

Ecole Supérieure d'Agriculture d'Angers (ESA)

International Food, Culture and Agriculture Exchange

Program Handbook – Summer 2022

The Ecole Supérieure d'Agriculture d'Angers (ESA) program is offered by the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in conjunction with International Academic Programs (IAP) and the Ecole Supérieure d'Agriculture d'Angers. This Study Abroad Program Handbook supplements handbook(s) or materials you receive from Ecole Supérieure d'Agriculture d'Angers as well as the General Study Abroad Handbook and provides you with the most up-to-date information and advice available at the time of printing. 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 your study abroad advisor.

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Contact Information

Alejandra Carril
Summer Program Assistant
Ecole Supérieure d'Agriculture d'Angers
55 rue Rabelais - BP 30748
49007 Angers CEDEX 01, France
Tel: +33-2-41-235-654
a.carril@groupe-esa.com

Gaël Roul
Area manager for North American Countries (FESIA)
Tel: +33-2-41-235-587
g.roul@groupe-esa.com

UW-Madison Information

International Academic Programs (IAP)
University of Wisconsin-Madison

106 Red Gym, 716 Langdon Street
Madison, WI 53706
Tel: 608-265-6329 Fax: 608-262-6998
Web: studyabroad.wisc.edu

<i>For Program Advising & Grades:</i> Kim Kroeger Study Abroad Advisor Tel: 608-265-5759 E-mail: kim.kroeger@wisc.edu	<i>For Financial Matters:</i> Judy Humphrey IAP Financial Specialist Tel: 608-890-3360 E-mail: judy.humphrey@wisc.edu
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Emergency Contact Information

IAP Emergency Number

For questions or general concerns that do not involve the immediate danger or threat to the health or safety of a student, call the main IAP number **(608) 265-6329** between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Central Time, Monday-Friday. Calls received outside normal operating hours will be returned as soon as possible the next business day.

If an emergency arises after-hours or on weekends, you can reach the IAP Staff On-Call at **(608) 516-9440**. This number is **ONLY for emergencies**, otherwise, please call the main desk.

Emergency Numbers in France

- Ambulance (SAMU): 15
- Fire Brigade: 18
- Police: 17
- European Emergency Number: 112
- SOS Help (English Speaking Crisis Line): 01-46-21-46-46
- Centre Hospitalier Universitaire (CHU; University General Hospital): 02-41-35-36-37
- La maison des etudiants (students' centre): 02-41-22-69-10 (Provides students many free services, including consultation with MDs, medical advice, help from social workers, access to information and documentation centre.)

Embassy Registration and Information

All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register with U.S. Embassy through the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) step.state.gov before departure as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at your home country's embassy or consulate.

U.S. Embassy in Paris, France
2 Avenue Gabriel
75382 Paris Cedex 08 France
Tel: +33 (0)1 43 12 22 22
Alt Phone: +33 (0)1 42 66 97 83

Email: citizeninfo@state.gov

Web: fr.usembassy.gov/

Preparation Before Leaving

Immigration Documents

Passport

A passport is needed to travel to France. 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>). 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

US Citizens only need a passport to enter France for the ESA summer program. They will be given a stamp for 90 days in their passport. If you are not a US citizen, a visa may be necessary. Please contact your study abroad advisor with any questions.

Handling Money Abroad

The official currency of France is the Euro (€). You should bring some money in cash with you for incidental purchases. You can request a small sum of Euros from most US banks before departure to assist with immediate payments. It is possible to convert almost any currency into Euros at the airport when you arrive. Banks in France are normally open from 9:00am until 4:00 or 5:00pm, depending on the branch. To view the current exchange rate and to print a traveler's cheat sheet, you can visit this website: <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.

ATMs and Debit Cards

ATMs are readily available in Angers and throughout France, in banks and post offices. ATMs are open 24 hours a day and take several different cards. Be sure to ask your bank about any international charges you may receive from using ATMs abroad and to notify them that you will be abroad so they do not freeze your account.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are accepted at most stores in France, but stores often have a minimum purchase requirement around 15€. It is important to notify your credit card company that you will be abroad so they do not freeze your account.

