

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EAU CLAIRE

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Study Abroad



PAU, FRANCE
SUMMER 2019

Program Guide

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CONGRATULATIONS on being accepted to the UW-Eau Claire study abroad program in Pau, offered through the University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC). Living and studying in a foreign culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

Building upon existing foreign language skills

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!

This program guide is to be used together with the general Study Abroad Handbook. The handbook has information that is valid for all study abroad programs. This guide will provide you with specific information for the Pau programs. It is designed to complement the handbook, study abroad orientation, information from USAC, and your individual pre-departure preparations.

Please realize that although this guide contains all of the information available at the time of publishing, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. Your peer advisor will email additional information throughout the semester. Please contact the Center for International Education (CIE) staff, your peer advisor, and past program participants with your specific questions.

Basic questions only you can answer include:

1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Common objectives of students abroad include advancement in a future profession, desire to expand personal and academic horizons, need for a change, and wish to challenge oneself with immersion in a new culture.

2) Given the way the program is set up, how can you best prepare to meet your goals? 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 ensure that you do not spend too much time with other U.S. Americans?

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

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Locations and Universities

UW-Eau Claire and University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC) entered into a cooperative agreement beginning with the 2007-2008 academic year in order to offer the Pau, France program to students. Effective summer 2017, students have been allowed to participate on the Pau summer program.

Pau is a city of approximately 100,000 people located in southwestern France and situated near the Pyrenees Mountains and the Atlantic coast. USAC classes and offices in Pau are located on the attractive campus of the University of Pau, situated in the northern part of the city about a mile and a half from the center of town. The [University of Pau](http://www.univ-pau.fr) is of a similar size to UW-Eau Claire with approximately 10,000 students enrolled.

Robina Muller is the Resident Director for the USAC Pau program. Fluent in French, German, Spanish and English, Robina and her staff, will organize transportation to your housing, provide an on-site orientation, and be available if questions or concerns arise during your time in Pau. The program assistant can also provide additional assistance and resources while you are in France. You can learn more about the Pau program via the USAC site: <http://usac.unr.edu/study-abroad-programs/france/pau>.

USAC

USAC (whose offices are located at the University of Nevada-Reno) works with several member universities. These member universities guide the consortium and assist USAC with registration and grade report/transcript issuance for students participating in USAC programs.

You will be receiving information directly from USAC through email and your Gateway account, which is your USAC study abroad online account. The CIE is not copied on these messages. **Please forward any messages from USAC to Jenna Krosch (kroschjm@uwec.edu), the USAC-France coordinator in the CIE.**

Academic Calendar

Below are the **summer I, summer II and both I and II session dates. Please don't book your ticket until the dates are confirmed by USAC.** Although dates are typically finalized when the optional group flight is announced, you should buy a changeable ticket as USAC reserves the right to change dates if necessary.

Pau, France Summer Session I ONLY:

Depart from U.S. on optional group flight	May 22
Arrival in Pau before 7:00 pm/Move into housing	May 23
Placement test and orientation	May 24-25
Courses begin	May 27
Final examinations	June 21

End of program, if not on optional Paris tour	June 22
Move out of housing if not on optional Paris tour	June 22
Move out of housing if on Paris tour	June 24
Optional Paris tour	June 24-28
Program end date if on Paris tour	June 28

To see the most up-to-date calendar, visit USAC's website: <http://usac.unr.edu/study-abroad-programs/france/pau/calendars>

Pau, France Summer Session II ONLY:

Depart from U.S. on optional group flight and optional Paris tour	June 23
Arrival in Paris before 3:00 pm (if on Paris tour)	June 24
Optional Paris tour	June 24-28
Arrival in Pau required by 7pm for ALL students/move into housing	June 28
Placement test and orientation	June 29- July 1
Courses begin	July 1
Final examinations	July 26
End of program	July 26
Move out of housing	July 27

To see the most up-to-date calendar, visit USAC's website: <http://usac.unr.edu/study-abroad-programs/france/pau/calendars>

Pau, France Summer Session I & II

Depart from U.S. on optional group flight	May 22
Arrival in Pau before 7:00 pm/Move into housing	May 23
Placement test and orientation	May 24-25
Session I Courses begin	May 27
Session I Final examinations	June 21
Optional Paris Tour/Field Study	June 24-28
Session II Courses begin	July 1
Session II Final examinations	July 26
Move out of housing	July 27

To see the most up-to-date calendar, visit USAC's website: <http://usac.unr.edu/study-abroad-programs/france/pau/calendars>

