

Study Abroad



**USAC FRANCE: LYON & PAU
2020**

Program Guide

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Congratulations on being accepted to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC)

study abroad program in Lyon or Pau, offered through the University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC). Living and studying in a new culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

Gaining new perspectives on a chosen academic field

Increasing understanding of different cultures

Enhancing personal development

Developing different perspectives on U.S. culture

Gaining self-confidence and independence

Learning skills for the future international job market

It is up to you to determine how you can best benefit from these possible advantages. This is your adventure!

Use this program-specific guide with the more general resources in your BlugoldsAbroad account. While this guide contains the information available at the time of publication, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. Your peer advisor will email information throughout the semester, and we encourage you to do your own research, also, using the web resources listed towards the end of this guide, as well as others that you find. Contact the Center for International Education (CIE) staff or your peer advisor with your specific questions.

Questions only you can answer include:

1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Advancement in a future profession, desire to expand personal and academic horizons, need for a change, and wish to challenge yourself in a new environment?

2) How can you best prepare to meet your goals within the context of this program? For example, if one of your goals is truly being immersed in French culture, yet you are going with a group of UW-Eau Claire students, how can you insure that you do not spend too much time with other Americans?

The information in this guide was current at the time of publication, though changes may occur at any time.

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ACADEMICS

Additional information on topics such as maintaining program eligibility, registration at UWEC, class attendance, course equivalencies, grades, transcripts and service learning is in the [Academics section of your Study Abroad Handbook](#).

Pre-departure Planning

Please see the [UWEC-Lyon, France Academics page](#) or the [UWEC-Pau, France Academics page](#) for details on how to plan your courses in France.

If you have questions about the French course equivalencies, contact Dr. Jessica Miller, the French section head, in the UW-Eau Claire Department of Languages.

As part of the USAC admissions process, you completed a preliminary course registration, indicating your course and tour selections, along with two alternative courses in case any courses become unavailable. You can see the form, Course and Tour Registration Form, in your USAC Gateway account. Your courses and/or level of French may change once you arrive at your host university.

Credits and Course Load

Summer

You can enroll in Session I; Session II, or both Sessions. A minimum of four and a maximum of five credits is required each session. You can take up to six credits in one session if you enroll in the Paris field study.

At least one, 4-credit French language course is required in each session in which you enroll. If you are at the intermediate level or higher, you will meet this requirement by taking one 3-credit French course and a 1-credit conversational French course.

If you are abroad for both sessions, you will earn 8-11 credits.

To receive summer financial aid, you must take at least six credits.

Semester

Lyon: You are required to take a minimum of 12 credits for the semester and may take a maximum of 18 credits.

Pau: You are required to take a minimum of 15 credits for the semester and may take a maximum of 18 credits.

For all terms:

- The credits you earn abroad are considered UWEC resident credits.
- The classes you take abroad will count towards the total credits needed for graduation.
- Dropping below full-time status may result in loss of financial aid and/or insurance coverage and **must be approved in advance by the CIE and USAC.**

Registration in France

Once you arrive in France, you will take a placement test and your registration is adjusted accordingly. You won't have much of a say in when your courses are as they are mostly determined by how you place in your placement test. You also won't have multiple time slots to choose from, like you usually do in the states. There is a drop-add period and withdrawal deadline set by the Lyon and Pau resident directors. You will receive these dates from the respective USAC Office in France.

Add/Drop Courses

There is a drop-add period for each term, set by the Lyon and Pau resident directors. You will receive these dates from the respective USAC Office in France.

Withdrawing from USAC Courses

Your Resident Director in France will establish a course withdrawal deadline. If you must drop a course after the drop deadline, but before the withdrawal deadline, a grade of "W" will be reported on your USAC grade report. If you stop attending a class without officially withdrawing from it, the grade will be reported as an "F."

Classes

USAC French language courses are taught at the Institute of French studies at the respective universities. Your classmates will be other USAC and international students. The language course structure is different than at UWEC: Instead of taking one French language course where you learn phonetics, grammar, etc. all within that one course, in France, they break those apart into different chunks. You may have different faculty teaching you phonetics, grammar, etc.

Summer: Upon arrival, you will take a placement exam. Based on the results, you will enroll in one 4-credit French language course, or one 3-credit French and a 1-credit conversation course. If you are attending both Sessions I & II, you will continue with the next course in the sequence during Session II. There are also several 1-credit electives to choose from, designed to introduce you to the region around Pau, as well as the possibility of taking the optional Paris study tour for 1-credit.

Semester: Based on the results of your placement test, you will enroll in three sequential language courses, plus a 1- or 3-credit French conversation course for a total of 12 credit hours. An example of a sequence would be Second Year French II, Third Year French I and II, plus French Conversation (12 credits).

In addition, you will take one or two elective courses taught specifically for USAC-Pau students. The elective courses are designed to familiarize you with the region and help complete requirements for other disciplines. Courses taught in French are appropriate for third year students and above; courses taught in English are appropriate for all students

In Lyon only, it may be possible to take a course at Université Catholique de Lyon (UCLy). There are several restrictions on the courses that you can take at UCLy, and neither UWEC nor USAC guarantees the transfer of the credit. Students interested in enrolling in a course at UCLy should consult the USAC Resident Director upon arrival in Lyon.

Class/Activity Attendance

USAC generally allows students one excused absence. Each tardy is considered one half of an absence. If you fail to attend class, this will affect your grade in the course. All exams must be taken as scheduled.

DUEF French Proficiency Exam

The Université Lumière Lyon 2 and Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour offers French proficiency exams at all levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced exams which are ranked from A1 to C2. All students will take the DUEF (Diplôme Universitaire d'Etudes Françaises = University Diploma of French Studies) at the end of their program; the cost is included in the program fee.

