters for 200 to 400 students. The lectures present a broad theoretical analysis of major issues and trends in the given field. Unlike practices at UC, syllabi, course readers, and published course notes are rarely available.

Although assigned homework is rare, professors do provide extensive bibliographies from which you are expected to select books to read. You will not receive a schedule of reading assignments such as you might receive at UC. On the final exam, you may be asked to present a broad, conceptual analysis of a given question based on lectures and independent reading. You must obtain a comprehensive knowledge of the subject through judicious reading.

The *cours magistraux* are supplemented with *travaux dirigés* or *conférences de méthode*. These are conducted in smaller groups and follow more closely the pedagogical pattern of American universities. The personal work (papers, oral presentations, etc.) is usually done during the *travaux dirigés*.

Generally, French courses meet once a week for one to two hours. The *cours magistraux* or *cours fondamentaux* combined with *travaux dirigés* or *conférences de méthode* add another two hours to the week over the 12- to 13-week semester. French courses often have a general title but the specific content, methodologies, and approach may vary each year. It is common for a course to follow an irregular meeting schedule. You are expected to remain informed about class meeting times and report the total number of anticipated meetings to the Study Center.

The small group classes are comparable to classes at UC, with a lot of participation, required exposés, continuous assessment, papers, a midterm, and a final exam. Participants report that lectures are comparable in size to UC and sometimes smaller, though the teaching style is drastically different. Professors expect you to take more notes than at UC, which requires strenuous effort since courses typically last for two hours with only a short break.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“ Library access is limited. You may have to photocopy parts of library books.

”

Instructors

French professors tend to be less accessible than UC faculty members. They occasionally cancel classes or change meeting times without prior warning. Outside class, there is not as much help as at UC. Office hours, if they exist, are limited, and usually there are no teaching assistants or discussion sections. These are the inconveniences of the French lecture classes, but once you get accustomed to this change in academic culture, you will find that the system teaches you to become intellectually more independent and improves research skills. Take responsibility for pursuing your own learning during any breaks in regular class meetings.

Professors do not expect much class participation. You may have the false impression that homework is not required because there are no detailed syllabi or reading requirements, and few references to the course bibliography; however, for the final (and sometimes only) exam, you will be expected to know your course notes in depth and to have read as much of the course reading material as possible.

Libraries & Textbooks

At the University of Bordeaux there are libraries at each Bordeaux campus for students to use. There are several bookstores downtown and one near campus where you can buy your textbooks.

In Lyon there are several municipal libraries to use throughout the city for a low cost, and all students can use the university libraries free of charge. Students typically buy books at bookstores or online stores such as Amazon. Some courses, especially those at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques (IEP), use course readers instead of textbooks. Some professors at Lyon 2 also post their class notes online.

Take familiar reference books and key works that are important for your major; these materials may not always be readily available in English.

You can find all books from the reading lists at the university libraries. However, libraries usually have limited hours and do not offer the option of late evening studies. It may be difficult to check out or reserve books. As a result, you may need to purchase books from the reading lists (though it may be inexpensive, as usually there is less required reading than at UC). The situation varies by university.

Academic Challenges

You will likely find that overcoming the language barrier in the context of your courses is the first main challenge you have to face. It may also be difficult to master the various French academic writing styles, such as the *dissertation* with its *plan détaillé* and the *commentaire composé*, especially when writing under pressure. Overall, the dominant feeling for most UCEAP students is that the benefits outweigh the challenges.

Grades

For detailed information about grades, see the [Academic Information](#) chapter of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...



Speak as little English as possible—even with American friends.

Don't choose courses in a wide variety of subjects as you might in the U.S. I did that and had terrible scheduling problems, especially at final exam time.

If you're on a short-term program, speak French as much as possible. It's easy to go through the whole program without learning much French at all. Don't get discouraged with the classes, because they're the most French practice you'll have daily.



ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Immersion Programs

University of Bordeaux

Program Description: Fall, Year, and Spring

The academic program begins with an intensive language program in Bordeaux. The ILP includes intensive language training and background on French culture. You must take the ILP for a letter grade. The ILP concentrates on providing an introduction to French contemporary culture and history, and developing French writing, conversation, and grammar skills. The ILP is designed to prepare you for the demands of regular university coursework.

During the ILP you will attend orientation sessions and receive information about the university and its fields of study.

The academic program during the year consists of regular university courses. Classes are available in a wide range of fields. Recommended fields include anthropology, art history, environmental/ecological studies, French language and literature, studio art, history, medieval studies, political science, economics, and sociology. The art history and history departments offer a variety of survey courses from classical antiquity to the present. An inter-departmental ecological studies program examines this field from a variety of perspectives. A large choice of courses is also offered in the science and engineering fields.

The Study Center offers a course on methodology each semester, which is designed to assist you in writing academic papers for the French universities using various subjects of French contemporary culture. The methodology professor also has office hours to help you succeed within the requirements of the French academic system.

When you arrive, you are required to take a language test to determine the level of classes recommended during the first semester. Those who place in the two lowest levels are strongly encouraged to take a French language class at the University of Bordeaux's Department for French as a Foreign Language (DEFLE). The DEFLE, in addition to French language courses, offers literature and civilization courses designed for foreign students. These courses are open to you as an immersion student. Classes often require two term papers or a midterm, and a final exam. Plan to study regularly for all your courses even if the professors do not ask for anything until the final exam.

Important note to fall program participants: As with the year program, you may enroll in regular university courses, but you must make sure you can take your exams before the end of the semester.

Requirements

You are required to enroll in a minimum of 18 UC quarter units each semester. The average course load is five to seven courses per semester, depending on the number of classroom hours per course.

Registering for Courses

You will complete your administrative registration with the University of Bordeaux online (in June for fall/year programs, in December for the spring program) and will obtain your student ID card during the ILP. The Bordeaux Study Center staff will send you the necessary information by e-mail.

During the ILP you will also receive course information and assistance with university course registration.

Registering for courses in French universities may be a challenge, as the registration process differs from one university department to another. In some cases you do not even have to register, you simply show up in class and speak with the professor. If you are at all unsure about the registration process for a specific course, check with the Bordeaux Study Center Staff for guidance.

University course catalogues are not common, and course descriptions and scheduling are often drawn up and posted in departmental offices the week before classes begin. Students and Study Center staff occasionally receive conflicting or ambiguous information during the registration period. For this reason, it is important to consult with the Study Center throughout the registration process.

You will enroll in Bordeaux classes with the help of the local UCEAP staff. The Study Center provides a course list that helps you to select classes. You may also seek out new courses not listed. For these, you are required to collect relevant data about the new course, which is submitted to the UCEAP Systemwide Office for review.

Assessment & Grading

Courses in Bordeaux are assessed in a variety of ways. Some courses are assessed on the basis of a final exam only, others will have a midterm and a final, and some may have one to three papers throughout the semester and an oral presentation in front of the class at the end of the semester. Final exams may be administered in class, as a take-home paper, or as an oral exam. For oral exams the professor will propose three or four different subjects for the exam and the student will select one at random. The student then has about 15 minutes to prepare and 15 minutes to speak in front of the professor.

For some departments you need to sign up for your final exams and for others you don't. Be sure to check with your professor to make sure you have completed all administrative steps required to take the final exam.

University of Lyon

Program Description: Fall and Year

UCEAP's fall and year immersion programs in Lyon begin with a few days of required orientation followed by an intensive language program (ILP), organized by CIEF (Centre International d'Etudes Françaises). You will receive a grade for the ILP. During the ILP, Study Center staff provides academic advice and helps you develop your academic program for the semester or year.

During the year, most students develop an academic program consisting primarily of courses in the humanities and social sciences. The Institut d'Etudes Politiques (IEP) features a multidisciplinary curriculum aimed at providing an intellectual basis for the interpretation of contemporary society. It offers courses in economics, history, geography, political theory, and sociology. Lyon 2 offers courses in economics, French literature, geography, history, linguistics, visual arts, art history, psychology, political science, anthropology, and sociology.

Some departments are located on the Bron campus. You may arrange to attend classes at both locations, if scheduling permits, and if available courses are relevant to your academic program. You may choose to take a UCEAP-sponsored writing course during the second semester.

Undergraduate students are encouraged to take courses offered in SEM 1-2-3-4, but can also take courses at the *licence* level (third year) in their major (SEM 5-6). Beyond the *licence*, courses become specialized and you must have a strong background in the field of study; these courses are more suitable for graduate students.

Most courses involve one lecture a week. For the most part, you will take the same exams, write the same papers, and be graded in the same way as French students.

Lyon 2 and IEP offer a methodology course to help you succeed within the requirements of the French academic system. UCEAP may also sponsor a writing course during the year to refine your French composition skills.

While abroad, remain in contact with your UC departmental advisors as you plan your study program for the year.

Important note to fall program participants: As with the year program, you may enroll in regular university courses, but you must make sure you can take your exams before the end of the semester.

Requirements

You are required to enroll in a minimum of 18 UC quarter units each semester. The typical course load is five to seven courses per semester.

Registering for Courses

You will register with the UCEAP Study Center during the intensive language program (ILP), and the Study Center staff will complete your office registration to obtain your student ID card. You will also receive course information and assistance with university course registration during a meeting in early September.

Registering for courses in French universities may be a challenge. University course catalogues are rarely available, and course descriptions and scheduling are often drawn up and posted in departmental offices the week before classes begin. Students and Study Center staff occasionally receive conflicting or ambiguous information during the registration period. For this reason, it is important to consult with the Study Center throughout the registration process.

Assessment & Grading

Assessment in Lyon is typically in the form of a final written exam, but it can vary depending on the course. Some professors may choose to give an oral exam to foreign students or to fall immersion students who need to take an exam in advance. Students are allotted time to prepare their answers to the question(s) posed by the professor and then they sit with the professor for the exam. You do not need to sign up for your final exams, but you usually have to sign a “presence sheet” on the day of your final. It is important for you to check the day and time of your final exam as they seldom take place on the day and time of the class itself. For example, you may have a final that takes place on a Saturday.

Political Science Institutes

As a UCEAP student in Bordeaux or Lyon, you may also take courses at one of these universities' corresponding Institut d'Etudes Politiques (IEP). The IEPs are part of the network of the *grandes écoles*:

- IEP Bordeaux offers a wide range of classes in political science, international relations, political sociology, and economics. Among its research units, the Les Afriques dans le Monde (LAM) is an internationally renowned research center focusing on the analysis of political issues of Sub-Saharan Africa.
- IEP Lyon is recognized for its programs in international relations, European studies, Arab studies, Asian studies, Latin American studies, North American studies, and public law.

Fall Intensive Language & Culture Programs

UCEAP offers two opportunities to study French intensively at the intermediate (second-year) level. The Lyon language and culture program is designed for students with a solid three quarters (two semesters) of university-level French. The Bordeaux language and culture program can accommodate students with four to five quarters (three semesters) of university-level French. Both programs offer a specially designed curriculum intended to improve both oral and written language skills while providing a fundamental background in French culture, society, and literature. All courses are conducted in French.

Bordeaux Language & Culture Program

- ▶ You will not have access to regular University of Bordeaux courses in this program.

Program Description

Intermediate language and culture classes are at the core of the program in Bordeaux. The program is taught entirely in French. The instruction is conducted at the University of Bordeaux's Department for French as a Foreign Language (DEFLE), which enrolls students from a wide variety of countries and cultural backgrounds and provides training in French language and culture.

