France, Montpellier SupAgro – Spring 2015
IAP Program Handbook

The France, Montpellier SupAgro program is offered by International Academic Programs (IAP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in conjunction with the Montpellier SupAgro: Centre International d’Etudes Superieures en Sciences Agronomique de Montpellier. This IAP Program Handbook supplements handbook(s) or materials you receive SupAgro as well as the IAP Study Abroad Handbook and provides you with the most up-to-date information and advice available at the time of publishing. Changes may occur before your departure or while you are abroad.

Questions about your program abroad (housing options, facilities abroad, etc.) as well as questions relating to your relationship with your host university or academics (e.g. course credit and equivalents, registration deadlines, etc.) should be directed to International Academic Programs at UW-Madison.

This program handbook contains the following information:

Contact Information ......................................................................................................................... 1
Preparation Before Leaving ............................................................................................................... 2
Travel and Arrival Information ......................................................................................................... 4
The Academic Program ..................................................................................................................... 4
Living Abroad .................................................................................................................................. 6

Contact Information

On-Site Program Information
Daniele MORNET
International Relations Office
Montpellier SupAgro
2, place Pierre Viala
34060 MONTPELLIER Cedex 01
E-mail: <mornet@supagro.inra.fr>
Ph: +011 +33 (0)467617013

UW-Madison Information
International Academic Programs (IAP)
University of Wisconsin-Madison
106 Red Gym, 716 Landgon Street
Madison, WI 53706
Tel: 608-265-6329 Fax: 608-262-6998
Web: www.studyabroad.wisc.edu
For Program Advising & Grades:
Erin Polnaszek Boyd
Study Abroad Advisor
Tel: 608-265-6329
E-mail: eepolnaszek@studyabroad.wisc.edu

Emergency Contact Information
In case of an emergency, call the main IAP number **(608) 265-6329** between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; after-hours or on weekends call the IAP staff on call at **(608) 516-9440**.

Embassy Registration
All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register at the U.S. Embassy before departure as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. You can register on-line at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at your home country’s embassy or consulate.

U.S. EMBASSY
2 Avenue Gabriel
75382 Paris Cedex 08
Phone: 33-1-43-12-22-22
Fax: 33-1-42-66-97-83
Web: [http://france.usembassy.gov/](http://france.usembassy.gov/)

* French language classes for foreign students:
Intensive courses for three hours a day for one-two weeks are offered before the start of the semester. There are also French courses organized throughout the year that meet for 90 minutes per week.

Preparation Before Leaving

Immigration Documents

Passport
A passport is needed to travel to France and to obtain your student visa. Apply immediately for a passport if you do not already have one. Passport information and application forms can be found on the U.S. State Department website ([http://travel.state.gov/passport](http://travel.state.gov/passport)). If you already have your passport, make sure it will be valid for at least 6 months beyond the length of your stay abroad.

Visa
To enter France, you will need to apply in person for a “Long Stay Student Visa”. More information will be provided under the visa tab in your My Study Abroad account. You must secure your visa in the US before your departure in order to stay in France for the duration of your program. The visa process is time consuming so keeping track of the information from IAP and the deadlines is essential to move forward.

Handling Money Abroad
You should bring approximately 100 euros in cash with you to cover your expenses for the first few days. Check with your bank or credit union for more information.

In Europe, as a general rule, avoid buying foreign currency (either with travelers checks or cash) at airports, railroad stations, and especially hotels and stores: they charge higher fees than at currency exchange places, which in turn charge slightly higher fees than the banks. Do not depend on the exchange rate published in newspapers; it is a bank-to-bank rate, and what you will get is often at least 5% less.

Feel free to utilize this website as resource to monitor the exchange rate and/or to print out a Traveler’s Cheat Sheet card to carry with you: [http://www.oanda.com/currency/ converter/](http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/).

