

AUG 12 2009



2008-2009 Student Mobility/Exchange Program Returning Undergraduate Student Report

The purpose of this participant report is to provide future Student Mobility/Exchange Program participants with helpful tips and insightful information about student life and academics at your host university. It is also useful to your re-entry to Canada, as it will give you an opportunity to reflect on your experiences and share them with others.

Please return the questionnaire to:

Susan Kemp, Coordinator, International Student Services & Student Mobility/Exchange
International Student Services Office (ISSO), Student Centre, 51 McCaul Street, Level 1

Student Name: _____	Student ID#: _____
Host University: <u>ESANSE</u>	Host Country: <u>France</u>
Faculty/Department at Host Institution: <u>Communications</u>	Semester: <u>Winter</u>
Student Signature: <u>[Signature]</u>	Date: <u>August 12th, 2009</u>

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OVERALL EVALUATION

How would you rate your exchange experience overall?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Excellent

Please explain your rating.

The host institution did not have Advertising (my major) as part of their Communications program. - the majority of my work consisted of Graphic Design. Arriving for the winter semester was also a disadvantage since most courses run year-long, and I frequently had to pursue teachers for assignments.

What was the most meaningful thing you learned while studying off campus?

That self-motivation, independence and resourcefulness are very important when studying in a foreign country.

Please share three of your most positive experiences and three of the biggest challenges you faced.

Positive

Challenges

① participating in a typography workshop

① getting used to working in French

② going on a roadtrip to the South w/ French students

② getting accustomed to the school irregular hours

③ traveling

③ getting a hold of the teachers

Why did you choose this host institution? What key factors or issues influenced your decision?

I chose this institution because I was looking to attend a school in France, so as to practise my French and be better prepared for venturing into the niche of bilingual/french advertising in Canada. I also thought a small town would be a nice change from working in a large city.

Please describe your preparation for the exchange, including banking, travel documents and student visa application. In retrospect, would you have done anything differently?

I brought traveler's cheques, cash and opened a bank account in France a few weeks after my arrival. In retrospect I would not have brought the travelers cheques since they are not accepted most places

Are there any important items (ie: art & design supplies, documents, specialty foods, health items) that a student should take to your host country?

A good quality outlet adapter (or two). All your insurance papers and any medication you will need for your stay. And a laptop.

ARRIVAL

Was anyone at the airport, train station, etc. to meet you? Did you experience any difficulties upon arrival?

I did not have anyone assist on my arrival. The most difficult part was carrying my luggage on the bus and train from the airport.

When should students plan to arrive at the host university? When did you arrive? Would you have benefited from arriving earlier?

I would recommend arriving a week early (earlier if you have no accommodation yet). I arrived a week after start of term due to a mistake on behalf of my host institution, and I would have most certainly benefited from arriving earlier.

Was there an orientation session offered at your host university? If yes, did you attend and what did you learn?

There was an orientation and I attended. I did not learn anything too useful and there was no representative of my program there.

Is there a coordinating office for international students, including exchange students, at your host university? Is there a staff person you would recommend students approach with their questions?

Yes there is a coordinating office but the coordinator is very hard to get a hold of and her assistant changed three times during my stay - so I would not be able to recommend anyone.

ACCOMMODATION

Where did you live during your exchange? Would you recommend your accommodation to future exchange students?

I stayed in a residence which was very comfortable but rather expensive. I would recommend students to ask ~~for~~ the school for a list of anyone looking to rent a room.

Did you have any difficulties arranging accommodation yourself? Did the host institution assist you in finding accommodation?

Arranging accommodation was difficult because the landlords were very hard to get a hold of. The school had sent us lists of possible residences and students looking to rent rooms/apartments.

If you lived on-campus, which residences would you recommend? Are there any that should be avoided?

My residence was not on campus - in France they are privately run independent from schools/universities (or at least in Saint Etienne). I know of none that should be avoided.

If you lived in residence, was a meal plan offered? If so, how would you rate the food?

There was no meal plan offered.

If you lived off-campus, do you have any recommendations for future exchange students? For example, does rent include hydro and other utilities, or are they extra? Which location in the city is ideal for exchange students?

My studio had utilities included ~~and most~~ but I believe it is separate in most apartments. Saint Etienne is very small, so as long as you are not in the outskirts, you're good.

