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INTRODUCTION TO THE CLERMONT-FERRAND CULTURAL GUIDEBOOK

With your departure for France fast approaching, many of you have begun to wonder what it's going to be like spending two or three quarters in Clermont-Ferrand. What will you experience living and studying in Clermont-Ferrand, and in traveling to other parts of the country? Will the family you'll be living with accept you just as you are now, or will you need to make some adjustments in order to fit into your new household? Have you forgotten to do anything before your departure? Will your French be good enough to allow you to do well in your classes, and to meet people outside of class? And just how much should you plan to pack in your suitcases? Hopefully, this guidebook can begin to answer these and other questions.

The information that follows is a collection of advice from former participants and staff abroad. We, in the Center for International Programs, have added practical information as well. All information was accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of printing. We recognize that there might be some necessary changes in the program made on site. When you return, we would greatly appreciate it if you could help us update this guidebook for the next year's participants.

The one constant piece of advice that comes from returning students in study abroad programs all over the world is: "Expect the unexpected." Ultimately, no written materials or any other preparation is going to fully prepare you for what lies ahead. The best preparation you can do is commit yourself to keeping an open mind, remaining flexible, and being patient with yourself as you're adjusting to your new environment.
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BEFORE YOU GO...PREPARATION

CLERMONT-FERRAND, FRANCE

France is the largest country in Western Europe, and is about the size of the state of Texas. In general, France enjoys a temperate climate, with fewer extremes than the United States. In the winter, zero degree temperatures are rare except in the mountains, and temperatures over 90 degrees in the summer are rare except in the southern areas.

Clermont-Ferrand, a city of about 450,000 people (including suburbs), is located in the Auvergne region of France, in the central part of the country. The historic, medieval downtown area provides an extensive pedestrian area only a few minutes’ walk from the ESC Clermont campus. Clermont-Ferrand is the site of the Michelin Tire Headquarters which was founded in 1886 by the Michelin brothers, who were the first to use rubber to make bicycle tires. It is in the prefecture of the Puy-de-Dome department and sits on the plain of Limagne in the Massif Central, a mountain range in south-central France. The city is famous for the chain of volcanoes, the Chaine des Puys, which surrounds it. The Puy-de-Dome is the highest of the volcanoes and is a really large tourist attraction. Because the region is quite mountainous it is, therefore, very pretty. Hiking enthusiasts should be delighted. Bottled water drinkers will recognize “Volvic” water, which comes from near Clermont – “L’Eau Vive de la Terre des Volcans”. Lastly, the Clermont-Ferrand Cathedral, which is a Gothic church built in the 13th-16th centuries, is a big tourist attraction – it is made completely out of black volcanic rock.

A former student says “One of Clermont-Ferrand’s greatest features is its location. Clermont is about a two hour train ride west of Lyon, and a 4 hour train ride south of Paris. Southern cities like Nîmes and Avignon are just a short (4ish hour) train ride away. It is a relatively urban city—it’s not Paris but it is more urban than Kalamazoo—and has an adequate public transportation system with buses, a tram that loops the city and easy transport to the airport and train stations. The city is very walk-able—one of my favorite pastimes was just walking around and seeing everything in the city. The hustle and bustle, however, is really easy to escape, especially if you specify that you want to be placed with a host family that will be enthusiastic about bringing you along for weekend hiking or trips to a country home (both were common among the families that hosted students the year I went). No more than 30 minutes outside the city are fantastic hiking trails in and amongst the chain of inactive volcanoes, Auvergnat farms, fromageries, small historic villages and other quiet places full of the charm of the French countryside.”
PROGRAM CALENDAR 2018

31 August      Depart for France
1 September    Arrive in Clermont
11-13 September intensive French and ESC international student orientation
September 14  ESC semester begins
24 September - 27 January ICRP
24 December – 4 January 2019 Holiday Break (tentative) (inclusive)
11 February, 2019 LT final day of program
12 February     first day available for departure

Official holidays

Sunday November 11, 2018 Armistice Day

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

It is necessary to have a passport for travel to France. You must also have a visa to enter the country because you will be studying in the French school system. Provided you submit the necessary materials by the deadline, the Center for International Programs will apply for your visa through the Centre d’Etudes en France (CampusFrance) with the French Consulate. Students participating for longer than six months will need to apply for a carte de séjour upon arrival in France. Mme. Lisa Fiacre in the International Office at ESC will give you instructions. Of course, since the visa regulations are determined by the French Government and by each region, the process that you will need to follow while in France to remain in legal status could change at any time.

You should carry a copy of your carte de séjour and a copy of your passport (both the first page with your photo and personal information, and the page that has your visa on it) with you at all times. Only carry your actual passport with you when you want to change money and whenever you leave the city or country. We recommend that you leave a copy of your passport with your host family and at home in the United States. Everyone over 18 is required to carry ID with them at all times so keep your US ID in your wallet with passport photocopies.
If you have specific questions regarding student visas, or intend to remain in France beyond the study abroad program, you can reach the Consulate General of France in Chicago at 312.327.5200 or by email at Contact@consulfrance-chicago.org (subject: name of dept. you wish to reach). If your passport is lost or stolen while you are abroad, you will need to reapply at the US Embassy in Paris, located at 2, avenue Gabriel (33) 143 122222. In addition, the Consulate Section in Clermont is located two blocks away at 2, rue St. Florentin.

RESIDENCY PERMITS OR “CARTE DE SEJOUR”

Any period of study abroad requires official paperwork which, if dealt with immediately after arrival, will make the rest of your stay and any future formalities much easier. You will find the main formalities in this section. Very useful websites to visit are as follows:

- www.campusfrance.org
- www.egide.asso.fr/
- http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/
- http://www.thefrenchdoor.org

All non-European foreign students intending to stay in France for more than six months (for K, Extended-term students) are required to apply for a residency permit. To obtain your residency permit for the first time, you must bring the VISA VALIDATION FORM that was issued to you (with your visa paperwork) before you left your home country to the ESC International office with a photocopy of your passport (identification pages) and a photocopy of your visa.

The ESC International office will take this to the immigration office in Clermont and you will be issued with a certificate to prove that you have submitted your forms. With this certificate you will find information about two required medical visits for 1.) a lung x-ray and 2.) visit with a doctor.

You must go to the University Medical Service (Rue Etienne Dolet) to make the appointments in advance. As soon as the medical visits are completed, you will receive a medical certificate which you should take to the prefecture (OFII desk – Office Francais de l’immigration et de l’intégration) on the first floor.

During this visit you should also bring the following documents/papers:

- Passport
- 2 identical passport-sized photos (3,5cm x 4,5cm) (recent photo, no hat or headband allowed, Clear photo on light or white background)
- Proof of an address (address of your home stay family)
- The medical certificate obtained from your medical visit
- On the same day, you will also be required to purchase a tax stamp: the cost will in the letter
You will receive to confirm your medical visit (this covers the cost of the compulsory medical
Visit for which you will be given an appointment date and time once your application has been
submitted).

**FLIGHT CONNECTIONS**

Please allow yourself plenty of time to check in at the airport. Airlines recommend arriving at the
airport at least 2 hours early for domestic flights and 3-4 hours early for international flights.
Airlines are also randomly searching checked and carry-on luggage. Keep boarding passes and
your identification (passport) easily accessible – in your carry-on or on your person.

Please take care not to miss connecting flights. It is your responsibility to be in the boarding area at
the appropriate time. Should you miss a connection, however, please note that you must be re-
routed by an airline representative at the airport. Travel Leaders and/or Kalamazoo College can do
nothing to alter your airline tickets at that point. Once you have had your airline tickets altered,
you should contact Mme. Caron (see contact information in the MAIL section), the Resident
Director for your program so that she knows of your delay and can give you new arrival
instructions. If you are unable to contact Mme. Caron, contact the CIP or a member of the CIP staff
(contact information can be found in the EMERGENCIES section), and we will try to assist you in
informing the on-site personnel of your situation.

**MONEY**

How much spending money should you bring? You will want to budget some personal spending
money for the occasional meal out, nightlife, personal travel, etc. People spend money differently,
whether in Kalamazoo or in Clermont-Ferrand. Former Clermont-Ferrand program participants
report having spent widely varying amounts of money during their six-month stay, between $1500
and $4000 (not including a Eurail pass), with the average around $2500. Some costs are
unavoidable: as is the case on nearly all study abroad programs, you’ll need to buy textbooks in
France, and you may spend upwards of $35 per class.