**Using Credit Cards and Debit Cards in ATMs**

A generally reliable way to get money from the U.S. is to use a VISA or MasterCard credit card or a debit card for use in ATM machines. Machines that accept CIRRUS are more common than those that accept PLUS debit cards. VISA is accepted in more places than AMERICAN EXPRESS or MASTER CARD.

Credit card companies do charge a fee for “cash advances” if you choose to take money out using a credit card. Know what these fees are before you leave the U.S. Using a debit card that withdraws directly from your checking account in the U.S. will avoid these fees. Regardless if you use a credit card or debit card, you will likely be charged international transaction fees.

Before you leave for France, notify your bank/credit card company the dates that you will be abroad. In trying to identify theft, banks will cancel debit/credit cards used in unexpected ways.

If you charge purchases to your card, you will get a slightly better exchange rate than you will get at French banks. Groceries, personal items, clothes, train tickets, and many other items can be purchased with a card, though some stores may have a policy of accepting it only for purchases above a certain amount.

You should never type your PIN number when a third party can see it. It is better to lose your card, which can easily be cancelled, than to reveal your PIN number to a stranger.

**Packing**

Since you will be carrying your own luggage during the trip, often for long stretches in airports, bus, and train stations, it is important that you pack sensibly. Take only as much as you can carry easily by yourself. One way to measure what is easily carried is to pack everything you would like to take, pick it all up, and walk around the block. If you are not comfortable doing so, you may want to re-evaluate what you’ve packed.

**Important:** Take clothing that needs a minimal amount of care (this is especially important if you plan to do any independent traveling). You may have to go a couple of weeks without doing any laundry, especially at the beginning of the program. Laundromats will be the only means of doing laundry if you plan to live in the dorms or an apartment. Laundromats are expensive and
complicated to use, and it may take some time to make arrangements for your laundry in Montpellier. Dryers are available in Laundromats.

Jeans are as common in France as here. Students dress very comfortably, but with style in France. Nice jeans, skirts (for women), nice but comfortable walking shoes, dark colors, and sweaters are all very popular items. Sweaters will be especially needed since winter temperatures drop to around freezing and the humid sea air can make the air very cold and damp. Consequently, we recommend a winter coat as well, as spring weather usually doesn’t begin until sometime in March.

Electronics
Electrical current runs at 220 volts, so US electrical appliances made to run on 110 volts will not work unless you bring a convertor. Convertors are not recommended for appliances such as hair dryers or curling irons as the current transition can cause them to spark or burn out.

These appliances may be purchased inexpensively upon arrival.

Electricity in France is very expensive, so people tend to use much less of it. People are careful to turn on only the lights they really need and always turn off the lights before leaving a room. Be careful not to overload circuit breakers and risk blowing fuses.

You’ll also need to purchase plug adapters as France is not on the same three-pronged outlet as the U.S. You can find plug adapters easily on-line by doing a search for plug adapters/France.

Travel and Arrival Information
You are responsible for making your own flight arrangements to Montpellier. There is an airport in Montpellier that you can connect to:


Be sure to look for student discounts on airfare. Studentuniverse and STA travel are two web sites/organizations that offer discounts.

You could also fly into Paris and take a train to Montpellier, but given that you will have all of your luggage, it may be worth the extra cost to fly directly to Montpellier.

The Academic Program
General Information
Established January 1, 2007, several organizations fused to form Montpellier Sup Agro, the International Center of Superior Studies in the Agricultural Sciences.

Montpellier SupAgro is a member of the international Agropolis and has 1100 students, 100 professors/researchers and 240 administrative agents. SupAgro offers License, Master and Doctorate level studies in a variety of agricultural fields. SupAgro is the second ranked School of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources in France. There are many research units, excellent faculty, and links to surrounding institutes & universities. SupAgro has modern labs, an experimental vineyard and an arboretum on campus.
For more information on the University, please see their web site: http://www.supagro.fr/web/pages/?idl=19&page=123

**Course Information**

**Courses**
Courses at SupAgro are modular, meaning students take one course at a time (generally six hours a day). To see which modules are offered during each session, you can refer to the SupAgro site here: http://www.supagro.fr/web/pages/?idl=19&page=214.

