Personal information

Name: Eric Cho  
Major: Applied Economics and Management  
Name of host university: IÉSEG School of Management  
Period/Time of Exchange: Spring 2017 (5 months)  
Address of blog if you had one: N/A  

Practical Advice

Visa

A visa is required to study abroad in France. To obtain my visa, I had to visit the French consulate for my area, which was in NYC with the necessary documentation. After an initial meeting, I had to return to the consulate in NYC at a later date to pick up my visa. The visa process took about 3-4 weeks to complete. It can be hard to get an appointment at the French consulate because there are no available appointments but the system is regularly updated with new appointment dates.

Housing

Housing was not arranged by my host university, but there were residences that had affiliations with the school (Les Estudines Flandre), which were close to the school and pretty nice. It was not very difficult to arrange housing but I recommend that students look for housing options early to have more options. I paid 570 euros a month for a single studio room, which included a desk, sofa bed, kitchen, fridge, and bathroom.

Arrival

There was an orientation and a buddy program. I missed orientation due to a schedule conflict with a Cornell program. The buddy program was great for some and mediocre for others. It really depends on how much effort you and the buddy make to keep the relationship going.

Academics

Courses (How did you enroll in classes, could you pre-enroll? What classes did you take? How were the classes graded (exams, presentations, assignments)?)

I chose my courses before applying to study abroad, as I had to get the approved by Cornell first. I mostly took courses in finance, but also took a few marketing, information systems and French course. Grading depends on the class, but most of them usually involved participation and an exam or project (sometimes both).

Difference between studying at Cornell and at your host university

Courses are organized differently, due to the different number of credit hours per course at Cornell and in France. So, I took 15 courses in France, but each class met for less hours.

Life Abroad

Language

Language courses of different levels are offered, and I could manage my way around the school with English, but it is a definite plus to be conversational in French in school and for life in France in general. It can become quite troublesome to have to use a translator for everything.

Health and Safety (What advice do you have for future students regarding their health and safety? What resources were available for you?)

Health and safety were not an issue for me, but if something does happen, the French social security system is great.
Overall exchange experience (anything you would like future exchange students to know about your study abroad semester)

It may feel uncomfortable at first, but that is you being out of your comfort zone (and learning/growing). Embrace it.

Additional Tips for future students

Packing (What did you not bring that you wish you had? What items do you recommend not bringing?)

I packed sufficiently, but I recommend not bringing too many things, as I ended up buying many things in France and had an overweight suitcase on my flight back!

Anything else that students should be aware when studying at your host location

Lille is a student city so it has great vibes. It also has a very rich Flemish culture.