ACADEMICS

There is additional information on maintaining program eligibility, as well as topics such as registration, class attendance, credits and course load, grades, transcripts, and accessing the UW-Eau Claire library while abroad in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Program Prerequisites

To participate in this study abroad program, you must **be in good academic, conduct, and financial standing, complete required prerequisite courses, and have a minimum GPA of 2.5.**

Registration at UW-Eau Claire

Do not register for classes at UW-Eau Claire for the term you will be abroad. The semester

before your program departs, CIE staff will work with the Registration Office to enroll you in the USAC-France program under a **temporary course number (INTA 301-Pau)**. This temporary registration will appear on your billing statements. You do not need to complete any other registration at UW-Eau Claire. **Once your grade report from USAC arrives, your Pau classes, credits, and grades will be posted on your UW-Eau Claire transcript.** The INTA 301-Pau registration code will remain on your transcript so that the university can maintain historical records regarding who has studied abroad. However, the INTA credit units will be removed, and the INTA course will not be graded.

Registration in France

As part of the USAC admissions process, you are required to submit a preliminary course registration. You will find the Course and Tour Registration Form in your USAC Gateway account. You will complete this form indicating your course and tour selections along with two alternative courses in case any courses become unavailable. You will submit the completed form directly to USAC.

Once you arrive in France, you will take a placement test and your registration is adjusted accordingly. There is also a drop-add period and withdrawal deadline set by the Pau resident director. You will receive these dates from the respective USAC Pau Office in France.

Credits and Course Load

Each session, you will be required to take a minimum of 4 credits and a maximum of 6 (if you enroll in the Paris Field Study). You are required to take 4 credits of French language each term. Students at the intermediate level or higher will meet that requirement by enrolling in a 3 credit French language course plus 1 credit of conversation French.

In order to receive financial aid, you will need to enroll in at least 6 credits.

Classes

The language courses are taught at the Institute of French Studies at the University of Pau; your classmates will be other USAC and international students. In addition, you 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. Elective courses taught in French are appropriate for third year students and above; courses taught in English are appropriate for all students. For a more detailed list of French language and USAC Pau elective courses, please access the USAC web site: <http://usac.unr.edu/study-abroad-programs/france/pau/courses>.

Course Equivalencies

You can find established course equivalencies on the academics page of the [Pau](#) brochure page on UWEC's site. If you have any questions about the French course equivalencies, you

should contact Dr. Jessica Miller, the French section head, in the UW-Eau Claire Department of Languages.

Grades

USAC grades will be reported to UW-Eau Claire using the standard U.S. grading scale:

- (A) -Excellent Performance
- (B) -Good
- (C) -Average
- (D) -Poor
- (F) -Failure

Range between the letters is represented by plus or minus signs:

A-, B+, B-, C+, C-, D+, D-

Note: UW- Eau Claire students abroad are not allowed to take classes pass/fail, and that grades from Pau are figured into your UW-Eau Claire GPA.

Transcripts and Credit Transfer

USAC will send a grade report both to your home address and to UW-Eau Claire upon completion of the program. However, your grades cannot be posted to your UW-Eau Claire record until UW-Eau Claire receives an **official grade report** directly from USAC.

If you are asked to complete a transcript release form by USAC, please have the transcript sent to the Center for International Education (see Contacts page for full address). Note that if you changed

your registration late in the summer, this change might not be reflected in your initial transcript. In addition, if you have any outstanding financial charges, your transcript will be withheld until payment is made.

Transcripts & Graduation

If you are a senior studying abroad for your last semester, be sure to read the information about transcripts in your Study Abroad Handbook as studying abroad may cause a graduation delay. If you have more questions, please contact the France coordinator Jenna Krosch (kroschjm@uwec.edu) to discuss your individual situation.

French Academic System

It is important to keep in mind that 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, which is 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 very different approach to education from that of the U.S. system, where the teacher presents the exact information, in an orderly fashion, that students "need" to know in order 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:

1. **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.
2. **Amount of time in class:** you will have more hours in class than you are used to in the U.S., however, you will do most of your homework during that time. When you leave class, you won't have nearly the amount of homework as you are used to in the U.S.
3. **Grades:** Although USAC will report your grades to UW-Eau Claire using the standing A-F scale, 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.

