



GRENOBLE

2018-2019

ABSTRACT

A useful document for anyone considering a year abroad in Grenoble, France

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Mathematics with
Intercalated Year

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Introduction

Going abroad to France this year has been one of the best things I have ever done. I had an amazing time, and my French improved enormously. I integrated into French culture and I absolutely loved it! I would recommend going on a year abroad to anyone who wants to improve their language skills and learn about a new culture.

Typically, a lot of Erasmus students find it hard to make friends with French students and live the life of a French student. I did not want this to be the case for me, and made a concerted effort to integrate. By joining volleyball teams at the University and outside the university, taking programming modules, and living with French students, I was lucky enough to achieve this.

Accommodation

Having read the reports of my predecessors, I was very indecisive as to whether to go for *Crous* (University accommodation) or privately. I guess I hedged my bets really. I applied for *Crous* when the email came, (sometime during exams, as you can imagine I was already quite stressed, without another decision to make) and I put *Marie Reynoard* first and got it. Initially I wanted *Crous* because I wanted something organised that I knew I could trust. However, after more thought over the summer, I realised that cooking without a freezer and oven/grill would be quite limiting for me (however *Crous* is the cheapest option). So, during July, when I visited Grenoble with my family, I went to see some apartments on the edge of campus which I had found on the website <https://www.appartager.com> However, be careful not to pay any money before you have seen the accommodation in the flesh, as there are some scams. The other option is private halls, which I understand to be very well equipped, although expensive and unsociable.

Whichever option you go for, I would advise living as close to campus as possible, or close to the tram lines B or C, especially if you plan on skiing or doing other sports, as the tram service is not that frequent early in the morning and late at night.

The following are a few things I think should be considered when choosing accommodation:

- Oven – halls do not have ovens
- Freezer – halls do not have freezers
- Guarantor – for some private rentals you will need a guarantor
- Room Insurance – sort this IMMEDIATELY (you have 48 hours after moving in by law)



Figure 1: Rue Tristan Bernard where I lived

- Secure bike storage – bike thefts are common in Grenoble, so this is very important if you plan on keeping/hiring a bike.

Bank Account

Other than being able to withdraw money when you first arrive, it would also be handy to have a French account ready before you go if you want to pay a deposit for accommodation. You could do this with an English account, but there will most likely be a fee.

Luckily, as my family travel to France I was able to use their French account for this purpose, until I had sorted my own out.

I decided to use the bank on campus (*Société Générale*), which I would not recommend, as I ended up paying for the account, though I thought I had it free for a year (turns out you still had to pay insurance).

My friend (also an Erasmus maths student) used *BNP Paribas*. His account was free, and they gave him a discount on insurance for his accommodation. Both of us had the shared experience that the administration side of things was slow and painful, but this is not uncommon in France!

Phone contract

It is useful to have a French mobile number in order to apply for *CAF* (French housing benefits for students), and any other online forms which don't allow enough digits for the country dialling code. I chose the company *Free Mobile*, who have a 12-month contract which costs 2€ per month, and 10€ to buy the SIM initially. You can use this to make calls to English landlines, but not English mobiles. Some mobiles can use two sims at once, so this may be worth considering. If you take a mobile across with you, make sure it is unlocked before you leave.

Transport

To Grenoble

By Car

I have done this journey once; it is very long!

By Train

This can be fairly cheap if booked in advance, however crossing Paris may be a bit stressful, especially if you have luggage.

By Aeroplane

Grenoble Airport is about 30-45 minutes coach journey from Grenoble train station. It is fairly small and is not open all year round. There is one coach company which does transfers between the airport and the station, which is *Actibus* (see airport website- they do not operate all year round). Prices for the transfer are fixed.

Lyon Airport is an hour's coach journey from Grenoble station. This is a larger airport and open all year round. *Ouibus* does regular coach transfers to Grenoble station. *Flixbus* also does coach transfers which can be much cheaper but less regular.

Book your coach transfer before flying, and check ticket prices as they can add a significant cost to your trip. Book plane tickets in advance to get the best deals, especially for the Christmas holidays.