The exam consists of different parts including oral proficiency, listening comprehension as well as a writing section. You will receive your diploma shortly after your program is over through the mail. This diploma is confirmation of your French language proficiency, according to French national standards. It may be beneficial in future job searches, especially for

students who are interested in an international career or teaching French. The results do not affect your UWEC transcript or grades.

Grades

Courses in the program are graded on the U.S. A-F grading scale. The grades reported on your USAC grade report are the same grades that will appear on your UWEC transcript.

However, while USAC will report your grades using the standing A-F scale, you may see French university grades on some of your individual work. French universities typically grade students using a scale of 1 to 20, with grades 18 through 20 never awarded. A 16 is a very high mark with a 10 being acceptable.

Note: UWEC students abroad are not allowed to take classes pass/fail. USAC grades are figured into your UWEC GPA and posted to your UWEC transcript. No exceptions will be made.

USAC Grade Report/UWEC Transcript

Please see the Academics section of the Study Abroad Handbook for important information if you are **graduating, transferring or applying for a competitive major** such as Nursing or Education at the end of your term abroad.

At the end of the program, USAC prepares a grade report, which must be sent to UWEC. If you have any outstanding financial charges, your transcript will be withheld until payment is made.

If you are asked to complete a transcript release form by USAC, have the transcript sent to the Center for International Education (see Contacts page for full address). UWEC cannot post grades that were first sent to a student.

USAC will also update your grades on your Gateway account for you to review. Courses, credits, and grades are incorporated into your UWEC transcript.

Summer: Grade reports are not available until a few weeks after the summer program ends.

Semester: Grade reports are not available until a few months after the program ends.

For all terms: Due to this delay, you will initially receive a grade report with "NR" (not reported) for all courses. This will be changed once your grade report arrives.

The Academic System

Cultural differences are not confined to life outside of the university. You are preparing to learn for a semester not only in a different language, but within a completely different university system, constructed on very different cultural assumptions.

Your courses are taught by French instructors, educated within the French academic system. Within this system, **teachers are expected to present ideas and information; it is the student's responsibility to make sense of the information.** Students need to learn independently and often work together outside of class to understand or expand upon the materials presented in class.

This is a different approach from that of the U.S. system, where the teacher presents the exact information, in an orderly fashion, that students "need" to know to pass an exam.

The U.S. system of higher education increasingly operates under the assumption that students are "**customers**," and that, as in business, the customer is (almost) always right.

This is not the case in French universities, where students are considered "learners."

To give a practical example: if a professor is ill and misses a class, students are required to attend a make-up session scheduled at the professor's convenience. **It is assumed that students will want to attend the session, because they are there to learn.**

Important differences that you may encounter:

Syllabus: You may not receive a syllabus for your class. As such, you will most likely not receive a breakdown of how your grade will be calculated and/or you may not be given a list of textbooks required for the class.

Amount of Class Time: While the credit load may be similar to UWEC, you can expect to spend more time in class in France, and less time working on assignments outside of class.

In the U.S., students are expected to attend and participate in class, but most of the work and learning is done outside of the classroom through projects, papers, or other homework activities. This is not the case in France.

Prepare to spend longer hours engaging and participating in class, interacting with peers and gaining direct feedback from the professor. Attendance is required and expected for every class to optimize the French learning experience.

On the flip side, because more hours are spent in the classroom, there is less homework assigned.

Testing: Testing in France is intense and high stakes. To enter university all students must pass their BAC, which involves a week of oral and written exams. Once at university students must take comprehensive exams each year. Part of the goal to weed out students: 50% of French university students do not make it past the first year. 90% of medical students fail their

first year. Failed students are required to retake the entire year of studies.

Student Services: Another important difference to note is that "student services" are a relatively unknown concept at French universities. While the USAC office and Resident Directors will be ready to assist you, in general, the university does not have the mission, common to most U.S. institutions, of "student development." It is there to provide access to academic resources. University students are considered adults who will work their way through the system, asking questions when necessary.

MONEY MATTERS

UWEC information about making payments, when they are due, withdrawal and refund deadlines, financial aid, general scholarships, budgeting and ways to bring money abroad is in the [Money Matters section of your Study Abroad Handbook](#).

Cost Estimate

You can find the most current cost estimate for your program, in easily printable format, on the [CIE France, Lyon \(USAC\) webpage](#), or the [CIE France, Pau \(USAC\) webpage](#). Be sure you are looking at the correct term. The cost estimate includes what you pay to UWEC, what you pay to USAC, and what you pay directly to other vendors.

Some details about housing costs:

Lyon Homestay: a homestay in **Lyon** includes breakfast 7 days a week and dinner 5 days a week.

Lyon/Pau Split Year: If you are combining semesters in Lyon fall and Pau spring, your housing is not covered over the winter break.

Pau Homestay: the homestay option in **Pau**, includes some meals: breakfast 7 days a week and dinner 2 days a week.

Both Locations: Yearlong students are provided housing during the winter break at no additional cost (subject to change, USAC will have final decision). If your family is available during the break, you can stay with the family. If your family is not available (traveling, etc.) during the winter break, you will move to the dorm temporarily.

USAC Payments & Refund Policy

For questions about paying your USAC fees, please contact the USAC accounting person listed in your Gateway account. You can pay with credit card, check, or money order.

In addition to the UWEC refund policy outlined in the "Money Matters" section of the Study Abroad Handbook, USAC has its own financial policies related to payment, cancellations, and changes. Information about the withdrawal deadlines and penalties are in the USAC Program Agreement and USAC Financial Agreement in your Gateway account.

Currency Exchange

The currency of France is the Euro (€). One euro has 100 cents. There are 8-euro coins, ranging in amount from 1 cent to 2 euros. Coins have different designs in the various countries that use the Euro. Bills range from €5 to €500 and have a standard design across countries.

You can find current exchange rates at <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.