The academic program begins with a two-week practical language session, the *stage intensif*, followed by more advanced language courses for the remainder of the term.

Stage Intensif

During the *stage intensif*, you will take language classes for 20 hours per week. Instruction is designed to advance your language abilities to the level necessary to function successfully in the subsequent fall culture classes. The *stage intensif* includes the study of written and oral French through exercises, conversation practice, and lectures on contemporary French civilization.

Course Information

During the second part of the program, you enroll in language and culture classes at the DEFLE. You will take approximately ten hours per week of oral and written French language study, plus six hours per week of courses on French culture and civilization. You will choose one civilization course plus two culture courses from class offerings in literature, art history, and French for business. You also have the option to take only one culture course and work on a research paper topic for a semester project, which you complete

by the end of the program. Research paper topics may include Roman art, city government, trade unions, merchandising Bordeaux wine, staging Racine at the Grand Theatre, traffic regulation in a medieval city, planning the riverfront at Bordeaux, etc. Tutorials are offered to orient you in these projects and help you write the paper.

The French culture and civilization courses are typically structured as follows:

French Civilization I:

This course comprises a thematic and comparative approach to French civilization, focusing on issues of culture and society, physical geography, history, language, religion, political institutions, and state and regional administration.

French Civilization II:

This course examines fundamentals of French attitudes and aspects of French civilization. Topics include the State organization, the education system, the press and the media, and the French population.

French Civilization III:

This course examines French civilization and society, covering demographic data, recent transformations, economic background conditions, and the structure of French administration and important institutions. The course also covers social differentiation: the countryside and its life, workers and trade unions, the tertiary domain, and employees and public officials.

French Culture I (choose two options out of the following five):

- 1) **French with an Emphasis on Tourism:** discusses means of transportation and the different types of tourism as well as the professions that relate to tourism
- 2) **French Song:** studies French contemporary songs starting from 1970
- 3) **French Theater:** offers an overview of French theater, analysis of texts, and performance practice
- 4) **Literary Texts:** explores the difference between the language of literature and the language of communication
- 5) **Language of French Media:** studies contemporary texts and recordings drawn from French media

French Culture II (choose two options out of the following five):

- 1) **France and the European Union:** focuses on the history of the European Union, with special emphasis placed on supra-national institutions
- 2) **19th-Century French Painting:** focuses on the Realism period during the second and third Republics, examining Courbet, Millet, and Daumier
- 3) **17th-Century French Literature:** focuses on 17th-century French culture and society, examining key literary texts of the period
- 4) **19th-Century French Literature from Romanticism to Naturalism:** examines the lives of key authors and their literary aspirations and value systems
- 5) **French Business Studies:** the French business system and the different types of communication within firms

French Culture III (choose two options out of the following eight)

- 1) **France and the European Union:** see previous description (French Culture II)
- 2) **19th-Century French Painting:** see previous description (French Culture II)
- 3) **Contemporary French Thought:** focuses on major trends in 20th-century thought
- 4) **17th-Century French Literature:** see previous description (French Culture II)
- 5) **19th-Century French Novel:** emphasizes the major works of Flaubert and Chateaubriand
- 6) **19th- and 20th-Century French Poetry:** traces the evolution of modern French poetry
- 7) **20th-Century French Theater:** surveys French theater and the authors of major dramatic works
- 8) **French Business Studies:** see previous description (French Culture II)

Registering for Courses

You will complete your course registration upon arrival in Lyon. The Study Center staff will provide you with instructions on registering for courses at your orientation.

Lyon Language & Culture Program**Program Description**

- ▶ You will not have access to regular University of Lyon courses in this program.

The coursework in this program is designed for UC students by the Center for Instruction in French Studies (CIEF), which specializes in teaching French language and culture to international students. Homestays are required and an integral part of the program. To successfully complete this program, you must take a total of five courses and earn approximately 24 UC quarter units.

The language portion of the program in Lyon is divided into three sessions. The first two sessions, each three weeks in length, consist of a two-part structure and culture course, which introduces and further develops your knowledge of linguistic structures and their contextual use, and provides pertinent cultural and literary information. Attached to this course are an oral and a writing workshop. During the remaining eight weeks of the program, you will study advanced composition and grammar, organization of ideas, and oral presentation. In this part, you engage in a field project, the results of which are presented in the form of both an oral and a written report at the end of the program. You earn 18 lower-division UC quarter units for the language coursework.

Course Information

In addition to the coursework described above, you also enroll in the Contemporary French Society class and a choice of one or two of the following course options (literature and culture and/or art history), each worth 4 upper-division UC quarter units:

Genres in Literary Analysis: This course is a survey of 19th- and 20th-century French literature and culture. It presents selections of major French literary works in their social, political, and cultural contexts, with emphasis on several texts of contemporary Francophone writers.

History of Art and Architecture in Lyon: This course offers an in-depth study of the history of art and architecture in Lyon and includes many field trips. The emphasis is placed on Roman through Renaissance art and architecture, as well as some modern art. Field trips include visits to important museums and other historical sites.

Contemporary French Society: This course focuses on France's social structures and institutions, as well as some major issues currently facing France on the national and international stage. Topics include the French educational system, French political parties and elections, France within the European Union (the Maastricht Treaty), corruption, immigration policies and policies toward asylum seekers, civil rights, unions, and French-U.S. relations. A few visits may be organized during the length of the course.

Classes in the Lyon fall language and culture program are held five days a week, Monday through Friday. Additionally, the last final exam will be held on the last day of instruction; you are not permitted to leave Lyon before that date.

Registering for Courses

You will complete your course registration within a few weeks after your arrival in Lyon. The Study Center staff will provide you with instructions on registering for courses at your orientation.

Internships

There is an office on the University of Bordeaux campus that is available to help find internships in the city. If you are interested in doing an internship you need to explore and research on your own. If you are interested in a research-based internship in a lab, then you will need to contact professors in the field you desire to work in. If you want to secure an internship with a private company, you will need to send out inquiries to see what opportunities are available.

At the University of Lyon you can go to the "Bureau des Stages" for information on internships. If you are interested in doing an internship in Lyon you will need to do the research into organizations or professors that are willing to take on interns.

EXTENDING UCEAP PARTICIPATION

Extending your UCEAP participation may be possible. If you are considering extension, submit a Departmental Preliminary Approval to Extend (DPA) form prior to departure.

Once abroad, make an appointment with the Study Center to initiate the extension process. The UCEAP Systemwide Office and the Study Center must approve your request once you are abroad in order to finalize the extension. Approval is based on a number of factors including academic performance, language acquisition, the support of your UC campus department, and available space at the host institution.

Due to France visa restrictions, you must have a preapproved DPA form in order to have the option to extend your stay in France. It is not possible to extend a semester-long visa after arrival in France. Instructions for obtaining the year-long student visa are included in the student visa section of the UCEAP online Predeparture Checklist.

The following extension options are available in France:

- Bordeaux and Lyon language & culture fall semester to immersion spring semester
- Bordeaux and Lyon immersion fall semester to academic year
- Lyon language & culture fall semester to Bordeaux language & culture spring semester

Once your extension has been approved, UCEAP will notify your UC campus registrar, Financial Aid Office, and Campus EAP Office. For information about the steps you need to take with regard to finances, see the [Extension of Participation](#) chapter of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...



The French love to go for coffee and have elaborate three-course meals. They know how to enjoy life and relax. Take advantage of this opportunity to learn about their culture.

Don't go with romantic notions about France. Think of it as a chance to observe another culture, and do just that. You won't be disappointed.

Beware of all the strikes. Be patient, things do not run smoothly here. Give yourself a few days to do errands. Start way before you would in the U.S.

Expectations will always change and evolve daily as you change. Just enjoy your experience for what it is—an exciting and new way of life!

Don't be the typical loud, obnoxious American because the French will get really annoyed. Be respectful of things that are different.



CULTURAL AWARENESS

Etiquette

The French are very attached to certain formalities, such as shaking hands frequently, exchanging kisses several times when meeting friends, and using expressions of courtesy like *bonjour*, *au revoir*, and *merci*, followed by *monsieur*, *madame*, or *mademoiselle* when in public situations. You can avoid misunderstandings by observing closely and conforming to some of these customs.

The student society is more relaxed than the society at large, and once initial contact is made, you should have little difficulty socializing with young French people. Students frequently go out in groups.

Educate Yourself

Get acquainted with your new host city, country, and culture before you leave the U.S. Travel guides and travel-related websites are excellent resources. Many guides provide background information about the region's history and culture. The following guides provide a wealth of travel information: Lonely Planet's *France: A Travel Survival Kit*, *Shoestring Guide to Western Europe*, *The Rough Guide to France*, Michelin Guides (Red and Green), Baedeker's *France*, Fodor's *France*, and Frommer's *France*.

French literature majors are encouraged to read a few books in French before going abroad. The following titles are often studied in class: *Le Lys dans la Vallée* (Balzac), *Madame Bovary* (Flaubert), *Les Fleurs du Mal* (Baudelaire), *La Peste* (Camus), *Le Rouge et le Noir* (Stendhal), and *La Chartreuse de Parme* (Stendhal).

Keep up with current events by reading articles in newspapers, magazines, and journals. You will also need to understand the local culture and history. The following resources will help you prepare before departure.

Recommended Periodicals

- **Le Monde**, France's premier daily (read it at least twice a week)
- **Libération**
- **Le Point**
- **L'Express**
- **Le Nouvel Observateur**

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“ You’ll feel like you are living amongst millions of foreigners who all speak a foreign language—eventually, it may dawn on you that you are the foreigner, not them.

Be understanding and realize that you are a guest in someone else’s country.

Manners and formalities are very important in France. People do not look others in the eye on the street—eye contact signifies that you want to be noticed, which can be dangerous.

Take advantage of the opportunity to live a different daily routine; that’s why you came, right? Don’t think too much about what you miss back home, it will be there when you go back. Learn to appreciate all the things that are different and seek them out.

”

Recommended Books

- | | |
|---|--|
| Asselin, Gilles and Ruth Mastron | <i>Au Contraire! Figuring Out the French</i> , Yarmouth: Intercultural Press, 2001. |
| Bailey, Rosemary, John Ardagh, Deni Brown | <i>Eyewitness Travel Guide to France</i> , DK Publishing, 2010. |
| Birnbaum, Pierre, trans. by M. B. DeBevoise | <i>The Idea of France</i> , New York: Hill & Wang, 2001. |
| Edmiston, William and Annie Duménil | <i>La France Contemporaine</i> , 4th Ed. Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning, 2009. |
| Fenby, Jonathan | <i>France on the Brink: A Great Civilization Faces a New Century</i> , New York: Arcade Publishing, 2000. |
| Howarth, David, and Georgios Varouxakis | <i>Contemporary France: An Introduction to French Politics and Society</i> , New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. |
| Mermet, Gérard | <i>Francoscopie</i> , Larousse, Paris, published annually. |
| Nadeau, Jean-Benoît and Julie Barlow | <i>Sixty Million Frenchmen Can’t Be Wrong: Why We Love France but not the French</i> , Naperville: Sourcebooks, 2003. |
| Potel, Jean-Yves | <i>L’Etat de la France</i> , Paris: Edition La Découverte, published annually. |
| Price, Roger | <i>A Concise History of France</i> , New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. |
| Whittaker, Andrew | <i>France: Be Fluent in French Life and Culture</i> (part of the Speak the Culture series), London: Thorogood Publishing Ltd., 2008. |

Concealment Act

The French Concealment Act prohibits the wearing of the full-face veil in public places in the territory of the French Republic. However, hijabs are very common and unlikely to lead to any specific harassment in France. Students wearing hijabs in France may encounter stares, though not likely any outright hostility. If you encounter any kind of hostility, contact the UC Study Center staff immediately.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

Practice reading, writing, and speaking French as much as possible beforehand.

