CIEE Study Center in Rennes

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Part I: The CIEE Program in Rennes

Rennes, a university city with a young population of almost 210,000, is regularly ranked among the most livable cities in France. Rennes is in the eastern part – the Haute Bretagne – of Brittany, a peninsula on the Atlantic coast. The western part is known as Basse Bretagne.

**Participants say...**

Rennes is a good-sized city – not too big, but big enough that there is always something going on. Probably the best education I’ve had. Even in a Western European country, perspectives and ways of life are markedly different.

Your time here is limited - make the most of it by speaking French at all possible times. The more French you come with, the more you’ll leave with. And above all, the more you put into your time and your life here, the more you’ll get out of it. Remember that you’re the foreigner, and you’re here to learn about France so REMAIN OPEN-MINDED!

YOUR HOST: THE UNIVERSITY OF HAUTE BRETAGNE

The University of Haute Bretagne (UHB), Rennes II, is the humanities division of the university system of Rennes. The campus, classrooms, offices, and dormitories for Rennes II’s 20,000 students are located on the northwest edge of the city, about a mile (3-4 metro stops) from the downtown area. The science division, Rennes I, known as Beaulieu, is located on the opposite side of town. The total university, Rennes I & II, comprises a student population of approximately 45,000.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The following notes highlight and update the more detailed information in the course catalog and on the CIEE website.

Following the 3-day orientation in Paris, students travel as a group to Chartres to visit one of Europe’s most famous cathedrals and then proceed to Rennes where orientation continues. In Rennes you will take a French language test to determine your placement, during which time you take the required pre-program language and culture course.

After the pre-program, students enter at one of six language levels depending on the results of your placement examination. The six language levels are as follows: A1 (Breakthrough level), A2 (Waystage level), B1 (Threshold level), B2 (Vantage level), C1 (Effective-proficiency level) and C2 (Mastery level).

Depending on the level in which students place, they may take courses only at CIREFE (Centre International Rennais d’Etudes du Français pour les Etrangers) or at both CIREFE and UHB.

**CIREFE Courses:** The CIREFE is a department within the University which offers courses to students who speak French as a foreign language. Local French students do not take courses at the CIREFE. All CIREFE courses are located in one hallway in one of the University buildings. The CIEE Office is located in the same hallway.

All CIEE students will take most of their courses at CIREFE while some students may take all their courses at CIREFE (usually those who place in the first four levels listed above). CIREFE courses are taught in French to international students only (including all CIEE students). A strong emphasis is placed on writing skills, more so than in the U.S. One reason is that many international students in your classes will go on to study at a French university and therefore need to have an excellent command of the written language for their course work and future professional endeavors. Secondly, the core language class in each level emphasizes written French. And finally, a student’s written work is considered to be a more reliable indicator of their overall competency in French as a foreign language. Thus, you will find that the French professors are particularly concerned with your ability to demonstrate logical thinking, produce well-structured arguments, and conform to French methodology.

**UHB Courses:** All students, regardless of their level, are encouraged to at least consider auditing a course taught at UHB alongside French Students. Only those students with advanced language skills (usually those students placed in the latter two levels listed above) may opt to enroll a course taught at UHB alongside French students. This will be in consultation with the Resident Director. Students at the C1-C2 levels may choose to pursue the Advanced Language Track.

Students selecting the course “Directed Individual Study Projects”, RENS 1390, must have prior approval from the appropriate officials on the home campus and from the Resident Director.
Advanced Track

The CIEE Study Center in Rennes offers qualified participants (with advanced language skills) an opportunity to pursue an Advanced Track of study in order to take classes at the UHB. Prospective students must have at least six semesters of college-level French and must place into the C1-C2 levels based on a placement test that students take at the beginning of each semester. In consultation with the Resident Director, students who qualify for and pursue the Advanced Track will have the opportunity to choose among a host of social science and humanities courses at the UHB. The only required courses will be the main French Language classes offered as part of the bloc commun at CIREFE.

CIEE Community Language Commitment

On this program, students are asked to take part in the CIEE Community Language Commitment. By signing an agreement during orientation, students indicate their intention to speak only French to all people at all times (except in cases of dire emergency). Students, thus immersed in the host country language, not only speak French but come to think in French as well. This Language Commitment fosters a program environment and learning community that encourages French language and cultural acquisition, thereby improving proficiency and understanding of both the French language and French society.

The Diplôme (certificate) offered by the CIREFE

The CIREFE offers a certificate for all students who complete a set list of courses. In our CIEE course catalog, the courses that a student would need to complete in order to obtain the diplôme are the main language classes, the recommended language / culture ‘bloc’ and one to three electives depending on the level at which students are placed. This certificate is free of charge and is not an obligation. Students will receive a more thorough explanation of the certificate requirements during the on-site orientation.

Continuing Study

Students who decide to continue their studies in Rennes for a second semester, or decide to do a summer or semester program at one of the other CIEE Study Centers should remember these deadlines: April 1 for most summer and fall programs; November 1 for most spring programs. Students must complete an enrollment extension form if they plan to continue their studies at a CIEE Study Center that they can obtain from the Resident Director.

Libraries

There are several library collections available at the Faculté des Lettres and in Rennes proper. The BU, la Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire de l'Université de Haute Bretagne, offers U.S. encyclopedias, while La Bibliothèque Municipale has a reading room with English language newspapers in addition to a very beautiful collection of old manuscripts. The library of the Institut Franco-Américain has a large collection of books, magazines, newspapers, and journals, mostly in English, on all aspects of American life.

CIEE also offers a private collection of reference works, including additional books on French history, civilization, language and literature, as well as on pedagogy, intercultural literacy and social sciences.

Academic Culture

You will hear this more than once: Teaching methods in France are quite different from what you are accustomed to. There tends to be less discussion and more memorization, a typical approach in most European universities. Indeed, rarely do students have the opportunity to participate actively in class. A class format typically consists of a lecture with students taking notes. Students are expected to use their essays and written work to express themselves; in other words, you will need to develop independence and self-discipline. Grades are based on essays and on mid-term and final exams.

Relationships between students and teachers are more formal. Friendly behavior that is taken for granted as normal in the United States may be considered rude in France. Many of your teachers are well known in their area of exper-
tise and are used to being treated accordingly. They are, however, available to students outside of the classroom.

**Class Locations**

Most classes are located on the Rennes II campus in Bâtiment E. The CIEE program office is located in the same building.

**Class Hours**

Expect to be in classes 5 days a week. Typically, you will take 2 classes a day, 2 hours each. Students with volunteer work or who teach English can expect to spend another 2-3 hours on some days at these activities.

**Student ID**

You will receive a student ID from the University of Haute Bretagne with your photo on it. Benefits of a student ID include access to the UHB Internet and WiFi, entrance to the university libraries, and discounted museum fees, cinema tickets, concerts, trains, etc.

**Extra-curricular Activities**

Every French University has a CROUS: Centre Régional des Œuvres Universitaires et Scolaires. Each CROUS is responsible for the cultural and sports facilities generally located on its particular campus; it also supplies information on all the cultural and sports activities in the area by means of circulars, monthly bulletins, and posters in the university restaurants and dormitories. In addition to these services, CROUS has a valuable travel service that supplies Billet BIGE/Transalpino tickets. These student discount tickets (20%) are good for trains going to destinations in all parts of France and Europe. Billet BIGE tickets have some restrictions, but they probably are the best way to travel if you do not have a rail pass. Billet BIGE tickets cannot be bought at the train station.