Cost of Living

For an idea of what everyday costs you may encounter, check out this website: https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/country_result.jsp?country=Francea

Scholarships

USAC Scholarships: USAC offers a variety of scholarships. For information, visit [USAC's Scholarship website](#). You will see optional scholarship applications on your USAC Gateway account when they open. You can apply for all scholarships you are eligible for and can be awarded more than one scholarship.

Scholarships for UWEC students on USAC Programs: USAC also offers an Affiliate Scholarship just for UWEC students on a USAC program. You will be considered for this scholarship when you complete the UWEC Study Abroad Foundation Scholarship application. The number of awards varies by term. Amounts vary between \$200 - \$500.

The Department of Languages also has scholarships to support study in France.

- ***Vernon J. Gingerich Memorial Scholarship*** (One award @ \$800)

Available to UW-Eau Claire students with a 3.0 GPA who spend a semester abroad immersed in a native French-speaking environment. Application forms are available in the Department of Languages and have historically been due around March 1. Check with the Department of Languages for the exact due date.

- ***Martha Worthington Foreign Studies Scholarship*** (Two awards @ \$400)

Applicants for this scholarship must be majoring in a foreign language and have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. There is also a preference for a financial need, but it is not required. There is a first preference for a student majoring in French, but it is also not required. Application forms are available in the Department of Languages and have historically been due around

March 1. Check with the Department of Languages for the exact due date.

- **Gale Crouse Scholarship** (One award @ \$400)

One annual award will be made to an outstanding French student wishing to complete a project involving a humanitarian cause in a French or Francophone environment. Application forms are available in the Department of Languages and are due around March 1.

HEALTH & SAFETY

General information on these issues, as well as information on CISI insurance, is included in the [Health & Insurance](#) and [Safety Abroad](#) sections of your Study Abroad Handbook.

Health & Vaccinations

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has vaccination suggestions, how to stay healthy when abroad, and health information specific to France, etc. you can review the [CDC site for France](#).

Due to an increasing measles and mumps cases in Europe, we strongly encourage all students to check their vaccine history to see if they have had the MMR vaccine.

Healthcare **Medical Facilities in Lyon**

There are medical facilities close to campus. The USAC-Lyon resident director will be able to assist you in identifying an English-speaking doctor or therapist. You will receive more information during orientation in Lyon.

Medical Facilities in Pau

There is a medical clinic on campus. The USAC-Pau resident director also has a list of doctors and therapists (English and French-

speaking) that students have used in the past. You will receive more information during orientation in Pau.

Counseling Services

Counseling services are available in Pau and Lyon; however, counselors may not speak English.

If you would like to see an English-speaking therapist while abroad, we can work with CISI to identify English speaking therapists in Lyon or Pau. Start this process before you go, or afterwards, by contacting your UWEC study abroad coordinator.

Health Insurance in France

As part of your program fees to USAC you receive health insurance. Your USAC health insurance cards will be handed out at the on-site orientation. This insurance is in addition to the CISI insurance that you have through the UW system policy. You are not able to opt out of either one, both are required as they have different levels of coverage.

Students studying in Lyon will have to obtain the mandatory French Social Security Health Insurance as well. It is mandated for all foreigners studying in Lyon and is not included in your USAC or UWEC fees.

Services for Students with Disabilities

If you will need any disability accommodations when abroad, it is important to complete your USAC Disability and Health Accommodation Request Form on your USAC Gateway account. While USAC cannot guarantee services, they will do their best to accommodate your needs. When you complete that form, USAC will be in contact with you regarding services they can/cannot provide.

It is also important to look at the level of accessibility in France in general. To find more information on the topic, please see the “Laws and Special Circumstances” tab on the [U.S. State Department France Country Information](#) page.

Safety in France

For important information on crime, drug penalties and other topics, please see the Safety & Security section of the [U.S. State Department France Country Information Sheet](#).

Specific safety in and around Lyon or Pau) will be discussed during orientation in Eau Claire and at your on-site orientation in France.

Emergency Contacts

General emergency procedures are described in the Study Abroad Handbook, and the USAC staff is available if difficulties arise. You will receive an emergency contact card with USAC staff information at the Orientation 2; be sure to keep it in your wallet at all times. The information is also on the Contact Names & Addresses page of this guide.

911 Equivalent in France

If you are in an emergency in France, you will need to know how to reach the local police, fire, or ambulance services. In France, you have more than one option to reach emergency services.

1. Call the Universal European Emergency Number (24/7): 112
(Equivalent to 911 in the U.S., redirects to other emergency numbers.)
2. Call the specific number for the service you require:
 - a. Firefighters (24/7): 18
 - b. Police (24/7): 17
 - c. Medical Emergencies: 15

Save these numbers in your cell phone in case you need to use them quickly.

In France, for a medical emergency that happens at night (e.g. severely sprained ankle) and cannot wait until the next morning, call the European emergency number (see above). A doctor will ask questions and give advice over the phone to determine whether they will send an ambulance, you will take a cab to the emergency room at the hospital, or you can wait until the following morning to be treated.

The U.S. State Department also provides a list of [911 numbers abroad](#). Please note that in some countries there are different numbers for fire, police, and ambulance. Plan ahead and research numbers before you go.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Passport information is included in the [Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook](#).

If you are not a U.S. citizen, please contact the CIE for more information about the following topics.

Visa

A visa is official permission to temporarily reside in another country and is granted by the government of that country.

Summer: U.S. citizens, studying in France for less than 90 days do NOT need a visa. If you plan to travel in the [Schengen area](#) (much of Western Europe) before or after the program, you CANNOT be in the Schengen area for more than 90 days. Make your travel plans accordingly.

Semester: You will need to apply for a visa the semester prior to studying abroad. The CIE will hold an info session to go over the process. USAC will also release detailed information, including webinars and examples, on your Gateway account about how you go about obtaining a visa for France. The process can be lengthy, so please plan and respond promptly to any emails about the France visa process.