Around Grenoble

Trams and busses

The public transport is very well run and good value for students in Grenoble. The trams and buses run on the same network and cover the whole city. Day and hour tickets are available from machines at most tram stops, and onboard buses. A one-month unlimited pass is available at the *Agence de Mobilité TAG* at 49 *Alsace Lorraine* for 15 euro per month, plus 5 euro the first time for the card itself, or at the *Tabac* on campus once term starts (beware, there will be huge queues the first few weeks in September at all the *agences*). You will need proof of age. Once you have a card it can be recharged at the machines at tram stops. It is also possible to pay for a whole year up front.

Métrovélo

Only available to pick up at the shop at the train station or on campus (only during term time). You will need a bank card for the 200€ deposit (money not taken). It costs 3€ per day to hire a bike, and there are deals for a week, a term, or the year.

If you have your own bike, be especially careful to lock the saddle and wheels, and use a D-lock for the frame.



Figure 2: Métrovélo

Inscriptions

You will receive email from Bérengère with poll for sign up times (check the time zone on the poll as this may be set by your computer and translate it one hour ahead for her automatically). Try and arrange for this appointment as soon as possible as once you have registered you will get your student card which will allow you to sign up for other things.

Modules

The first thing you have to decide, is if you want to take *Parcours A* (harder) or *Parcours B* (easier). My recommendation is to start in *Parcours A*, and then drop down to B if you so wish. If you are taking the year for credit at Warwick, I would highly recommend you stay on *Parcours A*, as otherwise you will be at a disadvantage when you return to Warwick for your 4th year.

I stayed on *Parcours A*, and I would say the first term's content you will have already studied at Warwick, but in a very different style of question. In the second term, you will start to see new content.



Figure 3: L'Institut Fourier

The course is split over two *semstres*, each comprising of 30 credits (*ECTS*). As an Erasmus student you may be able to transfer credits from one *semestre* to another.

Modules I took

Semestre 1

- *Français langue étrangère (FLE) (3 ECTS)*– this module is an intensive week-long course, and runs twice, in the week before term, and the first week of term. I recommend doing it in the week before term, so you don't miss any Maths. This module typically replaces *Anglais* which French students take in term 2.
- *Topologie A (12 ECTS)*
- *Algèbre A (12 ECTS)*
- *Volley-ball (3 ECTS)*
- *Programmation méthodes numériques (3 ECTS)*

Semestre 2

- *Calcul différentiel A (9 ECTS)*
- *Théorie de la mesure et introduction aux probabilités A (12 ECTS)*
- *Volley-ball (3 ECTS)*
- *Chinois (3 ECTS)* – sign up for languages is done by queuing up in the *Maison des Langues*, and a test before this if you are not an absolute beginner.

Grades

Each core maths module is examined by *contrôle continu (CC)*, which are invigilated by teachers (up to 3 exams during the term, the dates will not be set in stone until the day before), and by a big exam with invigilators etc. Either 50% of your grade will come from CCs, and 50% from the exam, or 100% from the exam, whichever is better.

Exams in France are marked out of 20, with 10/20 a pass. The average is set to be 10, so a lot of people fail, and retake the year. Achieving a 10/20 is very good, and roughly equivalent to getting 65% at Warwick. Because exams can be 4 hours long with only 20 marks available, you don't tend to get as many marks for working as you do at Warwick, so it is often better to try and get one whole question right than attempt several. In one CC we did, the 3rd question was worth 11/20, and only one person started it, so the rest of the class failed.

Health

To Take:

- EHC (assuming you are European)
- List of vaccines
- Past medical certificates (for sports/ exam arrangements)
- Past ECGs (if you have had any, it speeds up the medical certificate process for sports- if not you will have one there)

Medical certificate (for sport)

- You need to see a nurse to arrange an appointment with a doctor
- Appointment may be on campus or at Presqu'île
- You will have to have an ECG
- You need your records of past vaccines

Medical certificate (for exam arrangements)

- You need to see a nurse to arrange an appointment with a doctor
- Take past medical certificates with you

Medical centre

- You see a nurse who will decide if you see a doctor (you need your EHIC and student card)
- Appointments to see a nurse are not made in advance, you just turn up
- Turn right as you go in, take a seat at the *infirmière*
- You need to figure out how many people were there before you to know when it is your turn
- It is free to see a nurse or doctor, but you will have to pay for prescriptions.

Disability services

- *Service Accueil Handicap (SAH)*
- Request exam arrangements/ help via online form
- You need to see doctor on campus to get a medical certificate to hand in at the SAH and to the Maths department

Insurance

Warwick provides some “travel” insurance, check this before you go.

