

THE AMERICAN  
BUSINESS SCHOOL

PARIS

## ***International BBA***



# STUDENT'S GUIDE TO PARIS ***2010 – 2011***

**AMERICAN BUSINESS SCHOOL**

12 rue Alexandre Parodi, 75010 Paris, France

tel: +33.1.40.03.15.04 fax: +33.1.40.03.15.05

e-mail: [absparis@groupe-igs.org](mailto:absparis@groupe-igs.org)

[www.absparis.org](http://www.absparis.org)

## PREFACE

Welcome to the American Business School and to Paris.

This booklet is designed to allow you to prepare and make your stay in Paris a most positive and memorable one. Working your way around the city, the country and for those of you who plan to travel further, Europe, should be a great experience.

We have incorporated the experiences and comments of your predecessors and peers, Americans for the most part. Any comments or suggestions are willingly accepted.

We advise incoming students to read this booklet carefully, and to pay particular attention to the sections devoted to housing, the *carte de séjour*, money and health Insurance. By doing so, you ought to avoid or at least reduce the main sources of frustration and worry that have affected most international students arriving in Paris.

See you soon in Paris!

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# I. France, Paris and IGS University

## 1. France

France is the largest country in Western Europe (549,000 km<sup>2</sup> 212,000 sq miles). It is located in the heart of Europe and in the middle of the Northern hemisphere. Its size and location between northern and southern Europe leads to strong regional diversity, and a French Catalan is arguably closer to a Spanish Catalan than to a Frenchman from northern France. This regional diversity is reflected in accents, customs, and lifestyles that change considerably from one area to the next.

Its 64 million inhabitants (1.1% of the world population) ranked it the 17th most populated country in the world. The population is aging gradually. Immigrants, 45% of whom originate from North Africa and West Africa, now account for more than 8% of the population.

Administratively, the country is divided into 22 different regions which encompass 95 different *départements* which in turn encompass 36,433 *communes*, creating three levels of local administration and representation.

Nicolas Sarkozy was elected President of France in May 2007. He is a representative of the UMP party and replaced outgoing President Jacques Chirac who was in office for 12 years.

Domestic issues currently focus on unemployment, the rate of social security levies, income tax rates, personal security (though crime statistics in France are much lower than American ones), immigration, school reforms and agriculture.

France has the lowest inflation rate in Europe, resulting from nearly ten years of tight fiscal and monetary control and financial deregulation. However, the economy, despite having come out of a prolonged recession, is having difficulty establishing significant growth levels.

Monetarily, France has adopted the Euro which went into effect in January 1999. Paper money and coins went into circulation in January 2002.

## 2. Paris

Paris was founded in the third century B.C. by the Parisii. It was conquered by the Romans in 52 A.D. and re-baptized "Lutece" until its original name was officially used again in the year 360 A.D.. After the decline of the Roman Empire and about 7 centuries of strife in Europe, it started developing the shape we see today.

Construction of Notre Dame Cathedral was begun in 1163. The "*Les Halles*" outdoor markets is developed at about the same time. The Sorbonne was founded about a century later. A lot of the monuments one sees now in Paris date from the 16th and 17th centuries: the Louvre, the City Hall, the Hospitals *La Salpêtrière* and *Invalides*, the *College de France*, the *place Royale*, the *place Dauphine*.

The current architecture and planning, especially in the west and in the center, is very much the result of ruthless city planning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century after the French Revolution and uprisings in the first half of the century. The authorities decided then to create the *boulevards* network, primarily to facilitate the mobility of troops in the city.

It is a pleasant city that provides tremendous cultural and leisure opportunities for all. Living in Paris is also surprisingly easy. One is rarely more than a stone's throw from a shopping district and all the international students have remarked how comfortable and safe one feels in Paris.

Paris and the greater Paris area comprise over 10 million people. Only one other city in Europe, London, is as large.

Paris is divided into la *grande banlieue* the outer suburbs, la *moyenne banlieue* and la *petite banlieue*. The town itself is encircled by the *périphérique* (the Beltway), a ring road that surrounds an oval shaped zone about 8 kilometers long and 6 kilometers wide. There are about 2,200,000 inhabitants in the city of Paris itself.

The city is divided into 20 different *arrondissements*, or districts, which are called the *1er*, *2ème* and so on. The first is in the center of Paris and the others spread around it in a snail shell shape.

Each district elects its mayor who sits on the town council. One of them is elected to the Paris City Hall or *Hôtel de Ville de Paris* and is thus designated as the city's mayor.

For practical purposes, and when dealing with the administration, you will often be directed to the *arrondissement* office of the administration you are dealing with.

As in most cities in the northern hemisphere, the up market areas are the west and southwest sides of town. The limiting effect of the *périphérique* however is creating a city that is generally up market with very few low class areas, as the people who wish to stay within Paris can only move east or north.

Paris has the benefit of an extremely efficient public transport system, which includes the famed *métro* (subway), buses, Regional Express Trains (R.E.R.), night buses and even cable cars or trams. Inner city dwellers can easily do without a car.

### **3. IGS University**

IGS University was founded in 1976. Over 5,000 students are enrolled in IGS' undergraduate and graduate degrees programs, and an additional 5,000 students are enrolled in professional and managerial development programs. It now comprises four downtown campuses in Paris, three in Lyon in southeastern France and one in Toulouse in south-central France.