Packing

Pack lightly. The weather in France can be unpredictable, so be sure to bring clothes that can be layered. Students typically dress fairly nicely, in jeans and a shirt, slacks and a shirt, or the latest fashion. You should also plan to bring at least one nice outfit because you may need to give a presentation or have another formal occasion during your stay. Remember that the climate is

milder than in Wisconsin, so do not bring too many sweaters and sweatshirts. To check the weather you can use this website for a general guide: <http://www.wunderground.com/>.

Other items to remember are: alarm clock, copy of all documents (passport, visa, etc.), French-English dictionary, a gift or token for your host family (suggestion: picture book from Wisconsin), journal, and a small bag for weekend trips.

Electronics

The electricity current in France is 220 volts, whereas the US is 110 volts. A plug adapter will be needed in order to fit the sockets abroad (two round prongs instead of our flat plug). An electricity converter may be necessary for certain electronic items. If you buy an adapter/converter, make sure it will work for the specific item for which you need it. Check with a local electronics store, such as Best Buy or a travel store or online, for assistance on finding the adapters and converters needed for France.

Travel and Arrival Information

Arrival and Departure Dates

Refer to the ESA Angers Program Handbook for more information about arrival and departure dates.

The Academic Program

Ecole Supérieure d'Agriculture (ESA)

ESA was founded in 1898 by Jesuits and representatives of the agricultural world. The school has been instrumental in the development of agriculture in Western France, the first region in Europe in the agricultural and the food industry sectors. Since the Jesuits left in 1970, the school has become a non-profit organization managed by alumni. Since its creation in the late 19th century, the school has diversified. The curriculum now includes several courses in agriculture, viticulture and oenology, livestock farming, horticulture and landscaping, the food industry, agro-business, the environment and land-use planning. With about 2,630 students, ESA is the largest higher agricultural institute in France. The university welcomes around 300 international students every year.

Course Information

Syllabi will be provided for the courses upon arrival in Angers. Papers, a final presentation and quizzes will be the assessment tools used. Refer to the ESA Angers Program Handbook for additional information about the academics on this program.

Course Equivalent Request (CER)

The four-week academic program will be assigned one UW-Madison course equivalent in order for your grades and credits to be recorded on your UW-Madison transcript. The 2022 academic program is currently equated with the following course equivalents:

- Food Science 400: Study Abroad in Food Science

It may be possible to request an alternate course equivalency for the academic program. Look in your [MyStudyAbroad](#) account for details. You can log into your My Study Abroad account to enter in your course equivalent selection.

Credits

10 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits will be awarded to you for passing your courses on the ESA summer academic program.

These credits will be converted to UW-Madison credits using the following conversion scale:

ECTS Credits	UW-Madison Credits
8	4

The 8 ECTS credits are composed of 1 ECTS French as a Foreign Language course + 7 ECTS for a course made of 2 units: “Terroir: Local, Traditional and Sustainable Food Systems” and “Value Chains within a Local and Traditional Food System”. You receive separate grades for each of these courses, so your overall final grade will be calculated as follows:

French as a Foreign Language course grade = 10% of overall course grade

Grade for the course made up of 2 units = 90% of overall course grade

Pass/Fail/Drop/Audit

Please refer to the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for academic policies.

Grades and Grade Conversions

You will receive a transcript from ESA with French grades on a 20-point scale. The following scale will be used to convert your grades to UW-Madison equivalents.

French Grade	UW-Madison Grade
14-20	A
12-13.9	AB
10-11.9	B
8-9.9	BC
6-7.9	C
0.1-5.9	D
0	F

French Certificate

As a student studying abroad in France/on a program with French language, you are encouraged to consider adding a French certificate to your degree. This flexible, 15-credit program also strengthens the applications of students who intend to pursue careers or graduate study in areas where French is useful. 6 credits from study abroad can be applied towards the French certificate. To read more about the certificate, please visit this website: http://frit.wisc.edu/undergraduate/french/french_certificate.

