

Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg
Erfahrungsbericht Auslandsstudium

Den angefertigten Bericht (mind. 2 Seiten) bitte per Mail als DOC-Datei an boryana.klinkova@fau.de (Europa) oder annemarie.doepper@fau.de (Übersee) vom Referat für Internationale Angelegenheiten schicken. Danke für Ihr Engagement für die Nachfolger!

Persönliche Angaben	
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Gastuniversität:	ESSCA Ecole supérieure des sciences commerciales d'Angers
Gastland:	Frankreich
Studiengang an der Gastuniversität:	Management
Aufenthaltszeitraum (WS, SS oder Jahr):	SS 2014
Darf der Bericht veröffentlicht werden?	(Nichtzutreffendes löschen) JA
Wenn JA, dürfen Name und E-Mail veröffentlicht werden?	(Nichtzutreffendes löschen) Beides JA

1. Vorbereitung (Planung, Organisation und Bewerbung bei der Gasthochschule)

I applied for a place at ESSCA in December 2012 through the WiSo. At some point in January I was invited to an interview, which was held entirely in English. Apart from me there was one more student, but I guess this wasn't the only round of interviews. The questions were rather general, and we were asked why have chosen this university, what do we intended to do in France, what we knew about that country, etc. Once I was selected, the confirmation from ESSCA was straight forward.

From an organizational point of view, I needed to find subjects that can be acknowledged at the FAU. This was rather easy, because at ESSCA they had a very exhaustive and up-to-date course catalogue. You could see the exact contents of each course which made it easy to negotiate with the professors at FAU with regard to the similarity of the courses. You could also see which courses are entirely tough in English. So, without any French, I was able to acknowledge 15 ECTS worth of subjects, which however were represented by 22 ECTS worth of subjects at ESSCA. Still, we were highly recommended to make at least 30 ECTS at the French school, so I had to take two more classes, 6 ECTS each. They are not so important though, and one doesn't necessarily need to pass them at all costs. For example I took a course in 'Intercultural and diversity management', which doesn't have a thing to do with information systems.

2. Anreise / Visum (Flug, Bahn)

The quickest way to get to there is by a plane to Paris and then a TGV to Angers. Depending on the available offers, one could expect to pay between 70 and a 100 Euro for a one-way flight to CDG. Then you would need to get to the train station Paris Montparnasse, which is in the southern part of the city, and catch the TGV Atlantique to Nantes. Angers would be the last but one stop. If booked in advance, the lowest price is 25 Euro, but in general be ready to pay up to 50 Euro one way.

I came with a bus, because was late enough and the tickets were too expensive. I took Eurolines from Nuremberg to Angers for about 70 Euro. Smarter would have been however to only reach Paris with a bus and then use the TGV, because the Paris-Angers takes about 6 hours by bus and an hour and a half with the high-speed train.

The same options apply for the way back.

3. Unterkunft (Wohnheim, privat)

As exchange students we have a priority for the student dorm places, so getting a place is not too difficult. The prices however might seem high on a first glance. However, students from Europe would normally get a housing subsidy (CAF), which on average reduces the prices to a decent 'German' level. I stayed in a residence called 'Volta', which is less than 2 min. walking from the university, but in the same time very far from the center where everyone else lives. There is a nice and cheap residence there called 'Couffon Pavot', but it is mainly reserved for students from other continents, so the chances to get a place there if you study in Germany are slim.

If you know French and you could figure out a place to stay in the first few weeks, you could also look for private housing. You may not have the right of a housing subsidy in that case, but the prices can be much lower than in a dorm. Plus, you could find a place in a typical arty old French building, which would make your stay absolutely awesome.

4. Studium (Lehrveranstaltungen / Stundenplan) sowie Sprachkurse (kostenlos, kostenpflichtig) an der Gastuniversität

All the courses take place in a single building, which can be very confusing and maybe spoiling for a FAU student. All the classes have a mandatory attendance, so skipping more than 15% of them would result in lower grades. In general, neither the students nor the professors make a difference between local and exchange students. This could be very motivating, by the way! Depending on your classes there might be an overlap of some courses, but if you only take master or bachelor classes, this is less likely.

There are language classes which are for free. You don't even have to buy a book, since the teacher gives you all the necessary print-outs.

The quality of the classes varies. Some of them are quite classy and structured, but I had two courses where the teaching quality was way too low. Lot's of group work is included, and this gets annoying from one point on. You would also need to these presentations with French students which have a different approach to group work,

so you might need some adjusting. At the end however, the effort you have to put is not too high compared to the one at the FAU.

5. Betreuung an der Gastuniversität (International Office und Fachbereich)

The international officer Nadege Picquenard and her assistant Katie Hart were very helpful! When coming to France, one might get lost in documentation, and rules, and government officials that do not speak English, but those two people above made this whole ordeal look very easy.