The University consists of a group of eight specialized business schools which fall under four main headings: Business and Marketing, Management and Human Resources Management, Health Management, and Computers and Office administration.

IGS University has established a dynamic international network and is involved in close cooperation with over thirty colleges, universities and business schools on four continents.

IGS University offers over 45 undergraduate and graduate level degrees, including a fully accredited BBA and MBA in partnership with business schools and universities in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, California, North Carolina, New York, and Virginia.

Further details and a general catalogue can be obtained on request from the International Programs Office.

## II. What do I do on arrival?

### 1. What do I do at the airport?

You will arrive at Orly Airport (ORY on your ticket) or Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG on your ticket, also known as Roissy Airport), which are the two airports that serve Paris.

If you want to phone upon arrival, you will need to buy a phone card (*télécarte*). Very few phones in France function without these. These are time-deduction cards that you insert into the phone to make a call. They are equipped with a computer chip that deducts the number of time units for each phone call. They can be purchased at the airport (inquire at Information) and in town at post offices, tobacco shops, and newsstands.

#### a) Orly airport - south of Paris

##### **By bus:**

There is an AirFrance shuttle bus that takes you in to *Invalides* station where you will find taxis. It runs every 10 minutes and the ride lasts about 45 minutes. Inner city taxi fares cost between 7 and 40 €, depending on the distance and traffic conditions.

*Orlybus* will take you to Denfert Rochereau in the south of the city.

Check the price at <http://www.ratp.info/informer/tarif.php>

##### **By train:**

You can also take a shuttle bus (no charge) from the airport to the RER (*Réseau Express Régional*) station where you can catch a train. You will be on the "C" line of the RER, and you can leave the train at *Gare d'Austerlitz*, *Saint Michel*, *Musée d'Orsay* or *Invalides*, which are all stations along the Seine and inside Paris. The most central one is *Saint Michel*.

Finally, you can take the *Orlyval*, a new line that gets you into *Châtelet* station in the heart of Paris or *Gare du Nord* (near campus) in about 30 minutes.

Check the price at <http://www.ratp.info/informer/tarif.php>

##### **"Door-to door" service:**

"*PariShuttle*" mini-van service operates 7 days/7: Same rates from Charles de Gaulle and Orly airports 20 € per person (when 2 or more people) or 25 € for one person. Group discounts, no extra charge for luggage. It's best to reserve ahead.

Tel: 01 53 39 18 18, web site: <http://www.parishuttle.com>.

##### **Taxi:**

A taxi into town from Orly costs between 30 and 50 €, depending on the exact destination and traffic conditions. Taxi drivers are honest and reliable in Paris, so don't worry, they won't take you for a "ride". They charge, however, for luggage (1 € per piece). The details of the fares are printed in English on a sticker placed on the backdoor windows. A tip of about 10 % is customary but not mandatory.

If you want to plunge right in, you can also take the métro at *Invalides*. (See Métro section below)

#### b) Charles de Gaulle Airport - north of Paris

##### **By bus:**

There is an AirFrance shuttle bus, which will drop you off in town at *Porte Maillot*, the first stop (more convenient for taxis) or *Place Charles de Gaulle Etoile* (second and last stop, more convenient for the métro), where the *Arc de Triomphe* is located.



### **III. Essential facts on housing, getting settled, and money**

#### **1. Housing**

The school will help you to find accommodation through a network of individual landlords and agencies specialized in short term furnished accommodation or through agreements we have with private student residences.

Research on the current students who are living in Paris indicates that the amount they pay is higher than what students pay, for example, in a city like Philadelphia.

The average monthly rent paid by international students last year was about 650 €

In France, when you work through an agency, the tenant pays the agency fee. Last year, very few students paid an agency fee. If they did, they paid about 5 weeks rent, or between 12 % - 15 % of the value of the total lease.

Those of you who have lived in New York or Hong Kong will be more accustomed than others to the size of apartments and the rents one finds in Paris. First, if you rent a two-room apartment, you are renting an apartment with one living room and one bedroom. A two-bedroom apartment is a three-room apartment and so on. Students in France tend to share apartments either by establishing two or three individual living spaces in a two or three room apartment.

Do not expect a fully equipped kitchen, especially in the smaller apartments, where an oven is really a luxury, and the kitchen can be a walk-in closet type affair.

The bathrooms will be smaller too, and a shower is much less commonplace than a bathtub. You may also discover the joys of the *baignoire-sabot*, literally "shoe-bath," in which one sits rather than reclines. Showers are rare. You will, however, usually find a hand held shower contraption that you can use to shower in the bathtub. Water gets all over the floor, as shower curtains haven't really caught on either in Paris. It's all part of the fun and allows you to clean the floor.

Closets don't exist either, especially in buildings built before the fifties, so don't make them a prerequisite.

The general state of the apartment may surprise you. It usually has to be cleaned when moving in. Furnished apartments, however, are usually cleaned between tenants.

The apartments are furnished and come with or without linen. If linen is provided, it is usually just one set of sheets, so bring linen anyway. American-sized single-bed sheets are a bit large for French single beds, but that does not pose a real problem. Towels are never supplied. Cutlery and some kitchenware are also provided

Finally, you will most likely rent an apartment in a building that doesn't have an elevator. Don't worry, you will find that one gets used to climbing three or five flights of stairs surprisingly quickly.

#### **2. Apartment Costs**

The cost of an apartment depends on the location, state, size, class of the building, view, local amenities, floor etc.