Don't be afraid of making a mistake while talking; everybody makes mistakes, even the French. The only way you're going to improve is by practicing. I've found the people extremely helpful, and most are anxious to practice their English.

Make vocabulary lists—ten words a day. Read aloud when you read something in French.

”

Improve Your Language Skills

The more French you know before leaving for France, the easier your time abroad will be. Prior to departure, spend 45 minutes a day, or at least five sessions a week, working to improve your French. Even though you may know the language, you may have trouble understanding people initially because they may speak fast, have a regional accent, use colloquial terms, etc. To prepare for this, go beyond reading and studying French and look for opportunities to speak and listen to the language. In addition, try to improve your writing skills.

The following are some effective methods to prepare linguistically:

- Go on a regular basis to the UC language lab and listen to audio recordings of French conversation. Some campus language labs have good collections of unrehearsed, spontaneous conversations with written transcripts, which provide a good basis for practicing aural comprehension.
- Read French magazines using an all-French dictionary. Using such a dictionary is difficult at first, requiring a certain amount of discipline, but it will prove beneficial when you get to France.
- Read newspapers, French and American, as often as possible. (The French are generally better informed on world affairs than most Americans.)
- Read French websites, especially French news websites.
- Read at least two difficult books in French: one fiction and one nonfiction.
- Read at least one book in your major in French.
- Keep a daily journal in French.
- Keep a notebook with French phrases, expressions, whole sentences, and structures that you would like to add to your vocabulary.
- Watch French movies and listen to French tapes, CDs, or Internet broadcasts.
- Read aloud (anything in French) for 20 minutes at a time. Strive for correct pronunciation; read progressively faster, maintaining correct pronunciation.
- Practice phrases picked up from conversation and reading.
- Try to speak with native French speakers (students, professors, etc.) on a regular basis.

- ▶ Additional information about required documents is provided in the [UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad](#) and in the UCEAP online [Predeparture Checklist](#).
- ▶ Be sure to get a student visa—not a work visa.

ARRIVAL & ORIENTATION

Travel Documents

Visa

If you are a U.S. citizen staying in France beyond 90 days, you need a visa to study in France. In order to obtain a visa, you must first possess a current passport that is valid at least three months beyond the end date of the UCEAP program. If you are participating in the UC Paris summer program and are definitely not going to extend to the fall semester program, then you do not need to obtain a visa.

The UCEAP Systemwide Office provides information about obtaining the appropriate visa in the UCEAP [Predeparture Checklist](#). It is not possible to apply for a visa after your arrival in France (i.e., if you enter the country as a tourist, you cannot switch to a student visa after arrival). You must obtain the appropriate visa before leaving the U.S. If there is even a chance you may extend your participation in UCEAP France, you must apply for a long-stay visa that covers the entire length of your anticipated stay, including the extension term. (This does not in any way obligate you to extend; there is no penalty if you get a visa for a longer period of time and later decide not to extend.)

You will submit various documents to the French consulate when you apply for a visa. The documents submitted should be returned to you. If the documents are not returned, request them immediately. Since you must take these documents to France, make copies of all documents before submitting them to the French consulate. You will need the documents after arrival.

Non-U.S. Citizens

If you are not a U.S. citizen, contact a French consulate immediately to determine your specific visa requirements. Requirements may differ depending on your country of citizenship, and the process may take longer than it does for U.S. citizens.

OFII Form

You will be required to submit an OFII (Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration) form when you apply for your visa if you fit one of the following descriptions:

- You will be staying in France for more than six months (180 days or more).
- You are considering extending to a spring semester or academic year program, so that your potential stay in France will be more than six months (180 days or more).
- You will be staying in France for a period of time between four and six months (for a total duration of 91–180 days) and wish to be allowed to work in France while studying (see the Working in France section of this guidebook to find out whether this is a possibility for you).

Refer to the Student Visa Instructions in the UCEAP Predeparture Checklist for instructions on how to complete the OFII form, and bring it with you to your visa appointment at the French consulate (if required). The French consulate will complete their section of the form and return it to you. It is essential that you bring your completed OFII form with you to France. Do **not** send the OFII form to the Prefecture de Police upon arrival in France. Depending on which host university you attend, you will be instructed to either give this form to the

Study Center administrator or to another office that will handle your *titre de séjour* processing.

Titre de Séjour (Residence Permit)

If you are required to submit the OFII form with your visa application (see previous section), you will need to obtain a *titre de séjour* after arrival in France. The *titre de séjour* may be either a sticker placed in your passport or a wallet-sized card. It must be carried at all times. Study Center or host institution staff will provide the necessary instructions for obtaining the *titre de séjour*.

As part of the *titre de séjour* application process, you are required to have a medical exam after arrival. This is in addition to the health clearance you are required to obtain before departure. You will have to pay for the French health exam. The cost is neither covered by the [UCEAP Insurance Plan](#) nor the UCEAP student fees. The cost of the exam is expected to be about €58 and is paid in the form of a tax stamp (*timbre fiscal*), which you can purchase online, at a *tabac*, or at a local *trésorerie générale*. The *titre de séjour* is provided when the health exam is completed at the OFII office. Once you receive your *titre de séjour*, your visa will become valid through the date indicated on the visa.

If you are not required to submit the OFII form (i.e., your stay in France will be within 91–180 days and you will not work in France), you will receive a visa that says “*dispense temporaire de titre de séjour*” (temporary waiver of *titre de séjour*), and you will not need to obtain a *titre de séjour*.

Without the *titre de séjour* or *dispense temporaire de titre de séjour*, you can leave France but cannot reenter if there is a passport inspection at the border once your visa has expired. Identity checks occur frequently; you risk being deported if you do not have a *titre de séjour* or *dispense temporaire de titre de séjour*. You must carry your passport and *titre de séjour* at all times. The French are becoming increasingly stringent about immigration and foreigner status in France. Even those with student status are subject to the laws.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...



A backpack is essential for traveling (and if you fill it, that undoubtedly will be too much stuff). Take only the bare essentials.

Don't buy new clothes before you get here, just stick with what you're comfortable with; you can buy new clothes in France.

The weather gets pretty cold in the winter. Your summer clothes won't get worn very much except during the first and last months. People don't wear shorts or tennis shoes.

If possible, take a computer.



Packing Tips

When traveling, pack your passport, visa, ticket, prescription medications, money, and other important travel documents in your carry-on luggage. Keep photocopies in a separate location. Scan the first pages of your passport and e-mail yourself the document; keep the file in your e-mail inbox and not on your computer desktop so that you can more readily retrieve a copy if it is lost or stolen.

Never put valuables in your checked luggage. Leave extra credit cards at home and carry only what is necessary. You will not need to carry your California driver's license or your Social Security card.

The [UCEAP Insurance Plan](#) does offer some coverage for personal property; however, it is your responsibility to determine if the plan provides enough coverage to suit your needs. You must research this yourself prior to departure to decide whether or not you should purchase additional coverage. To avoid personal property theft, never leave your luggage unattended.

Essential

- Photocopies and scans of important documents (first page of passport, receipts for travelers checks, etc.)
- One extra change of clothing and toiletry kit (packed in your carry-on)
- Warm clothing (thermal underwear, waterproof winter coat, etc.)
- Items of clothing with multiple uses that can be easily layered
- Comfortable and sturdy walking shoes
- Reference French grammar book
- Towel
- Prescription medication (packed in carry-on); see the [Health](#) chapter for more information

Optional

- Dressy outfit for evenings, formal events, and outings (museums, theater, etc.)
- Laptop and recovery disks (see Computers in this chapter for details)
- Lightweight gifts for new friends and hosts (suggestions: Frisbees; T-shirts with city, state, or campus logos; UC pens or pencils; baseball caps; California postcards, posters, or scenic calendars; sealed local food products such as California almonds, honey, Ghirardelli chocolate)
- Umbrella

Travel lightly and avoid shipping surplus supplies to France. You will have to carry all of your luggage through customs. Baggage allowances have changed significantly and continue to change, so be sure to check with your airline to determine their restrictions. Most U.S.-based airlines charge a fee for each bag you check. Oversized and overweight luggage (typically defined as over 50 pounds) also requires an additional fee. Ideally, aim to travel with one large suitcase, but make sure it does not go over the weight limit.

You will be responsible for carrying your own bags quite some distance, including to your final residence. Many apartment buildings do not have elevators. In addition, most cities in Europe are not set up with wheelchair ramps. Consequently, rolling luggage may need to be carried up flights of stairs or lifted frequently. Keep your luggage with you at all times while traveling. It is expensive to ship bags home or consign them at an airport or train station, and most students find that they can get by on much less than they brought. In addition, many students find that a large backpack (not an external frame backpack) is more convenient than a suitcase. Backpacks are especially handy when traveling by train.

Clothing

If you are in a summer, fall, or year program, it will be warm when you arrive in France. Temperatures sometimes reach the 80s and low 90s (°F), depending on the location. However, France will become cold and wet later in the fall and throughout the winter. Snow showers are also likely during the winter. If you are in the spring program, it will be cold when you arrive. Pack the appropriate clothing based on the months that you will be in France.

Typically, California winter coats are too thin for cold winters in France. Be sure to take a durable coat or buy one in France. However, be aware that clothing is often more expensive in France and the UCEAP Student Budget does not include funds for the purchase of clothing abroad.

Europeans tend to dress up more than Americans. Generally, they do not wear sweatshirts, sweatpants, athletic shoes, or jeans with holes or tears. You may feel more comfortable if you dress to fit in. Wearing dressy clothes is obviously not practical for everyday purposes, and you can get by wearing shirts, blouses, or sweaters with pants or nice jeans.

Laundry facilities are expensive in Europe (approximately \$5 per load of wash) and are often hard on clothes. Pack easy-to-care-for clothing that can be washed at home and drip-dried.

Between cultural activities, excursions, on-site lectures, and traveling, you will be doing a lot of walking. Comfortable shoes are a necessity; make sure they are well broken-in before departure. Sturdy walking shoes (preferably with thick rubber soles), boots, and tennis shoes are recommended.

Women

Good jeans, skirts, sweaters, and other casual attire are sufficient for everyday wear. You will need a warm dress or skirt and blouse for more formal occasions, such as the theater, opera, or dinner with a French family. Most French women do not wear shorts, halter tops, or revealing clothing in the city. If you dress this way you are likely to attract unwanted attention and rude remarks. Such clothing is acceptable and common, however, at the beach and recreational areas.

Men

Jeans and permanent-press shirts are practical. Many French men wear sweaters over their shirts in cooler weather. You will need some formal attire for dressier occasions, such as the theater, the opera, or dinner with a French family.

► See **Computer and Internet Access** in this guide for more information.

► You are subject to dismissal from the program if you fail to appear on the official start date (per Student Agreement, Section 10) unless your flight is delayed or canceled. Attendance at all orientation sessions is mandatory.