Although the CIE and USAC will provide information, it is your responsibility to keep up-to-date about student visa requirements for France, and to apply for and receive a visa from a French consulate or embassy in a timely manner. Please read the “Visa” section of your Study Abroad Handbook for more information about what you should do to keep up-to-date on visa requirements.

Visas for Travel to Other Countries

If you plan to travel outside of France while abroad, you should verify visa requirements for each country you will visit by contacting the nearest consulate for that country, or your travel agency. Most Western European nations do not require U.S. citizens to have a visa for tourist travel of less than three months.

PACKING TIPS

There is general packing information in the [Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook](#), you will get a suggested packing list for France at Orientation 2, and USAC will post a packing list to your Gateway account. In addition, you should know the following:

Weather

Lyon: The climate in Lyon is moderate, with warm summers and a chance of showers year-round so bring a raincoat and umbrella. In the fall, average temperature will be 63°F (17°C) when you arrive in September, with the temperatures beginning to drop in October. In December, you will experience an average temperature of 40°F (4.5°C).

In spring, you will arrive to daytime highs around 38°F (3°C). To explore Lyon in the winter you will want to bring a hat, gloves, and a warm coat. Spring can be a little slow to start but by May you should experience daytime highs between 68-84°F (20s°C) with plenty of sunshine.

Pau: Pau is known for its temperate climate. It rains on a regular basis, so you should be sure to pack a raincoat and umbrella.

For summer, the average temperatures range from ~75°F (~24°C) to the low 80s (~27°C) during the day and around 50°F (10°C) at night.

For fall, the average temperature is 65.5°F (18.6°C) in September when you arrive and 46.2°F (7.9°C) when you head home in December.

For spring, the average temperature in January is 43.5°F (6.4°C). By April, the average temperature is 52.5°F (11.4°C). Past spring students say that at the beginning it will seem COLD and WET (even though Pau is warmer than Wisconsin).

Clothing

French young people generally dress casually jeans, casual pants/skirts, casual tops. However, French casual is more formal than U.S. casual: sweatshirts, sweatpants and shorts are uncommon outside of athletic activities.

Because you will deal with a range of temperatures, bring clothes that you can wear or take off in layers. French apartments/buildings are often not as warm as those in the U.S., since they are not insulated for very cold weather.

Gifts

If you are staying with a host family, you may want to pack some small items that you could

use as gifts. It is suggested, but not obligatory, to offer a small gift for your host-family. A small memento from Wisconsin, like a UWEC mug, might be nice. If you are unsure what to bring for your host family, ask your Peer Advisor for suggestions.

Converters & Adapters

If you plan to bring a hair dryer, razor or other appliance from the US, you will need to **buy both a voltage converter and a plug adapter**. Another option is to buy the appliances after you arrive.

If you plan to bring your laptop abroad, check the power cord to see acceptable voltage inputs and outputs. If it includes 220 volts, you will only need to use a plug adapter, not a voltage converter.

If you have several US appliances you plan to use abroad, consider bringing a power strip, also. You will still need to have a voltage converter in order to plug it into the wall.

GETTING TO FRANCE

There is information on student-oriented travel agencies, instructions for booking a flight, and other travel information in the [Travel Resources section of the Study Abroad Handbook](#)

USAC will also posted a detailed “Flight Guide” in the 5-6 Months Before Program Start section of your Gateway account.

Travel Arrangements

It is your responsibility to make and pay for travel arrangements to Lyon or Pau. Airline tickets are not included in your USAC program fees.

An **optional group flight** is available for this program through a travel agency recommended

by USAC. If you choose not to book the group flight, you will need to book your own flight and arrive prior to the mandatory orientation. **There is a \$200 fee for students who miss orientation!** See the USAC Flight Guide for details on both options.

In both cases, pay attention to the group flight dates **as they may not directly align with the program calendar**. Sometimes there is an optional field trip before or after the program, or the return flight is sometimes offered later, or from Paris to allow for travel.

If the group return flight leaves after the program end date, and you do not request a change to leave when the program ends, you will be responsible for finding your own housing until the departure date.

USAC Group Flight

Benefits to booking with the optional group flight:

- Flexible tickets that are refundable and changeable for a fee.
- Flexible payment plan (pay a deposit to hold your seat, then pay the balance 2 weeks prior to departure)
- Select the group return date or select your own date for the same price
- Frosch Student Travel can help book connecting flights to merge with the group flight departure cities.
- Airport pick-up in Costa Rica (there is no USAC staff to chaperone the flight, but group flight participants will be met at the airport by USAC staff, unless you arrive late).

USAC will be in contact with you and information will be on your USAC Gateway account on how to sign up for the group flight.

Early Arrivals

USAC strongly discourages students from arriving early. If you decide to arrive early, you will need to find and pay for your own

accommodations. You should not expect to have any assistance upon arrival and should be prepared to deal with any issues on your own.

Airport Pick-Up Service

Please fill out the Flight Form in your Gateway account after you have booked your flight.

Depending on several variables: if you are on the group flight, if there is an optional field trip prior to the beginning of the program, etc., you may be met at the airport in your host city. If not, you will get detailed instructions on how to get to your initial accommodations in the **USAC Arrival Guide**, that will be posted to your Gateway account about two months prior to departure.

Late Arrivals-Expected and Unexpected

If you do not arrive as scheduled for any reason, you will be responsible for arranging and paying for your transfer from the airport. Again, watch for detailed instructions in the USAC Arrival Guide.

Important reminder: Write down your host family or apartment address on a piece of paper, in case you need to give it to a cab driver on arrival.

Leaving Your Host City

Return airport transportation is not included in the USAC program cost. It is your responsibility to make arrangements to get to your airport of departure and to pay for the cost of whatever type of transportation you use. Neither your host family nor USAC staff are obliged to take you to the airport.