At the time of printing, the exchange rate was 0.82 euros to the U.S. dollar. You can check the most
at websites such as www.xe.com/ucc/.

Students recommend using an ATM card as it is often more accessible, faster, and gives a better
exchange rate. The majority of money machines in France, and Europe as well, accept American
ATM cards (particularly those that are "Cirrus Plus"). You should make sure you have a method of
checking your account balance and you should notify your bank that you will be overseas (for
security purposes). You can expect the exchange rate to change often, even daily. Past participants
recommend carrying cash around instead of relying on using a credit card on a daily basis.
You will want to have all the money you plan to bring with you in ATM, cash and credit cards, since sending money overseas is a complicated process best avoided. It is always a good idea to bring some cash, just in case your ATM card does not work right away. Credit cards (particularly visa) will be helpful when booking travel and in emergency situations. Again, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company that you will be overseas.

**CLIMATE**

You can expect the weather to be relatively warm in September and October (but you probably should not bring more than one, maybe two, pairs of shorts). There is relatively little rain. You may experience some snow in December and January, although it rarely snows in the downtown area.

**PACKING AND LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS**

You will need to check with the airline’s website or your travel itinerary from Travel Leaders to determine your luggage restrictions. You are also typically allowed one small carry-on bag (it has to be able to fit under the seat in front of you or in the overhead compartment). Even if you're willing to pay overweight or excess baggage charges at the airport, we strongly encourage you to resist doing this and to pack as little as possible. Additionally, when flying on smaller airlines, such as RyanAir, the luggage restrictions are much lighter (30lbs) so make sure you also bring a light duffel bag you can use on side trips. At the time of this printing, some airlines were imposing additional fees on bringing more than one checked luggage bag, so please contact the airlines in August before you depart.

PACK LIGHTLY!! Few things are as disheartening as dragging around excess or overloaded suitcases while traveling abroad, especially when you could have done without most of it. You will also encounter situations where you’ll need to change trains quickly, and your amount of luggage can make a big difference in getting from one place to another. The best advice from former participants is to pack everything you think you'll need, take out half, and then take out half again. Don't bring it if you can't carry it!

Another good packing tip is to carry a change of clothes and essential toiletries (travel size – less than 3 ounces) in your carry-on bag in case your luggage gets lost.

In general, casual wear in France is dressier than in the US. Where Americans wear scruffy jeans and T-shirts, French students will wear dark, skinny jeans, cotton and polyester pants, skirts, button down shirts and blouses and possibly a jacket. Be aware that what is perfectly acceptable in a Kalamazoo classroom may earn you a few odd looks in a French classroom. For example, Kalamazoo students wear sweatpants, sweatshirts, and flip-flops to class – something you will never see a French person do. Whatever shoes you bring, try to break them in before you go. It's no fun to have to stay home instead of exploring your new surroundings because of too many blisters.
Bring clothes that you can layer. Many French people don’t keep the heat turned up very high (and turn it off completely at night), so you’ll need to pack clothing suitable for being indoors as well, especially clothes that you can wear in layers (pajamas, sweaters, and pullovers are especially useful). This will also serve you well when traveling as you can adjust to other climates by adding or removing the appropriate layers. Take clothes that you don’t care about wearing out, since frequent washing and extensive traveling will take a toll on your clothes. Clothes that are light in weight and easily foldable are the best.

Jewelry: It is best to leave jewelry at home while travelling, especially when staying at hostels. It is, however, perfectly acceptable to leave jewelry with host families, although favorite items should stay with you at all times.

Electricity: if you must bring any electrical appliances with you, keep in mind that you will need both an adapter and, in some cases, a converter. For small items, such as hair dryers and curling irons, plan on buying them in France.

PACKING LIST

- Dark jeans, pants
- Sweaters
- Heavy coat, scarf, gloves, winter hat
- A nice outfit (preferably separates that will mix and match with your more casual clothes, and maybe a dress shirt and tie for the men)
- Raincoat (not a must, but a waterproof pull-over is a great idea!); folding umbrella
- Sturdy walking and waterproof shoes
- Nice T-shirts (good for layering and to reduce the amount of laundry when traveling)
- Warm pajamas and slippers (Essential for living with a host family. Most often shoes are not permitted inside the bedrooms/bathrooms, and wearing only socks or going barefoot is viewed as crude)
- Dressy shoes with wide heels (to match your nice outfits) – cobblestones ruin skinny heels
- Backpack (If you are planning on buying a backpack for traveling, buy one that has an attachable daypack. Don’t buy one that is too wide, as you have to be able to get through train doors quickly!)
- One or two pairs of shorts
- Bring plenty of underwear and socks, because in some cases, especially when traveling, laundry access may be limited
- Toiletries (enough to get you through one week)
- Gift for the host family (see suggestions in "Gifts" section)
- Pictures of your family to share with your host family (including K pictures, home pictures, and friends and family)
- Towel & washcloth (if you plan on traveling, as most hostels don’t provide one)
- Plastic baggies (larger Ziploc bags are great for holding wet towels and dirty laundry)
- Money belt or neck pouch
- Luggage locks

**Additional Items to Bring**

- Extra passport photos (you will receive extras in your pre-departure packet in the summer)
- VISA, or MasterCard credit cards or an ATM card – Visa compatible (check with your bank before leaving)
- Contact solutions/glasses (It's a good idea to bring a copy of your prescription with you in case your contacts or glasses are lost or stolen.)
- Study Abroad Handbook (available from CIP website)
- ICRP Handbook (available from CIP website)
- Journal
- Prescriptions (in original containers) and other medical supplies
- Thumb drive
- Bathing suit (there are several public swimming pools in Clermont-Ferrand)
- Adapters/portable chargers

Pack for your emotional self as well: bring books, small musical instruments, etc., or whatever can help pull you through difficult times.

**NOTE:** Never pack your passport, money, prescription medications and valuables in your checked luggage. Keep those items in a money belt or bag that you keep with you at all times, especially when traveling. Former participants have had their passports and money stolen. Keep your carry-on with you at all times.

**GIFTS**

It is customary to bring a gift to your host family and perhaps your new French friends. Some good ideas include:

- Clothing and items with Kalamazoo College/Michigan logos/your home state-country
- US-style paraphernalia (i.e. things from Disneyworld, Warner Bros., Mt. Rushmore, World Cup, NBA, NFL, etc.)
- CDs of American music (jazz, blues, etc.)
• Local foods (dried cherries, maple syrup)

Show your pictures of home and ask to see theirs. Talk about your country, and ask questions about France. You will probably find that the French are proud of their country and willing to give you a lot of historical information. Other good topics of conversation include politics and cuisine. Avoid talking negatively about any aspect of French life, but be honest about your impressions – the French are open to debate and do not appreciate it if you are always in agreement “just to be polite.”

BILLING

The Center for International Programs does not handle the billing for the program. The Business Office issues the bills and will send your bills for the program costs to your home address just prior to the beginning of each quarter that you are abroad, as when you are in the United States. For specific questions regarding your account, please direct these to Patrick Farmer in the Business Office, 269.337.7226 or pfarmer@kzoo.edu

HEALTH AND MEDICAL ISSUES

You need to be up to date with your standard immunizations such as measles and tetanus. Please refer to your Handbook for the information on required and recommended immunizations. If you have any questions, contact the Health Center (269.337.7200) or your personal physician. Of course, be sure to make doctor appointments if you are concerned about a particular problem (i.e. make a dentist appointment for that sore tooth, etc.).

You will find that what are considered prescription drugs in the U.S. are often sold over the counter in France. So if you are feeling sick, normally you may explain your ailments to the druggist and he or she will provide you with medication. Make sure you know the generic/scientific names of the medications you request. Common medical complaints include sore throats and stomach aches. Bring aspirin or Tylenol, yeast infection creams, Midol, Rolaids, cold medicine, laxatives, Pepto-Bismol, vitamins, and other medications you generally use. Shampoo, soap, non-applicator tampons, and sanitary napkins are sold in France for little more than their cost in the United States, but if there is a brand that you cannot do without, bring a supply that will last the entire program.
If you are ill, please see a doctor and notify Mme. Caron. Doctors are generally not expensive, so the cost should not be prohibitive. The resident director will provide you with the names of doctors in town during your orientation after you arrive. There is also a list of doctors in the international student handbook you will receive from the international office at ESC.