Electrical Appliances

As in most of Europe, the current is 220 volts at 50 cycles in France, instead of the 110 volts at 60 cycles found in the U.S. Travel irons, curling irons, hair dryers, and electric razors that can operate on all currents are available both in the U.S. and abroad (a plug adapter may be required). Voltage converters and plug adapters are available in the U.S. for European current and outlets (the same items cost more in France).

Computers

Taking a laptop has advantages, especially if you are unaccustomed to writing papers any other way. Disadvantages include the risk of theft and access to printing facilities. Commercial outfits that provide printing are neither numerous nor cheap. There may be lines to use university printers. Past students who took laptops and printers were generally pleased they did.

If you are in a UC Center Paris program, take a laptop if possible. Limited printing and Internet services are available at the UCEAP Study Center and ACCENT Center in Paris.

Books

Not all books can be found easily in France. Pack a reference French grammar book with which you feel comfortable. The grammar books for foreigners available in France do not concentrate on the usual difficulties and particular problems of native speakers of English. If you do not have a grammar book, get a recommendation from your current French instructor. Once in France, you can purchase a French dictionary.

There are some English-language bookstores in France, but it is typically cheaper to order books through Amazon.fr (go to the “livres en anglais” section).

Travel to France

You need to make your own travel arrangements to France. Purchase a changeable airline ticket if possible. Standby tickets are not appropriate.

The UCEAP program calendar, which is located on your Participants program page online, lists the official start date for your program. You will need to arrive at the specified location in France on time on the official start date. Detailed arrival information is provided in the Arrival Instructions in your UCEAP online Predeparture Checklist.

Flights are routinely changed or canceled. Confirm your flight schedule about two weeks before departure. Your UCEAP insurance includes coverage for certain travel-related contingencies such as delayed flights and late or lost baggage. Review the [UCEAP Insurance Plan](#) brochure thoroughly for details.

The start date of the program can change due to unforeseen circumstances. You are responsible for making modifications in your travel itinerary to accommodate such changes. UCEAP is not responsible for any unrecoverable transportation charges incurred for independent travel arrangements. In order to be kept informed of any program changes, update MyEAP with any changes in your address, phone number, or e-mail address. Your program requires that you submit a Travel Itinerary Form (see the online Predeparture Checklist).

- ▶ Even if you are on full financial aid, you are responsible for reserving and purchasing your ticket. Your Financial Aid Office will not do it for you.

- ▶ UCEAP strongly discourages couch surfing, defined as using an online social network to organize free places to stay.

Financial Aid Students

Your financial aid package is based partly on the UCEAP Student Budget for the program. The estimated round-trip airfare is based on the cost of a changeable student fare to France. If your independent travel costs are greater than the airfare estimate in the UCEAP Student Budget, notify your financial aid counselors. Neither UCEAP nor the Financial Aid Office can guarantee that the additional cost will be funded by financial aid.

Avoid Travel Hassles

Do not ask others to carry any items abroad for you (laptop, camera, extra bags, etc.) and do not volunteer to do so for others. Airlines may not allow you to take them, or customs abroad may charge you a high duty. This is particularly a concern with electronic goods.

Identify each item of your luggage on the inside and outside with your name, home address, and destination. To avoid theft, never leave your luggage unattended. UCEAP recommends that you pack your prescribed medication in your carry-on luggage.

The [UCEAP Insurance Plan](#) includes a personal property benefit; however, it is your responsibility to review the benefits before departure and determine whether or not the coverage will suit your needs. You may decide to purchase additional coverage.

Return Travel

If you do not make round-trip arrangements, be sure to book a return flight with plenty of lead time once abroad. Flights to the U.S. fill up quickly and economy-fare seats book early.

► The UCEAP Student Budget does not include funds for recreational travel abroad.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Travel within France

Most students live 30 to 60 minutes away from the university (local commute times and costs vary by location and host institution). Monthly transportation passes available in both Bordeaux and Lyon cover the bus, tramway, and metro services. The costs of these passes are approximately €25–28.

Bordeaux also has an annual pass available for €195, which is a better deal over a 10-month period than the monthly pass (€19,50 per month for 10 months vs. €28 for the monthly pass).

Bikes

Bike riding is another option in some cities. You can easily rent bikes in Lyon at inexpensive rates; all details can be found on the [Vélo'v](#) website. Bordeaux is less bike friendly, but there are bike lanes to accommodate cyclists. Bordeaux also has a bike renting system; see the [VCub](#) website for details. Note that you are required to have a French bank account in order to rent bikes from these services.

Trains

When traveling between cities and countries, most students use the train. A high-speed train ticket from Paris to Lyon or Bordeaux costs approximately €75 to €130, and you can receive a 25 to 60 percent discount with advance reservation. To find routes, fares, and schedules, visit the website for France's train transportation system, [VoyagesSNCF](#). Upon arrival in France, you will be able to purchase a "Carte 12-25" if you are under age 26, which will entitle you to up to 50 percent discounts on train tickets.

► It is important that you carefully read all of the information available in the [UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad](#) and discuss it with the person who will assist you with your finances while you are abroad.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Understanding Your Finances

Understanding your finances before, during, and after your program is crucial to having a successful time abroad. The following list outlines just a few of the many things you will need to know before departure.

Detailed information on the following topics can be found in the [Money Matters](#) chapter of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*:

- Contact information for finance questions
- How to estimate the cost of your program
- Budget instructions and information
- How to and who can make payments to UCEAP
- UCEAP student account information
- Banking before and after arrival
- Fees and penalties
- Loan information
- How financial aid works while abroad (how do I get my financial aid from my home campus and how are my fees paid?)
- Various forms (e.g., direct deposit, etc.)

MyEAP Student Account

Your MyEAP Student Account is similar to your UC campus financial account. It will be available as soon as you are selected for your program in MyEAP. You can make payments through this account using e-checks or credit cards (MasterCard, American Express, or Discover). The fees that you owe UCEAP will be applied to your account after your program predeparture withdrawal date, which is listed in MyEAP. For the amount due to UCEAP prior to fees being posted on your account, refer to the UCEAP Student Budget Payment Vouchers. Program fees are subject to change.

UCEAP Student Budget

Carefully review your [UCEAP Student Budget](#).

Your UCEAP Student Budget lists the fees you will pay to UCEAP and an estimate of the personal expenses you will need to plan for. It does not include the cost of recreational travel or personal entertainment. Review your UCEAP Student Budget frequently. The Payment Vouchers are on the second page of the UCEAP Student Budget.

Instructions

- **Download** and **print** your UCEAP Student Budget and Payment Vouchers.
- Note the deadlines on the Payment Vouchers.
- Give the UCEAP Student Budget and Payment Vouchers to the person responsible for paying your UCEAP bills. Sign this person up for Third Party Authorization so they can make payments online.

For further information see the [Money Matters](#) chapter of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad* and the Money Matters tab of your Participants Portal. If you will be receiving financial aid, see also the [UCEAP Financial Assistance](#) web page.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“ I knew that Europe as a whole was more expensive than the U.S., but it was a shock for me when I arrived. I wish I had more preparation for the price differences.

Be sure to budget wisely. Financial aid funds may not always be available on time.

Utility bills can be costly. To help sort out the phone bill, you can request that it be itemized. Beware: electricity is expensive!

Count on everything costing more than you think and economize in the beginning so you can budget how long your money will last. Travel is important and if you waste your money, you may not be able to afford to travel.

”

Handling Money Abroad

It is imperative that you review the UCEAP Student Budget and determine your program costs. You can find the budget in the Money Matters section of your Participants program page. As noted in Section II of the UCEAP Student Budget, you are responsible for your finances while abroad. Before you go, make sure you completely understand your financial needs for study abroad and verify that your personal funds and/or financial aid meet these needs. Plan carefully, as recreational travel expenses and entertainment are not included in the program budget.

The Euro (€)

The official currency of France (and of the European Union) is the euro (€). As with all currencies, the value of the euro relative to the U.S. dollar fluctuates daily. Depending on these fluctuations, your actual living expenses (in terms of U.S. dollars) can rise or fall over the duration of the program.

There are 100 cents in 1 euro. Coins (*la monnaie*) come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents, and €1 and €2. Much like the U.S. dollar, euro bills (*les billets*) come in denominations of €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200, and €500.

In writing numbers, commas and periods are reversed in Europe. For example, 1,00 is what we would consider 1.00, and 1.000 is what we would consider 1,000.

Additional information about the euro is available on the [European Central Bank](#) website. To find out the current dollar-euro conversion rate, visit websites with currency calculators such as [Google Finance](#) or [OANDA](#).

Cash Upon Arrival

- Do not carry large amounts of cash (American or European).

It is wise to obtain €150–200 before departure from the U.S. In addition to allowing you to become familiar with the currency, the funds will be useful for snacks, transportation, and unexpected purchases when you first arrive in France. You can purchase foreign currencies from most U.S. banks; the process may take a week or more, so plan ahead.

It is also possible to exchange dollars for euros at international airports (both in the U.S. and abroad), although exchange rates are less favorable and exchange offices are not always open in the late and early hours of the day. ATMs can be found at the airport, and you will have the opportunity to withdraw euros from your American bank account as soon as you enter the arrival hall.

If you set up a bank account in France, you may not have access to money in the new account for up to a month, so be prepared to access cash from another source for your initial financial needs (see *Obtaining Cash Abroad*).

If you are in an immersion program, the Sciences Po program, or Bordeaux Language & Culture, take enough money (U.S. \$2,000 to \$2,500) to cover initial living expenses (rent, meals, and incidentals) that will be incurred shortly after arrival. If you are a UC Center Paris or Lyon Language & Culture student, you will need less money initially (U.S. \$1,000–\$1,500). If you are required to obtain a *titre de séjour* (see the [Travel Documents](#) section of this guide for details), you will also need €58 to cover the cost of the fiscal stamp required by France. This is payable when you go to complete the *titre de séjour* process later in the semester. Alternatively, you can pay for the fiscal stamp online prior to attending your medical visit at www.timbresofii.fr

Obtaining Cash Abroad

The Study Center recommends the following forms of handling money: debit card, credit card, travelers checks, international money orders for AmEx members, and wire transfers. How you divide your money into the various forms is entirely your choice; choose the options with which you feel most comfortable. UCEAP recommends that you choose multiple methods of accessing funds so if there is a problem with one, you can use another.

Credit Cards

Credit cards generally offer the best international exchange rates. Visa, known as Carte Bleue in France, is the most widely accepted credit card in Europe. With a Visa card, usually you can get an immediate cash advance by presenting your card and passport at a major bank. Four-digit PINs are essential in order to use credit cards at ATMs. MasterCard is also widely accepted, as is American Express (AmEx), though to a lesser extent. You can use an AmEx card to purchase travelers checks abroad. The Discover card is not commonly accepted.

If you take a credit card, set up an online account (if possible) so you can track expenses, receive statements, and pay your bills online. You may also arrange to have your statements sent to France, or for your parents or a responsible person to receive and pay your bills from the U.S.

Past students have found it useful to bring an additional credit card strictly for emergencies.

Travelers Checks

Travelers checks are rarely used nowadays in France, so they are not practical for everyday use. Landlords and shops will not accept travelers checks as payment, even if they are in euros. However, immersion students may need to bring travelers checks in order to pay their first months' rent and security deposit (after which you can withdraw euros from your bank account during the month to pay your monthly rent without exceeding your daily/weekly limit on withdrawals).