A studio is between 600 € and 1000 €. A two-room apartment is between 750 € and 2,000 €. You can budget an approximate cost of 500 € per person in shared accommodation. Individual accommodation is more expensive.

All these estimates are for **furnished apartments**. The quality and style of the furnishing and equipment provided will obviously impact on the rent. These estimates do not include the costs of utilities. Add from 10 % to 15 % on average per month, more in the winter and less in the summer to account for heating. Very few, if any, apartments are air conditioned.

Although occasional exceptions to the above information exist, they are difficult to find, and identifying them takes time. It has happened, though.

### **3. Finding a place to stay**

If you elect not to use temporary housing previously recommended (page 7), and if you have not made other arrangements, we will direct you to a hotel. Prices start around 50-70 € per night, depending on the type of and category of hotel.

Once you have established your requirements - if you want to share, how many want to share, your budget etc.- we will assist you in identifying suitable rental opportunities and provide a support person to assist you in establishing an agreement with the landlord or the agency.

This process will take between one day and three or four weeks, depending on your requirements.

Typically it is the student who insists on living alone and who has a limited budget who takes the longest to get settled. Students who share and can make up their minds quickly rarely take more than two or three days.

### **4. Rental Agreements**

If you rent an apartment, you will be expected to pay a security deposit (1 months' rent) and the first month in advance. When you visit the apartment, have with you proof and copies of your identity, financial resources, and a statement from IGS proving you are a student (which IGS will provide).

If the apartment is rented through an agency, or a representative, it is normal in France for the tenant to pay a fee, roughly 1 month's rent. For short stays (4 months) however, you can also operate through an agency that builds its fee into the monthly rent.

Rent is usually collected at the beginning of the month. Be sure to establish clearly with your landlord when you are leaving. Send a registered letter to cancel the lease within the time frame indicated on the contract (usually a 3-months notice).

### **5. Initial outlays. How much money should I bring?**

The experience with current and past international students has usually been that they do not bring enough for the initial move-in costs.

So, let's take a worst case scenario and imagine you have rented a 920 € two-room apartment at the beginning of the month through an agency. The agency will expect:

1st month's rent:	915 €
2-month security deposit:	915 €
Agency fee:	1,068 €
Insurance:	<u>153 €</u>
Total initial outlay	3,051 €

To that you should add at least two months subsistence, say 763 €, and include the cost of initial hotel accommodation, say 230 €.

**So, ideally, you should have in hand 4000 € if you plan on spending 920 € a month for rent.** Bear in mind that the security deposit which represents about a quarter of this initial outlay is returned to you at the end of your stay if you return the apartment in good condition.

If two of you are sharing the apartment, your initial costs will be half of the fees above (457,5 € rent...) for a total of 2136 €. Add in to that your initial hotel accommodation and subsistence, and **you will need 3102 € in hand if you are sharing the apartment.** These figures are realistic.

The easiest, safest and most accessible way to bring that amount of money with you is to bring to hand a Visa Card.

These initial housing figures are in addition to the BBA program tuition fees, if applicable.

## 6. Banking facilities and credit cards

If you are staying in Paris for more than a year or more, you will probably want to open a bank account. We can introduce you to a local bank which will accept to open an account for you. We advise you to verify how your sponsor can send money, and especially which is the cheapest and fastest way. Bear in mind that checks and money wired from abroad to a French bank account can take at least a week if not two or three to clear and arrive in your account.

If you are coming for less than a year, we would advise you to simply rely on credit cards, and cash cards with ATM machines. You can pay for anything with a credit card in France, and it is rare to find a place of business that will not accept them. Be sure to make provisions at home to feed money into your account and pay off your credit card charges. Also, check with your bank and see how much money you can withdraw per day and per week. If this appears to be too low, ask your bank to increase the limit. Check also what transaction fee you will be charged when withdrawing money from an ATM machine.

## 7. Insurance and local taxes

When you rent an apartment, unfurnished or furnished long-term (more than a month), you are required by law to insure it unless the landlord has already made provisions.

The standard insurance package costs between 100 € and 200 € a year depending on the number of rooms in the apartment and covers you for fire and water damage, theft and also personal liability. As you are here for less than a year, the insurer should give you back the prorated equivalent.

## 8. Landlords

Landlords' attitudes are different from those you might expect. They tend to be quite possessive about their property and tend to feel they have the right to inquire about your personal life and habits. If they rent a two bed apartment or studio, they expect only two people to live there. In other words, the fact that you have rented a place doesn't necessarily give you the right to do what you want.

They can for instance ask you to leave if the *conciergerie*, Parisian equivalent of a caretaker, tells them that you have been organizing wild parties all the time or having twenty people sleep over, or that two people slept on the landing while waiting for you to get home. So, keep on the right side of the *conciergerie*, if there is one. More about the *conciergerie* is in paragraph 10 below.

The landlord will expect to deal with one person only. If there are several of you in the apartment, they may want to see all of you initially to check you out, but will want one person only to act as the tenant and to accept those responsibilities and obligations.

Finally, we advise you to deal openly and fairly with your landlord. If you promise, say, to pay rent by the 5th of the month, keep your promise. The more you abide by the terms of your agreement, the less potential trouble you will have.

## 9. Electricity, telephone, and settling in

When you rent an apartment, you may find the electricity and gas and telephone cut off. In that case, go to the relevant business offices: the *EDF/GDF* for the electricity and gas, and *France Télécom* for the telephone. Bring your identification (passport with visa), and a copy of the rental contract. You will have to wait in your apartment one morning or afternoon for the *EDF* and *France Télécom* representatives to come by and to connect the utilities and/or phone. In both cases, knowing the name of the previous tenant can speed up the installations.