VEGETARIANISM

For those of you who follow a vegetarian diet: be aware that you may find yourself in situations in France where you will be expected to eat meat. Vegetarianism is not common there, and by refusing to eat meat when it is served to you, however infrequently, you risk offending the people that are with you. One good way to prevent offending someone is to let your host family or resident director know before you are served food or are taken to a restaurant.

No special accommodations will be made for vegetarians during the various field trips. If you require a vegetarian diet and cannot eat what is available during such excursions, you will be responsible for paying for and providing your own meals at those times.

YOU’VE ARRIVED!

ARRIVAL IN FRANCE

When you land in Europe from the US, you’ll be required to pass through passport control. Be prepared to present your passport and the boarding card for your flight to Clermont. The airline should automatically transfer your luggage from your international flight to the airplane to Clermont. It is important to pay attention to the instructions that are given to you on the airplane as you arrive in Europe. When you arrive in Clermont, you will be met by Mme. Caron and your homestay families at the airport.

It is possible that your luggage will be searched, as immigration officials will be monitoring you as you exit the customs area. In some international airports, guards with trained drug-detecting dogs will be monitoring luggage collection. Do not be alarmed by this, just remember to keep your luggage with you at all times, and do not agree to carry anything that a stranger might try to give
you. In addition, keep your luggage keys with you so that you can easily assist immigration agents in opening your luggage, should they need to look inside. Cooperating with all airline and immigration officials is very important and will make your travels more pleasant. If you are asked questions, remain calm and understand that they are there to protect you too!

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION
Most of Clermont-Ferrand, including the University, is within walking distance. There is a good, safe public transport system (tram and buses) serving most area of the city. There will be times when a taxi may be necessary. You can purchase a tram/bus pass once you’re there (ask your family or Mme. Caron about how to get one). Buses run from early morning (5.30 am) until about 11.00 pm on most routes. The tramway runs from 4.30 am until about midnight. If you’re out later than that, taxis are also a good option. They are expensive, so you won’t want to rely on them as your sole method of transportation, but please don’t take safety risks by walking a long way home at night alone. Former participants, however, have said that the bus system is very reliable, but you’ll rarely use it because you’ll walk most places in Clermont, instead.

TRAVEL/VACATIONS
When you do travel, in or out of the country, please inform your host family of your plans, indicating where you are going and approximately when you will return. If you are planning on being gone for more than 48 hours, please notify Mme. Caron; and leave addresses where you can be contacted at approximately 48 hour intervals. Be sure to check in at the addresses you’ve given, with the director, or with someone at home during your travels. Should an emergency happen at home or with you, this information will make communication possible.

TIPS ON INDEPENDENT TRAVEL
 **Avoid traveling alone.** This will ensure that you don’t have to deal with illness, theft, or emergencies by yourself.
 Take some kind of pouch for documents, money, and tickets. The best rule is never to take it off. Sleep with it and take it in the shower if you have any doubts. (Especially for those of you planning to stay in International Youth Hostels) Be sure to use luggage locks.
 When traveling, keep documents with you, not in luggage on a train rack or in a checked bag.
 Make sure you know where you’re going – confidence can deter criminals and you are less likely to get lost.
 Plan an itinerary and leave it with the resident director. Also, make sure that your French family and someone in the U.S. has a copy.
 Call home and/or your homestay when you get a chance, especially if there is an itinerary change.
Talk to experienced personnel concerning where you will enter boarding areas, which plane, train, or bus is yours, etc.

Be wary of complete strangers who approach you and offer you rides. As is expected here in the U.S., never accept a ride from a stranger when you are alone.

Do not spend the night in train stations, especially if you are traveling alone. Most of them close during the night.

Always carry your passport with you while traveling.

Check to see what kind of discounts you can get with your International Student I.D. card: usually there are discounts for museums, bus rides, and who knows what else!

US passport holders – enroll in the State Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

https://step.state.gov/step/

SAFETY

Just as you would expect in a different city here in the U.S., you will find it necessary to become well-acquainted with your new surroundings in Clermont-Ferrand in order to feel comfortable. You will need to find out which areas of town should be avoided, which means of transportation are reliable and safe, and what time of day is safe to be walking around. Use of normal common sense and caution will serve you and your money well in this regard: women should get used to holding on to their purses while they walk, and men should not carry their wallets in their back pockets. Clermont is a very safe city and pick pocketing is quite infrequent, but be careful in large tourist cities like Paris.

Former participants report that both men and women should be wary of walking late at night after 12am. You might consider bringing a whistle, screamer, or some other similar safety device. When you are walking around the city, and in other areas, be sure to walk assertively and as if you know where you’re headed. A strong and confident posture will let people know that you’re not a tourist. Please make sure that you have read the “Responding to Physical Assault or Sexual Assault While on Study Abroad” section in your Handbook to be prepared in case you or a friend are in such a situation. It is always best to be prepared.

We highly recommend that you make photocopies of relevant pages in your passport, including the page your French visa is printed on, and you should carry these copies with you in place of
your passport while walking around Clermont-Ferrand. Bring your passport with you only when cashing traveler's checks or traveling out of the city.

**One last tip:** don't become so intoxicated that you can't walk home. If you're noticeably drunk, you are much more vulnerable to potential safety hazards than when you're sober.

**WATER AND OTHER BEVERAGES**

Tap water in France is safe to drink and very good – it is the same water you find bottled! Many students are able to drink the water from the first day with no ill effects. Occasionally, your system may prove a little less adaptable, in which case you may wish to avoid it for a while. There is also a wide and wonderful variety of bottled water in France. The milk is UHT (ultra high temperature), meaning it has been heated to a high temperature and no longer needs refrigeration, except after opening. This may upset a few stomachs, so try to be careful about how much you drink at first. In general, it just might take a little time for your stomach to adapt.

**MAIL**

You can expect letters between France and the U.S. to take two weeks to arrive. Packages can take longer. Make sure "airmail" or “par avion” is specified on all letters and packages.

After your arrival, friends and family should send letters to you at the address of your host family. You will find out that address after you arrive in France. If someone must contact you before that date, they can address mail to you at:

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Your name
S/c International Office
ESC Clermont,
4 Boulevard Trudaine,
63037 Clermont-Ferrand
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**EMERGENCIES**

► In case of an emergency, you should first contact Joëlle Caron if you are able at 011-33-473-773869 (home) 011-33-6-3343101 (mobile). She will notify the appropriate people on site.

Emergency numbers in France are:

- 15 – SAMU (for ambulances and medical emergencies)
- 17 – Police
- 18 – Fire Department
Although emergencies rarely happen that would require you to call one of these numbers, they can and do happen, and you’ll feel better if you’re prepared. Ask your family for this information when you arrive.

In case there is an emergency that requires you to get in touch with us in the Center for International Programs, call one of the following numbers:

**Center for International Programs**
Voice: 269.337.7133  
Fax: 269.337.7400  
E-mail: cip@kzoo.edu

*Margaret Wiedenhoeft, Executive Director*  
*Cell: 269.267.5800  
E-mail: mwieden@kzoo.edu*

**THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

**RESIDENT DIRECTOR**
Mme. Joëlle Caron is the Resident Director and will be one of your professors during the program. She will also supervise and grade your ICRP. She will coordinate the homestays and oversee other aspects of the program, such as excursions. She can be approached about any issue related to your stay in Clermont-Ferrand.

**STAFF AT ESC, Clermont**
Mme. Mary Vigier is the academic coordinator of the Kalamazoo program at ESC. She will coordinate all coursework and schedules for Kalamazoo students. You may consult with her for any concerns or questions you may have about classes. Mme. Lisa Fiacre is the coordinator for all incoming international students at the institution. You may also approach her about any questions or concerns you may have during your studies in Clermont. Mme. Vigier, as well as your other ESC professors, may be approached about any questions you may have about your academic program.

**INTENSIVE LANGUAGE COURSE**
The program begins with an intensive French Language and Cultural course at ESC. This course will extend over the fall and will include a cultural component. Also included in the first month of the program is a two-week introductory orientation and seminar for first-year students at the ESC called S.I.G.N.E. (Séminaire d’Intégration des Nouveaux Élèves).

After the intensive language course, you will have an opportunity to participate in an orientation program including other first year students. This is known as the "integration weekend" and is a
Clermont-Ferrand 18-19

camping trip in September. It will be a chance for everyone to get to know each other in an informal setting. Bring clothing suitable for camping and sports activities and be prepared for the fact that your clothes may be ruined by the end of the trip. This event is optional and Kalamazoo students are not required to attend, although it is a great time to meet French students who you will, generally, not have in classes. Talk with past participants to find out more information.