If you do bring travelers checks, you will need to exchange them into euros at either American Express or any bank marked "Change." AmEx travelers checks are the most widely accepted. Be sure to make two copies of the check numbers and give one copy to a family member or friend. Keep the other copy for yourself, separate from the actual checks. If you lose your checks, you will need to provide these numbers and the receipts in order to obtain replacements.

ATM Transactions

A good way to obtain cash is through an ATM. In most cities in France, it is easy to use an ATM. To get an ATM card, you must first have an account at a bank or credit union in the U.S. before departure. Most ATM cards are connected to a checking or share draft account. The bank will issue you an ATM card and a personal identification number (PIN). The PIN must have four digits in order to work in France. Keep in mind when choosing a PIN that ATMs abroad do not have letters on the keypads. Most cards carry the symbols for the Cirrus and Plus systems on the back, which are common ATM networks throughout Europe. It is helpful if your ATM card has a Visa or MasterCard logo on it. Once abroad, the ATM card and PIN can be used to withdraw money from the U.S. account.

There is no waiting period, and money deposited in your account in the U.S. is immediately available for withdrawal abroad. There may be limitations on the amount of cash accessible per transaction, and there may be fees depending on your U.S. bank. Ask your bank about sister banks in France; you may be able to avoid extra fees. Be sure to keep track of your account balance at all times so you do not overdraw funds from your account.

ATMs are available at most French banks and commercial centers and accept all major ATM and credit cards.

Check with your bank to make sure your ATM card can be used to access funds in France. Be sure to notify your bank that you will be using your credit and debit cards abroad so they do not freeze the accounts when you try to use them overseas. Increasingly, banks block the use of American ATM cards abroad to prevent fraud.

International Money Orders and Gift Checks

AmEx international money orders and gift checks provide an inexpensive way to receive money from home. However, relying on this system requires planning and knowing some time in advance that you will need funds. Allow at least two weeks for the money order or gift checks to arrive by airmail. You may cash them at an AmEx office.

Personal Checks

U.S. bank checks and cashier's checks cannot be cashed in France. Therefore, this is *not* a recommended option.

Wiring Money

One option for wiring money is the MoneyGram from Thomas Cook. The transfer generally takes about ten minutes and all fees are paid in the U.S. For more information, contact a Thomas Cook office.

AmEx also maintains a wire service, and transfers from the U.S. generally take two business days. (Higher fees are associated with AmEx wire services.) You may receive funds directly in travelers checks, if desired. AmEx also permits cardholders to charge travelers checks to their account and cash personal checks.

Another option for wiring money is to use the international transfer services operated by **Western Union** (phone in the U.S. is 800-325-6000). As with the Thomas Cook MoneyGram, all fees are paid in the U.S. You may pick up the money at one of many post offices within two or three hours from the time it was sent.

Credit Card Advances

You may obtain a cash advance with your Visa or MasterCard from a bank offering *Dépannage*. Your PIN is not usually required if the transaction is conducted inside the bank, but you must show your passport. Remember that interest begins to accrue the day that you take the cash advance, not at the end of the billing period as is the case with purchases. Also, the interest rate charged on cash advances is usually higher than that charged on regular purchases.

If you plan to use your credit card for cash advances, check with the issuing bank in the U.S. to make sure that the card will be accepted by European banks and ATMs. A credit card with an international PIN comes in handy if you need to obtain a cash advance after hours.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“Once in France, be sure to check bank hours. Some are closed on Mondays, others on Saturdays; all close on Sundays and holidays. Review your French bank statements regularly, because the bank tends to make errors (e.g., bizarre charges).”

Banking

Bordeaux

Take enough money (about U.S. \$2,000 to \$2,500) to cover initial expenses (rent, meals, and incidentals); you will not be able to open a bank account immediately upon arrival. There is an AmEx office in Bordeaux where you can cash travelers checks (although travelers checks are not widely used in Bordeaux). The Study Center does not have an agreement with a particular bank. Fees and services will vary by bank, so shop around before you choose a bank. There is no cost to open an account, but you will be required to provide your passport. You can order checkbooks and bank cards when you open your bank account.

Lyon

Take enough money (about U.S. \$2,000 to \$2,500) in travelers checks to cover initial expenses (rent, meals, and incidentals); if you open a bank account in France, you may not be able to access the money in it right away.

The Lyon Study Center has an agreement with BNP Paribas (partner of Bank of America). There is no obligation to open an account there, but it is convenient, as you will be given the opportunity to open an account upon arrival. Fees and services will vary by bank, so shop around before you choose a bank. To open a bank account, you will need your passport, a *certificat d' hébergement* (housing certificate), and identification from your landlord.

Opening a bank account in France is free and does not require an initial deposit. You will receive a debit card within about 10 days of opening an account, and if you wish, you may request to receive a checkbook as well.

Closing Accounts

At the end of the year, you may be entitled to a refund for certain items, such as the housing security deposit (this usually requires that the landlord inspect the apartment and verify that all bills have been paid). Do not have reimbursements sent to you in the U.S. in the form of a check. By French law, checks from a French bank account cannot be accepted for deposit in the U.S. (A local California bank will likely be unaware of the French law and may initially accept the check, but eventually it will bounce.)

If you expect reimbursement:

- Leave your French bank account open until all checks are deposited. Once all reimbursements are completed, write to the bank and have them close the account. You can request that the French bank transfer the balance to a U.S. account. There will probably be a transfer fee of \$25.
- Have the person who owes the money transfer it through his or her bank directly to a U.S. bank account. International bank-to-bank transfers are allowed by French currency regulations.

Late Withdrawal Penalties & Fees

As noted in the UCEAP Student Agreement, if you withdraw from the program after the UCEAP deadline, you will incur financial penalties. These penalties may vary according to the host institution and date of withdrawal. UCEAP can neither waive nor assume the costs of penalties assessed by the host institution. You are required to pay the amounts assessed by the host institution and/or UCEAP. You will also be responsible for airfare expenses; you will not be reimbursed for these expenses.

COMMUNICATIONS ABROAD

French Postal System

French mailboxes are yellow and readily available in public places and on the outer walls of post offices and tobacco shops, called *tabacs*. Collection times are indicated on each box. In general, mail sent within France that is posted before the last collection will be delivered the next day, unless it is sent economy rate. Mail sent abroad will take longer, and delivery times depend on the destination—on average it takes between one to five days. Anticipate five days for letters to reach the U.S. Stamps are available in post offices, which are open from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, and on Saturday mornings until noon. In Paris, the main post office, located at 52 rue du Louvre (metro station “Louvre”), is never closed. It is the only post office in France open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Domestic stamps are also available at *tabacs*, which charge the same rates as the post offices. These shops are identified by a red or orange diamond-shaped sign.

Sending parcels home from post offices is generally convenient and reliable. Sturdy shipping boxes with self-fastening systems are available in all sizes at moderate costs.

Another safe and reliable way to send large items, parcels, or luggage within France is by using SERNAM. This forwarding service operates out of all major train stations. For a reasonable charge, SERNAM will forward an item by rail and immediately deliver it to its final destination. Parcels can be delivered to the SERNAM office at the train station or be picked up by their courier service.

Mail

Have mail sent to the local Study Center during the orientation and ILP and to your private address once you are settled in your permanent residence. Do not have mail sent to the temporary student residences (this mail may not be distributed and is not forwarded).

See [Your UCEAP Network](#) in this guide for Study Center addresses.

Shipping

Do not ship computers, cameras, or valuable items to France unless the shipping agent and French customs confirm that you can receive your shipment without import duty taxes. It is common to pay a fee as high as \$100 for something as simple as a coat or camera. Furthermore, even inexpensive items that are correctly marked “For Personal Use Only/No Commercial Value” sometimes incur customs charges. Keep all your receipts for electronic equipment and register the items with U.S. customs to make it easier to bring equipment back to the U.S.

If things have to be shipped, all packages will go First Class and the rates are fairly expensive.

When shipping important documents, it is often worthwhile to use such shipping services as FedEx and DHL. These companies, along with the U.S. Postal Service, have special additional services that help to ensure that the documents reach their proper destination. All of these options usually require a physical address (no P.O. boxes) along with a phone number.

Remind your parents, friends, and others who might send you a package to declare “For Personal Use Only/No Commercial Value” on the customs slip.

► Approximate time difference: add 9 hours (except for one week at the end of October and one week at the end of March, add 8 hours)

Phones

Public phones work with prepaid cards (known as *télécartes*) that can be purchased in post offices, *tabacs*, bookstores, newsstands, some cafés, and numerous other locations. Use France Telecom to call the U.S. only at the most economical times (Sundays or between 1 a.m. and 6 p.m. France time) or for very short calls.

Many students choose to obtain cell phones shortly after arrival. A wide selection of cell phones is generally available. You may be required to have a bank account in order to buy one unless you buy a cell phone that operates with prepaid cards. If you already have a cell phone, check with the manufacturer to see if it will operate in France (only tri-band phones operate in Europe). More information on purchasing a phone will be available after arrival at the Study Center.

You will have access to phone booths during the orientation and ILP. During the regular term, use your home phone and/or cell phone.

If you live in a homestay, you may be allowed to make local phone calls (within a reasonable limit as you have to pay for each call). You can make international or long-distance calls using a phone card. Discuss your calling options with the host family when you move in.

If you live in an apartment, you can get a phone installed in your apartment once you move in. However, most students prefer to use cell phones.

One of the most popular means of calling internationally is using the Internet to make phone calls at an inexpensive rate. **Skype** is a free option for computer-to-computer calls made through the Internet. You are advised to buy a headset in the U.S. where electronics generally cost less. SkypeOut is a Skype service through which you or your parents can charge the account to make calls to regular landlines and cell phones. Currently, SkypeOut costs 3 cents per minute to a French landline, American landline, and American cell phone, and 24 cents per minute to a French cell phone.

Computer & Internet Access

In most cases, computer access will not be as extensive as it is at UC. If possible, take a laptop. Carefully consider security risks and other precautions. Laptops, cell phones—particularly smart phones—and other electronic devices are among the most frequently stolen items from travelers. Keep all your electronics within reach at all times. Do not place your cell phone on the café table—it can be quickly stolen. For your laptop, it is advisable to have updated virus protection. The **UCEAP Insurance Plan** offers a personal property benefit, which covers theft; however, it is your responsibility to review the insurance details and determine whether or not it is sufficient to cover your laptop. You may decide to purchase additional coverage depending on your needs.

Most laptops are equipped with a voltage converter allowing the use of the 220-volt electricity in Europe. Read your manual to confirm. The converter is usually part of the “box” located halfway down the power cord. You still need an adapter to use the outlets.

In order to have Internet access on a laptop in Europe, you will need:

- **Access to a phone jack.** If you have access to a phone jack and can make outgoing calls, you will need a dial-up number for an ISP (see below). If you are living in a homestay, you will likely be restricted from using the phone jack for Internet access.
- **European phone cord.** The phone plugs are shaped differently in each country in Europe. You will need to buy a phone plug for France. These are inexpensive and available in the U.S. and Europe.
- **European ISP (Internet Service Provider).** Talk to your American ISP to see if you can use your service while abroad. If not, you will need an ISP in Europe. Some services require a monthly subscription; others are more flexible. Note: An ISP from the U.S. may exist in Europe but will require a different billing and payment setup (for example, AOL).
- **Wireless cards and 3G.** If your laptop or smart phone has a wireless card or 3G installed, you will be able to access WiFi in Europe where it is available.