The cost of the *EDF* (electricity) hook-up depends on whether there is electricity in the apartment when you arrive. If there is, the account is simply registered in your name and you do not pay anything. If the previous account has been closed, and the electricity turned off, you will pay a hook-up charge.

As of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007, other electricity providers have been allowed to supply private residences. At the date we updated this guide, it was too early to be able to provide you with more information about alternative providers.

Most students simply get a mobile or cell phone and forego the installation of a landline. Rates and equipment prices are too varied to be listed here. You may want an Internet high speed connection. Numerous providers offer packages that include high speed internet access, unlimited phone calls in France and cable TV at prices that start at 30 € per month.

**To call from a phone booth**, you must have a phone card, or *télécarte*, which can be purchased at the post office, tobacco shops, or book stands.

## **10. La concierge**

A lot of buildings still have a *concierge* or *gardienne* (building manager). If there is one, a little gift is normal when moving in and at the New Year. Gifts in kind are accepted, but a financial gratification is appreciated more. Count on 25 € minimum. The concierge is usually a she, called *Madame*, and normally has responsibility for cleaning the entrance, stairs and distributing mail.

If you get on well with her, which may involve some diplomacy on your part, she will usually take your keys to give to the *EDF* or *France Télécom* when they come, and take in large deliveries. This is a handy service which will allow you not to miss class! Let her know if you are going to give a party, if a friend from home is staying with you for some time, or if you are going to be gone.

She will appreciate being warned about what is going on in the building. If you do not get along well with her, beware. She can make life hard just by not accepting to do little services that are not mandatory, or by bad mouthing you to the landlord.

## **11. Television, hifi, radio and electrical appliances**

You can rent TVs from audio video retail rental networks that can be found throughout the city. If you rent a TV, the rental company will declare you to the collecting office for a TV licence, and you will have to pay a TV tax, or *redevance*. However, it will be cheaper to buy a TV than to rent one. You can pick up a small color TV for about 120 € in the large hypermarkets, for example. The shop from which you purchase your TV will also declare you for the *redevance*.

If you are a music freak, or can't live without an answering machine, bring as much home electronics with you as possible, as prices are much more expensive in France. If you are bringing appliances check whether you need voltage converters. France operates under a 220 volt/50 cycle system. You may also need to plan for French plugs on your appliances as a lot of foreign ones do not fit and do not meet French security standards. Converter plugs are readily available in large home improvement stores.

## **12. Staying with a family**

It is possible to stay with a family in Paris. A word of warning, though, is necessary. The average Parisian family is quite small, and may comprise one or no children. Most often, through family stays, one finds an individual or a couple who wish to sublet a room in their apartment and who are interested in meeting foreign nationals.

Finding a family in which there is a student of your age doing studies equivalent to yours is next to impossible as young people tend to move out as soon as possible, especially in Paris. However, if the family experience is really important to you, it is usually possible to find a family with children in the suburbs.

If you are staying with a family, don't forget that priorities are different in France. Friction and tension can be created by guests not turning off lights when leaving a room or leaving the heating turned up during the day when they are not there. You guessed it, the French are energy conscious.

Food is an important part of French culture and the French will really want you to try specialities. If you find yourself in front of something unusual, be polite and say something like "I have never eaten this before." Try it, unless religious or other deep convictions prohibit you! It won't kill you and who knows, you may like it. Conversely, they will be happy to try something that you cook, so don't hesitate to offer to make a national dish from your country or whatever you know how to cook.

Meals apart from breakfast are a communal sit down affair, and you don't just turn up when you feel like it to eat something. If you think you are going to be late, it is better to warn your family. They will very often not start to eat before you arrive unless you tell them you are going to be late. It is a good idea to help when meals are being prepared or after. Also, do not help yourself to things in the fridge unless invited specifically, and even then, tell them that you took something. You should try to adapt to the dress code in your family, which may be more formal than you are used to. Smoking habits will differ from family to family. If this is an issue for you, check out the situation before committing yourself.

When living with a family, you will be sharing space with people. Be careful you are not monopolizing someone's favorite armchair, or the bathroom at a crucial time. Remember also to lock the bathroom door in France in order to avoid embarrassing situations...

You will also be living with a group of people who have their customs and behavior standards. You may discover that you forfeit breakfast if you get up after 10:00 am. They may consider it rude to listen to a walkman in the living room or watch TV during a meal. Adapt to the family. And even if it seems punitively difficult, remember that you will only be staying there for a few months.

People do not usually "sleep over" in France. So do not ask friends overnight, unless you think they will not mind. And even then, check first.

Also, if you travel, let them know about your schedule and any change in your plans. Play the game. Your family may organize something just because you are there (an evening at the theatre or a trip to Disneyland Paris for example). You may hate the idea, or have better things to do, but relax and enjoy it. Otherwise they might feel insulted. Be prepared to discuss issues in a non-confrontational way and to change your habits or behavior if necessary. Once again, you are only staying four months. You can put up with it.

The cost of a family stay ranges between 20 and 40 € per day and includes breakfast. An evening meal can usually be provided for an extra nominal cost.