SETTLING IN

Orientation

When you first arrive in France, you will have a mandatory orientation, with topics such cultural differences, appropriate behavior, France in

general, safety & emergency procedures, and living with host families/. This is also a great chance to get to know the USAC staff.

On-Site Support

USAC provides a resident director and staff to assist students with the transition to France. They will also be coordinating various excursions and activities throughout the term. If any questions or concerns arise, reach out to the onsite staff! It could be anything from how to say something in French to needing to go to the doctor. The USAC staff is there to assist you so please use them as a resource.

Getting Involved

To meet French students and others in the community, you'll need to get involved in activities. USAC can arrange speaking partners with French natives, and occasionally they receive requests from French families looking for English speakers to tutor their children. There are many options if you like sports: soccer, basketball, ski club, backpacking, and others. There are also theater groups, church groups. Just get out and explore!

HOUSING

See the USAC Housing Guide in your Gateway account for additional general information on housing, as well as cancellation policies.

Housing Options

You have two options for housing in both Lyon and Pau: 1) homestays, including some meals, with a family/French host or 2) university residence halls with no meals/meal plan included.

Specific housing assignments are given upon arrival to avoid last minute changes.

Host Families

Most students opt to live with French hosts for linguistic and cultural reasons. Host households involved in the program come in all shapes and sizes—two parents with several children, a widow and her child, an older couple whose children are on their own, a single woman, etc. Some of them have had students for years; some will be hosting for the first time.

Homestays are in Lyon/Pau and their suburbs. The homestay is either located within 15-40 minutes walking distance or is connected to school via public transportation (buses). If you choose a homestay, you must commit to staying there for the whole session.

Family Placement Process

USAC arranges accommodations with carefully selected host families. On your housing preference form, indicate if you want to be in a family with small children, pets or no pets, smoking or no smoking, etc. **Keep in mind that this is a preference list only.** Family assignments are made by the administrative office in Lyon and Pau based on availability.

What's Provided?

- A single, furnished room
- Pillow, sheets, towels, one blanket
- Some meals day provided by the family. See your specific Cost Estimate for details.
- One load of laundry/week.

Meals with your host family: See the Cost Estimate for your location to see how many family meals are included. You can also purchase meals at the campus cafeteria for approximately 3 Euro. Some past students have arranged with their families to pay for additional meals not included in the fees. Not all families will be open to this.

Remember that you are a guest (even if a paying one) in your family's home and that this is not a hotel situation. Do not insist on being

able to do things as you would in your own home. This is particularly important when it comes to food customs. You are most likely used to snacking when you wish, eating on the run, or inviting friends to meals. Be prepared for the following:

- Meals in France often involve sitting down with the whole family and for a long period of time.
- Be open-minded when trying new kinds of foods.
- The refrigerator is often off-limits and between-meal snacking is less common than it is here. You may get hungry between meals, especially at the beginning. Go to the supermarket and buy some snacks or fruit that you can carry with you to school.
- If you know you will miss a meal, let your family know and ask how you should handle it. Do not expect that they will make other arrangements to feed you.
- In France, inviting a guest into your home implies a close relationship—it would be more usual to gather with friends at a restaurant, while the home is reserved for families.

Laundry: Laundry is included for students staying with the host families. Students are allowed a maximum of one load of laundry per week. Many French families do not own a dryer, so you will need to hang-dry your clothes.

Telephone/Internet: All calls in France, even local calls, involve a charge. Telephone bills in France are not itemized. As such, families will only allow you to use the home phone if you have a pre-paid French calling card. Not all families allow phone use so don't assume that you can use the phone. Ask permission each time you use the telephone. Keep phone calls to a minimum. The USAC resident director will

go over phone use during the on-site orientation program.

Most families have Wi-Fi, but it is NOT guaranteed that you will have access to it.

Utilities: Electricity, water, and phone calls are very expensive in Europe. Some families impose restrictions on the use of hot water and the telephone. Many families are on the plan where electricity is discounted at night and extra expensive during the day, so ask when you should shower (don't take long, hot showers), wash clothes, etc. Don't ever forget to turn off the lights when you don't need them. Use natural light from windows whenever possible. Turn off the water when soaping up, brushing teeth, etc.

Living with a family

Get involved as much as you can with your family. They are an important resource for you to learn from and a great resource to help you experience the culture of France! You may have an interest in cooking. By taking some mixes or recipes from home, you may easily enter the kitchen. The French are very proud of their cuisine and are often thrilled when individuals show an interest in French cooking. Conversation is important in French culture. You can spend hours after a meal chatting and watching television or learning to play French games.

Depending on your specific home situation, you will probably not be *expected* to help with setting or clearing the table for meals. Do it anyway. This is a great opportunity to talk and develop your relationship with your host family. In addition, these small efforts show that you are a considerate and appreciative guest in their home.

Keep in mind that any relationship is a two-way street. **It is as much your responsibility to fit into the family as it is their responsibility to**

include you in their daily life. The more you put into the relationship, the more you will receive!

If you have questions about what your family expects of you, or you feel they do not understand your behavior, talk with them! Open lines of communication are important in building trust in any relationship.

Financial Agreements

While USAC screens families carefully to try to ensure that they have cultural interests for participating, **most** households participating do so at least partially for economic reasons. This is only logical, given the disruption that hosting a student causes to family life. It is not easy to welcome a stranger into your home for several weeks or months. The entire family needs to adjust schedules and habits to accommodate a new person. In addition, there are very real costs associated with having another person in the home. Receiving some monetary compensation for this is only fair, and most families would not consider hosting otherwise.

If you stay after the program ends and request to remain at your host family's house, you **must pay** your family for room and board. You should not expect your host family to provide room and board for free. The families need your contribution in order to take care of you.

Changing families

Keep in mind that any relationship is a two-way street. It is as much your responsibility to fit into the family as it is their responsibility to include you in their daily life. USAC expects you to commit to a host family for the full semester.