Bordeaux (All Programs)

When you register with the University of Bordeaux, you will receive a university e-mail address and you will be able to access WiFi on campus.

During the ILP, you will have access to computers and WiFi at the DEFLE (Foreign Students Department) and in the Study Center. When the regular term starts, you will also have access to computer rooms at Bordeaux 3.

Expect computer access to be more limited than at your UC campus. You will be allowed to write papers by hand if necessary.

Lyon Immersion

When you register with the University of Lyon, you will receive an e-mail address and limited access to computer rooms for writing papers. There are also many Internet cafés available. WiFi is installed at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques and Lyon 2.

Lyon Language & Culture

All host families have Internet in their homes, though web access may be limited. Check with your host family about Internet access. There are also a number of Internet cafés available in Lyon, and you will have access to WiFi at Lyon 2 during the semester. You will also have access to computer rooms at the university.

- ▶ Craigslist France is not as legitimate as Craigslist USA and should not be used to secure housing, be it temporary or permanent.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“Start early when you're looking for housing; it's by far the most stressful part of the first month for everyone.

Getting to classes takes about 30 minutes on a good day, so be prepared. Try to avoid transfers between buses. It's not worth it and it takes longer.

Get housing close to the center of town and jump on it early. The availability decreases as time goes on.

Take your time deciding where you'll live and consider all of your options. Don't get discouraged.

”

HOUSING & MEALS

Bordeaux (Immersion and Language & Culture)

You will be asked to provide your housing preference in a housing questionnaire e-mailed to you by the Bordeaux Study Center. Your housing choice is binding; do not expect to change your housing preference after arrival.

You have a choice between living in an apartment or a homestay. It is recommended that students who will be studying in Bordeaux for the full year live in apartments. Your address will be confirmed by late June if you are a fall or year student, and mid-December if you are a spring student. You will move directly into your permanent housing upon arrival in Bordeaux.

Apartments

Apartments are furnished, including kitchenware. You will need to obtain your own towels, and you may need to obtain sheets.

Homestays

There is a wide range of homestay accommodations, in terms of location, facility, family interest, and socio-economic and educational background. If you choose this option, review the general [Homestays](#) section at the end of this chapter before making a final decision about housing. The homestay housing cost includes breakfast and dinner seven days a week. You will be provided with a single room that includes bedding (sheets, blankets, and pillows). Towels are usually provided. You will have access to kitchen facilities and cooking utensils to prepare lunch when you are at home.

Lyon Year (Immersion)

During the ILP, you will live in a residence hall for two and a half weeks; the cost is included in your UCEAP fees. Accommodations consist of double rooms with a private bathroom; there is no refrigerator or cooking facilities. Be prepared to pay for all meals during the ILP (except breakfast). The cost of eating out can be high, but you can find reasonably priced meals at nearby university dining facilities.

Academic year housing options include rooms in private homes/residences, shared apartments, or homestays in Lyon or its outskirts. (Priority for homestays is given to students in the fall Language & Culture and fall Immersion programs.) The suburbs of Lyon are well connected by an efficient transportation network.

You are responsible for finding your own housing (unless you are placed in a homestay). Housing can be difficult to locate; **UCEAP strongly advises you to start your housing search before departure.** The Study Center puts ads in the local newspaper and will share with you the offers received. You are also responsible for doing additional research on your own (via the Internet and various offices centralizing offers). A former UCEAP student is also hired for three weeks at the beginning of your stay to assist you with your housing search. The student assistant is familiar with the city and can help you with the housing hunt.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“ I chose to rent a room in a French couple’s house. I recommend living with native French speakers (not with other Americans). It enriches your experience and forces you to speak the language (even when you don’t want to).

If you rent an apartment, don’t room with other Americans. Rooming with a French student enhances your French language skills.

”

You can also consult the following websites:

www.grand-lyon-colocation.com

(no French guarantor needed)

www.leboncoin.fr

www.colocation.fr

www.kel-koloc.com

www.appartager.com

www.paruvendu.fr

www.topannonces.fr

www.kijiji.fr

www.colocation-etudiante.com

www.pap.fr

www.icade-immobilier.com

www.appartcity.com

www.lesestudines.com

www.antaeus.fr

UCEAP students have found the first month in Lyon to be somewhat stressful. Be prepared for the usual frustration associated with finding ideal housing. UCEAP students report that this is a tough time but it is also a good learning experience and well worth the effort. If you have difficulty locating housing, contact the Study Center immediately. The Study Center is often indispensable in assisting with the housing search. While the Study Center will not actually find your housing, staff can be of great help if you are having trouble locating housing that suits your needs.

Lyon Fall (Immersion)

Housing options during the semester include private apartments (usually shared with other students), rooms in private homes/residences in the city, and homestays. Unless you are placed in a homestay, you are responsible for finding your own accommodation for the semester. Housing can be difficult to locate; UCEAP strongly advises you to start your housing search before departure.

Apartments

The Study Center puts ads on housing websites and will share with you the offers received. You are also responsible for doing additional research on your own (via the Internet and various offices centralizing offers). A former UCEAP student is also hired for three weeks at the beginning of your stay to assist with the housing search. The student assistant is familiar with the city and can help you with the housing hunt. Refer also to the useful websites listed in the previous section for Lyon year students.

During the ILP, you will stay at the residence hall with the year students for the first two and a half weeks.

Homestays

You will receive an e-mail from the Lyon Study Center with information on how to select your housing option. If you are interested in a homestay, you will be asked to submit a homestay questionnaire, self-introduction letter in French, and your photo to the Lyon Study Center. The homestay questionnaire and letter in French can be sent by e-mail as attached documents.

In your homestay, you will have access to full kitchen facilities. Bedding (sheets, blankets, pillows) and towels are provided, but you are advised to bring one towel for traveling. Most homestay families live in apartments, and you will have a private room. The homestay housing cost includes breakfast and dinner five days a week. You will be staying at the CISL for the first three nights.

You may not move in with your host family in Lyon prior to the official start date. You will be staying in the residence hall for the first three nights of the program. You are expected to move out on the last day of the program.

There is a €200 Homestay Service Fee for Lyon students who are placed in homestays (in addition to the cost of the housing); if you are placed in a homestay, this fee will be charged to your MyEAP Financial Account. Your UCEAP account will be adjusted and the cost of rent will be paid directly to UCEAP.

Lyon Fall (Language & Culture)

You will reside in a homestay during the program. After spending your first night in Lyon at a residence, you will move to your private room with a family in Lyon or its surrounding districts. You may not move in with your host family in Lyon prior to the official start date. You are expected to move out on the last day of the program.

In order to aid the Study Center in arranging appropriate housing, complete the UCEAP homestay questionnaire and a self-introduction letter in French during the spring prior to departure. The questionnaire and the instructions for writing the letter will be e-mailed to you by the Study Center.

Your letter in French will serve as the first contact with your host family, and then they will have your e-mail address for the response. The Study Center will only consider reassigning you in severely mismatched situations.

There is a wide range of accommodations, in terms of location, facility, family interest, or socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Some of the homestays may be as far as 30 to 40 minutes by bus from the university, but Lyon has excellent transportation.

Accommodations include breakfast and dinner five days a week. You provide your own lunch, and you will have access to the kitchen during the weekends. As a guest in a homestay, you are expected to conform to French family norms. Flexibility and adaptability are important qualities for a successful homestay experience. Do not expect to live as you do at home. Review the general [Homestays](#) section at the end of this chapter for further guidelines.

The cost of the homestay is included in your UCEAP program fees. There is a €200 Homestay Service Fee for Lyon students who are placed in homestays (in addition to the cost of the housing); this fee will be charged to your MyEAP Financial Account. Refer to the Student Budget Worksheet (available in the [Money Matters](#) section of your [Participants](#) program page) for exact fees.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

If you find a roommate (English- or French-speaking), write a contract and sign it right away. Include all details as to how much each person owes and when the money will be paid. Make sure to do l'état des lieux with the landlord at the beginning so there is no question about the condition of the apartment when you leave. If you decide to leave your apartment mid-year, three months' notice is necessary. If you don't give this advance notice, the landlord has the right to keep your deposit.

”

Rent Payment (All Programs)

- ▶ Unless otherwise instructed, you are required to make your own housing payments (even if you are on financial aid). Review your UCEAP Student Budget to determine if housing costs are included in your program fees or paid for out of pocket.

Apartments

Your rent is due at the beginning of each month. In most cases, you will be required to pay a rental deposit in advance in the amount of one or two months' rent. This is returned within two months after you move out as long as the apartment is left in the condition it was found. Utilities and phone bills are extra costs. You may also have to pay a renter's tax of about one month's rent.

If you arrange to rent through a rental agency, you may have to provide documentation of parental income and pay additional deposits and agency fees. In addition, you are responsible for any extra housing expenses such as cleaning, utilities, and phone bills that are charged to you after the program is over. You will be blocked from registering for courses at your UC campus and from obtaining transcripts from your UC campus if you fail to pay such bills.

All renters in France are required to have liability insurance for protection against accidents, fire, or water damage.

Bordeaux participants: The renter's insurance premium is included in the UCEAP fees.

Lyon participants: The renter's insurance premium is not included in the UCEAP fees; you will have to pay this out of pocket.

Homestays

Bordeaux participants: Rent is paid by the students at the beginning of each month—usually in euros and directly to the landlord (never with travelers checks). You will likely be required to pay a one-month rental deposit in advance. This is returned within one month after you move out if the room is left in the condition it was found and in good condition according to the rental agreement. If you decide to move without giving one month's notice, you may be fined up to one month's rent. Phone bills are extra expenses. Rent includes breakfast and dinner seven days a week, plus lunch on weekends.

Lyon participants: If you are in the fall language and culture program, the cost of the homestay is included in your UCEAP program fees. If you are in the fall immersion program and choose to stay in a homestay, the fees will be added to your UCEAP account. Refer to the UCEAP Student Budget (available in the Money Matters section of your Participants program page) for exact fees.

Renting Apartments in France

The following information applies only if your program allows renting apartments. See the [beginning of this chapter](#) for housing options in your program.

To rent an apartment, one normally must have enough funds available upon arrival in France to cover:

- the equivalent of one months' rent for a security deposit
- *taxe d'habitation*, if you will be the renter of the apartment on January 1 of a given year
- renter's insurance (if not included in your program's UCEAP fees)
- possible agency fees
- first month's rent

Apartment Fees

If you rent an apartment under your name (shared or not), you must pay the *taxe d'habitation*, which is equivalent to about one month's rent and is billed annually by the government. Sometimes the *taxe d'habitation* is calculated by the landlord and is included in the rent. The *fisc* (French IRS) is increasingly more computerized and efficient. If the *fisc* sends an inquiry, it must be answered. Be aware that it is often sent after your departure from France.