## IV. Identity and the *carte de séjour* (resident's card)

### 1. The *carte de séjour*

By law in France any foreign individual, in any situation and at any time of the day or night has to be able to give proof of his identity. As in your own country, you may be asked for your identity in many different situations: changing money, for certain company visits, establishing your age if you want to qualify for a special age related tariff, using a credit card, registering for an exam, and maybe even during a spot check by the police in the street or the métro (this is rare, though).

You will also need to prove your identity in the following situations: opening a bank account, registering with the Electricity or Gas Board (*EDF/GDF*), paying by check, withdrawing money from a bank, signing a lease etc...

If you are a non EU national staying less than 12 months, **which is usually your case if you are an exchange/study abroad student**, the Consulate will issue a multiple entry visa for the duration of your stay and you will not be applying for a *carte de séjour*: your visa includes the *carte de séjour*.

If you are a non-EU national, you will have to carry your passport with your visa all the times.

If you decide to stay more than 12 months, obtaining the *carte de séjour* itself is a process that requires

- Copy of a valid passport (with the copy of the stamp you get upon your arrival at the airport) or ID for the EEC members.
- Copy of the birth certificate, translated in French.
- Proof of financial support – a statement from a bank in your country, or a notarized statement from a family member or friend saying that you have at your disposition the necessary living expenses for your 4-month stay in France. This can be the same one you submitted for your visa application.
- A statement the school will provide saying that you are registered student
- Documentary proof of your place of residence (lease, utilities installation bill or housing certificate)
- 3 pictures 3.5x3.5 cm, recent and resembling you
- Stamped envelope

The French authorities stopped issuing *carte de séjour* to EU nationals several years ago. You will need to carry your national identity document or passport.

In general be prepared to furnish between 10 and 20 different identity-size pictures of yourself, depending on your nationality, and the procedures you may have to go through. You will need them for your *carte de séjour* (for this, they have to be black and white, no color pictures are accepted), visas for trips that you might be making, student ID cards, your *carte orange navigo* (bus/subway monthly pass), membership applications to sports clubs etc. They are generally cheaper to get in France than in the States.

### 2. Driver's license

Individuals staying for less than a year in France can use their national driver's licenses for driving and car rentals. However, driver's licenses do not qualify as identity documents.

## V. Out on the town

### 1. Public transportation

Paris is a pedestrian's paradise. It is really easy to travel around the town by public transportation, and many Parisians believe that a car is not necessary any way.

In the city you can use the subway (métro), buses, and city portions of the regional express trains (RER) as many times as you like during a month with a two-zone monthly pass, or *Navigo* (the cheapest version is currently 56.60 €). Buy one immediately on arrival or buy the weekly version (17.2 €) if you arrive in the middle of the month. You will be using it a lot more than you might think and you will find that you will probably be averaging 4 to 8 trips a day. If you plan to use public transportation sparingly, you may opt for individual tickets (1.6 € per ticket, 11.6 € if you buy a *carnet* of 10 tickets) or the "weekly coupon," which allows unlimited travel on public transportation for one week (see 5 paragraphs below). This solution is also handy for your out-of-town visitors who want to see Paris.

Check the prices at <http://www.ratp.info/informer/tarif.php>

A ticket allows you access on the métro for unlimited travel until you leave the system. In other words, you can change three times or more (if you went the wrong way for instance) without having to use a new ticket. You stick it through the access gates and keep it in case of a check and in certain cases to exit the system. But, the ticket cannot be used a second time. If you try to use it again, the automatic turnstile will sound off an alarm and, not content with just having embarrassed you in front of everybody, refuse to let you through.

For students who stay for a minimum of a year, you should ask for the "*Imagine R*" card, which is a special year-long metro ticket. Advantages include a special student price (295.70 €), easy replacement of the card in case of loss or theft, and "de-zoned" travels on week-ends (you can travel outside of Paris by taking the RER at no extra cost).

To get the card, you simply have need a student ID or an Enrollment Certificate from the school, a photo, and the card's application form.

If you are coming fo a semester you can get a Navigo pass. The Navigo pass exists in two versions :

The Navigo Découverte can be obtained at the Metro station with an ID size picture. It costs 5 €. Then you charge it in an automatic machine with a credit card or by paying cash at the counter. If you lose it you will need to get a replacement card which will cost 5 € again and repay for the rest of the month.

The regular Navigo is requested online. You will need to send in a picture and a form and they will send you the card by mail. It is free. Then you charge it in an automatic machine with a credit card or by paying cash at the counter. If you lose it you will be able to get a replacement card which will cost 8 € but you will not have to bring a picture as it is already in the system and you will not have to repay for the rest of the month.

To use the Navigo pass, just slide it over the purple circular pictogram at the turnstile in the metro stop or as you board the bus.

If a specific bus route interests you, you will find the time of the first and last bus at the stop, plus the average time between buses. Beware though. Buses do not run as frequently as the métro, and some do not run on weekends or only run part of their route on Sundays. Also, the time of the last bus can vary from 7:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. depending on the route. So before going out in the evening, don't forget to check the times the last buses run before.

After 1:00 a.m. you can also use the *Noctambus* (night bus) lines that start operating at that time from

Chatelet, the center of Paris. They cover four main routes, basically going North, South, East and West, stop at regular stops but will also stop between stops if you make the request to the driver.

On buses, if you are using tickets, you may have to use one or two tickets, depending on the distance you are traveling. This is indicated on a map of the bus route, divided into sections, that you will find hanging overhead in the bus. One section is one ticket. Two sections or more require two tickets. A lot of bus routes know are one section only, that is you only need one ticket. You have to insert them in a little machine near the driver or the door inside the bus, and the machine will process them for you.