CLASSES AND CREDITS

You will be taking most of your courses at the École Supérieure de Commerce (ESC), one of France's prestigious "Grandes Ecoles." You will take specially arranged classes, continuing with the intensive French class (1 K-unit - French) as well as a French Culture and Civilization course (1 K-unit – Social Science) and a French Literature course (1 K-unit – French). On the second campus, located approximately 30 minutes outside the main campus, you will take two courses, Marketing and Branding (explained below - 1 K-unit – ECON). You will also take a “cultural electives” organized by the ESC in January. Some of your courses may be taken with French students, and you will be integrated into the French system of higher education. Extended-term students may continue with the Marketing course and enroll in additional coursework at ESC for the session that begins in February. Please note, to receive credit courses must be in the Liberal Arts Tradition and must have “in-class” seat time of at least 45 hours per course. For credit distribution information, please refer to the Program Description.

The “Brand Management” project at ESC will take the form of a real brand study of a French business product or company. You will be working with a group of five or six first-year French business students enrolled in the bachelor of Management program at ESC. As a member of the group, you will meet on a weekly basis and will be supervised by an ESC faculty member. Once the project starts, you'll be working within your group on an academic project, which will be a feasibility study for the setting up of a business activity. You will learn more about the structure of the course from Mme. Vigier once you arrive in Clermont. Whether or not you are a business or economics student, this course will give you the opportunity to improve your command of oral and written French through the group discussions and the preparation of various documents. This project will allow you to learn about working in a multicultural team and will also give you a chance to become more immersed in university life as French students experience it, in addition to learning about French consumer culture.

You are eligible to receive 6 K units for the long-term program in Clermont-Ferrand. Students may have to combine two courses in the same subject to earn one K-unit. To be credited as a K-unit, a
university course must have at least three (3) contact hours of instruction per week (for a minimum of 45 hours for the semester). Grades from all study abroad courses will appear on the Kalamazoo transcript but are not included in the Kalamazoo College grade point average. The transcript will list the title of the course, the appropriate discipline, and a translation of the local grade into the Kalamazoo “A, B, C” grading system. Students must earn the equivalent of a “C” in the local grading system to receive credit for course work completed abroad. All course work, including the ICRP must be completed and turned in prior to the end of the program, or no credit will be earned. Attendance is mandatory in all classes. Failure to attend classes will result in the lowering of grades and possibly dismissal from the study abroad program.

INTEGRATIVE CULTURAL RESEARCH PROJECT

For your integrative cultural research project you will choose some aspect of French culture that you wish to research in a more direct, experiential manner. Conducting such a project offers you a way to get to know the host culture using a variety of methods and in a more intimate fashion. How productive and fruitful your experience is will depend on how much time and thought you put into the planning and how much you choose to commit yourself.

Six distinctive features characterize the ICRP projects, regardless of where they are completed, and should guide you in the selection and implementation of your particular project—

1. **Emphasis on “hands on” human interaction**—your project should allow you to interact with local people outside of the usual academic environment in a systematic, integrated way.

2. **Choice of the Project Topic, Type, and Scope**—the project should reflect your own goals, interests, and skills. Although you will need to consult with the local project coordinator who will ultimately approve your topic, you may exercise wide latitude in selecting the sort of project you wish to pursue in the host city; however, the project should give you an opportunity to apply what you are experiencing to your academic experience and to interact with a diverse group of people within the local culture.
   a. Service and volunteer projects
   b. Cultural externships—participation in some facet of the local culture
      Life histories

3. **Choice of Methodology**—in consultation with the project coordinator, you’ll have wide latitude with respect to the information-gathering method(s) you choose to employ in your project.

4. **Systematic Research** (cf: Describe, Interpret, Evaluate, Validate, Act)
a. Consistent journaling
b. Painstaking interpretation

5. **Cultural Insight** (cf: DIEVA)
   a. Insight into the particular cultural activity or aspect you’ve selected
   b. Insight into the larger culture and/or social structure of the host country

6. **Advising and Mentoring**—from a local project coordinator and also a site supervisor
   a. Selection of topics and methods
   b. Introductions and first contacts
   c. Review of journal notes
   d. Interpretation

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR ICRPS**

- What is the main activity of the placement? What was produced?
- What are the goals and mission of the organization?
- Where does this particular organization stand in relation to similar ones in the city? In the region? In the state? In the country?
- Whom does this organization serve?
- How do people view this organization and its mission?
- What problems and tasks are to be accomplished?
- How was this done?
- How successful is the organization?
- What are the basic skills and knowledge needed to work for this organization?
- What would be a typical day or week in the organization?
- What were your responsibilities?
- What contribution did you make to help the organization achieve its goals?
The project can consist of a collection of life histories, a study of some facet of the local culture, a service project, or some other form. Start thinking early in the fall about what aspect of the culture you would like to study. In discussing your plans with Mme. Caron you will receive more specific instruction. Each study abroad site has unique conditions, practices particular to the community and specific limitations. Some of the common limitations of this program are that students cannot work in medical setting, and prisons or houses for battered and abused women do not usually accept our students. You will need to determine the focus of your project during orientation and have a site selected by October. The ICRP must be conducted in Clermont, and you will be required to keep extensive notes of the time you spend conducting your project. In the past, students have selected service-learning projects such as volunteering to work with children with learning disabilities and with

The following pages provide a sampling of recent Clermont-Ferrand ICRPs, including the locations and activities that students performed and discussed in their final papers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>ICRP Title</th>
<th>Abstract/Synopsis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Astuces Circus School, Diabolo Fraise Circus School</td>
<td>&quot;Avec Amour, Cir-kisses&quot;</td>
<td>My project took place in two local circus schools, Astuces in the city of Chamalieres, France and Diabolo Fraise in Riom, France. My experience primarily included attending bi-weekly classes, working with students to prepare for upcoming performances, conducting informal interviews with the entrepreneurs of the companies, and shooting video for the students. I also took field notes on my observations during and after each encounter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Bourrée des Volcans: Groupe de danse folklorique auvergnate</td>
<td>Discovering French Traditional Folk Dance</td>
<td>During the past several months I have been part of a French traditional folk dancing group called La Bourrée des Volcans. My objective was to learn and experience traditional French dances, learn French dance terms, and improve my comprehension and execution of instructions given in French. During the process I also learned a lot about French teaching styles and was able to interact with a group of people outside of my day-to-day contact. I would go to rehearsals that met once a week for 2 to 2.5 hours and participate in the group rehearsals and lessons. The group, La Bourrée des Volcans, is a formal group that performs locally and in festivals and shows throughout France and other parts of Europe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Conservatoire Emmanuel | My Art Class and the Stereotypes it Killed | For my ICRP I took an art class focused on drawing at the local conservatory. I have always had a deep appreciation for
art, particularly its history, having come from a very artistic family. I started taking art classes when I was 5 and have not stopped since so it only made sense to continue this passion while in France. It was a wonderful and very constructive class. In this paper I give a brief history of my first few days in the class and how they threw the traditional French stereotypes out of the water. Then I describe the other members in my class to give an idea of the wonderfully diverse group of people I got to spend time with each week. Then I give a few of their responses to the question “Why do you take an art class?” And I further discuss how their responses and the class as a whole proves that France isn’t a neat little black and white portrait like it is sometimes made to look.

LIVING IN CLERMONT-FERRAND

THE HOMESTAY EXPERIENCE

Please familiarize yourself with the "Housing Definitions and Regulations" as they’re described in the Handbook.

All of you will be living in a private household in Clermont-Ferrand. For most of you, these living arrangements will be very different from what you’ve experienced in living with your family in the U.S., or in living in the dorms or in apartments here in Kalamazoo.

The heads of households receiving K students tend to be older married couples, many of whom have grown children. In a few cases, there may be small children in the home or other exceptions to the norm. As is the case with all private households that receive Kalamazoo students anywhere in the world, the College compensates the heads of households fairly for their willingness to take international students into their homes.

We are counting on you to give us honest, accurate, and complete information on your housing form so that the Resident Director can try to place you in an appropriate household. Mme. Caron will make every effort to place you in the sort of household you’d prefer, but please keep in mind that she may not be able to match you with exactly the situation you're seeking. In this regard, as in many others where life in Clermont-Ferrand is concerned, you’ll need to be prepared to be flexible and to make some adjustments to a different way of living.