You can also take advantage of the services provided by the MJC, the Maisons des Jeunes et de la Culture. The MJC serves as a meeting place for students and provides various social and educational activities. Through the MJC, you can pursue your interests, whether they are intellectual, artistic, or athletic.

**Participants say...**

The first day, go to the tourist office and get involved in activities that interest you! It's a great way to meet French people, improve language skills, and learn about the culture.

**THE CIEE PROGRAM**

**Discount on Airfare**

As a part of your program fees you will receive an iNext (www.iNext.com) insurance card/student ID that allows a $15.00 discount on flights costing $100.01 to $249.99 and a $25.00 discount on flights costing $250.00 or more when you purchase your airfare through Student Universe (www.studentuniverse.com). To take advantage of the discount, type “iNext” in the Promo Code text box when you finalize your reservation. Student Universe is a travel agency that offers plane tickets at a reduced student rate. Aside from Student Universe’s already discounted student fares and the iNext discount, most Student Universe tickets allow changes to the ticket for as little as $50. If you have one of these tickets, you can make your plans to travel independently even after you have already arrived on-site. Your iNext card is valid for 365 days and the code can be applied towards any two airfares purchased while you are covered by iNext.

**Tip: Phone home**

Upon your arrival, it is a good idea to call your parents. A brief phone call telling them that you have arrived and are fine will relieve them of any worries. At this time you can also pass along exact information on how they may reach you.

**Departure and Arrival**

**How do I get there?**

When arranging your flight, you must plan to arrive for the start of orientation. Details regarding the group airport pickup can be found on the “Dates, Details and Updates” page on your MY CIEE online checklist. If you arrive late, you will be responsible for getting yourself to the orientation site in Paris. You can take a taxi or use the Paris public transportation system to reach the orientation site. Instructions will be included in the final details email.

**Will I have to pay duty?**

To avoid paying duty on items coming into France from the United States, declare all bag-
gage, whether with you or unaccompanied, with a low declared value marked "Used Personal Belongings." Generally, laptops, cameras, CD players, radios, and other similar items can be carried in duty free.

**Participants say...**
The Rennes Resident staff is excellent. They know that a mix of encouragement, care, and hard-line cultural bullet-biting is vital to the success of every foreign student's stay.

**Online Pre-Departure Orientation**
Students begin their study abroad experience in Rennes before even leaving home—by participating in a CIEE Online Pre-Departure Orientation. Meeting with students online, the Resident Director shares information about the program and site, highlighting issues that alumni have said are important, and giving students time to ask any questions before leaving home. The online orientation allows students to connect with others in the group, reflect on what they want to get out of the program, and learn what others in the group would like to accomplish. The CIEE goal for the pre-departure orientation is simple: to help students understand more about the program and site, as well as their goals for the program, so that they arrive to the program well-informed and return home having made significant progress toward their goals.

**Onsite Orientation in France**
Your stay in France begins with a mandatory Orientation program in Paris. Orientation is designed to help you adjust to life in France and to get to know staff and other students.

If you are delayed en-route to the program, call the Resident Director as soon as you realize that you will be late.

You will receive more specific information about the orientation in your final details email, including directions for independent travelers.

**Living with a Family**
People who open their homes to students in Rennes include couples, families with children, and women living alone. While many of the homes are in Rennes, some are on the outskirts; so you may not be in the city itself. Please be flexible in your expectations.

CIEE has carefully chosen these host families, and some of them have been with us for years. The Student Services Coordinator visits the home, interviews the people to make sure they are appropriate for the program, and stays in contact with them throughout your stay. Many of the families have visited the United States and are interested in its culture. They enjoy the opportunity to house a foreign student and the possibility of cultural exchange that this offers.

Your room will be fully furnished with bed, closet, desk, chair, and lamp. You will eat breakfast, dinner and weekend meals with the family. Certain families are willing to accommodate individual dietary needs including vegetarian diets, as long as they are informed. For lunch you will receive tickets to cover meals at RUs, restaurants universitaires, from Monday through Friday.

Note that CIEE pays your room and board directly to the host family every month whether or not you are in residence for the entire period. If you go on vacation, you should not expect reimbursement of room-and-board funds for time spent away from the home.

**Housing and Meals**
Final housing selection is determined during orientation. Because of potential last-minute changes, you will not know your housing address before you depart for France. Have your mail sent to the program address.

**Participants say...**
The homestay is my favorite part of my abroad experience. It is too easy to speak English with other students and the homestay was a great way to be immersed in the language and culture. The university also offered immersion activities: I joined a sports team and a little choir for international students. The program directors and the French student monitors were very helpful in giving us information on how to join a sports team and other activities at the university.

**How can I best get along with my host?**
During the orientation, you will receive a housing contract that provides you with the housing guidelines; the host family will be given the same guidelines before you move in with them. It is very important that you respect these guidelines.
Of course you want to be well received by your host family. It is important to remember that although you will most likely be treated as another member of the family, you will also be treated to some extent as a guest in their home. Be considerate of your host family and respect their concerns, which may include the following:

- Phone ahead or leave a note if you will be late coming home for a meal or if you will be coming home late at night. Families usually expect you to be home at a reasonable hour, especially on weeknights, so be respectful of their concerns. It may make your host parents uncomfortable to have you coming and going at all hours of the night.

- Respect your host family’s belongings. Remember to ask permission to use stereos and other equipment or to go into the rooms of members of your host families.

- Don’t leave things in the bathroom unless advised to do so. Your host family will show you where to leave them.

- If you smoke, ask where it is permissible.

- To feel secure in your new home, put your valuables (money, travelers’ checks, passport, etc.) in a safe place. Neither your host family nor CIEE can be held responsible for theft. You can lock valuables in your suitcase or your closet.

- Don’t develop the habit of lending money to or borrowing money from your host family.

Moving in will involve some adjustments that may be hard at first. Imagine yourself moving back with your own family to live, particularly after having had independence to do things without your family’s immediate influence. Your hosts may not intuitively understand your needs, so communicate your concerns and work things out with them. For example, you may have trouble finding space to store all you bring with you. Only after attempting to resolve any problems by yourself, should you ask help of the resident CIEE staff.

One discussion that is difficult to have, but which students have said helps a lot, is to talk about the hosts’ expectations in having you stay with them, and yours in wanting to stay there. Watch out for a tendency to immediately criticize what is different from your own standards. You may find some things you have trouble accepting, but at least try to understand and interpret in terms of societal and cultural differences.

**May I have guests?**

If you are planning to have guests during your stay in Rennes, do not assume that they may stay with you in your family housing. In most cases it is preferable and most comfortable for everybody if friends and family stay in a hotel. If you would very much like for them to stay with you, please ask your host family in advance and be prepared to compensate them for the extra expenses.

Ask your host family upon arrival about bringing friends over, until what time they can stay, and if they permit friends of the opposite sex coming over. (This does not mean sleeping over, which is never permitted.) Don’t abuse their home by having a constant parade of friends come through. Always ask your host’s permission before bringing a friend over to eat dinner.

