



Title Report

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IN THIS PAPER

This paper summarizes my experience abroad to the Ecole nationale des Ponts et Chaussées in Paris. Hope it will come in handy when considering this exchange.

My semester abroad

Overall, a great experience in a renowned school, but more importantly in one of the most interesting cities to live in.

The Preparation

In the very beginning, I had to meet with the exchange program coordinator and ask for information on the school and the application procedures.

It is a rather complete application folder that needs to be provided (form, resume, motivation letter, transcript of records, recommendation letter from the coordinator, proof of French language proficiency and learning agreement).

To send the application, the learning agreement has to be completed and signed by both sending and hosting institution; and I have to admit, it is quite complicated to navigate through the course catalogue and set your definitive learning agreement. It took a few backs and forths to settle things down.

The Travel and Arrival

The semester in France begins first week of September and you do have to be there in the last week of August for a language assessment test; which means you only have a week or two of semester break depending on your exams.

The travel is 1:30 hours by plane from Bremen with Air France. But also, there is a 10-hour night bus ride with Meinfernbus between Bremen and Paris.

The arrival there was pretty nice. Students and the international exchanges' department were very welcoming. Tutors were assigned to help newly arrived students to find their way through administrative procedures and others...

The Accommodation

As an international student, the accommodation was provided automatically by the school residence. You have to fill a form and send it to the international Student Office at the hosting school, which takes care of assigning you accommodation; three types are available: two types of double apartments that are shared with a flat mate and a third single apartment.

The residence is 2 minutes on foot, from the school, and 25 minutes by train from the center of Paris. The bus and train connection is very good during the day, a lot worse after midnight until morning.

The housing overall is quiet good, with the exception of some heating problems which took time but finally got repaired.

The studying at the host university

The courses are very diverse, 5 engineering specialization programs are available: mechanical and material; construction; city/environment/transport; industrial and economic/financial engineering.

Once you pick a department at least 50% of the courses you pick have to be offered by this same department.

Most of courses are very theoretical with almost no practical application.

One project was available in a one of a kind partner school, the D-School, which gives a glance into design thinking and the

innovative processes, which was really interesting



Everyday life and leisure time

The school offers various language and sports classes, but as places are limited for each class, early application is necessary to get places in the languages and sport class desired. Apart from that the Residence is some 10 min by foot from a supermarket, a couple food shops are located all around the campus. Also, the school canteen offered delicious affordable and healthy food during the week days.

Concerning the living costs, the government does pay back some of the renting costs and Erasmus exchange students are not required to pay any tuition fees.

As for the student life, students are organized in associations that organize all the get togethers and parties. Most of the parties are organized in the school itself, halls are transformed into enormous dancefloors which is quiet impressive.

Apart from that, it is needless to say that Paris is a wonderful city to live in. The center of the city is an architectural marvel, it is very lively and is full of activities (concerts, comedy gigs, interesting museums to visit...)



Do's and Don'ts:

- ✓ Do sign up for rental government repayment (CAF) as soon as you can
 - ✓ Do sign up for language and sport classes in time
 - ✓ Do study with the local French students to get used to their working methods
 - ✓ Do check out courses and projects offered by the D-school, they are interesting
 - ✓ Most importantly, do **enjoy** your time there
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- ✗ Don't hesitate to ask for info's, even though in general reactions won't be very friendly to non-fluent French speakers, insist on getting the information you need
 - ✗ Don't let all your studying pile up until the end of the semester, exams all happen in the same week sometimes.