## 2. Food

Food is an all important item in French culture. The French love eating and you will find food shops all over Paris. There are regular supermarkets, grocery stores and specialized food shops everywhere. Also, be prepared for some pleasant surprises - the quality, freshness, and flavor of food has to be tasted to be believed.

There are also the late night shops or convenience stores in most areas. They are usually more expensive than supermarkets and Parisians generally use them in case of emergency. They stay open to 10:00 p.m. or later. You can check with your local one. Regular shops open between 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. and often close from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. to reopen until 6.30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The Monoprix on the Champs Elysées stays open until midnight (Métro *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, food downstairs). The cheapest supermarket chains are Ed, G20 and Franprix, Leader Price.

You may find food items you have never seen or don't know how to cook. The salespeople will be happy to tell you how to cook them, and will usually give you three or four different recipes.

In any shop other than a supermarket, the salesperson is liable to say something incomprehensible, hand you a receipt, refuse your money and not give you the goods when you want to pay (even though he has been using a cash register). This means that you have to go to the cash desk which you will usually find near the exit. You pay there and have the receipt stamped *payé* (paid) before reclaiming the goods from the salesperson.

## 3. Restaurants

They abound, so take your pick. For a guide to inexpensive restaurants, buy a copy of "*Le guide du routard- Paris.*" (in French). Also, ask people for good places to go.

There are different categories of restaurants, and sometimes different zones for different kinds of services in the same establishment. It is not appropriate to ask, say, for a salad and coffee in a restaurant, or the restaurant zone of a brasserie. If you try to do so, the waiter will soon let you know that, and you can tell by the menu given to you or on the table.

All restaurants in France, except the luxury rated restaurants, are obliged by law to post a menu known in French as *la carte* outside. In the restaurant industry however, running out of a dish cannot be considered false advertising. Indeed, it is proof that the restaurant doesn't overstock on perishable goods.

Most restaurant advertise a set three-course menu, known as *le menu* within *la carte*. Others advertise their *formule* which is a two-course set menu without dessert.

By law, all types of eating establishments have to supply you with a *carafe d'eau* (pitcher of tap water) free of charge, even if you find some waiters who will be pushy on the *eau minérale* (bottled water). You can even ask for a glass of water in a McDonalds for instance. Establishing your rights to a *carafe d'eau*

will also establish you as a customer to be reckoned with, so don't hesitate to insist.

The price of a meal in a restaurants starts at about 10 € for a three course meal. At the upper end, the sky is the limit (but food is "Paradise Gained" for the French).

One final word: diet coke can be found in supermarkets and shops, but is less common in restaurants, bars or cafés.

#### **4. Cafés**

Cafés are a French institution. Many French people have their breakfast and/or lunch there. There are two types, *le café* and *le bar/tabac* which is similar but where one can also buy cigarettes, stamps, lighters, candy, and other trivia. The following information applies to both.

You will discover that prices vary depending on where you sit, inside or outside *en terrasse*. Standing at the bar for a quick drink or sandwich it is always the cheapest, and also the best way to enter into conversation with people if you want to test your French.

You will also discover that at midday, most of the tables are set for meals. A meal is at least *un plat*, or a hot dish. If you ask for a sandwich or a salad at such a table, you will be told to go to the non-restaurant section or non-brasserie section of the establishment (which is probably full anyway).

You can order sandwiches, salads or a hot dish at midday in most cafés and *tabacs*, but if you want to do the real thing and pretend to be Hemingway, order a coffee and croissants for breakfast one morning.

A cup of French coffee is basically an espresso (don't tell an Italian we ever said this and if you are Italian, we apologize). It is always brewed when ordered, which can explain the delay. It is stronger than American style coffee. If you want something less potent, ask for *un café allongé*, or a "long coffee." If you want it with milk, ask for *un grand crème* or *un petit crème*. You can also try ordering *un café au lait*. In France it is not customary to serve a second refill as it is the case in the States. If you want one, you have to pay for it.

#### **5. Night life**

Take your pick also. Entrance into most clubs costs between 10 and 25 € and includes a first drink, unless there is live music. In certain clubs, women are allowed in free at certain times and on certain days. In others, entrance is free for everybody on certain nights (usually Mondays). In the more hip clubs, entrance is subject to your looking like the kind of person the doorman feels ought to be let in... Behavior in night clubs is more subdued than you might be accustomed to. For a guide, see "Passion..." an English language magazine devoted to social life in Paris.

If you want to know where to go, ask other students about the current hot spots. Bars as opposed to *cafés* are coming back into fashion. Most of them have happy hours. If so, it will be posted.

#### **6. Movies**

If you are a movie buff, you will adore Paris. The programs are extremely varied and there are regular film festivals in various cinemas. If you feel you have had enough French practice, you can see most American and English films in *version originale* indicated by the acronym VO on the schedule. Films are programmed by week, from Wednesday to Wednesday.

The cinema ushers are traditionally non salaried and expect a tip as they rely on them to make their living. If you arrive at the beginning of the showing, they don't really do anything special for you apart from tearing your ticket as you enter the cinema but still expect something. The standard tip is 0.50 €. One or two cinema chains have suppressed this practice and have salaried ushers. If this is the case, it will be proudly posted and a tip is not necessary.