In addition to the modules, students are required to participate in internships that vary in length from four-six months. There is a strong emphasis on team projects in the classroom.

**Registration**
IAP will register you for a special “Study Abroad Course” for the term(s) you will be studying abroad; therefore, it is not necessary for you to register on the UW-Madison campus. This is a temporary registration, which will be converted into graded UW-Madison credit after the completion of your program.

You will submit a Contrat d’études or Learning agreement to SupAgro after being accepted by UW-Madison to the exchange program. You will also work closely with Daniele by email on any course related questions but not finalize your course registration until you arrive onsite.

**Course Equivalent Requests and My Study Abroad**
Each course you take abroad must be assigned a UW-Madison “equivalent” course in order for your grades and credits to be recorded on your UW-Madison transcript. In order to establish UW-Madison course equivalents for your study abroad courses, you will submit a Course Equivalent Requests through your My Study Abroad account. Detailed information on the UW course equivalent process that you will use through your My Study Abroad account is available in the IAP Study Abroad Handbook.

**Credits**
**Conversions**
SupAgro uses the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credit system. A full study load for one semester equals 30 ECTS credits. ECTS credits transfer back to UW-Madison credits using the following scale:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECTS Credits</th>
<th>UW Madison Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or 5,5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 or 6,5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 or 7,5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12,5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please be very careful when selecting module courses.* If you choose to take module course (those that meet for part of the term), note that many courses are offered that carry fewer than the 5 ECTS (equivalent to 3 UW credits). Courses must be worth at least 2.5 ECTS to be approved at UW. Courses under 2.5 ECTS should be combined with other courses of similar content to create a UW course equivalent. The combined courses should be at least 5 ECTS to provide meaningful credit.

For example: *Systematic Botany* (2 ECTS) and *Practical course with Field Exercise in Systematic Botany* (3 ECTS) = UW’s Botany 400 (3 UW credits).

It is possible to have courses approved as 2 UW credits instead of 3 UW credits. However, if you are taking courses to apply to major, certificate or college requirements, the ECTS must be equivalent to the UW courses credits. For example, Botany 130 is 5 credits at UW. If this course is needed for your major, certificate, or college requirement, you need to combine UHOH courses to equal at least 9 ECTS. If you have any questions on course credit, please contact your IAP Study Abroad Advisor.

**Limits and Load**
Students are required to take one course during each module.

**Pass/Fail/Drop/Audit**
Please refer to the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for academic policies.

**Grades and Grade Conversions**
IAP will use the following grade conversion scale for the courses you take at SupAgro:
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UW-Madison</td>
<td>SupAgro Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>11.6-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>9.6-11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>8.6-9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>7.6-8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>6.1-7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>4.1-6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Living Abroad**

**France**

France is a country whose metropolitan territory is located in Western Europe and also comprises various overseas islands and territories located in other continents. Metropolitan France extends from the Mediterranean Sea to the English Channel and the North Sea, and from the Rhine to the Atlantic Ocean. French people often refer to Metropolitan France as *L'Hexagone* (The "Hexagon") because of the geometric shape of its territory. France is bordered by Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Monaco, Andorra, and Spain. France is also linked to the United Kingdom via the Channel Tunnel, which passes underneath the English Channel.

The French Republic is a democracy that is organized as a unitary semi-presidential republic. It is a developed country with the sixth-largest economy in the world. Its main ideals are expressed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. France is one of the founding members of the European Union, and has the largest land area of all members (with a population of roughly 60.4 million people). France is also a founding member of the United Nations, and a member of the Francophonie, the G8, and the Latin Union. It is one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council wielding veto power, and it is also an acknowledged nuclear power. France is the most popular international tourist destination in the world, receiving over 75 million foreign tourists annually.

(Information in the above paragraphs was adapted from Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France).