University Facilities

Find out more here: <http://www.groupe-esa.com/lesa/organisation/le-campus-les-equipements/?lang=en>

Libraries

ESA's multimedia library contains a collection of 35,000 books, 300 magazines, including 10 daily newspapers and 40 foreign magazines, and numerous electronic resources.

Computer Labs

ESA has 6 computer labs with Microsoft Office software and internet access.

Cafeterias

Angers has three university cafeterias with a variety of food ranging from traditional French meals to quick meals, pizzas, grilled dishes, pasta or sandwiches. Meals cost 4 – 6 Euros.

- Restaurant universitaire des Beaux Arts: 35 boulevard du Roi René
 - Closest cafeteria to ESA
- Restaurant universitaire Belle-Beille: 3 boulevard Lavoisier
- Restaurant universitaire "La Gabare": 55 quai Félix Faure
- Restaurant universitaire Sciences médicales: Rue Haute de Reculée

Living Abroad

France

On the western edge of Europe, France is bordered by Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Spain. It is the largest country in Western Europe and is about 80% the size of Texas. The country extends from the coastal plains in the north to the beaches of the south; from the wild coastline of Brittany to the top of the Alps, with cliff-lined canyons, dense forest and vineyards in between. The highest point in Western Europe, Mont Blanc, is situated in the Alps on the border between France and Italy. Metropolitan France also has extensive river systems such as the Loire, the Garonne, the Seine and the Rhône, which divides the Massif Central from the Alps and flows into the Mediterranean Sea at the Camargue, the lowest point in France. Corsica lies off the Mediterranean coast.

Over the centuries, France has received more immigrants than any other country in Europe. From the ancient Celtic Gauls and Romans to the more recent arrivals from France's former colonies in Indochina and Africa, these peoples have introduced new elements of culture, cuisine, and art, all of which have contributed to France's unique and diverse civilization.

French cuisine is rich and varied, creative and innovative; each region specializes in certain dishes, cheeses and wines. In France, people usually eat three meals a day. Breakfast, eaten when they get up, is usually quick and consists of a hot drink and a baguette with butter or jam. Lunch and dinner, eaten around 12 or 1:00 pm and 8:00 pm, respectively, typically consist of a starter, a hot main course (meat or fish with vegetables), followed by cheese and dessert. The French drink a lot of bottled water, although tap water is perfectly safe to drink throughout the country. Although France produces a lot of wine, fewer and fewer French people are regular wine drinkers.

Angers

Angers is a city of 150,000 people (almost 400,000 in the metropolitan area) situated along the Maine River in western France's Loire Valley. The city is about an hour and a half train ride from Paris and about 100 kilometers inland from the ocean.

The region hosts the greatest variety of crop and animal production in Europe, including cereals, oilseeds, vegetables, flowers, fruit, wine, cattle, pigs and poultry. This agricultural diversity, along with modern processing plants, numerous food companies and research centers make Angers an ideal setting for an agricultural institute of higher learning. Angers is known as the Most Flowered City in Europe for its many parks, gardens and fresh cut flowers. Angers also hosts a medieval fortress where the longest tapestry in the world can be seen. It is also the home of the famous Cointreau liquor and of a number of modern industries.

Housing

For the entire program, students will live with a host family. Please be prepared for some language barrier if you do not speak French, as levels of English knowledge will vary by host family. ESA Angers will send participants their host family information one week before the program start date.

Transportation

Bus/Tram

There is a local company, Irigo, who runs the bus and tram service in town. One-way tickets are available from vending machines or from bus drivers. You can also buy 10-trip cards from Irigo vending machines at any tram stop and certain bus stops. Other ticket options and information can be found on the Irigo website (only in French): irigo.fr/

Bicycle

Riding a bike is an inexpensive, fast and convenient way to travel throughout the city. ESA rents bikes to students at a low cost.