One returning student offers these pieces of advice: "ask for house rules right at the beginning. You’ll have to expect more from yourself than you have in the past” and “be willing to take on chores or a similar role (of that of a “real” family member) and interact with them as you would with your own family.”
Students recommend talking as much as possible with your host family, and not being afraid of making language mistakes. Above all, if you're not sure about something, ask, ask, and ask again.

**HOMES IN FRANCE**

Most of you will be living in apartments in large buildings. Very few people live in individual houses in the central city area. Most French people keep the heat on quite low by American standards, so you should be sure to bring warm clothes for sleeping (see the suggested packing list). In some cases, the water will be hot only at certain times of the day. Avoid taking long showers since energy costs in France are very high and people are generally more aware of wasting energy. The host families are responsible for feeding you breakfast and dinner, and you should be sure to be home on time for those meals. If you need to miss a meal, inform them that you'll be absent. You'll then be responsible for paying your own expenses for the meal you eat out of the house.

“My host family was wonderful, but like a lot of French people they were slightly “reserved” relative to American standards. It took me a while to figure out that it wasn’t that they weren’t interested in me, it was that they didn’t want to make me uncomfortable by asking me a lot of personal questions or seeking me out to have a conversation. If you find yourself in the same situation, I would recommend taking initiative with your host family – finding a time every day (for example, right after you come home from school, or after dinner) when you can have a one-on-one conversation with someone, even if it’s only for 5 minutes. Ask them questions and share your own experiences – that’s why they host foreign students, because they WANT to make a connection with you! In France, meal times are sacred, and that will be when you sit down together as a family. Make sure you use the opportunity to talk! My host family also liked to go on hikes or other family outings on weekends - another great bonding opportunity. A lot of times I had to make a choice between hanging out with friends and spending time with my host family. You don’t have to spend every minute of the day with your family, but when you do get some free time it’s sometimes a good idea to spend it with them: spending time with your host family is the easiest way to feel more comfortable speaking French and to make connections that will last.”

**MEALS**

The French take special pride in their cuisine. Your host mother will appreciate sincere compliments, and the important thing to remember is to be clear about your food likes and dislikes from the beginning.
If you are planning on following a vegetarian diet, put that on every form in which you are asked your eating preferences. Also, be very specific about what you will and will not eat and how much. Any extra expenses incurred because of special dietary needs, including additional food for those who are "big eaters," must be borne by the student.

Always leave your hands above the table when eating, as not to do so is considered rude. Rest your wrists on the table -- no elbows. Do not touch your food, but use the bread (which is served at every meal) to push the food onto your fork. You may be offered wine at every meal, but don't feel like you have to drink it on every occasion. You won't offend anyone by just asking for water. Wine and water are the only beverages drunk during meals so don't ask for anything else.

As you undoubtedly know, France is famous for its pastries and desserts, wine, café au lait . . . to name a few foods. You might especially enjoy the culinary part of your experience. Quiche is especially common. You may be exposed to escargot and boudin (blood sausage).

Petit déjeuner: the breakfast meal will normally consist of coffee, tea, or chocolat; bread with butter and confiture (don't ask for "préservatifs" which means "condoms" and probably tastes horrible on bread); and perhaps yogurt or fruit.

Déjeuner: lunch is the biggest meal of the day. You can take lunch at the cafeteria at the university or on your own. Joëlle Caron will give you a stipend to cover these meals.

Dîner: the size and time of the dinner meal will depend on your family. You can expect to eat around 8 p.m., and the meal may be lengthy, occasionally lasting for up to two hours.

**TELEPHONE USE**

Most Kalamazoo College participants decide to purchase cell phones while abroad and find this to be a better way to make domestic and international calls as well as receive calls at any time. Speaking with past participants about this is a good idea, to learn about the plans available and what was most economical. Before you leave, it is a good idea to spend some time with your family, teaching them some simple French phrases. It is very possible that you will be living with a family that does not speak English fluently. To avoid frustration, it is a good idea to teach your family in the United States how to ask for you, and some of the responses that they may receive if you are not home or available. Also, remind your family and friends who might call that the time in France is six (sometimes 7) hours ahead of Michigan.
LAUNDRY
Your family will inform you when you arrive how laundry will be arranged in the house. You may or may not be able to do it yourself. Again, if you don't know what to do, don't hesitate to ask.

LEAVING YOUR HOMESTAY AND DESIGNATED VACATION PERIODS
As a matter of policy, you'll be able to stay in your homes only when classes are in session. When the academic program ends, you must vacate the household the morning of the second day after the end of classes. If you need to stay during the winter holiday, please let Mme. Caron know and she will make the appropriate arrangements.

ADAPTING TO FRENCH CULTURE

HELPFUL HINTS FOR A POSITIVE CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

While common sense will get you through a lot of potentially awkward situations in an unfamiliar culture, you should be aware of a few cultural differences that exist between France and the U.S. You should bear in mind that France tends to be more formal, socially, than most Americans are accustomed to, and that if you're willing to adapt to your new culture by observing some of the French norms, you'll run into fewer problems at home, in the classroom, and elsewhere.

- Don't invite people to your home unless you've asked the head of household if it's all right to invite a guest. Overnight guests are not allowed.

- If you do have guests, introduce your family to your friend and give them an opportunity to talk to one another.

- If you want to take a guest into your bedroom, ask your family’s permission first, especially if the guest is a member of the opposite sex.

- Respect people's privacy at home: the French often regard certain areas of the house, especially bedrooms and the kitchen, as off-limits to visitors.

- Make sure you know the rules for using the shower and water in your home. For example, don't just assume that it is permissible to wash socks in the sink.
- Avoid wearing a hat in homes or indoors (for men).

- Don’t take off your shoes in public, and wait and observe what your family does before walking barefoot in the home.

- Don’t chew gum in class or at your ICRP site. Chewing gum is, in general, looked down upon.

- Be sure to cover your mouth in public when you yawn!

- Don’t put your feet on furniture, whether at home or in class.

- When going out in public with large groups of Americans, be especially aware of your actions and behavior. Americans have the reputation of being loud and obnoxious. This is mostly because Europeans speak quieter and more intimately than Americans.

- When in bars, do as the French do: enjoy the company of your friends rather than absorbing yourself in the act of drinking as an end in itself.

- Avoid smiling at people on the street, as it may be interpreted as a "come-on" rather than as a sign of general friendliness. Likewise, don't be surprised if people don't smile at you.

- While shorts are acceptable during holiday (at the beach for example) they’re not generally worn to school or work, even when it’s very hot. Dress shorts are however acceptable for tourism, but avoid very short shorts. In general shorts are worn for sports.

- Pay close attention to non-verbal behavior in and out of your home. Communication isn’t always direct and verbally expressed.

- In greetings, men shake hands with other men. Women greet each other and men with a series of kisses on the sides of the cheeks. How many kisses (usually two to four) will depend on what part of France the people are from. Don't feel like you should necessarily know in advance how many times to kiss someone. Often, the French play it by ear as well.

Of course, there's no guarantee that if you do fail to observe some or all of these norms, you’ll be openly criticized for it. However, many French people will regard a failure to acknowledge these sorts of norms as proof that you aren't particularly well-mannered. As their culture is one which places great value on exhibiting proper degrees of respect and self-control in socializing, they won't be as inclined to meet you or to spend time with you if you seem unwilling or unable to observe what they regard to be normal standards of conduct.

If you are unsure of something in your homestay, ASK, ASK and ASK again! No one is going to expect you to catch on to everything at once, so anything you don’t understand, ask people to repeat and clarify.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Over the period of your stay in France you will probably learn the most from living daily in a different culture. For in the day-to-day experiences -- the morning walk to the University, a trip to the market, a meal with your family -- lie the real challenges, frustrations, and joys of living in a new cultural environment. It is an immensely rich and rewarding experience and one that you can anticipate with pleasure.

However, in the adjustment process, everyone has bad days, some people more than others. It is normal to feel like you just want to go home -- everyone has felt that way at some point in her or his travels. Students who have been abroad in the past offer the following advice:

- First of all, be prepared to have unhappy days and know that they will pass.
- Remember that the French have bad days, too. If someone in your host family is having a bad day, don’t take it personally and automatically think they’re unhappy with you.
- Keep yourself open to making friends with different kinds of people, including the people in the K group.
- Talk to others in your group, perhaps with someone who’s having a good day but who can relate to your feelings.
- Try doing something that will involve you in the present; simply doing something can work wonders. For example, if you have nothing to do one Saturday and are feeling homesick or miserable, give yourself a task that will help you to get to know the host culture better -- like going to a local church, searching for a specific item in the market, going to a café in a different part of town, etc. Immerse yourself and keep busy.
- Sometimes, though, you might find that you need to be away from people and/or the local culture for a while, so you might choose to hole up with a book, listen to music, write letters, or write in your journal.
- Be patient with yourself. There will be times when you feel you are the only one who is miserable and having a bad day, but you’re not!
- Lastly, just tell yourself that you can do it. You can survive in a different culture.