4. **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 with part of the goal to weed out students. Fifty percent of French university students do not make it past the first year. Ninety percent of medical students fail their first year. Failed students are required to retake the entire year of studies.
5. **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

Information about how payments are made, when they are due, the UW - Eau Claire withdrawal/refund deadlines, financial aid, scholarships, budgeting and ways to bring money abroad is in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Cost Estimate

You can find the most current cost estimate for your program, in easily printable format, on the [CIE Pau webpage](#). Be sure you are looking at the correct term. Remember that the cost estimate includes what you pay to UW-Eau Claire, what you pay to USAC, and what you pay directly to other vendors.

A few things to elaborate on that appear on your cost estimate.

Homestay: If you selected the homestay option, the USAC fees also include some meals: breakfast seven days a week and dinner two days a week. If your family is available during the break between summer sessions, you can stay with the family. If your family is not available (traveling, etc.) during the session break, you will move to the dorm temporarily.

Residence Hall: There are no meals included if you opt to live in the residence halls. There are communal kitchens that you can access to cook your own meals.

Personal Travel

The amount spent on personal travel varies greatly from student to student. It depends on your budget and your priorities. Students who want to be involved in their host community generally spend less time (and money) traveling. Others travel every weekend with correspondingly high costs and fewer close connections in their new home.

USAC Payment Questions

If you have any questions about paying your housing deposit, housing, or the optional Paris trip, please contact Migeul Perez in the USAC Accounting Office. You can reach him by telephone at 1-755-682-5882 or e-mail at Miguel.perez@usac.edu. You can pay with credit card, check, or money order.

USAC Refund Policy

In addition to the UW-Eau Claire 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. You can learn more about the withdrawal deadlines and penalties by referring to [USAC Money Matters/Program Fees and Billing](#).

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.

The exchange rate as of December 2018 was 1 euro = \$1.13637 U.S. dollars. You can find current exchange rates at <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.

Travelers Checks

Traveler's checks are increasingly rare and difficult to use. They generally must be cashed

at a major bank, although, in some countries, post offices also offer this service. You must have your passport with you. Most banks charge a fee for cashing the checks; it can vary widely. Before cashing a check, ASK what the fee is.

SCHOLARSHIPS

In addition to the scholarships listed in your Study Abroad Handbook, these may also apply for students in a France program:

Martha Worthington Foreign Studies Scholarship

(Two awards of \$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 of \$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.

Foundation Scholarship

There may be other Foundation Scholarships available based on your major or minor. You can search for other UW-Eau Claire Foundation Scholarships at

<https://uwec.scholarships.ngwebsolutions.com/scholarshipsearch.aspx>

USAC Scholarships

In addition to UWEC scholarships, USAC offers a variety of scholarships for students. To see more information, visit [USAC's Scholarship website](#). You will have optional scholarship applications applied to your USAC Gateway account when they are open. Students are able to apply for all that they are eligible for and can be awarded more than one scholarship.

USAC also offers an alliance scholarship just for UWEC students on one of their specialty programs. This application will be applied to your UWEC study abroad account in September for spring students and in **March for Summer/Fall/Academic Year students**. Your UWEC study abroad coordinator, Jenna, will email you when it is available. The number of awards will vary by term. Amounts will vary between \$200 - \$500.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Additional information on these issues, as well as information on CISI insurance, is included in the Health Issues and Safety Abroad sections of your Study Abroad Handbook.

Medical Facilities in Pau

There is a medical clinic on campus. The USAC-Pau resident director also has a list of doctors (English and French-speaking) that students have used in the past. During your on-site orientation in Pau, you will receive more information about what to do if you need medical care.

Counseling Services

Counseling services are available in Pau; however, counselors may not speak English. In the past, an English-speaking counselor was located for a student, but it involved advance planning with the CISI insurance and the resident director.

Students currently in counseling or who think they might need counseling support while abroad are strongly encouraged to contact the France study abroad coordinator, Jenna Krosch (kroschjm@uwec.edu) so that advance arrangements can be made.

Health Insurance

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 will receive through the UW system policy. You are not able to opt out of either one, both are required as they do have different levels of coverage.

Safety

Safety will be discussed during orientation in France. For specific information on crime, tips on how to avoid becoming a victim, and road safety in France, see the [France Consular Information website](#). If you are a crime victim, or if you are arrested abroad, get in touch with the nearest U.S. Consulate or Embassy. U.S. Consular Offices will do what they can to help U.S. citizens in serious legal, medical, or financial difficulties. They can often direct you to a reliable doctor or clinic, help you contact family, or re-issue your passport.