**What about meals?**

Breakfast and dinner, as well as all weekend meals, are provided by the host family and included in the program fee.

As in the United States, the time that meals are served and what is served varies from household to household. If you do not like a certain dish, you should not be afraid to say so. Families can be flexible and adapt meals to a certain extent to things you like. You cannot, however, expect them to rearrange their cooking for you nor can you expect them to purchase special items for you because of a special diet. You should receive healthy meals and portions. If this is not the case in your home, discuss it with the resident staff.

Contributing something occasionally towards a meal, such as fresh fruit or bread, is also something most host families greatly appreciate.

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<th>Participants say...</th>
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<tr>
<td>My home stay was the best part of the program for me because I loved my family and they really included me in daily life and helped with my language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My host family experience was excellent. I was a little worried before coming because I’d had bad host family experiences in the past, but everything was great - food, housing, family activities, etc.</td>
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**What if I follow a special diet?**

CIEE cannot guarantee that a home will provide a vegetarian, macrobiotic, or other special diet. If you have a medically certified diet, please notify CIEE immediately. The resident staff will make every effort to find a suitable situation.
Living with the French can be one of the most important parts of your learning experience in France. You have to adapt on a day-to-day basis to another culture, another mentality, another way of facing problems and making decisions. You will be exposed to other points of view and be closely involved with people from a different culture. We believe that if you are happy in your living situation, your studies will progress faster and your adjustment to living in Rennes will be easier. It will also add to your understanding of France and greatly enhance your overall experience.

Part II: Before You Leave Home

A LOT TO LEARN

Preparing for study abroad entails a lot more than just packing a suitcase. In fact, the thought and effort you put into preparing yourself will largely determine the success of the program you are embarking upon. At CIEE, we will do everything we can to provide you with the information you require prior to departure. But there is only so much we can do, and it is important for you to recognize your own responsibilities, which include:

- Thoroughly discussing your study and travel plans with your financial aid office, study abroad office, and academic advisor.
- Making any necessary arrangements for the following academic year, including housing, registration, and graduate school application. If you are a senior, be sure to make necessary arrangements for graduation.
- Reading all of the materials that CIEE has sent to you, including this handbook. Many of the questions that students ask are answered in this handbook.
- Doing additional reading about the region/country you will be visiting and the customs of the host culture. While you could not possibly be prepared for every new experience that awaits you, reading about the host country will give you a base of knowledge that will serve you well in the early weeks of the program. (Refer to the Reading List at the back of this handbook for required and recommended reading.)
- Arriving at the program site with an open mind, a sense of adventure, and a positive attitude toward what lies ahead.

In addition to these required steps, there is a lot more we recommend you do to inform yourself before you go.

Get a Good Guidebook

Past participants recommend that you purchase a good guidebook and read a lot of it before you go! Options include the “Lonely Planet” series, the “Let's Go”, and the “Real/Rough Guide” series. Insight guides provide good background and cultural information. Pay particular attention to sections on obtaining maps and other information from tourist offices, customs of the host country, currency exchange, telephoning home, safety, transportation, and general travel advice.

Tap Other Resources

Other good ways to learn about your new home:

- Check your college or university study abroad office for useful services and information.
- Seek out French-speaking people through cultural organizations, international student organizations, and French or European area studies departments or centers at your college or university.
- Surf the web. Many web sites, such as www.lonelyplanet.com, offer travel information, slide shows, and tips from other travelers.
- Check libraries for detailed information and keep yourself informed of current events through the news media.
- Consult the list of past program participants on the Program Dates, Details and Updates link. They have agreed to be contacted about their experience. Some of their comments are interspersed throughout this book.

Brush Up on Your French

It is a good idea to sharpen your French skills before departing. Listening to French tapes, watching films, reading newspapers, and talking to native speakers or fellow students are excellent ways to do this.

Frequently, students who have studied French for several years are surprised to find that they have difficulty understanding the language as spoken by native speakers. This is quite normal. In your foreign language class at home, you can unconsciously pick up your instructor's accent and other personal speech characteristics. However, this may not be possible once you go
abroad and are surrounded by native speakers. Don't worry; it gets easier.

**Check Travel Advisories**

The U.S. government issues travel advisories and consular information sheets for most countries. To receive updated information or advisories for other countries you may be traveling to, visit the US State Department website at [http://travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).

**Be Informed about Home**

It is important that you be well informed about your own country, region, and hometown. New friends and acquaintances in your host country will be just as curious about you as you are about them. Be prepared to discuss your home political system, culture, traditions, history, holidays, geography, and social structures.

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**Participants say...**

Plan for the return semester with your home university before leaving! I had all my courses pre-arranged, and just sent a confirmation and it was safe and easy.

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**ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS**

When preparing to travel and live abroad, it is essential that you obtain all the proper documents prior to your departure. CIEE cannot accept responsibility, financial or otherwise, for a student who travels without the proper documents.

**Passports**

Each participant is responsible for obtaining a passport prior to the start of the program, and in the case where a visa must be secured, prior to the visa application deadline. You must have a signed passport, valid for a minimum of six months after the date you enter France or for the duration of your program plus any travel, whichever is longer. If you do not have a passport, apply for one immediately as the process can take several months. CIEE highly recommends that you pay for expedited passport processing. If you already have a passport, be sure that it is valid for the required period.

U.S. citizens applying for their first passports must apply in person at a passport agency or at one of the several thousand federal or state courts or U.S. post offices authorized to accept passport applications.

Applicants should research the requirements through the US Department of State website at [http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html).

Generally, the only times you need to show your passport or other identification while in France is when cashing traveler’s checks and when registering at hotels while traveling. Many students have the Resident Director or the Assistant make a photocopy of the passport in case of loss or theft.

**Tip: Take a lost passport kit**

It happens. So save yourself a major headache. Take with you two U.S.-produced passport photos, a certified copy of your birth certificate (which you can shrink to wallet size), and the face page of your passport. Keep this “lost passport kit” separate from your actual passport. Also leave one copy of the passport face page with your parents or guardian and give another copy to CIEE staff in Rennes.

**Visas**

A visa is an endorsement or stamp placed in your passport by a foreign government allowing you to enter and stay in that country for a specified period of time. All participants in the Rennes program need a French student visa. Please refer to the detailed instructions in your online checklist accessed via MY CIEE. We urge you to begin the visa process as soon as possible as it is an involved process. The application typically takes several months. Once you obtain the visa, make a photocopy of it and put this with the “lost passport kit.” The CIEE fee does not cover the cost of the visa.

**Trap: Applying from outside the U.S.**

A U.S. student applying for a visa from outside of the U.S. may not be able to obtain one. Please check with the appropriate consulate.

**Birth Certificate:** You must also have a birth certificate in order to register your residency in France.

**Documents for non-U.S. Citizens**

If you are not a U.S. citizen, check with your consulate for regulations regarding your stay in France and reentry into the United States. As visa procedures may vary, you should also
check with the French consulate that has jurisdiction over your place of residence immediately for their specific visa procedures. Failure to do this may result in your being refused permission to enter the country or not even being allowed to board the aircraft at the point of departure. Also, you should call the nearest district office of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for information on the documents necessary for you to leave and re-enter the U.S.