If you are having problems, please contact the USAC resident director to discuss the situation. UW-Eau Claire is not involved in the actual family placements and changes must be done through USAC. The resident director may be

able to offer valuable cultural insight and suggestions for improving the situation. Remember to give the situation some time and to be flexible and open-minded.

Residence Halls

French vs. U.S. Residence Halls

You should be aware that French dorms, unlike U.S. dorms, are not typically centers of social activity. French students view them much more like someone living in an apartment building would in the U.S., as their private dwelling. Oftentimes, French students return home to their family on the weekend. In all French universities, **each floor of each residence is mixed gender.**

Lyon: You can choose from a single room in the University Residence Hall, or a shared or single room in the Private Residence Hall. Depending on the option you select, kitchen facilities will be available either in your room, or on each floor of the residence hall. You can also eat at the university restaurant inexpensively.

There are no on-campus residence halls at the university downtown campus, where you will be studying. The private residence halls are closest, with just a 5-minute walk to campus. The university residence halls are further away, with a 25-35-minute commute to campus.

Pau: You have two options: individual studio accommodation or a shared (three bedroom) accommodation. Individual rooms include a shower and bathroom. In the shared accommodation, you will live with other USAC students, have a single room, and share bathroom and kitchen facilities. The residence halls are located relatively close to campus and the university cafeterias, as well as neighborhood bakeries, cafes, supermarkets, banks, and the post office.

What's Provided?

Past students have had a single or double room. In addition to a bed, their rooms were equipped with a small refrigerator and hot plate along with a sink and cupboards to store dry food and dishes. Things from the previous student will be left in your room. This is normal! You can choose to use these things or to throw them away.

Please note that the less expensive rooms in the Private University Hall in Lyon are shared rooms.

Meals: You can eat at the university restaurants, which provide a wide range of food options for a modest cost (3 Euros/meal), cook your own meals, or both.

Laundry: Laundry is not included in your residence hall fees. There are no laundry facilities in the residence halls but there are two laundromats within walking distance of the dorms. The laundromats do have both washer and dryers.

Telephone/Internet: There are no phones in the residence hall rooms, but there may be pay phones in the buildings which use phone cards.

You will have access to internet but will most likely need to use an Ethernet cord to connect.

COMMUNICATION

Information on accessing/forwarding your UW-Eau Claire email address and on computer app-based phone services (SKYPE, What's App, Facetime, etc) is in the [Contacts & Communication section of your Study Abroad Handbook](#).

Time Difference

France is seven hours ahead of Eau Claire. For example, when it is 1:00 p.m. on Thursday in Eau Claire, it is 8:00 p.m. on Thursday in France.

Email/Internet

Internet access is available for free in the campus computer labs. Also, Wi-Fi is available on both Lyon and Pau campuses.

Residence halls: There is no Wi-Fi in the university residence halls at Pau or Lyon.

Host families: Internet use is not included in your homestay fees. Most homestays have Wi-Fi but use of the family's Wi-Fi is not guaranteed. Do not assume that your hosts will allow you to use their computer/Internet service.

Landline Phone Information

Telecarte (phone card): Nearly all public phones now require a "telecarte" instead of coins. Buy them at the Poste or at a "bureau de tabac." This card can also be used for local calls.

Look for discount periods. Sundays have a 50% reduction and weeknights after 10:30pm have a 65% reduction. The Poste has the complete schedule of these reductions.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are just as common in France as they are in the states. Some past participants have found it economical and convenient to purchase a cell phone in France for their time abroad. You can visit a cell phone store after arrival.

If you decide to bring your cell phone from the U.S. remember that you need to have it unlocked before you go to use it. If you don't purchase an international plan with your US

provider, you will want to purchase a French SIM card when you arrive. This will allow you to call/text. In the past, some students have only used their US phones when on Wi-Fi and not for making/receiving phone calls.

Calling Internationally

Calling from the U.S. to France: If you want to call someone in France before you arrive, you must first dial 011, which is the international dialing code. Next, you dial 33, the country code for France, and the rest of the number.

It is cheaper for your family and friends to call you in France than it is for you to call them in the U.S. The cheapest rates are through calling cards. Compare international calling plans and international calling cards to set your family and friends up with the best deals, or you/they may be surprised at the first bills!

From France to the U.S.: If you do not buy a cell phone, you will probably make use of public phones. One place with easy access to public phones is the main post office. At the "Poste," you can buy stamps and boxes and make phone calls.

Courteous Communication

If Skyping/using other communication apps in your room, use headphones, close the door to your room, speak softly, and end the conversation immediately if it is time for a meal.

Snail-mail

You will receive mail at the USAC office in your host city. This address will be provided to you in a USAC Update via your USAC Gateway account. International airmail takes 7-10 days to cross the Atlantic in either direction. Packages usually take at least two weeks and sending from France can take longer than receiving in France. Any packages that arrive to France are

subject to being searched by French custom officials.

Communicating in French

Most of you have been studying French for quite a while, and now you are going to apply your language skills in day-to-day life. Here are some things to keep in mind.

Before You Go: Start listening to French music, movies, TV shows in French. Get your ear accustomed to it before you get there! Also, start reading it, beyond what is required for class. Consider changing your phone language to French, reading websites from France, finding online French newspapers.

Fluency: In the words of a past language student, *"I am going to warn you right now: you WILL NOT be fluent after only three-five months in another country. I definitely improved in my reading, writing, listening and speaking, but I did not sound like a native. Don't expect to come home fluent, or you will spend your whole time abroad frustrated with yourself. Take things one day at a time and you will be so impressed with yourself. There were days where I would all of a sudden realize that I was participating in classes that were all in French! It's definitely a great feeling to see how much your French speaking is improving."*

Speaking: Speak as much as possible. You have SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES to speak French (since you're living in France). And there are so many people willing to help you get better:

Professors: It's their job to help you improve, so they will correct you in class and will require you to speak often. They are always willing to help explain things or sit down and talk with you about things you don't understand.