Renting an apartment may require the payment of an agency fee (typically one and a half months' rent) and a security deposit equal to one months' rent. These factors can increase the monthly housing expense by one-third. The security deposit should be refunded after termination of the lease, generally after the landlord has made sure that the utilities have been paid and there is no damage to the apartment. The landlord has up to two months to refund the security deposit. The security deposit cannot be applied toward the last month's rent. In accordance with the housing agreement, sufficient notice (typically one month for a furnished apartment and three months for an unfurnished apartment) is required before vacating the apartment. Notice must be sent via registered mail with return receipt requested, or "*lettre recommandée avec avis de réception*."

Leases

Although a lease usually covers 12 months, French law provides a procedure for early termination. To terminate a lease, the owner must be notified by a registered letter (receipt requested) at least one month in advance for a furnished apartment and three months in advance for an unfurnished apartment. After giving notice of early termination, you must allow the landlord to show the apartment. If these requirements are fulfilled, you are freed of the lease. If you decide to move without following this procedure, you may be fined up to one months' rent for a furnished apartment and up to three months' rent for an unfurnished apartment, or you may have to pay the rent until the official procedure has been fully completed. By law, the landlord has two additional months to return the security deposit, less any damages. There is little chance of finding someone to sublet an apartment. Ask the Study Center staff for help with these important matters, especially when you receive and sign official documents.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“

The homestay is absolutely wonderful. Experience another side of French culture, and save bunches of time not having to worry about grocery shopping, cooking, and cleaning. The costs come to about the same in the end.

It's definitely the best idea to live with a family. I'm truly happy with the choice I made.

My stay with a host family is the only reason I now have passable French.

”

Renter's Insurance

Under French law, you are required to have renter's insurance, which can cost from €80 to €140 for the year. This insurance covers fire, water damage, accidents, and theft (only from your home). Review the UCEAP Student Budget online to determine if the renter's insurance is included in your UCEAP fees. If it is not, you will be required to pay for the insurance out of pocket once in France.

Utilities

Depending on the type of housing, utilities (gas, water, and electricity) may be included in the rent, but phone, Internet, and cable services are not; plan on paying for these services yourself. More and more phone contracts are now bundled with phone, TV, and Internet for one monthly fee (around €30). Ask for a package that includes unlimited and free phone calls to the U.S.

Homestays

There is probably no better way for you to be immersed in French culture than to share everyday life with a family. The homestay is intended to be a mutually convenient social arrangement, a cultural experience, and a financial agreement between the host family and you. The home is intended to be more than just a place to stay. However, conforming to someone else's rules, especially if they seem strict, may be a strain if you have lived on your own for a few years. You may need to accept some limits to your independence. The homestay family may require that you be home by a certain hour each night, keep your room reasonably tidy, or have different rules governing phone usage, food, and utilities. Some families place restrictions on visitors. In some homes, students have their own entrance and considerable privacy.

Although you may be made to feel like a part of the family, some families are more distant and will establish a more impersonal and businesslike arrangement. The degree of interaction with other members of the household varies in relation to the diversity of the households in France. You may well find yourself living with a single individual and one or more family members (collateral or direct kin) instead of a traditional family unit. Retired single individuals (usually retired women) frequently enjoy hosting students. Do not expect a traditional French nuclear family or the dynamics that you might otherwise experience with such a family.

You will need to be flexible. The responsibility to adapt is on you, not on the host family. Being in a family setting, it is imperative for you to take into account local customs. The homestay coordinators are careful about matching you with the best family, but a perfect match is difficult. Dialogue, patience, cooperation, and consideration are usually the best vehicles for good results. While the program attempts to place one student per household, occasionally another student might be present from another program. In order to be placed in the most suitable situation, fill out the pre-departure housing questionnaire carefully and accurately by the required deadline.

The primary purpose of being with a host family is to interact socially and culturally, and to improve language proficiency. It is expected that everyone, including other guests in the home, will speak French at all times. If a host family requests that you speak English, it may be beneficial to work out a reciprocal arrangement in which you occasionally speak in English to help the host family with the language, while remaining committed to using the host family's help in your own acquisition of French.

There may be some unspoken conditions and responsibilities to a homestay involving everything from use of the kitchen to possible curfews. To avoid any confusion, communicate with your host family about the following when you arrive:

- **Keys:** Will you be issued keys to the house? Does the family expect you to be home at a certain time of night?
- **Bathroom privileges:** What are your rights and responsibilities concerning the bathroom facilities? If possible, set up a schedule, especially for the morning.
- **Meals:** How many meals per day will you receive? What should you do if you know you will miss a meal? What should you do if you miss a meal unintentionally? Discuss any special dietary needs and scheduled meal times, and inquire about access to the kitchen and the household's food. Be flexible if you are a vegetarian.
- **Towels and linens:** Will they be provided? Who will launder them? How often will linens be changed?
- **Your room:** Who is to clean the room? Make the bed? Change the linens?
- **Laundry:** Who is responsible for the laundry? In some situations, the host family will do all laundry except underwear.
- **Water:** Conservative usage is highly recommended. You may be limited to one shower per day.
- **Guests:** Are you allowed to have guests, including overnight guests? What about parties and social gatherings in the home? Always inform the host family about any out-of-town trips and times when you expect to arrive home late, in case of an emergency.
- **Payment:** Clarify how payment for room and board is to be made. When is payment due? In some programs, homestay payment is included in the UCEAP fees.
- **Phone:** Ask your host family about the use of the phone and how to reimburse them for phone bills, and follow the set guidelines. Leave some money to cover charges that have not yet been paid before you leave France. Most students obtain cell phones, which avoids this problem altogether.
- **Internet access:** If the host family does not have wireless, make sure you understand how to access the Internet. If you will be using a computer belonging to the host family, assume access will be limited. Seek out other ways to get online, such as computer labs and Internet cafés.
- **Other utilities:** Do not leave lights, computers, or other items running when not in use, and check with your host family regarding use of heat, etc. The French are conservative about the use of electricity and hot water. Respect host family expectations with regard to use of utilities.

Do not hesitate to report difficulties to the Study Center staff. Concerns should be aired immediately to avoid having a small instance build up into a major annoyance. Often, an upsetting situation is the result of a cultural misunderstanding that the Study Center may be able to explain.

You are responsible for any damage that you cause in the homestay and you will be expected to replace the items or pay for the damages before departure.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...



The bread is wonderful! There are boulangeries all over and you can buy fresh bread every day. The cheese is great too—250 different kinds.

You have to walk to the grocery stores. A customer isn't always right. Returning items to stores takes more effort. Stores aren't open 24 hours a day or on Sundays.

Cuisses de grenouilles, frogs' legs, are good if you try not to imagine the frog. They taste like chicken and the French will be pleased and surprised if you eat them.



Meals

Meals in student restaurants are substantial and cost about €3 each. If you are in a homestay, you will either be provided with a meal plan or you may arrange cooking privileges at home. If you choose to rent an apartment or private room, be sure that you will have access to full kitchen facilities. Expect to prepare your own meals. If you eat primarily at student restaurants, you can keep within the estimated budget noted online in the UCEAP Student Budget. The UCEAP Student Budget is based on estimated costs of eating at the student cafeterias and cooking at home. Eating out in France is generally a lot more expensive than it is in the U.S.

Bordeaux (Immersion and Language & Culture)

Students living in apartments will prepare their own meals. It is also possible to buy food in shops and bakeries near the university. Note that eating options on campus (cafeterias, restaurants) are very limited during the ILP, since most French students are not there yet.

Students living in homestays are provided breakfast and dinner seven days a week. On weekdays, you must buy or prepare lunch on your own; on Saturdays and Sundays, lunch will be provided.

Lyon Immersion

There are no cooking facilities in the ILP dormitories, but reasonably priced meals are available at university dining facilities (approximately €3 at the *restaurant universitaire*). You can also buy food at a reasonable price in shops close to the residence.

Lyon Language & Culture

In your homestay, breakfast and dinner are provided five days a week, and the cost is included in your fees. You will have access to the kitchen to prepare your own meals on weekends. You must prepare your own lunch or eat at one of the local cafeterias.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

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If you can, avoid going home to the U.S. for the holidays. After being abroad for four months you'll finally find a rhythm, and a mere two weeks' vacation home will break that rhythm. You may find yourself more homesick upon return.

Take advantage of invitations for excursions, meals, and events with French friends and host families. It'll be fun and enlightening for you. You'll discover insights that you might not be able to gain on your own or with your American friends.

Meet French people; don't be afraid to call them, and don't be afraid to ask for help.

If you go to a coastal city, try the regional specialty, les huîtres, live oysters. The French eat them raw with a bit of lemon juice. It's a wonderful delicacy, and locals will be thrilled to see you eat them.

Take risks with the language and try to speak French whenever possible. Observe what others are doing and follow their example. Say 'Bonjour, madame' to a shopkeeper and 'Merci, au revoir' when you leave.

”

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Get Involved

Participating in extracurricular cultural and social activities while on UCEAP is an excellent way to meet people, improve your language skills, and integrate more fully into the community.

Join sports, musical, theater, or arts groups; volunteer at local organizations; attend lectures and receptions held in academic and community circles; and get the most out of your time abroad.

Working in France

Only students in the Lyon immersion and Sciences Po, Paris programs may legally work in France. French law dictates that international students have the right to work while studying in France as long as they are enrolled in an institution that participates in the national student health care plan. Students who are not EU citizens must also hold a valid *titre de séjour* (see the [Travel Documents](#) section of this guide for details). It may take four months or more to receive your *titre de séjour* after your arrival in France, so working may be more feasible for students who will be in France for the year.

The law allows students to work 964 hours in a given year, which corresponds to 50% of full-time employment for the year (approximately 20 hours per week). Your work schedule should not interfere with your class schedule and coursework.

If you decide to work abroad, do not rely on that source of income to subsidize the UCEAP program; you must have other means of support. Student jobs are difficult to find, especially for foreigners, and even more so if you are not fluent in French. A few students in the past have found jobs teaching English and babysitting.

Contact the French consulate for more information about working abroad and applicable visa requirements.

Volunteer Opportunities

There may be volunteer opportunities available in your host city. Talk to the staff at your UCEAP Study Center to discuss whether volunteering is feasible for you and for suggestions on what organizations may be in need of volunteers.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

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Finding a church and people I connect and relate to made my experience a lot better. Meeting people from so many different cultures was amazing.

Travel! Go north at the warmest times and south in the winter. The outdoor market (I frequented Marche d'Aligüe) is great for practicing your language.

Exclude yourself from American groups; this is the best way to avoid English.

Keep an open mind; it makes all the difference.

Just be yourself. Don't pretend to be French because you're not. Be respectful, friendly, and keep your frustration with French inefficiency and administrative and cultural differences to a minimum.

Most valuable: learning that Americans are not the center of the world—that there are so many other cultures out there, ways of living, and so much to learn.

Planned activities by UC were extremely good.

”

- ▶ In addition to the following, read the **Health** chapter of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*.
- ▶ The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **Travelers' Health** website provides valuable health information for all destinations. **Medical Facilities**

HEALTH

Medical Facilities

Medical care in France is of comparable quality to that found in the U.S. If you feel sick or have a medical emergency, seek medical attention and contact the Study Center immediately. Study Center staff can recommend a clinic to visit, provide the necessary UCEAP medical insurance claim forms to complete, and make arrangements with your professors if an extended absence from class is expected.