Emergency Contacts

General emergency procedures are described in the Study Abroad Handbook and USAC staff are available if difficulties arise. You will receive an emergency contact card at orientation; be sure to keep it in your wallet at all times.

Emergency Situation

The world that we live in is always evolving and sometimes natural disasters and/or violent attacks happen in the unlikeliest places. In the event that there is an emergency in your city, your USAC resident director will be attempting to locate you and ensure your safety. Be sure you provide them with your contact information and any travel plans you have. The CIE will also be contacting you via email or phone to verify your safety. In the event of an emergency, please continue checking your UWEC email. We would also encourage you to develop a plan on how you will communicate with family/friends back in the U.S.

After Hours Medical Concern

In France, for a medical emergency that happens at night (e.g. severely sprained ankle) and cannot wait until the next morning, you should call the European emergency number 112 (see below for more information). A doctor will ask questions and give advice over the phone to determine whether they will send an ambulance, or you will take a cab to the emergency room at the hospital, or whether you can wait until the following morning to be treated.

911 Equivalent in France

If you are in an emergency situation 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 (24/7): 15

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

The U.S. State Department also provides a list of [911 numbers abroad](#). Like France, 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 your Study Abroad Handbook.

Visa

A visa is official permission to temporarily reside in another country and is granted by the government of that country. U.S. citizens, studying in France for less than 90 days do NOT need a visa. If you plan to study longer than 90 days, then you will be required to obtain a visa.

Please note that if you decide to travel amongst the [Schengen area](#) before or after your program, you CANNOT be in the Schengen area for more than 90 days. It is your responsibility to make sure you plan your travels accordingly.

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.

PACKING TIPS

In addition to the general packing information in your Study Abroad Handbook, you should know the following about France.

Climate

Pau is known for its temperate climate. In June/July it will get into the mid 70-s lower 80's

during the day and down into the 50's at night. Many homes and the residence halls aren't insulated thick (like in the U.S.) so you may want to pack a few sweatshirts and pants for cooler evenings. Pau also experiences rain on a regular basis, so you should be sure to pack a raincoat and umbrella.

Bedding and Linens

Bedding is provided with both housing options, homestay and residence halls. However, you are responsible for bringing or purchasing towels and washcloths.

What to Pack

Your peer advisor will give you a suggested packing list at the second orientation meeting in April.

USAC will also post a packing list onto your Gateway account.

ARRIVING IN FRANCE

Travel Arrangements

It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to Pau. USAC provides group flight information. **USAC strongly recommends that students take the group flight.** However, you are free to make your own travel arrangements as long as you arrive in Pau on the designated arrival day/time.

Please note that you must arrive in time for orientation. Students who miss orientation will be fined by USAC. **USAC will send you information on flights and arrival**

information to your USAC Student Gateway Account.

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 in English. There are many options if you like sports: soccer, basketball, backpacking, and others. There are also theater groups, church groups, just get out and explore!

HOUSING & MEALS

Housing Options

After your acceptance to USAC, you were asked to submit a housing questionnaire via your Gateway account where you indicated your housing preferences. You have two options for housing: 1) homestays with a family/French host or 2) university residence halls. Most USAC students opt to stay with families/French hosts. USAC will notify you of your housing placement upon arrival as last-minute changes are not uncommon. The homestay fee covers some meals. See the [Money Matters](#) section of this guide to see what meals are included. The residence hall fee does not include meals. More details on each option are provided below.

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 located in Pau and the surrounding suburbs. The homestay is either located within 15-20 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: On your housing preference form you should 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 Pau.

Meals with your host family: Students in host families will be provided with some meals. See the [Money Matters](#) section for your location to see how many meals are included. Students living in host families can also purchase meals at the campus cafeteria for approximately 3 Euro.

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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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. Please note that 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.

Utilities: Some families impose restrictions on the use of hot water and the telephone. Electricity, water, and phone calls are very expensive in Europe. 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.

Get involved with your host 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 gain entry into 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.

Financial arrangements of hosting: Some U.S. students are surprised that their host families receive money for having them in their homes. They are concerned that the family is only interested in them as a "customer." While USAC screens families 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 size of the typical French home and the disruption that hosting a student causes to family life.

Even for families with cultural reasons for participating, it is not easy to welcome a stranger into your home for a semester. The

entire family needs to adjust its schedules and habits to accommodate this 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.

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. 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.

UW-Eau Claire is not involved in the actual family placements and changes must be done through USAC offices. However, CIE can consult with USAC and try to assist in bringing a positive resolution.