Families: It is very likely that your family has been hosting American students for a number of years. This means that even when you say the wrong thing, chances are they will

understand you. Don't be afraid to speak with your family at meals, after meals, during down time, at any possibility.

Other People You Meet: Most French people KNOW that you are not a native speaker even before you open your mouth. In most cases, if you make the effort in French, they will be very kind and patient with you. In addition to this, get to know local students. Many of them are studying English and would LOVE to get together and talk. One thing to remember: you need to make the effort to get to know them.

TRAVEL WHILE ABROAD

See additional information in the [Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook](#).

Tours and Field Studies

USAC organizes field trips each semester to familiarize students with their host region in France. These bus trips generally take place on weekends and are included in the program fees. The exact dates and sites may change at the discretion of the Resident Director.

Optional Excursions

USAC also plans optional tours and field studies at an additional cost. You can select these options on the Course & Tour Registration Form you filled out as part of your USAC application.

Train Travel

SNCF (Société Nationale des Chemin de fer Français) is the national state-owned railway company in France. SCNF offers different railcard discount programs. If you plan to travel within France by train, consider a [Carte Jeune 18-27](#) when you purchase your first ticket. The card gives you 25-60% savings on all ticket

purchases. There are also special last-minute deals exclusively for Carte Jeune cardholders.

If you are planning a train trip that requires reservations, couchettes or multiple tickets, you can make the reservation and purchase the ticket [online](#) at the SNCF site, go to an SNCF (the French national rail) sales office, or go to the ticket window at the train station. The SNCF sales office personnel usually have more time (and are therefore more patient and friendly) than those right at the train station. SNCF also has several [mobile apps](#) if you will have a smart phone during your time in France.

Don't be late for your train. They're nearly always on time and loading time onto the train can be between one and five minutes. Storage on the train can be scarce, especially if you're going to a large city like Paris. Bring only what you can comfortably carry and handle in a tight-fitting area. Be aware that there are thefts on trains and keep an eye on your bags.

CULTURAL NOTES

General Information

Most French people are attached to their national and individual traditions and to their freedom of expression. With family, friends, and acquaintances, they are never afraid to discuss important political, social, and cultural issues. You may wish to read up on U.S. and French politics before you leave to take part in such conversations.

French families are typically very close by U.S. standards. If you are invited to a French home, you should be aware of the importance given to meals: traditionally, on Sundays, a typical French family has a substantial lunch (what Americans would call dinner). What is meant by substantial is not so much the quantity of food but rather the variety of the numerous courses

and the length of time (often several hours) spent at the table.

Art and culture play a central role in France. This is true not only in Paris and the larger cities but in every part of the country, in tiny villages and in the most remote corners of the countryside. The artist is accepted and respected, not derided as a different and eccentric species. A good example of this is the fact that the TV news often devotes some time to presenting the latest happenings on the cultural scene, such as films, exhibits, or concerts. The French government offers many subsidies to support the arts.

It is sometimes said that the French are rude. American tourists may feel this way because it can be difficult to strike up a conversation with a French person while standing in line at a store or sitting on a train. A better way to describe this behavior would be to say the French are generally more private than Americans. The French may not be as casual as Americans to become "acquainted", but it is often believed that if you have "un ami français" you will have him/her forever (or at least for a very long time).

On the other hand, social rituals, such as saying hello and goodbye, are important in France. As one student reported, everyone likes to "faire la bise." Kissing strangers on the cheek may seem odd at first, but you will adjust.

French people eat fast (on the average), but meals are usually long, so even if you eat slowly you won't be too out of line. The French often seem to eat a larger quantity of food than Americans, but they snack less between meals. Coffee follows nearly every meal.

Dinner is usually between 7:30 and 8:30 p.m. This may be hard to get used to. When traveling, don't try to eat at a restaurant until at

least 7:00 p.m. (they'll think you're nuts if you try to eat dinner at 5:00 p.m.!).

The French keep both hands (but not elbows) on the table during the meal, and bread is left on the table rather than on the plate (despite everything your mother taught you).

French cafes are a must! They vary in size, price range, and quality of coffee, so it's best to give them a try and find your favorites. Explore! Every little street has a café that has its own personality and meeting the owners and the waiters is a lot of fun! There are a few "rules" that should be adhered to in any French café:

1. Once you've ordered something in most cafés, you're free to sit there for as long as you like.
2. Never use the bathroom in a place where you haven't ordered anything. The restrooms at a café are reserved for its customers.
3. In most places the tip is included in the bill, as shown in the expression "service compris." If it is not included ("service non compris"), which is extremely rare, add 12 to 15%.
4. Usually the waiter will put your bill under a small tray often mistaken as and used for an ashtray. (It's to hold your coins.) Some places like it if you pay right away; others let you pay later.
5. Don't make the mistake of if every bar/café/restaurant has "the customer is always right" as their motto. Many reserve the right to refuse service to anyone, and they exercise that right! If you're messing around too much or are too loud, they will not only ask you to leave, but they will make sure you have an escort to the door. The French are not very rowdy when it comes to their behavior in a bar. The atmosphere is much more reserved.

Government of France

France is a semi-presidential republic. This means that their government is very similar to ours with the main exception being that the French have a prime minister in addition to a president. The president shares executive power with his or her appointee, the prime minister. The president is elected directly by the citizens of France. France is also a unitary nation instead of federal. This means that they don't have what we'd call state governments they operate predominantly on the federal level. However, three administrative subdivisions the *régions*, *départements* and *communes* have various legal functions, and the national government is prohibited from intruding into their normal operations.

France has multiple political parties which work together to form roughly two coalitions – right wing and left wing.