You’ll learn that everyone has her or his own way of coping in a different culture and what might help some people some of the time, won’t help everyone all of the time. But this learning
process, coming to really know yourself in a way you haven't before, is part of the adventure.

Learn more about cultural adjustment on the CIP website.

DOING WITHOUT
In addition to adjusting to the conditions mentioned above, there are things you will have to give up to live in France—and this may be hard at first. Eventually, though, you may realize that you don't necessarily “need” what you thought you did. Not everyone misses the same things and different people react differently to the sacrifices they must make. For some people, not having their own car may prove frustrating since possibilities for travel will be limited. For others it might be the unavailability of certain foods, or not being able to maintain a vegetarian diet. For some people it's hard to find clothes or shoes that fit or suit their taste.

You will also have to adapt to a new city and a new community. This means using a map to learn where things are and making use of public transportation. In a new community where you don't know anyone, your usual support systems will not be available. It's important to consider beforehand how you will cope in such circumstances. Your routine will be different. You may find structure where you don't want it and none where you do. This is a normal part of cross-cultural learning and adaptation.

FRANCE: THE SECOND CULTURE
In addition to adapting to France as a country, you will be learning to adjust to a second culture. Learning to live in a new culture requires a great deal more than a list of do's and don'ts, or a brief description of the cultural traits of a society. For one thing, any culture is much too complex to narrow down to a definitive description. Descriptions can describe general characteristics, but they will not explain each specific encounter. Secondly, and more importantly, adaptation has as much to do with understanding oneself and one's own culture as it does with understanding a different culture.

As individuals, we are cultural beings with ways of behaving and perceiving which we do not always identify as springing from our culture. It is when we attempt to understand, or become a part of, another culture that we come to see that many of our values, beliefs and behaviors stem from our own cultural background.

Interaction in a new cultural environment can cause conflict both within oneself and between oneself and the new culture. Some of this conflict is inevitable. However, by understanding yourself as a product of your own culture and of your own personal background, you will have a much easier time observing your interactions and learning to adapt to a new set of behavioral ground rules.
The task of culture learning requires a high tolerance for ambiguity and a patient willingness to work through culture shock in a constructive manner. Students must be willing to learn from situations where they may have mis-communicated or failed at communication. They will be expected to examine how their own cultural expectations may have interfered with interpretation, to use their observation skills to pick up on other clues as to what may be happening, and to reserve judgment while remaining tolerant of ambiguity until they reach understanding.

Learning a second culture not only affords students an understanding of the new culture derived from first-hand experience, it, at the same time, gives them an awareness of their own culture than they never have had before. With familiar surroundings and friends taken away, students are led to examine not only their culture, but themselves as well. One student participating in an intensive study abroad program wrote, “I’m learning to enjoy being with myself, independent and alone from lifelong cultural props. It’s great!”

Such awareness of one’s own culture and self ultimately allows students to live more responsibly as members of the global community.

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH FRANCE AND THE U.S. BEFORE YOU GO

GETTING TO KNOW FRANCE: TALK WITH YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS!

One of the best ways to start preparing for your experience is to do some background reading and research on France. Familiarize yourself with the current political situation and educational systems, historical background, current events, customs, and cultural norms. See if you can find the answers to all of the questions in the culture section on the CIP website. Go to your library or ask to talk to a faculty or staff member who has had experience in France. Or arrange to talk with one of the students who has been there in the past; you’ll have had the opportunity to do this during your orientation, but often times individual conversations are extremely helpful. Former participants and the current French students on campus will be your best sources of information. They know what it’s like to be in your shoes as you try to imagine what in the world the next six months will hold. In case you don’t personally know any former participants, contact the Center for International Programs.

KNOW WHAT’S GOING ON IN THE U.S.

Some people have had the embarrassing experience to learn that people abroad seem to know more about U.S. history and politics than they themselves do. You can expect to be asked your opinion about current events and U.S. politics -- you can also expect to hear the opinions of others,
and not all of them will be complimentary of the U.S. Should such a situation arise, the best advice is to remain respectful, even when disagreeing, and to resist the temptation to criticize France, as you are a guest. Start keeping abreast of current events and continue to do so while you’re in France. Remember that disagreement is the heat of conversation in France—if everyone had the same opinion, there would be no reason to discuss anything. Don’t take disagreement or criticism personally—it’s just meant to prolong the discussion. On the same token, don’t feel you have to be an expert on everything about the U.S.—you don’t have to assume the role of the “defender” of U.S. culture. If there are things you don’t know or don’t feel like explaining, just say so.

**SPEAKING FRENCH**

Probably all of you are feeling French-language anxiety—relax! It will be O.K. if you step out of the train and don’t understand a word your host family says to you. Everyone who has been abroad where another language is spoken has lived through that experience. There are, however, some great opportunities to practice your French here before you go. Some ideas for practicing French include renting French movies, listening to French music, and practicing the language with the French-speaking students on campus.

However, if you don’t end up doing as much as you would have liked, don’t panic. Regardless of how comfortable you feel about your French, the thing everyone has to get through is the fear of making mistakes. Remember, especially at first, the goal is to get your point across. Proficiency will come with time and practice. There are notable differences in accents in different regions of France. Also, in rural areas, people will speak what is called the “langue doc.” This is not the French you have studied, so don’t think you should be able to understand it. Many French people don’t understand the langue doc either.

**GENDER RELATIONS IN FRANCE**

While in recent years French women have gained an ever more active voice, traditional male machismo is still alive and well (the concept and word applies in France). At home there are still clearly defined spheres of men’s work and women’s work. Some married French women still take their primary pride in a well-kept home and family, leaving career concerns second-place, although many may work outside the home. Your host father will not necessarily participate in the cooking and running of the household.

Dating patterns also differ. To go out as a couple is a much more serious step in a relationship than it is here in the U.S. One French exchange student notes that dating in France is more exclusive than in the U.S.—if you are “going out” with someone on a regular basis you should not be seeing anyone else. She adds that couples are often more affectionate in France in public, and this is not in
any way considered rude. If you get involved in a relationship, it's a very good idea to talk to a French friend and to ask what kinds of norms and behavior you should follow. It can be very confusing, especially with the language barrier.

Women should expect a certain amount of overt attention, and should not be surprised if they receive unwanted stares or comments in the street. As this attention is almost always non-threatening, you might want to do what the French women do, which is to ignore it and walk away. Looks from French men should usually be interpreted as a complement and are mostly disinterested. You should know that in France, accepting to go for a drink or dinner with a man is a tacit sign of consent for a woman – while you can always change your mind, don’t be surprised if the man expects you to agree to go home with him. Also, be especially conscious of your behavior in clubs – the French do not dance the same way as Americans do and see the physical contact of Americans as vulgar or even obscene. Observe the behavior of others before going on to the dance floor, especially if you don’t want to attract unwanted attention.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Issues of sexuality can be complex in your own cultural environment, and much more so in one with which you are less familiar. While living in a culture that is not your own, it is more challenging to evaluate situations and to assess risks for emotional distress, disease, and assault as a result of intentional or non-intentional sexual contact. Sexually transmitted diseases are prevalent everywhere in the world, and the HIV virus can lead to death. We strongly recommend that students educate themselves on safe sex practices, pack condoms when they are traveling abroad, and be cautious about their sexual activity while abroad. For further information regarding HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, please consult with Kalamazoo College’s Health Center or your physician.

Learning about your host country’s culture with regard to acceptable and safe sexual behavior, is one of your responsibilities as you prepare for and experience study abroad. It is also very important that participants understand the local norms and cultural patterns of relationships. What are the local dating patterns? If you accept a drink or some other “gift”, are you tacitly consenting to sexual activity? If you invite a member of the opposite gender into your living space, is it culturally and/or legally acceptable for him/her to expect intimate contact? Is the legal definition of “consent” different from the definition in the U.S.?