Residence Halls

Students living in the residence halls 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. The residence halls have a reception desk with limited hours. Other than the reception desk, there is no housing staff, such as RAs or hall directors, as are common in U.S. 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.**

What is provided for your room? Past students have had a single room. In addition to a bed, their rooms were equipped with a small refrigerator, kitchenette, desk, bed, closet, table, chair. 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.

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. Students living in the residence halls are expected to do their own laundry. 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. Internet can be accessed by using an Ethernet cable.

COMMUNICATION

Information on accessing/forwarding your UW-Eau Claire email address and telephone calls through your computer (SKYPE) is in 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 the Pau campus.

Residence halls: There is no Wi-Fi in the university residence halls at Pau, but it is available on campus. You can access internet via an ethernet cord, when in the halls.

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.

Snail-mail

You will be able to receive mail at the USAC-France office. 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.

Telephone Information

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.

Cell phones: Some past participants have found it economical and convenient to purchase cell phones for their time abroad. You can either purchase a phone or a SIM card for your U.S. phone. If you think you might be interested, stop in a cell phone store or ask the USAC staff for more information. These stores are everywhere and are not difficult to find. **If you decide to bring your cell phone from the U.S. remember that you need to have it unlocked before you go in order to use it.**

Telecarte: Nearly all public phones now require a "telecarte" instead of coins. They can be bought at the Poste or at a "bureau de tabac." This card can also be used for local calls. Also 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.

CULTURAL NOTES

Politics

Most French people are attached to their national and individual traditions and also to their freedom of expression. As recent as December 2018, there have been repeated protests against planned tax hikes on gas. These protestors are known as the "Yellow Jackets" due to their yellow vests they wear. Many say that these protests are not for the tax

hikes alone, but for the overall high cost of living in France and with Macron's presidency. With this in recent news, you may still hear people talking about it when abroad.

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 in order to take part in such conversations.

French Families

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

In France, art and culture, which elsewhere may be the preserve of a small elite, play a central role in the lives of inhabitants. This evidence is to be found 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 intellectual does not stand apart from everyday life; he or she is part of it. 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.

Perceptions of French People

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 U.S. Americans. The French may not be as casual as U.S. 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 very odd at first, but you will soon adjust.

Eating & Table Etiquette

French people eat fast (on the average). Don’t worry. 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 U.S. Americans, but they snack less between meals. Coffee follows nearly every meal.

Another thing that takes getting used to is the time at which the French eat their evening meal. Supper is usually eaten between 7:30 and 8:30 p.m. This may be hard to get used to but do your best. You may even find you prefer eating at the later hour. 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.!).

A couple of hints, 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.

French Cafes

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 assuming that 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 still 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.

TRAVEL WHILE ABROAD

See additional travel information in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Field Trips

USAC organizes field trips each semester that allow students to become familiar with their host region in France. These 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. Additional field trips are offered for a modest fee. You can find details on the [USAC Web site](#). Just look at the program calendar for your site and term.

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, you will want to buy 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 friendlier) than those right at the train station. SCNF also

has a number of [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.

WEB RESOURCES FOR FRANCE

City
Universite de Pau: http://www.univ-pau.fr/live/
Official Tourism Site of Pau: http://www.pau-pyrenees.com/
Culture
France culture (in French): https://www.franceculture.fr
U.S. Consulate French Culture site: http://frenchculture.org
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

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/>

PAST PARTICIPANT TIPS

WHAT THEY WISH THEY HAD KNOWN/ADVICE:

The French are very proud of their own culture and self-image. I found myself in situations where simply not being French was an opportunity for someone to belittle my culture or national identity. I don't think this was specific to being American, but about not being French. Also, the French don't like faults or shortcomings of their country or culture pointed out by anyone, French or otherwise, which I think is also in part to their pride in their self-image.

I had been told about home sickness, but I had been abroad before, so I didn't think I would get it. There was a lot of down time and I didn't know what to do and it got a little lonely.

Take advantage of the USAC excursions – they're included in your fees, so why not?!

THEIR SAFETY TIPS:

Travel in groups – it makes it easier booking hostels but also provides comfort knowing you're with others you trust.

There is an English-speaking therapist in Pau and USAC is able to connect you with her, if needed.

Pickpocketing is real and does happen. Keep all of your belongings in safe places and keep your valuables out of plain sight.

HOW THEY SUMMED IT UP:

The professors and the USAC staff were everything I could have hoped for! They were helpful in answering all of my questions and were there in case I just wanted to talk too.

Pau is a great city!

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