We also have a supervisor for each student. Mine was Thomas Hoerber, he was also very helpful and friendly. The supervisors are the people that you go to when you experience any sort of problems.

6. Ausstattung der Gastuniversität (Bibliothek, Computerräume, etc.)

There was a small library and many computer rooms. As a student you get to print 25 Euro worth of print-outs for free, which was quite nice. One might need to get used to the French keyboards in the beginning though.

7. Alltag & Freizeit (Sehenswertes, Kulinarisches, Geld-Abheben, Handy, Jobs)

Angers is in one of the less popular parts of France. However, there are many things to see here and in the surroundings. It has a nice chateau and many typical French streets and houses, a few very large and picturesque parks. The town is in the Loire valley, famous for its Loire Valley castles. These are a number of stunning old French palaces that must be seen once you are in France. The town is also relatively close to other tourist places like Mont Saint Michelle and La Rochelle.

From a food point of view, Angers and France as a whole spoiled me very efficiently. I am nowhere close to trying all specialties of the French cuisine, but I've had my fair share of cheese, snails, sea snails, oysters, muscles, galettes, French crepes, local specialties, etc. When you go to the supermarket for the first time, you might get shocked how the prices of the food you eat in Germany are up to three times higher. However, your eating habits are changing completely, once you settle down in Angers. There is a Saturday market for sea food, which can be very cheap and the products you buy there are amazingly tasty and healthy.

There are enough ATMs, and some of the banks are partners to some of the German ones, so you could avoid the 3.5 Euro withdraw fee if you inform yourself in advance. There are a few phone operators and it might be useful to get a contract with no deadline (sans engagement), because the prepaid cards are not prepaid in the actual sense, but allow you to use them for a number of days. Thus they can get much more expensive than a local contract or even using your German phone number.

As far as jobs are concerned, it is not as common to work as a student as it is in Germany. As an exchange student one should better forget about this possibility at all. In the best case you need good French and lots of documents.

8. Finanzielles (Lebenshaltungskosten, Stipendien)

Depending on your spending, Angers could be a bit more expensive than Germany. Still, there are a few positive aspects. France is a socialist country and you get to pay

your rent at the end of the month instead of its beginning. Also, you get bicycles for free from the city of Angers, which is a good way to save the 30 Euro that you would otherwise give for a city transport card each month. If you are under 25 or 26, most of the museums and chateaus would be for free. If you are older though, don't expect student reductions, you would need to pay 10-12 for nearly all of them.

However, eating out and traveling throughout France can be costly. Using the local version of Mitfahrgelegenheiten (BlaBlaCar) and organizing trips together with fellow students might be an option to reduce the costs a little.

If you have never done an ERASMUS semester before, you can get an ERASMUS scholarship. It is not high enough to finance your stay, but it's nice picket money and could very well finance your cheese and wine needs. There is also a 250 Euro per month scholarship offered by the Bayerisch-Franzoesisches Hochschulzentrum, which however is reduced if you get the ERASMUS one. So, the maximum amount that you could rely on if you are lucky is 250 Euro per month.

9. Fazit (beste und schlechteste Erfahrung)

It is tough to find the best experience in France. One evening we were at Montmartre in Paris sitting at the stairs, looking at the city lights below, drinking beer and eating croissants, when it became windy so we had to move a bit further down to one of the small Parisian streets and go on doing the same thing. There people would pass by us and tell us 'bon appetit' almost all the time, which was heart melting. The worst experience was probably not too bad in the long run. After having visited the Chateau de Chambord, we somehow forgot we have to return the rented cars in time and overstepped the mileage with nearly 200 kilometers. So this was stressful for its time, but we got to see the Disney-inspiring castle.

So, let me sum up. There are good clichés and bad clichés about France. The reality is the very appealing mixture of all the good cliché being true (cuisine, art, etc) and all the bad ones being false, plus a number of pleasant surprises that do not fall in any clichés. I didn't see any mimes or musicians playing accordion. I also didn't have problem with people not speaking English – the truth is they do speak it, you only need to ask it in the right way. Instead of asking 'Do you speak English?' you could ask 'Parlez-vous anglais?' which instantly makes everybody pretty proficient in that language. Also, the word is out there that French people are very hard to deal with, arrogant and not very open to strangers. In fact nothing can be further from the truth, the French people are awesome!

10. Wichtige Ansprechpartner und Links

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- ESSCA course catalogue - <http://sites.essca.fr/devspe/dg/catalogue/menu.asp>
- BFHZ scholarship - <http://www.bfhz.uni-muenchen.de/de/foerderung/unsere-foerderprogramme/studierende/index.html>
- Loire valley castles - <http://loire-chateaux.co.uk/>