Detailed programs can be bought at any newsstand the two main ones are "Pariscope "(0.46 €. Useful for movies and all other cultural activities) and "l'Officiel" (0.3 €). These publications will also give details on any film festivals that are on.

## **7. Museums**

Museums in Paris are closed either on Mondays (Museums run by the town authorities) or on Tuesdays (National Museums). They are usually open on Sundays. If you want to become a culture vulture for a couple of days, you can purchase a museum pass at the main Métro stations. This pass grants you immediate non-standing-in-line access to over 60 museums in Paris for 1, 2 or 3 days. You will find information on tours in the museums themselves and sometimes in the Pariscope (see "Movies"). The green Michelin guide also has excellent information on museums and just about everything else in Paris.

## **8. Weather**

The climate in Paris is mild, though this is obviously very much a question of personal appreciation. The temperature rarely drops below 32°F (0°C), except during night in the colder winter months, and is pleasantly warm in spring and summer, rarely exceeding 85°F (30°C).

The wind chill factor, especially on those wide Parisian boulevards can make it seem colder, but you don't really need heavy duty winter wear, unless you are a chilly. Current students stress that it gets hot in the summer and cold in the winter, but Paris never gets snowbound for example.

## **9. Security and lost passports**

Paris is a safe city. Foreigners in Paris always remark on how safe they feel, and they are right. The crime statistics are nowhere near those of large American cities for example. Normal security precautions apply as in any large town. If you can keep to them, you will not have any problems. The worst that might happen to you is to have your wallet or purse lifted. Don't forget to be careful in crowds, especially at tourist spots.

Make copies of all important documents you have (passport, including the visa page, *carte de séjour*, if you have one, return air ticket etc.). This will speed up replacement procedures by the relevant authorities, should they be necessary.

Also, if you do get lose your passport, the replacement procedures at the relevant Embassy or Consulate are usually fairly easy, especially if you have a copy of the one you lost.

## VI. It ain't like home

### 1. How to get along with French people in everyday situations

Adjusting to life in a foreign culture is challenging, exhilarating, energizing and at times, frustrating. There is no way we can prepare you for all the minor cultural differences that you may encounter in your stay, nor help you avoid culture shock. For some of you, it will be brief and hardly noticeable; for others, more severe.

When one speaks to foreign students who have been through the difficulties of adjusting to Paris and France, the feeling that is most commonly stated is that of having felt like a second class citizen.

When one speaks to French people who have had to deal with foreigners arriving in France, the feelings most commonly expressed are that "they are impolite" and "they take everything for granted". So where's the catch?

The value system is simply very different in France and the way the French consider individuals and young people is quite different too. The system is not all that complicated. Lots of foreigners pick it up quickly and have a great time.

The first and most important thing is that people in France do not grant you an immediate status as an equal until you have established a relationship. **You always have to establish a relationship**, whether it be while making enquiries in a train station, ordering a coffee in a *café* or buying something in a shop. This is direct contrast with the US where you would expect the salesperson to make that initial approach. Establishing a relationship does not imply inviting that person out to dinner or anything as complicated. It just means saying "*Bonjour Monsieur or Madame*". And beware, if you don't - you will probably not be considered polite or credible. Even in a shop, commissioned salespeople are likely to give you a brush off if you don't do this.

If your request is slightly off beat, be sure to explain why it is so, and explain your predicament. Don't just say "Please, I don't want any dressing on my salad" (which is off beat in France). Say "I've got an allergy" or "I'm on a diet and I'm not supposed to take any dressing."

Be prepared for the "*ce n'est pas possible*." This does not necessarily mean that it is impossible, but that you didn't give enough context to your request. Usually you simply have to repeat your request and explain why you are making what they perceive to be a strange request, and you will be successful. It pays to use charm; a smile and a hearty "*bonjour*" goes a long way to establishing you as a nice individual.

The idea of young people having rights is still strange for most French. Explaining that you have needs and expectancies works a lot better than using a "it is my right to" approach.

Be prepared for conflict also. The French love argument, debate and conflict and will use it in many situations as way to solve a problem. It may seem unreasonable or antagonistic, but there is nothing personal involved if this happens to you. Just join in and have fun.

Work on building a network of French acquaintances. Also, build relationships at your local *marché* (outdoor market), *boulangerie* (bakery), laundry, dry cleaners, *bar/tabac*, etc.

## 2. Dates and times

In France, and most of Europe, dates are expressed: day /month / year. For example, September 8, 2007 is 08/09/07.

Time is expressed by a twenty-four hour clock system. Thus, 4:00 p.m. is 16h00. In the evening though, and in spoken French only, people tend to revert to a twelve hour clock as the context is sufficient to avoid misunderstanding. *Midi* is not necessarily high noon. It is advisable to check if your appointment is for 12h00 or 13h00.

## 3. Time management

Being on time is very much a question of personal inclination, but in theory one should be punctual. In a social context, people will often ask you to arrive between such a time and such a time, i.e. come between 8:00 and 8:30. In that case, arrive closer to the later time, but not after it, to avoid problems. When invited to someone's home for dinner or a social occasion, it is acceptable, if not required to arrive 10 minutes late. Arriving right on time "rushes" the host or hostess and may not be appreciated.

In a business context, always be on time. You may expect though, to be kept waiting if you are meeting with someone. If you are attending a meeting, don't expect the meeting to start or to finish on time. Don't get frustrated. This is just a different way of managing time, and there are countries a lot more relaxed about time management than France. You will also find that the French themselves are divided over this issue, and tend to talk about it a lot while, say, waiting for the meeting to start.