Before departure from the United States, non-U.S. citizens must also obtain a Certificate of Compliance (often referred to as a Tax Clearance or a Sailing Permit) from the local Internal Revenue Service (IRS) office. This will certify that you do not owe taxes to the U.S. government. Contact your local IRS office for information on documents required to procure this permit.

**Immunization Records**

No vaccinations are required for U.S. citizens to enter France from the United States. If you intend to enter other countries where immunizations are required, you must present a record of vaccinations. The most widely recognized document for this purpose is the yellow World Health Organization booklet, International Certificates of Vaccination, which is available from most doctors and health centers.

**HEALTH**

**What health-related steps should I take before I leave?**

You are required to complete a medical report in order to participate in the program; please be sure it indicates any allergies you have, in particular to medications. This information is confidential and has no bearing on your participation in the program. If you have a chronic illness that needs medical attention, have your doctor write a clinical report that can be given to a specialist in France if necessary. In addition, we strongly urge you to have a complete physical and dental checkup before departing. Any required dental work should be done at home. Women should also have a checkup by a gynecologist.

No vaccinations are required to enter France unless you are a citizen of, or arriving from, one of a number of less-developed countries or sites of disease outbreak. However, the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) recommends that you be current on your tetanus-diphtheria booster and that you get immune globulin (IG) inoculations (formerly gamma globulin) to prevent hepatitis A. You may also wish to get a flu shot.

The CDC recommends that all travelers also have updated vaccinations for polio, measles, mumps, and rubella.

**What medical supplies should I take with me?**

If you take prescription drugs, take a sufficient supply with you for your time abroad. (Be sure to take these in their original packages and with the original prescriptions.) Students who wear glasses or contact lenses should be sure to take an extra pair as well as a copy of their prescription. If you have a prescription for oral contraceptives, please take an adequate supply with you.

Be prepared for the common cold and for stomach and intestinal disorders often caused by changes in diet and drinking water. It might be wise to take along small amounts of medications in case these problems arise; your doctor may suggest which drugs to consider. Remember, however, to be careful about treating yourself, and be sure to seek professional help when necessary. Many over-the-counter medicines are available, but can be more expensive in France than they are in the United States.

**What other precautions should I take?**

Inform the resident staff of any existing health problems, including mental health, or any potential problems you anticipate arising throughout the course of the program. This includes allergies to any medications. CIEE staff will use this information to ensure that appropriate accommodations are made. Please inform the resident staff if you become ill during the program.

**HIV/AIDS:** The HIV virus is now pandemic, meaning it is present everywhere, including Europe. Take the appropriate precautions. Should you need an injection while in France, make sure the needle comes sealed in a special package and is torn open in front of you. This is normally done in the clinics you would go to in France.

If you need information or contraceptives while abroad, contact a doctor or the local equivalent of Planned Parenthood.

**Smoking:** As of January 1, 2008, smoking is banned in all public places in France. However; smoking remains more common in France than in the United States. If you are allergic to or easily bothered by smoke, be aware that it will be more difficult to avoid in France than it is in the United States.
CDC Recommendations: If you plan to travel after the program to other countries, you may want to consult the CDC information specific to these countries. The CDC website is www.cdc.gov.

INSURANCE

If you are covered by a personal or parental insurance plan, CIEE recommends that you continue this coverage while abroad. Prior to departure, you should contact your current insurance carrier concerning coverage for accidents, illnesses, and liability cases that occur outside the United States. Check your policy’s limitations before making any assumptions about coverage. Most U.S. based insurance companies will not cover property lost or stolen overseas.

Accident and Sickness Insurance

Each participant is covered by the iNext Platinum Plan designed to help cover the cost of unforeseen illnesses or accidents that occur while abroad. Additionally, the policy offers Emergency Medical Evacuation coverage, together with 24-hour Emergency Assistance Services. The policy also offers coverage for travel document replacement and limited travel delay and lost/stolen personal effects coverage. Coverage begins two weeks before the program start date and continues for 364 days.

A complete description of the iNext Platinum Plan is in the online checklist accessed via MY CIEE. It is important that you read the plan carefully and note exactly what coverage it provides, and note items that are excluded from coverage.

The iNext Insurance is designed as a supplemental or secondary plan only, and does not cover liability. It also does not include routine physical, dental examinations or preventive medicine. Students are not covered for injuries resulting from acts of war or other political unrest such as riots and demonstrations.

Please note that CIEE does not cover medical expenses on-site. Students pay for any medical costs incurred and then file a claim directly with the insurance company for reimbursement. CIEE does not act as an intermediary between participants and the insurance company.

PERSONAL FINANCES

Cost of Living

The exchange rate is not constant. The New York Times and similar publications publish exchange rates daily. You may also reference www.x-rates.com or www.oanda.com for up to the minute exchange rates. You should keep abreast of how a rate fluctuates leading up to departure.

What costs are covered by my CIEE fee?

CIEE Study Center fees include pre-departure information and services, on-site support services, tuition, orientation, cultural activities, local excursions and field trips, and sickness insurance. The cost of housing and meals is also included in the Rennes program. CIEE does not cover local transportation to and from your classes at the university, nor does it cover the cost of any textbooks or the train from Rennes to Paris at the end of the program.

What expenses should I budget for?

You will need money for entertainment, toiletries, cosmetics, gifts, local transportation (including a daily commute), school supplies, and independent travel. The cost of meals is included in the program fee, but you will probably want to eat out from time to time.

Average Student Expenses

Besides inflation and currency exchange, another variable that will affect your spending abroad is your individual taste requirements. When creating a budget, it may be helpful to consider how much you normally spend in a semester and inflate it a bit. Although the cost of living for a student in France is comparable to that of a student in the United States, the added cost of independent travel along with the impulse to splurge makes careful budgeting imperative. Former students have saved considerably through limiting meals to those provided by the program and limiting vacation travel to the general area around Rennes. We suggest you take extra money, if possible, for unforeseeable expenses. Please consult the CIEE Europe catalog or website for a list of estimated expenses.

PACKING AND BAGGAGE

Try to organize and pack a day or two prior to departure so that you can judge if you will be able to carry your bags (you must be able to do this). Some students have even practiced by carrying their bags around the block! Also, by
packing early you will have time to rest before the long trip.

Consider using a backpack or duffel bag, especially if you are planning to travel on your own upon completion of the program; suitcases can be quite heavy even when empty. A knapsack or flight bag is great for carry-on luggage and for field trips. Keep your essential medication, toiletries, and documents in your carry-on bag so you will have it in the event luggage is lost or delayed in transit. Please be sure to check with your airline regarding possible carry-on restrictions. If possible, lock your luggage.

What are the baggage limits?

Limits vary. Read the weight limitation and baggage allowance information provided by your international airline carrier. Generally flights overseas permit one piece of checked baggage and one carry-on piece. If your baggage exceeds any of your airline’s standards you may be charged for excess baggage. Please, check with your airline regarding any items that are oversized.

What should I pack?

For a complete list of what to take, please see the Suggested Packing Checklist at the end of this handbook. Experienced travelers agree: take as little as possible.

Climate and clothing: Since you are limited in the amount of baggage you can take, choose each item carefully. Take clothes that will suit many types of occasions and avoid duplications. You will not need much variety: European students do not vary their dress much from day to day. There is no need for a large wardrobe. Also, note that space for storing your clothing will be limited. Remember that nothing ruins traveling abroad more than having too much luggage.