Hospital

If the *Centre de Santé* on Campus is not open, or it is an emergency, you can go to the *Urgences Adultes* at the hospital. You will need your EHIC. You will be sent a bill by post if you don't pay there and then.

Places to eat on Campus

- *Izly* card - like 'Eating at Warwick'
- Used in *Crous* restaurants
- Food on campus is cheaper than at Warwick
- Some outlets only open for lunchtime
- *Tour Irma* near the maths building is good for buying sandwiches etc. at lunchtime

Making friends

- *IntEGre* is the international student's organisation, they run an integration programme with all sorts of activities at the start of both terms, however most people you meet will have better English than French, and will not speak in French
- Joining a sports club/ the orchestra is a good way to make French speaking friends
- Maths students- people from *Prepa* elsewhere, are also new to Grenoble, and so it is easier to make friends with them.
- Living with French *colocataires* is naturally a good way to improve your French.

Sport

- You can do one sport *noté* (for credit) and one sport *non note* (not for credit)
- For most sports you sign up on *mon compte suaps* (your online sports account) via *LEO* (online student portal)
- Need to have registered to do this
- Otherwise go to the sports fair to sign up



Figure 4: My UGA 2nd term volleyball team

Sport Noté

You can take one sport for credit per *semestre* (3 ECTS). It is usually free (except for equipment fees etc), and you get priority in the allocations of courses. You get 2 *vœux*.

Sport Non-noté

These classes may be with people who take sport for credit. There is sometimes a small fee for the class, in addition to the cost of equipment etc. You do not have priority in allocations of places, but still get 2 *vœux*.

Compétition FFSU

In order to compete in university sport (even against other UGA teams) you will need a licence, which costs 30€ for the year, and covers as many sports as your medical certificate signs you off for. You will need to get a medical certificate from the university health centre – it is available to print online (same form for all sports).

Medical certificates

- Need to be in French, and recent
- External sports may need their own format of health certificate- check and print, and do it all in one go
- Technically the university health centre will only do sport *noté* certificates, but you can get them to do others at the same time.
- Do this asap after arriving- even before you have signed up for sports, as once term starts there will be a massive waiting time, and a delay in obtaining your certificate could mean you miss matches which penalises your grade.

Skiing

Buying Skis

I would recommend buying skis second-hand, in case they get stolen or damaged. If you do buy new skis, make sure you insure them.

- *Troc Sport*
- *La Boîte à Skis*

Uglisse

This is the university ski club. It is well worth signing up as it is extremely good value for money. They also run lessons which are free and taught by students. This is a good way to ski with a group if you haven't met any skiers of your ability. They also run coaches to the resorts where they do lessons.

When you are skiing with a *Uglisse* instructor, you are insured, however if you are alone you are not. *Uglisse* sell insurance for 10€.



Figure 5: Les Deux Alpes

Events

- *UGA C'est Party !*
- *Coupe Icare*
- *La Descente des Alpapes – Grenoble*
- *Le Millésime - Festival oenologique et musical de Grenoble*
- *Fête des Lumières*
- *Les Marchés de Noël de Grenoble*



Figure 6: UGA C'est Party !

Places to visit

- *Lyon*
- *Annécý*
- *Genève*
- *Vizille*



Figure 7: Annécý

Useful contacts

- Bérengère Duc, *Correspondante des relations internationales*
Contact *Bérengère* for anything regarding administration.
berengere.duc@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr
- Grégory Berhuy, *Responsable pédagogique de la L3*
Contact *Monsieur Berhuy* for queries relating to the course.

gregory.berhuy@ujf-grenoble.fr

- Catriona Maclean, *Responsable des relations internationales*
Contact Catriona (native English speaker) for queries regarding module changes, modules you are allowed to do.

catriona.maclean@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr

- Sarah Hanrahan (myself)
I am happy to answer any queries, for my personal email after 2020, please ask the Maths Department at Warwick.

S.Hanrahan@warwick.ac.uk

Useful websites

<https://www-fourier.ujf-grenoble.fr/~l3maths/>

<https://www.appartager.com>

<https://www.grenoble-airport.com/en/access/shuttle>

<https://www.integre-grenoble.org/>

<https://www.grenoble-tourisme.com/en/>

<https://www.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/la-vie-de-campus/vie-pratique/se-connecter/leo-l-intranet-etudiant/leo-l-intranet-etudiant-244383.kjsp>