Taxi

Taxi fares in France are strictly controlled and all taxis have meters. Fares are more expensive in the evening and late at night.

Train

The French railway system is a fast and convenient way to travel between major cities. *Société nationale des chemins de fer français* (SNCF) is the national railway operator, and also runs coach buses to smaller municipalities that were part of old, discontinued railway lines. The train can also be a less expensive way to travel if you are able to take advantage of one of SNCF's many reduced rates. For example, there are promotional fares available if you travel with a companion, reserve your ticket well in advance, or are 15 to 25 years old. Certain reduced rates are only good on certain trains, at certain times or have a limited number of seats available - so plan your trips well in advance! France also has high-speed trains, TGV (*train à grande vitesse*). These trains travel at 300 km per hour, compared to the 160-200 km per hour that normal trains travel. This can cut a trip that would normally take 8 hours down to three. Prices depend on if you are traveling at peak or off-peak time.

For more information, including train timetables, fares, and details on reduced-fare travel, visit:

Gare d'Angers-Saint-Laud (Train station Angers-Saint-Laud)

1 Esplanade de la Gare

49100 Angers

Tel: +33 (0) 892-35-35-35

Web: voyages-sncf.com

Air

Traveling by air can be a relatively cheap and convenient way to visit other European countries. Several airlines, including Ryanair, Sky Europe, and Easyjet, provide flights throughout Europe at a very cheap rate. The cheap flights allow access to almost all of Europe, but enforce a 20-kg limit for checked luggage when flying within the EU (unless traveling trans-Atlantic on the same trip).

Communication

Telephone

When making calls, keep in mind time zone differences 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 timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html. Some of above steps can vary if you are using a calling card.

Calling to France

International access code: 011

Country code: 33

Angers city code: 2

To call France from the United States, your family and friends must dial the international access code, followed by France's country code and Angers' city code, and finally your phone number: 011 + 33 + 2 + telephone number

Calling from France

International access code: 00

Country code: 1

To call the United States from France, you will need to dial the international access code, the United States' country code, the area code and phone number: 00 + 1 + area code + telephone number.

Check with your US cell provider about international calling/data plans and rates or consider unlocking your phone, so that you can insert a SIM card that you would purchase once in France.

With a smart phone or a laptop + Wifi connections, you may be able to easily communicate with friends and family in the US via different applications such as Facebook, iMessaging, WhatsApp, or Skype.

Calling within France

Please note that when you make calls within France you must include a 0 before the city code: 02 + telephone number. However, the 0 is dropped when friends and family make international calls to France, as shown above.

Cellular Telephone

- You can buy a cellular phone in one of the many telephone shops in Angers.
- Prepaid cards that you can find in any *bureau de tabac* are available to use with cellular phones for ease of communication.
- The cheapest price for an average cell phone is approximately 30 euros. A prepaid card will cost between 15 and 45 euros and can be bought in any telephone shop or *bureau de tabac* in France. Unlike the US, in France there is no charge to receive local/regional calls on a cell phone.

Internet

WIFI is available in many restaurants, cafes and other locations in France.

Skype/Google Voice

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. See the following link for more information:

<http://www.skype.com/en/>

Google Voice allows you to call landlines in the USA for free and internationally for low rates. See the following link for more information:

<https://www.google.com/googlevoice/about.html#tab=international>.

Additional Relevant Information

Websites of Interest

U.S. State Department

<http://travel.state.gov>

Current exchange rates

<http://www.oanda.com>

State Department Students Abroad site

<http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov/>

Lonely Planet

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>

UW-Madison International Academic Programs

<http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu>

ESA www.groupe-esa.com

Ouest-France (Regional Newspaper for Pays de la Loire)

<http://www.ouest-france.fr/>

Angers Tourism

<http://www.angersloiretourisme.com/en>

<http://www.angers.fr/>

www.nta-angers.fr

Center for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

Diversity Climate In-Country

France is largely considered to be a highly tolerant country, with robust laws protecting ethnic and religious minorities, LGBTQ individuals, the disabled and other groups from discrimination. Students in France will encounter a culture that is generally accepting of multiculturalism with progressive social policies.