It rains often and without warning in Brittany, so you will need a sturdy umbrella, a rain poncho, and a pair of waterproof shoes. Daytime high temperature averages are fall 66°F, winter 40°F, spring 60°F. Evenings are cooler. Inside temperatures tend to be cool as well. There is very little snow, but there is a chilling dampness in the air and it can stay quite chilly through the end of April.

Plan your wardrobe in layers so you can put on or take off as the weather changes from a cold winter to a cool spring. Take warm, versatile clothing that needs no ironing and that travels well.

Participants say...

Pack as if you were coming for 2 weeks. It will make your life so much easier through the whole year, and honestly nobody cares if you wear the same shirt three times a week.

Jewelry: Do not take expensive or elaborate jewelry with you to France. Not only is there a very good possibility of loss or theft but fine jewelry is rarely appropriate.

Toiletries: For both men and women, most common toiletries are readily available in Rennes. Bring your own supply only if you are particular about a brand that you use.

Linens: You will not need to provide linens. However, you will need to pack towels for time at the hostel in Paris as well as for overnight excursions.

Electrical Appliances: Electrical current in France, as in nearly all of Europe, is 220 volts, 50 cycle AC (hertz). Electric converters and adaptors must be used to connect North American equipment. Travel supply shops and some hardware stores in the U.S. carry them. Although converters and adaptors are available in France, it will be easier and less expensive to buy them before you go.

If you are buying any new electric items to bring with you, try to get dual-voltage models so you will not need a converter at all—though you will still need the adapter plug. The French plug is a standard European plug with two round prongs. Most laptops have a built in voltage converter—check your manufacturer if you are not sure. You will still need an adapter if you choose to bring your laptop.

Laptop: A laptop is not required, but if you do have one, you will find it very handy to have with you.

As mentioned above, if you plan to take a laptop, be sure you have the appropriate electrical adapter. Additionally, we recommend that any students taking a laptop consider installing security/theft recovery software. One example of this software is Computrace LoJack for laptops, made by Absolute software.

Prescriptions: If you take prescription drugs, ask your doctor to give you a copy of the prescription with the name of the generic drug, not a brand name, in case you lose your prescription and need to get a new one, as your brand may not be available in France. Remember that it’s always best to plan to have enough of your med-
ications with you to last through your stay abroad as not all medication is available in France.

Mementos from home: Bring things from home that you can share with your French family and friends. This includes pictures of yourself and your family in the U.S., recipes you like to cook, typical items from your community, college, or region of the U.S., and items related to talents you might have and wish to share.

Gifts: While not expected, it is nice to bring gifts for your host family. Bring various small generic gifts such as picture books of the United States, or memorabilia from your university and hometown. You will not be placed with a specific family until your arrival so plan to bring general gifts that highlight your hometown or home state. Later, once you know your host family better, you can call home and request that your family or friends send specific items that you know your host family will enjoy. Keep in mind that parcels will incur a duty and it is not advisable to send large parcels or expensive items in the mail.

PREPARING FOR CULTURAL ADAPTATION

Although cultural adaptation is highly individual, research indicates that most people go through similar stages in adapting to a new environment. Any travel you’ve done abroad, and perhaps even within your own country, has exposed you to culture shock. But if you’ve never had to overcome culture shock, you might want to read about it before you depart. You will find books relating to cultural adaptation and culture shock on the recommended reading list at the back of this handbook.

During your on-site orientation, the resident staff will discuss details about culture shock and give strategies for adapting to your new surroundings. Near the end of the program, they will also provide information on reverse culture shock and suggest ways of coping with returning home.

Part III: Living in Rennes

Sometimes living in a university environment abroad makes it easy to forget you’re not home. Remember, you are in another country with its own laws and customs, and they are different from the ones you’re used to. Be aware of this and conduct yourself accordingly. Also, be sure to attend classes regularly and participate in program activities.

The orientation described in Part I will also cover practical aspects of living in a new place, French laws, proper social conduct, and cultural differences, including race, gender and class.

Meeting the French

Just as it is impossible to define a typical American, it is equally impossible to define a typical French person. You will meet many types of people in France who have different opinions, attitudes, and habits. The more you interact with French people, the better chance you will have of forming relationships and understanding the culture. During these interactions, use common sense, intelligence and a sense of objectivity. Be prepared to discuss your views freely and openly, and try to listen with an open mind.

You may arrive in France with some preconceptions about the French and may encounter some with preconceptions about people from the U.S. Try to put aside stereotypes and make judgments based on real experiences. If you are confronted with what you feel is a false stereotype about the U.S., be frank and truthful, yet tactful in your response. Avoid refuting arguments with odious comparisons to France. This type of response will only create bad feelings. A positive and serious response from you will help dispel myths about the United States.

The French tend to be more aggressive in their dealings with each other in public situations — in stores, in traffic, at the University. As it is easy to be initially intimidated by this forwardness, you will need to adapt, and in some instances become more assertive in certain situations.

Some past participants report feeling anxious over miscommunications both as a result of the language barrier and as a result of cultural differences. Some found that the French misconstrued or failed to respond to their communications or jokes. Some had difficulty joining into conversations going on around them.

Remain as objective as possible when reflecting on these encounters, especially in the beginning. Eventually, you will begin to feel more connected to the people, their views, and their language.

Many French people want to talk and share views with Americans and each other on such current topics as the environment, politics, racial problems, etc. They are also curious to know American impressions of French people, customs, food, government, student life in Rennes, etc.
Cafés in the *Restaurants Universitaires* are also good places to meet French students, and the price of a coffee is lower than in cafés in town.

Lastly, don’t overlook the benefits of getting to know other international students on campus. It is a great way to practice French and get to know people from other cultures.

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<tr>
<th>Participants say...</th>
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<td>Discipline yourself and speak the language all the time—even with other Americans. Be willing to try lots of new things, and to be removed from communication with the U.S.</td>
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**Special Note to Women**

The French often do not understand that the U.S.-style familiar manner with strangers is merely a gesture of friendliness. Smiling at men or making direct eye contact with strangers may be considered flirtatious. Outgoing behavior may be misconstrued as romantic interest.

**Special Note to Minorities**

Students who are members of ethnic minorities, students with disabilities, gay and lesbian students, or overweight students may face particular difficulties in the study abroad setting. France is increasingly multi-ethnic and heterogeneous, but this doesn’t mean that ethnic stereotypes, racism or other kinds of prejudice don’t come into play. The resident staff is sensitive to these issues and will provide as much information and support as possible.

**SAFETY PRECAUTIONS**

The health and safety of program participants abroad is understandably an important issue for all concerned. CIEE was a founding member of the Inter-Organization Task Force on Safety and Responsibility in Study Abroad. The following website contains information about the Task Force and study abroad safety issues –

http://www.nafsa.org/knowledge_community_network.sec/education_abroad_1/developing_and_managing_practice_resources_36/policies/guidelines_for_health

CIEE’s approach to safety is fourfold. First, we conduct a careful safety evaluation of every program we run. Next we provide comprehensive and realistic information to prospective applicants so that they may make informed decisions as to participation. Then, when the students arrive on site, we conduct a thorough orientation that includes tips on reducing risk and handling difficult situations should they arise. Finally, program staff continuously monitors local conditions in order to provide guidance to participants throughout their stay.