STUDIES AT HOST INSTITUTION

To better understand the similarities and differences between academic studies at OCAD and at your host university, please comment on the following:

Level of Academic Difficulty & Challenge:

Much easier. More independent work. Less tenancy to due dates.

Time spent in class (# of hours):

approx 3-4 hrs/week (workshop weeks: 5-8 hrs/day)

Time spent outside (# of hours):

approx 4-5 hrs/week

Oral presentations (Individual and Group):

virtually non-existent

Written assignments:

actually non-existent

Studio-based work:

100% of the work was studio - although you may have a choice

Interaction between students and professors

extremely variable - mostly distant.

to
take
lectures

SERVICES

Were there any extracurricular activities/events scheduled for exchange/international students at your host university (cultural visits, trips, workshops, etc.)? Which ones would you recommend?

I know of only one event scheduled for exchange students and I did not attend (it was a tour of a nearby town, and since it was organized at the end of the semester, I had already been there several times by then.)

What were the libraries and computer facilities like? Would you recommend that students bring their own laptop?

The library was adequate but the computer facilities were abysmal. I would highly recommend students bring their own laptops.

COST OF LIVING

How did you prepare yourself financially for your exchange? Did you pay for the experience entirely out of your own savings? Did you receive student or bank loans? Did you apply for / receive any financial awards (scholarships or bursaries)? Did you have help from parents / family / friends?

I financed my exchange by my savings and help from my family. Also, in France, anyone can apply for government housing aid - and although it was a long and tedious process, it was well worth it (400 euros for four months).

In general, was the cost of living in your host country higher, lower, or similar to that in Canada? Please explain.

The cost was higher. Everything is roughly the same price as here, but in Euros. Rent in a small town in France costs about the same in Canadian dollars that it would to rent in downtown Toronto.

Please complete the following budget form to give other students an idea of what they can expect to spend in the host country.

EXPENSES

Exchange rate with host country: \$1 CAN = 1.6 euros

Time spent in host country (month/year - month/year): (end of) February/09 to (end of) June/09

Would you estimate that you spent more, less, or the same amount as an average, local student attending your host institution? more

Basic Expenses in Canadian \$	Total
1. Tuition and general fees	\$ 2000
2. School supplies and books	\$ 100
3. Rent or university residence	\$ 750/month
4. Rent-related expenses: A) Electricity/Water: \$ _____/month B) Telephone: \$ _____/month C) Cable: \$ _____/month D) Other (specify) \$ _____/month	small studio all included except internet
5. Groceries (or meal plan) and housekeeping supplies \$ _____/month	\$ 250/month
6. Personal expenses (toiletries/cosmetics, etc.) \$ _____/month	\$ 100/month
7. Laundry and /or dry cleaning \$ _____/month	included in residence
8. Transportation: A) Public (Bus, Taxi, Subway, etc.): \$ _____/month B) Private Car (gas, parking, ins.): \$ _____/month	n/a
9. Clothing	\$ 100/month
10. Leisure (Sports, Entertainment, etc.)	\$ 100/month
11. Extended medical coverage	\$ 250
12. Travel / trips in host country	\$ 300-400
13. Round trip plane ticket	\$ 900
14. Student visa	n/a
15. Medical expenses	n/a
16. Other expenses (please specify)	n/a
ESTIMATED TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 9,000

ADAPTING TO YOUR HOST COUNTRY

Did you experience any "culture shock" during your exchange? How did you deal with it? Do you have any advice for students on how to adapt to life in your host country?

There was nothing too shocking, and Saint Etienne is a very normal town.

Was there a lot of interaction between local students and exchange/international students? What is the best way to develop friendships with students from your host institution?

There was a good amount of interaction. Knowing the language is a must in France.

Did you have any unforeseen problems? Was there anything that you felt was strikingly different from what you expected? If so, is there a way that you could have prepared yourself?

The biggest ~~was~~ difference was the manner in which the school was run. It was much more relaxed, courses did not run regularly, punctuality is not enforced (or attendance, really) and it is very difficult to get a hold of anyone (faculty or administration). My only advice is to relax, because everyone else in France is.

Additional Comments

I'm not entirely sure that Advertising students should attend ESADSE. Not only is there no advertising component in their program, but the faculty and students actively dislike it. In addition, their Communications program has been phased out and so students only have a choice between Fine Arts and Design.