Along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea in southern France, Montpellier, the seventh largest city in France, has everything it takes to please. A lively and surprising city in the heart of the Languedoc-Roussillon region, Montpellier is vibrant, elegant and artistic. People are drawn here by the city's rich past, former and contemporary glory, intense cultural life and youthful feel. Its sunny climate and well-preserved historical environment are second to none, nestled between the sea, vineyards and mountain landscapes.

Known internationally for its world-class medical schools, whose long-standing tradition dates back the Middle Ages, Montpellier is well practiced in the art of welcoming people. Montpellier today is a leading destination for business tourism, vacation and language stays. Montpellier is only three and a half hours from Paris by train.

**Montpellier Tourism office**
http://www.ot-montpellier.fr/en/

**Housing**
Students are housed on-campus in single rooms or studio apartments. Student housing has Internet access and laundry. Students share kitchen and bathroom space.

**Transportation**
Montpellier has both a public bus system and a tram line. For more information and schedules, please see the TAM web site (Transports de l’Agglomération de Montpellier)


To reach the campus from the train station take bus No.16 and get off at place Viala. To get to the campus from the airport take the shuttle bus to the train station and take bus No.16 as above. The airport website has more information about buses, taxis, and how much they cost.

Montpellier also has a train station for travel throughout France and Europe: http://www.ter-sncf.com/Region/languedoc_roussillon/gare/MONTPELLIER%20ST%20ROCH.aspx

**Safety**
You are responsible for reviewing the US State Department’s website at www.travel.state.gov for up-to-date information on travel to France and any other countries you plan on visiting during your term abroad.

- Female students should avoid traveling alone at night. Always walk in groups or with a male companion. Do not look strangers in the eye or speak to them, particularly at night, as this is considered an invitation to conversation. Use a firm “Non, merci.” or no response at all to any verbal harassment. Do not try to defend yourself if confronted by strangers or hagglers, particularly at night. Immediately leave the setting and seek assistance from the nearest restaurant, café, or police officer.
- Keep your personal belongings hidden. Montpellier is a metropolitan city with people from many different economic levels and cultures. You should not assume that you are safe to travel without concern.
- Use common sense when giving out your address or phone number. If you are uncomfortable with someone, you may have a real reason to be. Although you want to meet and get to know people, some people may not share in that innocent intention. It is wise to set up times and places to meet others rather than give out any personal information. If you are living with a host family, check with them before giving out their phone number, address, or inviting guests over. In general, overnight guests are not appropriate in any housing situation.
- Neighborhoods in Montpellier are made up of people from all economic levels. Students are housed in typical neighborhoods with people of all ethnic and economic backgrounds.

**Communication**
When making calls, keep in mind time zone differences (www.timeanddate.com/worldclock). To make an international call to the United States, dial the access code for the country from which you are calling plus the United States country code (always “1”) followed by the appropriate U.S.
area code and local number. To call internationally from the United States, dial “011”, the country code, city access code (if necessary) and the phone number. Country and city codes can be found online (www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html). Some of above steps can vary if you are using a calling card.

Skype is a free, downloadable software application that allows users to make live video and voice calls over the internet. Skype users can also add money to their account and can then use the service to call land lines and cell phones internationally at very low rates. Additionally, Skype also provides an instant messaging function as well as file sharing.

To create a Skype account, users must download the application from www.skype.com and create a user name and password. Once the application is installed onto their computer, they can search for friends either by first and last name or using their friends' Skype usernames. Once a friend is added to a users contact list, they will be able to see whether that person is available to chat. If two users both have web-enabled video cameras for their computers, they will be able to chat face to face. For users without a web cam, a microphone is all that’s required for calls to another computer.

**Websites of interest:**

U.S. State Department Students Abroad site:  
http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov/

UW-Madison International Academic Programs  
http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu

U.S. State Department Students Abroad site:  
http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov/

Center for Disease Control  
http://www.cdc.gov/travel/

Current exchange rates  
http://www.oanda.com

Lonely Planet  
http://www.lonelyplanet.com

Sup Agro  
www.supagro.fr