**What can I do to be safe?**

Experience has shown that the single most important factor in assuring a safe study abroad experience is the sensible and cautious behavior of the participants themselves. When traveling abroad, you should exercise additional caution until you become familiar with your new surroundings. Always remain alert to what is going on around you, especially in crowded tourist areas and on public transportation.

Although Rennes is safer than Paris, you must be careful about what you do and where you go, just as you would in any major city in the world. Follow these general rules:

- Tourists are common targets for pickpockets. Be aware of your backpacks and camera especially on crowded buses. Don’t carry large amounts of cash or your passport with you. Never leave belongings in a parked car.
- Keep a suitcase that can be locked under your bed and leave your money, passport, camera, and other valuables secured in it or in the hotel safe.
- When you carry your passport, wear it around your neck in a thin pouch inside your shirt. If you must carry it in a bag, use one that can be slung diagonally across your chest and that has a sturdy strap that cannot be easily ripped.
- Never carry valuables in the pockets of your pants.
- At night, don’t take shortcuts. Take a cab or walk on main streets.
- Do not accept rides with anybody you do not know.
- As noted earlier, keep a photocopy of your passport in a separate place. This will speed up the process of replacing your documents should they be lost or stolen.
- Be especially cautious in areas frequented by tourists, such as airports, train stations, museums, and U.S.-style restaurants such as McDonald’s.
- Be aware of the heating situation provided by your host institution and host residence. For locations where carbon monoxide producing appliances may be present – i.e., any appliance that burns fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal – detailed information on the possible dangers associated with such appliances, along with safe operating instructions, will be provided in the on-site program orientation. For further information, please visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website at www.epa.gov. You may wish to take a small battery-operated carbon monoxide detector to have in your housing.

**E-mail**

You will receive your e-mail address from the university approximately 10 days after arrival in Rennes.

There are numerous computer labs at Rennes II for student use. You will be given more information about location and operating hours upon arrival in Rennes.

Part of your cultural adjustment in France will be linked to your access to modern conveniences such as internet access and e-mail. These modes of communication are available in France, but French students generally have less access to them than their American counterparts.

**Laptops**

Many students choose to bring a laptop. Please note that many insurance policies will not cover a laptop overseas. Bringing a laptop to France does bring with it some risk as computers, if stolen, are more expensive and much harder to replace than a camera, for example. Additionally, you should be aware that there are differences between electrical currents (in France it is 220 volts; in the U.S. it is 110 volts), 50 hertz (and not 60 as in the US), and modem speeds.

There is also some incompatibility with modems and the internet cafes and University will not allow you to hook up your laptop in their facilities. The University provides computer labs to the students throughout the day and evening. There are also many internet cafes throughout Rennes. The Rennes II campus has WiFi access as do a number of cafés in the city center. It is recommended to have an Ethernet controller 802.11 a/g/b.

**Post Office and Mailing Procedures**

Mail service in France is similar to that in the United States. First class letters between the two countries arrive within a week, but surface parcels may take as long as 2 months. Parcels sometimes get lost in transit or face high import duties so mailing expensive items is not advisable.

**COMUNICATIONS AND MAIL**

**Telephone**

There are fewer and fewer public telephones in France, and those that do exist generally do not take coins but rather use a card system. You can buy these télécartes at a post office or newsstand. It is no longer possible to make collect calls in France.

You may place calls to the US from a public phone using a pre-paid phone card. In France, you cannot make a collect call from a private home. Rates to the U.S. are much more expensive than U.S. rates to France. Calling cards are very handy.

A growing trend for participants is to buy a cell phone once they arrive on site. During orientation the Resident Staff will be going over this procedure with you.

If you already have a tri-band phone, you may choose to take it with you and purchase a French sim card.

**Time Zone Note:** Remind your callers that all of France lies in one time zone, which is 6 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. When it is 6 p.m. in New York, it is midnight in Rennes.

**Tip: Short phone calls**

Phone service in France is expensive so the telephone is used only for brief messages or for emergencies. Please be considerate, and limit your time on the phone.

**Trap: Letting down your guard**

When visiting a foreign country, you may well be enchanted by your surroundings and engage in behavior that is not typical of you. This may cause you to let your guard down and be susceptible to crime. Practice common sense and exercise good judgment. Note that you are more likely to be a victim of crime if you are drinking alcohol.
While we do not recommend having large packages sent to you, if you do take a chance, have them sent parcel post with a full description of the contents written on the outside of the package along with the words "Unsolicited Gifts" or "Used Personal Effects". Mailing a computer costs at least $100 in duty fees. In general we wouldn’t suggest mailing electronics. **We do not recommend using U.P.S. for sending packages to and from Rennes.**

**Program Mailing Address**
(Your Name) Council/CIREFE
Université Rennes II
Place du Recteur Henri Le Moal
CS24307
35043 Rennes, CEDEX
France
Tel: 011-33-2-99-14-13-07
Fax: 011-33-2-99-14-13-10

**MONEY AND BANKING**

**Money**
The currency of France and much of the European Union is the Euro broken down into 100 cents.

You have several options for getting money in Rennes. Past participants recommend that you come with two or three ways to obtain money so that, in the event that one method fails or is inconvenient, you will have a back-up option. Most students recommend planning to use credit and debit cards and having traveler’s checks as a backup in case your cards are stolen.

**Bank Cards & Credit Cards**
Bring a credit card. Visa, American Express, and MasterCard are widely recognized. They're great for emergencies and, with a pin number you can withdraw money from ATMs. Cash advances cost less from ATMs than those made at banks or exchange offices. Pay off these cash advances quickly though, as the service charge and interest rates are high.

Note, however, that the French use Debit and Credit cards for purchases far less than Americans. While some larger stores may accept a card, expect to use cash for your day to day purchases.

Be sure to let your bank know before you travel that you plan to use your card in France.

**Participants say...**
Use an ATM card to get money regularly but have a credit card and some traveler’s checks for emergencies.

Have most of your money in a checking account that you can access with an ATM card. Also have credit cards and some American dollars for emergencies or in case there is a problem with the ATM card or machines, which does happen more often than you might think.

Make sure you bring as many options as you possibly can: traveler’s checks, credit card, and ATM.

**Trap: PIN numbers**
For both credit cards and bank cards, inquire with the issuer to verify that the card is valid for an international banking system. And memorize your PIN in numbers not letters; foreign keypads are often configured differently.

Most past participants have had no trouble accessing checking accounts at their home bank using an ATM card. Double check with your bank before you leave to make sure you have the type of account that will allow you to do this and to check regarding fees. Past participants have noted that it is best to withdraw as rarely as possible and budget the money withdrawn in order to keep service charges down. Your card should have a Visa or MasterCard symbol on it. Note that both the Cirrus and Plus system (ATM Cards) are accepted, but Cirrus tends to be more widespread. Remember that it is not possible to get balance information when using foreign ATM's so it is important to track your finances carefully if you choose this option to handle your money. You should also be aware that when outside of the country you may not be able to access your savings account, only your checking account.

Academic Year students may wish to open up a bank account; information regarding which banks give good rates is distributed during orientation. For semester students it is recommended to use ATM cards and Traveler’s Checks.