At a minimum, you must be aware that some behaviors that may be culturally and legally acceptable, and seemingly safe, at home may not be in your host country – and vice versa. Certain behaviors will also communicate different messages in your host culture than they do in the U.S. Resident Directors and other program staff members will give you guidelines to the local cultural norms for relationships between genders and laws regarding this issue.
YOUR RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES

YOUR RETURN FLIGHT TO THE U.S.

PREPARE FOR YOUR RETURN

As the end of your program approaches, you will likely experience a wide range of emotions and reactions. Just as you needed to prepare for your stay in Clermont-Ferrand before leaving the United States, you will also need to take care of many important details as your program comes to an end.

The Center for International Programs’ Peer Advisers – seniors who have returned from studying abroad that organize campus events and help advise students on their study abroad experience – put together a list of recommended things to do several weeks BEFORE you leave for the US, and before you do any post-program travel. These are great things to do to prepare yourself for the end of the program and for the reverse culture shock you may experience when you return to the United States. The Peer Advisers, who have experienced the reintegration process, wish that they, themselves, had done the following:

- Take photos of your campus, living space, neighborhood, and surrounding areas so you can remember them and share them with your family and friends back home.
- Definitely set time aside for thorough ‘last’ goodbyes with friends and host families.
- Enjoy some of your favorite foods that you may not be able to get in the United States.
- Re-visit a place you went to when you first arrived and reflect on how that place feels differently now.
- Start thinking of ways to be upfront with your family and friends back home about how you are feeling – write emails or make phone calls to share what you will miss from study abroad and ask them to be patient with you when you have ups and downs as you reintegrate.

RETURNING HOME

Going home is usually a very exciting prospect. Most students look forward to seeing family and friends they have missed, eating food they haven’t had for so long and enjoying activities that may not have been possible during study abroad.

Remember that returning home is also a transition very similar to your arrival in France. Just like your arrival, you can expect to feel frustration, anxiety and confusion at home, on your campus and with your friends. Craig Storti puts it this way in The Art of Crossing Cultures:
“The problem is this word home. It suggests a place and a life all set up and waiting for us; all we have to do is “move-in.” But home isn’t a place we merely inhabit; it’s a lifestyle we construct (wherever we go), a pattern of routines, habits and behaviors associated with certain people, places and objects—all confined to a limited area or neighborhood. We can certainly construct a home back in our own culture—just as we did abroad—but there won’t be one waiting for us when we arrive...In other words, no one goes home; rather we return to our native country and in due course we create a home.”

At the foundation of this transition is the task of determining what to do with the changes that have occurred while you were away and the changes that have taken place within you as a result of your time in France. Life for your family, friends and teachers probably will not be the same as when you departed, but you were not there to gradually adjust to those changes with them. And they have not been able to get used to the things that are different about you.

Hardly anyone avoids the discomfort of this period of growth, but the good news is you will eventually find a way to include your new ideas, skills and outlook in your life back in the U.S. Here are a few questions to consider before your return. Your answers may help you recognize the changes that have occurred during your sojourn.

☐ What have I learned about France’s culture that I did not know previously? In what ways has this changed my view of France?

☐ By being abroad and able to compare my culture with a different culture, what have I learned about the history, values and traditions that make up my home culture?

☐ While I was away, what significant events have occurred in my country, my family, in my hometown, among my friends and on campus?

☐ How have my personal values changed because of my study abroad experience?

☐ In what ways have my stereotypes or biases changed?

☐ What new skills have I developed (e.g. adaptation skills, second language proficiency, sensitivity, etc) and how might I maintain them?

☐ How can I express these changes to my friends, family and teachers?

☐ What might I do to continue to deepen my understanding of France?

ADVICE FROM PAST-PARTICIPANTS

RECOMMENDED THINGS TO DO
“In terms of gifts for your family, I would recommend getting something that reflects your personality or interests, something that has significance for you, maybe something unique to your home town. As opposed to something generic, a gift that has meaning for you will be a good way to start the getting-to-know-you process.”

“ESC Clermont always organizes a trip around the Auvergne region at the beginning of the academic year and you should definitely try to go.”

“Buy a carte “Cité Jeune” to get discounts at bookstores, the film festival and movies.”

“If you go to the Conservatoire (which is near the school, I believe on the Rue de Ballainvilliers), there are community courses offered in the arts (ceramics, painting, dancing, etc) for a relatively low price. I also took a course in theater, which was very fun, and was where I met most of my French friends.”

“None of us joined a student organization, but I think it might have been a good idea because the students at the school are very involved in associations, and the student groups play a big role in social networking at the ESC.”

“I took violin lessons at the Conservatoire. Friends of mine participated in local choirs, took painting and sculpture classes, performed in theater productions, played sports, and a number of other things. Whatever your interests are, you can find a community group to join.”

“Students should know that if they’re taking a course at the Conservatoire and have a Carte d’Etudiant to prove it, they can get into any national museum in France for free, which includes the Louvre as well as over a dozen other amazing museums in Paris (Musee Picasso, Musee Rodin, Centre Pompidou . . . the list goes on).”

“I would encourage everyone to go to the Soirees that are advertised around the ESC, they are a great way to mingle with the French students.”

“There are sports clubs at the ESC for those who are interested. There is also a gym facility that is connected with the larger university in Clermont that has free classes for students. I got a membership at the Piscine Coubertin; if anyone’s interested in swimming I would recommend checking it out because it’s a great facility.”

“The meal stipend you will receive is pretty generous, so even though things are expensive you will have a bit of extra money to help you with daily expenses. Explore the city; there are some restaurants, cafes, and boulangeries that are good but not too expensive. Check out the cafeteria at Blaise Pascal for lunch; it’s within walking distance of the ESC and it’s really cheap.”

“Go up to the top of the cathedral!”
“Explore a little around the countryside -- especially if your host families have houses out there or invite you for a drive or something. It is just so beautiful and so different than a typical "American" countryside.”

“I took a sculpture class that met at night and it was a great experience because it put me in touch with some people that I would have never had a chance to talk to. I think that any class/activity that takes you away from your host family/K friends/or the ESC is a good thing to try out. I also went on the ski trip that one of the clubs at school organizes and that was a good experience too. I would recommend doing that if you like to ski.”

“Taking a tour of the region of Auvergne is definitely worth it. There are a lot of really small rural communities that are sooooo old and full of wonderful history. Also, the St. Nectaire cheese caves are fun to visit.”

“There are also two movie theaters on Place de Jaude: one inside the mall on Jaude and the other right on the square. The one on the square plays movies in their original language, so you can catch some American releases if you need a break from French.”

“I would definitely recommend taking part in the international student day they have towards the beginning of the program, it is hosted by the city and a great way to meet other international students from all over the city and at the various colleges/universities.”

“Partake in the winter event called Soiree Pere Noel. It is a school sponsored event with dinner, a small show and then the school rents a small club and drives everyone to the club for the night. It was a great way to spend with friends we had made while we were there.”

**LIVING IN CLERMONT: CULTURE AND CITY LIFE**

“The best part about school in France is that you have 2 hours for lunch every day – take advantage of it! Eat good food! Explore!”

“Meal times are very, very important in France so it’s a good idea to eat with your host family as much as you can, as meals are seen as crucial family time. Warn your family in advance if you won’t be eating with them.”

“The city is very safe – the department of Puy de Dome has one of the lowest crime rates in France.”

“When visiting restaurants, cafés and bars, it’s good to keep in mind that the people working at these venues aren’t just doing it for minimum wage; usually you’ll be dealing with the owner of the place or at least someone who really values what he or she does. As a result, there’s a certain amount of respect that’s expected from the customer. It’s a good idea to follow that social norm, since you’ll probably be back at that café the next day, and I can almost guarantee the same person will be serving you (they’ll remember you, too!).”
“The best thing about living in a homestay is how immersed in the culture you become. It is nice to have people who understand why you are there (to learn the language and the culture) and want to help you experience as much as possible (food, T.V, lifestyle, etc.) The worst thing about living in a homestay is the rules/limitations -- not feeling comfortable walking around the apartment or being in the “common” areas (you’re living in someone else’s home!), and not being able to come and go as you please during the night -- especially after living pretty independently for the last 2 years.”

“When you go to the club, observe how the French are dancing before you start grinding up on your neighbor. There are unspoken rules of the dance floor, such as, do not raise your arms above your head. Do not dance with someone unless you are willing to be in a committed relationship with that person. You think I’m joking, but I’m not.”

Café de Jardin Lecoq – really nice, but only available until about October.