Racial/Ethnic Minority

Some students of color studying in France find it to be less prejudiced, in general, than many parts of the U.S. Outside of big cities, students not of European descent may have difficulty finding certain beauty products they use in the United States.

Sexual Orientation

France is generally considered one of the most LGBTQ-friendly places in the world, with many groups, organizations and establishments supportive of the LGBT community for students to get involved with.

Disabilities

Getting around French cities can be challenging for those with mobility issues. Many sidewalks are narrow and uneven, and cobblestone streets make access difficult. Major tourist areas may often have better facilities.

Religion

France is historically predominantly Roman Catholic, though more in tradition only. There has been a growth in the number of worshippers of Islam, and small, but significant Protestant and Jewish populations. There do exist some tensions between the Muslim community and wider French society due to recent political disagreements, but overall, individuals can be assured of the ability to practice their faith in open and in peace.

Women

Female students who travel to France can expect a level of protection and respect equivalent to the U.S.

Student Testimonials

The testimonial below is compiled from past participant's evaluations; they reflect various students' experiences and are included to provide different perspectives.

Academics

"The classes were very intense but intriguing. The normal class session (that is a day without an educational or cultural trip) lasted from 8 AM to about 6 PM. There were a wide variety of topics covered in the class such as French meat production, sustainable agriculture, intercropping, global trade policy, EU agricultural policy, French culture & language and French agronomy being some of the topics that were covered."

"I learned what I expected to learn before departure, and really enjoyed the time in ESA. Every lecture gave me the new idea of the French way of life, culture, and the sustainable food system. The lecture and on site farm visit are well conducted."

Safety

"I felt like Angers was a very safe town and it reminded me a lot of living in downtown Madison."

Meals

"If you're vegetarian or vegan it's going to be really hard to eat healthily in France; since there aren't many vegetarians, and even less vegans, options are extremely limited."

Cost

"You're not going to be spending a lot on food and travel during the week, because your host family feeds you and you are in classes all day. But on the weekends [if you travel] you're going to be going to a lot of different places where you'll want to buy souvenirs and things, so it's a good idea to make sure you have [that in your] budget"

Language and Culture

"Try to learn at least some basic French before you go." This will help with asking for directions, ordering food in restaurants, navigating daily living in France, etc.

"I learned so much about French culture while I was there and this program helped me to step out of my comfort zone and meet a lot of people. I'll never forget the memories I made abroad and I'm really thankful that I had this opportunity. I hope other UW students can have a similar, or better, experience than I did."

"Look into common French manners and fashion. People will be able to tell you are an American, but by being aware of the social practices around you, it can make you feel less awkward (and avoid getting angry glances). Some things I noted was that no one talks loudly on the Paris metro and the French rarely wear brightly colored clothes or patterns."

Additional

"Keep a journal. I went 3 summers ago, and already I'm forgetting a lot of the day-to-day activities and my emotions throughout the trip. (Thankfully, I kept a journal!)"

"Pack light! They have probably told you this, but it is so true and will make traveling so much easier! You can do laundry at your host family in Angers. It is important to pack a variety of clothes for all weather since you can't plan for 1 month, but pack layers or clothes that can be worn in multiple occasions and outfits. Plus, you can always buy things in France (clothes, snacks, toiletries).

"Keep a positive attitude and be open to new experiences! You are probably all very excited to go, but the days can get long after sitting in the lecture hall and it can be frustrating to do simple things such as type with a French keyboard. From experience, midway through my trip, some individuals developed negative and disrespectful attitudes which had a negative impact on everyone. Try to appreciate the new experiences and opportunities."