**MEDICAL FACILITIES**
Rennes boasts excellent medical and hospital care. If you need attention, inform the Resident Director or Student Services Coordinator who will help locate a doctor.
GETTING AROUND
Consider buying a secondhand bike for use during your stay in Rennes; you can sell it at the end of your stay.

Buses
Buses run every 15 minutes. You can buy a carnet, a book of ten tickets or a monthly pass. A French student monitor will show you how to buy a carnet and help you find the best bus route from your home to classes. Currently a monthly bus/metro pass costs approximately 30 €. Note that students will need to use public transportation on a daily basis to get to and from class.

Subway
Rennes is one of the smallest cities in the world with a subway system. The tickets for the bus system also work on the metro (VAL). With a stop near the UHB, most students will find that the VAL is the fastest and easiest way to school. A combination ticket (bus + VAL) will be available and explained during orientation.

Independent Travel
You will no doubt want to explore this city, particularly on weekends; however, you must remain in Rennes during all regular academic sessions. You can plan longer vacations on university holidays exploring other regions of France.

Before leaving the U.S., gather as much information as possible about places you may want to visit. Of course, this may require additional funds. The National Tourism Board of France and other sources such as the various Michelin guides and the Lonely Planet series may offer helpful information.

Tip: Wherever you go...
You must inform the Resident Director and your host family of any travel involving an overnight stay outside Rennes. Failure to do this may result in your dismissal from the program.

Modes of Travel for Long Distance
There are a variety of means of transportation that students may use in order to travel independently. You will be given more information during orientation but here is some general information.

Car Rentals
Students under the age of 23 are prohibited from renting cars in France. Public transportation is inexpensive and will get you anywhere that you want to go.

Participants are not permitted to rent cars or drive in Europe while the program is in session, and CIEE cannot accept responsibility for students who choose to do so.

Trains
Certainly one of the easiest ways to get around Europe is by train. You can buy Billet BIGE/Transalpino tickets through the CROUS office as already mentioned or you may wish to buy a flexible Eurail pass. Note that a Eurail pass is expensive and is typically only worth the cost if you plan to do a significant amount of travel by train.

Hostels
Many hostels are not considered official and therefore do not require Hostelling International Membership Cards. Many are listed in travel books and offer comfortable and clean accommodations. For information on Hostelling International, see www.hiusa.org.

VOTING WHILE ABROAD
U.S. citizens who expect to be away from home on Election Day may request absentee ballots in person or by mail from their local election offices. Procedures vary by state but are usually quite simple if you have already registered to vote.

If you have not arranged this before leaving home, you may use the provisions of the Overseas Voting Rights Act of 1975, which requires states to establish a means for citizens residing overseas to apply for voter registration. Some states permit you to use an FPCA (Federal Post Card Application) to register. Others use an SF76, which serves as both an application for registration and as an absentee ballot. You can get a list of states’ voting requirements from a U.S. Embassy or consular office.

Tip: Notarize your ballot
FPCA forms used to register or obtain a ballot must be notarized. If you believe you have been wrongfully denied the right to vote, you may write to the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Washington, D.C. 20530.
INCOME TAX

Most U.S. citizens and residents must file U.S. income tax returns even if their earned income is exempt from taxes. State requirements vary; call or write to the appropriate state office.

Internal Revenue Service income tax information and forms are available at U.S. Embassies and Consulates. Since tax laws change from year to year, direct any questions to the U.S. Consulate. Non-U.S. citizens should contact the appropriate authorities in their own countries for taxation information.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In case of an emergency, parents or family can reach you by calling CIEE.

Contact information for the CIEE home office will be included in the final details email to both you and the emergency contact designated in your application materials.

Part IV: Policies and Procedures

Please click on the following link to view CIEE’s Policies and Procedures: http://ciee.org/study/terms.aspx.

This website includes:

General Policies
- Admissions
- Late Arrival and Early Departure
- Exceptions
- Drug and Alcohol Violations
- Alcohol Policy
- Dismissal from the Program

Academic Policies
- Student Academic Orientation
- Course Loads, Credits, Equivalencies and Grades
- Academic Records
- Attendance
- Pass/Fail and Audit
- Drop/Add Period
- Incompletes
- Withdrawal from a Course
- Academic Honesty
- Appeals

Program Fees and Payment Policies
- Confirmation of Participation
- Payment of CIEE Program Fees
- Due Dates, Late Fees and Interest
- Exclusion from Participation
- Late Fees and Interest

Withdrawal and Deferral Policy

Program Cancellation

Please make sure to review this website. Your signature on the “Program Participant Contract” indicates that you have read and agree to comply with all of the policies provided to you on that website.

A NOTE FROM CIEE

Credits and Grades

Most students who choose to go abroad for a term or a year report that the experience is one of the most powerful and enjoyable parts of their undergraduate education. We hope that when you return home, you will have had an equally memorable experience.

Many students report that study abroad is also challenging, and that coming to terms with the challenges is one of the things that make it so powerful and memorable. Some students, however, report that the challenges of dealing with another country’s academic culture are sometimes more frustrating than enjoyable.

The academic programs that CIEE provides are to varying degrees integrated into another culture’s academic framework, and are often governed by rules that are unfamiliar to U.S. students. At CIEE we want you to experience the challenges of adapting to a new culture, of accepting different teaching styles, and embracing forms of learning that may be different from what you are used to.

But we are sure you will agree that problems associated with your credits and your grades should be avoided—that these should not turn out to be “opportunities for growth.” We want to help you avoid these problems, and with some careful planning and attention to detail, you can:

1. Managing Your Registration.

You are probably going to sign up for five classes during your session overseas. Although it’s surprising, one problem faced by some students when they return home is that the Course Registration Record we have for them doesn’t match what the student actually took. You can avoid this. Read on.

Make it your responsibility to keep your Course Registration Record accurate and up to date.

Students select a preliminary course schedule, either in the U.S. before going abroad or after arrival at the Center. The courses selected con-
stitute your Preliminary Registration, which will be sent to your home or sending school. There will be an opportunity to change courses during the first days of the regular semester (the “drop-add” period). Once this add-drop period ends, all courses for which you are registered will remain final, and will be permanently listed on your Course Registration Record. These will be the courses that will appear on the credit and grades report that we will send to your home or sending school after the session ends (called the “CIEE Academic Record”).

Although CIEE staff, both in the U.S. and at your site, will make every effort to ensure that your Course Registration Record is accurate, we cannot do this unless you correctly follow all the formal procedures for making changes. **You must fill out a form to drop or add a course.** It is not sufficient to tell your professor, the CIEE Resident Director, or another staff person that you are changing courses—you must complete all required paperwork or the change is not official. In some cases you will also be required to obtain permission from your home institution.

To sum up, **make it your responsibility** to ensure that your Course Registration Record is accurate. If at any time you are not sure, ask to see a copy of it.