The foundational principles of the French constitution are: equality of all citizens, the rejection of special class privileges, presumption of innocence, freedom of speech and opinion, freedom of religion, protection from arbitrary seizure of property, and the accountability of the government to its citizens.

Pau Historical Facts

Pau is the birthplace of Henri IV, King of France. He was born in the castle in 1553. The castle now houses one of the world's largest tapestry collections.

Napoleon refurbished the castle in Pau and he used it as a holiday home during his reign of power.

Marie Antoinette spent many of her summers in Pau as well and her garden remains at the castle.

Pau is the birthplace of Jean Bernadotte, the Marshal of France as appointed by Napoleon I. He became King of Sweden in 1810 and later King of Norway under the name Karl Johan. The main street in Oslo is named after him. His original home in Pau has been maintained and is open to the public for visits.

Lyon Historical Facts

In 43 BC, Lugdunum (Lyon) was founded. The Ampitheatre Gallo Romain was constructed during the reign of the Roman Empire and is still around today.

After the collapse of the Roman Empire, Lyon became known for its silk factories and traders.

During World War II, Lyon was the center for the French Resistance.

CONTACT NAMES & ADDRESSES

GENERAL UW-EAU CLAIRE & CISI CONTACT INFORMATION IS IN YOUR STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK.

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Consulate General of France in Chicago

205 North Michigan Avenue
Suite 3700
Chicago, IL 60601
Tel.: 312 327 5200
Visa Section: 312 327 5229, from 2:30 to 4:00
pm
Fax: 312 327 5201
Email: visas@consulfrance-chicago.org
<http://www.consulfrance-chicago.org/>

U.S. Embassy in France

4, avenue Gabriel
75008 Paris
Tel. 011 33 43 12 22 22 (calling from US)
Tel. 01 43 12 22 22 (calling in France)
Metro stop Concorde on lines 1, 8, & 12)
<https://fr.usembassy.gov/>
a few times until you get through. If calling from
the US, add 011 before the number.

WEB RESOURCES: FRANCE

City
Universite de Pau: http://www.univ-pau.fr/live/
L'Universite Católique de Lyon: https://www.uclv.fr/
Official Tourism Site of Lyon: http://www.en.lyon-france.com/
Official Tourism Site of Pau: http://www.pau-pyrenees.com/
Guide for Lyon for Students: https://www.lyoncampus.info/Etudiants-internationaux_r75.html
Culture
France culture (in French): https://www.franceculture.fr
US Consulate French Culture site: http://frenchculture.org
Living in France: http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/living/living_abroad/living_in_france.shtml
Expat Experiences in France: http://www.expatarivals.com/france/expat-experiences-in-france
Country
France-Diplomatie: http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/es/
French Newspapers: http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/france.htm
France Travel: https://www.ricksteves.com/europe/france

WHAT PAST PARTICIPANTS WISH THEY HAD KNOWN B4 THEY LEFT

"Plan your budget ahead of time! Take out a month's worth of euros at a local ATM and plan how much you will allow yourself to spend per week. This can alleviate any financial stress you may be feeling."

"Don't go out to eat all the time for lunch, the Universite de Pau has decent food and is more than half the price you would pay at a restaurant. Also, I recommend uploading money to your student card- it makes paying for lunch or a coffee fast and easy. Plus doing so makes the cafeteria workers happy."

"Theft is very common in any large city, and Lyon is no exception. Always keep your phone in a zipped pouch within your purse or bag to avoid theft!"

BIGGEST ADJUSTMENTS THEY HAD TO MAKE

"You must wait until sometime in December (spring students) to receive your host family information. Once you receive your placement, it is smart to send them an email introducing and describing a bit about yourself. Try to ask them questions to find out more about them as well! You may consider bringing them a gift for when you arrive. Any items that are unique to the USA make great gifts. I bought my host family Wisconsin Badger gear, books, U.S. currency, magazines, peanut butter, etc. I went a little above and beyond, but only because I was extremely excited."

"Many of the dishes served you may have never seen before. My host family ate a lot of pasta, quiche, raclette (my favorite), soup, and casseroles. I was lucky and usually liked what we were eating....After dinner, we would usually have bread and cheese, followed by dessert."

"Be prepared to have less control than you would over things in the U.S. My host mom was adamant about doing our laundry for us. This was difficult for me to adjust to at first and when I told her I had a load of laundry for her I felt guilty about it, but I eventually got used to it."

SAFETY TIPS FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

"Smiling at strangers in Europe- especially France- gives them the feeling that you are interested in them and they literally might ask you to grab a coffee if you smile at them while walking down the street. This is not to scare you or stop you from smiling, it is just a reminder that it is a different culture and therefore smiling means something else. To address if someone approaches you, you can just ignore them or say "non, merci" or anything polite to let them know you are not interested."

"The bus system runs pretty late into the night, so use it if possible. Remember not to wear headphones, as this gives someone an easy way to catch you off guard. Also, avoid cutting through parks at night. Crime in Pau does not happen often, but when it does, it usually happens at parks. This is not to scare you! Use your common sense and you will be just fine."

"Upon arriving at your first orientation, you will receive a list of doctors that are available to you. Many of them speak English, so do not worry. On the rare occasion that something does happen, and you need medical attention while abroad, a language barrier is not something that will be an issue. There is a doctor

office located on campus near the dorms. When my friend felt sick, her host mom called the doctor to come to their house. This is common in France when someone is feeling ill. However, there also are hospitals. My friend got hit on his bike and had to go to the hospital, and they took great care of him.”

HOW THEY SUMMED IT UP:

This was such an awesome experience. I was originally scared to leave home and go to a foreign country, but within the first week here, I didn't know if I'd ever want to leave. I've met some of the greatest people while here!

I see everything from a different point of view and I have the travel bug now. The world is an amazing place and this experience is one of the best things I have ever done.

Updated 7/2019, clw