Keep the following numbers handy in case of a medical emergency:

Medical emergencies and SAMU (24-hour ambulance)	15
Police	17
Fire department and other emergencies	18

If you have questions, concerns, or feel that you need to be tested for a sexually transmitted disease, you can receive information and testing at the following clinics:

Bordeaux:
 Hôpital Saint André
 Service du planning familial
 1 rue Jean Burguet
 33000 Bordeaux

Lyon:
 Hôpital Edouard Herriot
 5 place d'Arsonval
 69003 Lyon
 (metro ligne D, station Grange Blanche)
 (This hospital is open 24 hours a day)

Psychological Health

If you are in need of counseling, the UCEAP Study Center can provide you with referral information and help you make an appointment with English-speaking clinical psychologists and psychiatrists. Your UCEAP Insurance Plan covers counseling sessions as any other health condition; there is no co-pay or deductible, and you can make an appointment with any doctor. You can also contact the UCEAP travel assistance provider, Europ Assistance, in the United States to ask for medical referrals and/or to arrange for direct payment to a provider, if possible.

Medications

If you take any medicine regularly, bring more than enough to last through the program. It is against the law to send prescription and over-the-counter medications through the mail. Medicines will most likely be stopped at French customs if you try to ship them to France. Take an extra copy of the prescription for any medication, eyeglasses, or contact lenses. Your prescription should also list the generic name of the medication you are currently taking. You might also consider bringing your favorite brand name products that might not be available abroad (familiar brands of shampoo, antiperspirants, pain medication, other over-the-counter remedies, particular brands of contact lens supplies, etc.). Although the brand may be difficult or impossible to find, it is almost always possible to find a local equivalent.

The UCEAP assistance provider, Europ Assistance, can provide information about whether a specific prescription medication is legal and available in France. Call them before your trip (1-866-451-7606) with the name of the medicine.

Birth Control

Condoms are the only type of birth control available over the counter. Oral contraceptives and other pharmaceutical forms of birth control are available only with a prescription. The UCEAP Insurance Plan covers birth control up to U.S. \$500.

Insurance

The cost for the required [UCEAP Insurance Plan](#) is paid by UC.

To be reimbursed for expenses that are covered by the insurance plan submit a claim form to the insurance carrier along with itemized bills within 30 days. See the [Insurance Information](#) tab on your [Participants](#) program page for claim forms and details.

French National Health Insurance

If you are enrolled in an immersion program in Lyon, you are required to obtain French national health insurance (*sécurité sociale*). The Lyon Study Center pays the *sécurité sociale* for Lyon students and the cost is included in your UCEAP fees. Bordeaux students are exempt.

Sécurité sociale covers about 70 percent of basic medical costs as long as you are treated by a designated category of doctor.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

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Sexual harassment in terms of catcalls and guys not leaving you alone in the street is common and can be frustrating. The U.S. is abnormal that way compared to the rest of the world, so I took it in stride (you have to learn to deal with it eventually).

For female students: Guys hit on you everywhere in France, but it's not a problem as long as you recognize that it's part of their culture and all you need to do is ignore it.

If you're a 'California girl' you better get used to not being your normal, sweet, outgoing self. Be assertive and learn to assume the 'mind your own business' demeanor that European women have, or you'll no doubt be hassled.

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SAFETY

- In addition to the following, read the [Safety](#) chapter of the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad*.

Terrorism

International terrorism is a growing concern in France, although the threat of terrorist activity remains low. French officials have arrested a number of suspected Islamic extremists as part of ongoing cross-border operations involving police from Italy and Spain.

The government of France maintains a national antiterrorism plan, “Vigipirate Renforce.” Under this plan, in times of heightened security concerns, the government mobilizes police and armed forces at airports, train and metro stations, and other high-profile locations, such as schools, embassies, and government installations. Arrests have been made in France relatively recently in connection with various terrorist plots. Remain alert and vigilant of your surroundings, especially on subways and trains, and report any suspect packages, unattended baggage, or suspicious activities to local police or the nearest authority.

The Basque Separatist Party (ETA) and the National Front for the Liberation of Corsica (FLNC) operate in the south of France and Northern Spain, and occasionally bomb local government institutions, banks, travel agencies, etc. There have been numerous politically motivated bombings on the island of Corsica. While no deaths were caused by any of these acts of terrorism, you should remain vigilant if you travel to Corsica or Northern Spain.

Crime & Personal Safety

France is a relatively safe country, with most crimes being non-violent. The majority of crimes directed against foreign visitors, including Americans, involve pick-pocketing and theft. Most problems can be avoided by being aware of one's surroundings and avoiding high-risk areas.

Petty theft is frequent in crowded tourist areas and bus/train stations, on commuter trains (Metro), and in main business and shopping districts. Pickpockets can be any gender, race, or age and are commonly children under the age of 16, as they cannot be prosecuted. Often, one thief distracts a victim while an accomplice pickpockets the victim; this tactic is commonly employed by adult-child teams, in which the children are often dressed as gypsies. Always secure your belongings before reacting to a distraction. A common scam involves persons working in conjunction to distract a foreigner by asking directions or the time. While the person is distracted, one of the scam artists steals from the victim.

Bordeaux is generally a safe city. However, follow the safety precautions above, and avoid the area around the main train station, Gare Saint-Jean de Bordeaux, if walking alone late at night.

Most of Lyon is safe, but petty crime is a problem, especially in metropolitan areas. Follow the safety precautions above, and avoid Parc de la Tete d'Or, Perrache, Terreaux, and some parts of La Croix Rousse after dark.

Crime in Paris is similar to that in most large cities, but violent crime is fairly uncommon in the heart of the city. There are several areas in Paris in which you must be particularly vigilant. The Gare du Nord train station, where express

trains from the airport arrive, is a high activity area for pick-pocketing and theft, as are major tourist attractions. Thieves also operate on the rail link from Charles de Gaulle Airport to downtown Paris by singling out jet-lagged, luggage-burdened tourists and students. Typically, one thief distracts the potential victim with a question while an accomplice takes a momentarily unguarded backpack, briefcase, or purse. Thieves often time their thefts to coincide with train stops so that they may quickly exit the train. Be careful on subway lines, especially those that pass by main tourist attractions. Avoid the Eiffel Tower late at night, especially if you are alone.

If a pickpocket steals your wallet or purse, do not let it affect your sense of personal safety. It can happen to anyone and possessions are much less important than your overall safety and good health.

Personal Safety Tips:

- Guard against pickpockets and purse snatchers.
- Avoid walking in deserted areas at night, especially alone; walk only in well-lit areas.
- Avoid wearing flashy jewelry and watches.
- Keep wallets in front pockets, wear purses close to your body or use a money belt. Carry your purse or bag with the strap diagonally across your chest.
- Be inconspicuous. Try to dress to blend in with locals. College sweatshirts, sweatpants, baseball caps, white sneakers, and shorts are all associated with Americans and may make you stand out.
- Act like you know where you are going, even if you do not. Plan ahead when you are in an unfamiliar part of a city so you will not have to pull out a map and demonstrate that you are lost.
- Always walk with a friend.
- Do not store a camera or other valuables in backpacks where they can be removed without notice.
- Leave items that you do not need on any given day at home.
- Do not carry your passport. Copy the first page of your passport to use as a form of ID and leave your actual passport safe in your room. If you lose your passport, or if it is stolen, immediately notify the nearest embassy or consulate, local authorities, and UCEAP Study Center staff. Before departure, scan the first page of your passport and e-mail the file to yourself. If your passport is stolen while you are traveling, you can access it online and print out a copy, which will help in obtaining a replacement from the embassy.
- Do not use an ATM in isolated, unlit areas or when there are people loitering in the vicinity. Avoid using the ATMS in train stations, especially at night. Beware of people standing close enough to the ATM to read your personal identification number (PIN) as you enter it into the machine. Thieves often conduct successful scams by simply observing the PIN as it is entered. If your card gets stuck in the ATM, be wary of people who offer to help, even those who seem to be helpful and ask for your PIN so they can “fix” the machine. Legitimate bank employees never have a reason to ask for the PIN.

- Remain aware if using your laptop or smart phone in a public space. Many laptops, cell phones, smart phones, and Blackberries are stolen by agile thieves watching you and waiting for you to turn away for a moment. If using a laptop in a restaurant or café, do not sit near the doors where a thief could run in, grab the computer, and run out easily. Sit in a back area and remain aware of the people around you. Do not place your cell phone or Blackberry on the café table; always keep it in your purse or pocket. Do not text or phone while walking down the street or waiting for the metro; do so in a discreet place where no one can see the phone you are using.
- Use common sense and use the same personal safety precautions that you would use in a large city in California.
- Lock your door and secure your bike to prevent theft.
- Secure your wallet and purse on buses and in crowds. Carry your wallet in a front or breast pocket, never in your back pocket.

For additional information, see the U.S. Department of State pamphlet, [A Safe Trip Abroad](#).

Demonstrations & Strikes

Strikes and protests are frequent in France, mostly in metropolitan areas, and are usually staged by public officials, unionized workers, farmers, and anti-globalization and eco-activists. While violent civil unrest is not common in France, student, labor union, and immigrant demonstrations have escalated into confrontations in the past.

Large demonstrations in France usually have a strong police presence, but there have been occasions when protesters burned cars and numerous arrests were reported. In addition, the congestion caused by large demonstrations could cause major inconveniences for a visitor on a tight schedule.

Demonstrators are required to obtain a permit, and some of the local media will list scheduled demonstrations.

Avoid all protests and demonstrations, including student and labor rallies.

Police

The police are well equipped and trained. Many officers speak more than one language. Main police stations, including those for the National Police or Gendarmerie, are located in each *arrondissement*.

Substance Abuse & Smoking

- Drug use is strictly forbidden by law.

You will find different practices and attitudes towards drinking in France. Alcohol can be purchased by anyone over 16 years old. If you choose to drink, do so in moderation. Familiarize yourself with the UCEAP [Substance Abuse Policy](#).

An anti-smoking law was passed forbidding smoking in all public places, including restaurants, bars, and nightclubs.

Fire Safety

Learn about fire hazards and safety. Purchase a smoke detector and use it. Have an escape plan and familiarize yourself with all exits. For more information, read the *UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad* [Fire Safety](#) section.

Emergency Contacts

What Is an Emergency?

An emergency is a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action. The following are considered emergencies:

- Any life/death situation
- A traumatic event requiring immediate assistance
- An arrest
- Civil unrest or natural disaster in the host country

In an Emergency

Contact local emergency services first and then contact the following:

If you are in the U.S.

- During office hours (8 a.m.–5 p.m. Pacific Time): Contact your Operations Specialist at the UCEAP Systemwide Office
- After office hours: Call the 24-hour emergency phone number at (805) 893-4762

If you are abroad

If you need immediate emergency assistance, **call 112** for Police, Ambulance, or Fire Department or:

Police	17
Ambulance.....	15
Fire Department	18

If necessary, call the emergency number of the U.S. Embassy in Paris:
01 43 12 22 22

U.S. Embassy in France

American Citizen Services
4, Avenue Gabriel
75382 Paris Cedex 08

Phone: (+33) 1 43 12 22 22

Fax: (+33) 1 42 66 97 83

Web: france.usembassy.gov

If you have a health, travel, or safety emergency and do not have access to local or UCEAP representative emergency information, contact the UCEAP travel assistance provider, Europ Assistance, available 24/7:

- **Call international collect:** 1+202-828-5896
- **Call within the U.S.:** 1+866-451-7606
- **E-mail:** ops@europassistance-usa.com