**There’s a difference between DROPPING a course and WITHDRAWING from one.**

As noted above, once the drop-add period is over, all the courses for which you are registered will remain permanently on your record. However, if you realize, **after the end of the drop-add period but before the middle of the session,** that special circumstances will prevent you from completing a course successfully, it may be possible to “Withdraw” from the course. Please also be aware that it is not possible to add a course after the add-drop period. If you do withdraw from a course, it will remain on your CIEE Academic Record with a “W” grade. Permission to Withdraw from a course is not automatically granted just because a student is not doing well; it is only granted when there are circumstances that the Resident Director believes prevented a student from doing well, and only before the program’s withdrawal deadline. There is also required paperwork to complete if you are withdrawing from a course.

After the withdrawal deadline, all courses that remain on your Course Registration Record will be posted on your CIEE Academic Record with a letter grade. If you stop going to a course, fail to take the final examination, or fail to turn in required coursework, you will receive an F.

2. Getting Good Grades.

The time to think about your grades is at the beginning of each course, not at the end.

Make sure you understand the basis on which the professor will be assessing your work. Practices vary from country to country. Often a single final paper or examination will be the most important (perhaps the only) opportunity to demonstrate what you have learned and/or achieved in the course. In some courses, the basis for grades may have been explained during orientation or during the registration process. An explanation may appear on the course syllabus, and/or the professor may announce grading policies. In some cases, you may not be sure how the professor will be calculating the grade. In this case as well, **make it your responsibility to be sure you understand the basis for grading in each course.** If you’re not sure, ask the professor or the Resident Director.

**How am I doing?**

Although grading differs from country to country, there are general guidelines that we can offer.

In the U.S., a student usually forms an idea of how he/she is doing as the semester progresses based on a self-appraisal of participation in class and a general sense of what the professor cares about. In most overseas situations, it is much more difficult, and often not possible at all, for a student to determine this. Although we ask our teachers to give students ongoing feedback, their own academic cultures are often very different in this regard, and many teachers do not always offer feedback in a way that enables a student to form a reliable opinion of his/her progress. We strongly recommend that you ask your professor how he/she is doing, perhaps two weeks after the semester has started and again two or three times during the session. Don’t wait until mid-term time to do this.

“Demanding” doesn’t mean the same thing in most overseas academic cultures.

U.S. students are accustomed to forming an idea of how demanding a teacher is based on the pressure that is applied on a day-to-day basis. In the U.S., if a professor repeatedly challenges students to show they have read and understood the assignments, and then chastises those who can’t answer, students will conclude that this is a demanding teacher. This doesn’t always happen overseas. “Demanding” in an overseas context may mean simply that the grades awarded at the end of the course are lower than those awarded by other professors.
Because of these differences, you need to take stock of your situation early and often. If the regular clues are not present, you should ask, “How am I doing?” If there isn’t yet any basis for the professor to answer that question, you should ask, “What is important in this class? What should I be doing in order to succeed?” Make it your responsibility to actively seek confirmation of how well you are doing in each course.

All the CIEE staff, both in the U.S. and at your program site, want you to have an enjoyable and successful session overseas. We are committed to offering top-quality assistance to help you understand the host culture and its constraints. Please do not hesitate to contact any staff member if we can advise you on how best to manage your overseas experience.

Have a great year, learn all that you can about your temporary home, and try to bring back an excellent and accurate academic record.

**CONCLUSION: THE CHALLENGE IS UP TO YOU**

Your stay abroad may be one of the most vital and rewarding times of your life. Don’t worry about what you are going to miss at school by going overseas. You will learn so much abroad! The people you meet and the situations you experience may be invaluable in the years to come.

We hope you will arrive prepared to adjust to a way of living that is different from your own; to a way of thinking that may be, in some cases, more traditional, more conventional, and more conservative than your own. You will also most likely encounter new and different views about the U.S. and its people. Take the opportunity to learn from these and to clarify misconceptions about the U.S. when you can.

Remember that each person you meet will see you as a representative of the United States. If you can accept differences cheerfully and with an open mind rather than attempting to alter the environment around you, you can contribute to a positive relationship between the country and the United States.

*CIEE wishes you every success during the coming months.*

**Participants say...**

Overall my experience abroad is something that I would not trade for anything. Being abroad gave me the opportunity to push myself beyond my comfort zone thus increasing my abilities to deal with more confidence. My only advice to those coming abroad is to constantly push yourself. Venture out on your own and don’t let your fears deprive you of the opportunity to try something new.
Part V: Additional Resources

SUGGESTED READING LIST

We urge you to read several of these publications to expand your knowledge of France and ease your adjustment to French culture. Many of these books can be purchased at your local bookstore or may be available for reference at your campus study abroad office or local library.

Books on French Culture

- Nadeau, Jean-Benoit; Barlow, Julie. *60 Million Frenchmen can't be wrong: why we love France but not the French*. Sourcebooks Inc., May 2003.

Books On Cultural Adaptation

Adaptation to a new culture can be difficult. The following reading list contains publications that deal specifically with issues of culture shock and the difficulties associated with living overseas. Many of these books can be purchased at your local bookstore or may be available for reference at your campus study abroad office or local library.

- Pearson, Mark and Westerman, Martin, ed. *Europe from a Backpack: Real Stories from Young Travelers Abroad*, 2004
**WEBSITES**

We also encourage you to look at the many sites on France and Rennes including the following:

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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.ciee.org">www.ciee.org</a></td>
<td>CIEE's website. If you haven't already, take a look and find out about other CIEE activities around the world.</td>
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SUGGESTED PACKING CHECKLIST

Naturally you will want to pack what best reflects your own lifestyle and taste, but CIEE recommends the following items. Please note that many of the optional items depend on your travel plans outside of the program. Additionally, many of these items can be purchased once you are in France.

Important Documents

☐ Airline ticket (including return ticket)
☐ Printed copy of the “Final Details” email (sent to you 3-4 weeks prior to departure)
☐ Credit card/ATM card with pin number
☐ Home Advisor's (both academic and study abroad) address, fax, e-mail
☐ Passport and visa with photocopies (keep copies separate from original) & extra photos
☐ Birth Certificate

Clothing

☐ Bras
☐ Pajamas
☐ Pants (one pair should be dress)
☐ Robe
☐ Shirts
☐ Shoes (including a dress pair)
☐ Shower sandals
☐ Skirts or dresses (one should be dressy) and pantyhose/stockings if needed
☐ Sneakers
☐ Socks
☐ Sports coat/blazer and tie
☐ Sweaters/sweatshirts
☐ Swim suit
☐ Underwear
☐ Walking boots: sturdy, water resistant
☐ Winter coat/gloves/hat/scarf

General

☐ Address book, including e-mail
☐ Backpack/Overnight bag for traveling
☐ Batteries
☐ Camera, film/memory cards/battery
☐ Contraceptives
☐ Flashlight
☐ French grammar book and pocket dictionary
☐ Gifts from home
☐ Glasses or contact lenses, extra pair, prescription
☐ Guidebook
☐ Gynecological supplies
☐ Laptop (optional) with electrical adapter and security/theft recovery software
☐ Medication you are taking and a copy of the prescriptions generic names
☐ Medicine kit, small: antacid/anti-diarrhea medicine/aspirin/band-aids/cold medicine
☐ Money belt/neck pouch
☐ Music/MP3 player
☐ Pictures of your home, family, university and region
☐ Reading material: books, magazines
☐ Sunglasses
☐ Toiletries and personal items
☐ Travel alarm clock
☐ Washcloth, towel and beach towel
☐ Umbrella (It rains frequently)