“Bring slippers! Many French families do not go barefoot or wear shoes in the house. Also, do not expect to be allowed to go into the kitchen/refrigerator on your own in your homestay. Eat snacks out of the house if your family eats dinner later than you would like (it’s usually around 8:00 and can last a long time).”

“The constraints that living with my host family could be stressful, and there were many times when I had to choose between spending time with them and going out to the bar or clubs with friends. However, the homestay for me was an absolutely invaluable part of my experience in France, and taught me more about French culture than any other one aspect of my study abroad. The advances I made in my French language were largely thanks to the many hours I spent discussing culture and politics with my host parents at the dinner table. In addition, I found that my homestay became a real home to me while I was there; I felt that it was a safe haven for me when the rest of my life there became overwhelming. Because of that, I’m very glad I made the choice to come home for dinner as often as I did.”

“Look forward to the Native Speaker days which are organized by the English department at the school. On these days you get assigned a group of French students and they are required to speak English.”

Language:

“France is like any other country: customs, cuisine, and even dialects vary in the different areas. Clermontois definitely have their own pronunciation, but the most marked difference is when you travel to the south of France, especially Marseille.”

incredibly rare. Arnaud took great care of me, explained things to me, and took me to visit his home in Lyon. He tried to get a few of his friends to be friends with me too, but they were never that interested in making the deep kind of friendship with me that I had with Arnaud. My advice is to try to make these kinds of friendships, but not to be disappointed in yourself or in the French if you are unsuccessful.” Sarah Shuster-Tucker K’08
RECOMMENDED PLACES TO VISIT

• La Cathédrale, located in the historic centre

• Place de Jaude (the “crater”) -- all the buses stop there, and the Centre Jaude is a mall with a variety of shops

• The Musée des Beaux Arts

• The Christmas Market for two weeks in December

• The most important short film festival in the world: “Festival du Court Metrage”. (end of January/beginning of February)

• L’arboretum (great hiking) – 1 mile north of Royat

• Mont Dore (great hiking)

• Maison de la Culture (visiting musicians, ballets, etc).

• Jazz en Tête (a great jazz music festival)

• Coopérative de Mai (concerts)

• La Cooperative de Mai for a concert or two; it’s a small venue with reasonably priced tickets, and occasionally they have some really good bands. If you happen to go on a night when the band isn’t so great, at least you’ll be amused by the emo/indie French kids attempting to sing in English.

TRAVEL ADVICE

“I recommend seeing as much of France as possible because each region really in very different and it is interesting to see those differences. Plus, you already know the language.”

“A note about train travel: only the regional train (SNCF) goes to Clermont so it’s much slower than the bullet train (TGV). If you plan to do a lot of train traveling, I strongly recommend buying the SNCF student pass. It’s about 50 euro and gives you up to 50% discounts on tickets.” Vanessa Faulkner K’09

“If you plan on doing a lot of travel within France, get a 12/25 pass from SNCF, the rail company in France. Fares are cheaper if you have this pass. There are SNCF boutiques in several locations around the city. Since you will need to get to Paris or Lyon to get to anywhere else you’ll be traveling in Europe, the pass is well worth it.”

“Keep in mind that the French transportation employees will strike continuously! Make sure to always pre-check any travel plans.”
“If you decide to spend any time in Paris, you should stop by a tabac and pick up a “Pariscope”, which is a weekly publication that lists literally everything there is to do in the city during that week, including plays, movies, museum exhibitions—everything.”

COURSES AND ICRP

“Most of our classes were made up of just 5 students – a comfortable atmosphere that encouraged us to speak French and participate in class, but at the same time it was frustrating because we didn’t have a lot of opportunities to meet French students.”

“You can choose between a French literature class and a class offered by the ESC. I took the French literature class and enjoyed it immensely, but I would recommend taking a business class offered by the ESC, even if you’re not particularly interested in the subjects that are offered because you will be integrated with the French students and you will get the chance to see how classes work in France.” Claire Eder K’10

“Always check your mailboxes and ask if you don’t understand because the French school system is different from ours (i.e. they don’t use syllabus’s for classes). There will be class announcements etc. in your mailboxes!”

“The classes are not very difficult compared to K classes, but it’s very important to show up every day, on time, with your work completed.”

“Some days we were at the school from 8:30 in the morning to 5:00 or 7:00 at night, because our classes were spread out with a lot of breaks in between. Some days, however, we got out at noon, and on Fridays we didn’t have class at all (although the program director would sometimes organize excursions on Friday).”

“As an art major, I wasn’t sure how my experience at a business school was going to work. I was worried that I was going to hate it and be totally lost the entire time. The truth is that Marketing (which is about the only class you can take at the ESC, aside from Human Resources Management) has more to do with psychology and anthropology than with business. Even I found it interesting, ESPECIALLY because I was on study abroad and on the lookout for any nuts of culture that I could crack open and try to understand for myself. This was a great way to get to know French ways of thinking and behaving. If you aren’t interested in business, it’s ok. My advice would be to just appreciate being a fly on the wall for a couple of months because it’s a pretty rare opportunity. Business is really something that is useful for anyone to know and easy for beginners at least because it’s at about 90% common sense and 10% vocabulary.” Sarah Shuster-Tucker K’08

“Although French students have a tendency to hold private conversations during a professor’s lecture, sometimes even rather loudly, it isn’t really considered appropriate to get up and leave (i.e. for the bathroom) during class time. So unless it’s an emergency, try not to leave during class. Some of the longer classes will even have a break sometime during it anyway.”
FOOD

“It’s impolite not to eat everything on your plate, so if you don’t like something only take a little, or politely decline. Just remember that everything related to food is really important. Table manners take a while to get used to, but if you have a question about what to do or how to eat something (because there is usually a right and a wrong way), just ask your host family.”

“Clermont-Ferrand is in the heart of the Auvergne, France’s richest agricultural region, so the food is always fresh, local and spectacular.”

GENERAL ADVICE FOR STUDY ABROAD

“Just try everything once, and if it’s good try it again, and again, and again. Just take advantage of everything. Don’t not do something because you are scared or worried about looking stupid. Study abroad is kind of scary and you have to get over that in order to experience amazing things. Same goes with speaking French. If I could change one thing about my study abroad experience, it would be to speak more. And if you don’t know what to say just ask people questions and hopefully that will start a conversation.”

“You just really need to be open and kind of persistent. It may be hard the first couple weeks but if you show that you are struggling, the French may turn off and never try to be friends with you again. You just have to be open and appear happy during those first few days and I’m sure you’ll meet a ton of people.”

“I think the best advice is to watch what those around you are doing and try to emulate them. It’s best to err on the side of formality and politeness, especially when dealing with your host family.”

Bibliography

BIBLIOGRAPHY
You will want to take a guidebook with you—perhaps one from the “Let’s Go” series, “Lonely Planet” series or a Rough Guide.
Clermont-Ferrand 18-19

http://allabroad.us/resources.php - Contains resources to help find funding opportunities, information about making study abroad support career development, reasons to study abroad, information to support diversity in study abroad, and information about discrimination abroad.

http://www.diversityabroad.com/ - “…connects talented diverse and underrepresented students and graduates to international education and career opportunities that prepares them for leadership in an interconnected world.”

http://www.purdue.edu/cie/learning/global/toolkit/ - includes 8 modules designed to help students learn about cultural worldview frameworks, intercultural openness, intercultural empathy, and cultural self-awareness.

https://travellatina.org and @TravelLatina on Instagram


https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/lgbt.html - U.S. Government’s resource guide for travelers who identify as LGBTQ


https://baniamor.com/ - Bani Amor

Books

Brislin, Richard. Understanding Culture’s Influence on Behavior, Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College


Various. *Diversity Issues in Study Abroad*, https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/international-study/student-resources/while-abroad/diversity-while-abroad

   Collection of quotes from study abroad participants from Brown University who are from historically disenfranchised communities.


**LGBTQ RESOURCES**

http://overseas.iu.edu/living/glbt.shtml - NAFSA’s Rainbow Special Interest Group’s website. Includes numerous web links and a bibliography.

https://www.outrightinternational.org/ - The Outright Action International is an association of individuals and organizations dedicated to building a free and peaceful world, respect for individual rights and liberties, and an open and competitive economic system based on voluntary exchange and free trade. They currently have members and representatives in over 100 countries.

http://studyabroad.isp.msu.edu/forms/glbt.html - Covers some of the issues a LGBTQ student may wish to research before departure.

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree/index.jspa - Includes both general travel information and a special discussion section (Thorn Tree Forum) for LGBTQ travelers.

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