## 4. Getting into buildings

So you have been invited to someone's home for dinner. Be careful, you may not be able to get in. Indeed, the first time, a lot of foreigners think they cannot and wander around outside the building thinking France is hopeless.

Here's the secret: either you have to push a button marked *porte* (door) which unlocks the door, or if there is no button marked *porte*, you will discover that fiendish contraption known as *un code*. This is a number pad beside the door that requires you to punch in a code to gain access. Your hosts will have given you the code, and hopefully, you won't have forgotten it (public phones always seem to be miles away when this happens). When you have punched in the correct code, you just push the door open. If you are really lucky, there will be an interphone.

You are inside, and it's dark. Push the button marked *lumière*. You then have about three minutes of light. At this point you will discover that the names of occupants and apartment numbers are not always listed. Your hosts will have told you that they live on the third floor to the right, or in building C through the second courtyard fifth floor second door on the left.

You are not there yet though. You entered the building on the *rez de chaussée* (ground floor). The 1st floor or *premier étage* is the one above, and not the ground level as in the States for example. Your friends on the third floor (France) are on the American equivalent of the fourth floor.

## **5. When invited**

If you have been invited for a meal by other students you ought to bring something. You can ask very simply what you should bring as a contribution when you are invited. You can suggest a bottle of wine, or dessert or cheese. Even with other students it is not appropriate to turn up with other guests who weren't specifically invited, unless it be for a real party. Even then, it is always better to check.

If you have been asked by, say, your uncle's business partner to his home for dinner with his family, bring flowers or chocolates. One single rose is acceptable if you are (feeling) penniless, and the florist will wrap it up nicely for you if you say "*c'est pour offrir*" ("it's a gift").

In France, you leave the wrapping on the flowers when you hand them to the person and you open gifts that are given to you in front of the person offering the gift, even if it is offered in a public place.

When greeting new people, always shake hands. If your hosts have small children, it is appropriate to kiss them on each cheek. (The practice of shaking hands and kissing will make a good topic of discussion with your French friends!)

## **6. Dress codes**

In France, young people tend to dress up and conservatively, rather than down. This is valid for school, parties, social interaction of any kind and especially business situations. If you want to be able to attend business or social functions without feeling that your attire makes you stand out like a sore thumb, remember to bring something yuppiesh with you.

## **7. Buying clothes**

Paris, and Europe is a shopper's paradise, fashion wise. However, do not expect bargains, and bring as much with you as possible as you will quickly discover that prices are between 10% and 30% more expensive than in the States.

Clothes sizes are different too, and relying on conversion tables is risky as the size on the item of clothing you might want to buy could be Italian, French, German, or of any other provenance. So, try it on for size always. One student recently in Paris said that if you are over 6'2" and wear shoes size 12 or larger, buy as much as possible before you come as large sizes are difficult to find.

## **8. Bar and restaurant service**

Waiters and waitresses serve in defined sections of the bar or restaurant. In other words the one who is not waiting in your section will not serve you and, at best, will say "*Je vais chercher mon collègue*" ("I'll get my colleague"). You should always pay the person who serves you directly. Others will most often refuse payment. If your waiter is ending his shift, he will ask you to pay then.

The service may not always appear to be kindly at first. If you smile and try to speak French, they soon warm up. Remember, you have to establish that relationship. Tips are built into the final price and are not required. However, if you plan to go back to the same *café*, for instance, it might be wise to leave a nominal tip (20-30 cents). In a local restaurant, the same rule applies. Tipping is not required, but you can leave one (1 €) if you want to.

## **9. Telephoning**

Most public phone booths in France operate with a *télécarte* as explained in the "arrival" section. It has become next to impossible to find coin operated phone booths, so get one as soon as possible.

For international direct dialing, dial 00, wait for the tone, and then dial your country code, area code and number. You can send telegrams in English by calling 01 42 33 21 11.

When calling within France, dial the 10-digit number which begins with a 0.

## **10. Phone etiquette**

People in France often don't return calls, even if, for instance, you have asked them for a price quote or they asked you to get in touch. It may sometimes take as many as 6 to 8 calls to get through to somebody. This is not an intentional personal affront against you, and don't forget that you may be difficult to get hold of also.

## **11. Service standards**

They are different from what you may be used to. The French use conflicts to find solutions, even sometimes in a commercial context. So if you feel someone is being aggressive towards you, don't take it personally, and just continue smiling.

Another tip : if your French is not so hot, rehearse with a French speaking friend a sentence along the lines "I'm sorry, I don't speak your language, but I'm learning it" and start all dealings with French people with it.

## **12. Queuing / standing in line**

A lot of people in France tend to jump lines if they think they can get away with it. In that case the others either look on and wonder what the world is coming to or remark openly about it to the culprits. They then will generally shrug it off, and go back to a place in the line where the others are less belligerent.

If there is no line like in front of a counter, it becomes very much a free for all situation with lots of pushing and shoving. The idea of a line can only be enforced if there is a physical element like rails forcing people into a line. Even then, do not expect the people behind you to "stand behind the line" while you conduct your business.

## **13. Smoking**

Smoking is banned in any public enclosed spaces welcoming visitors. This includes offices, restaurants and bars, airports and train stations and so on

## **14. Taxis**

They usually only accept three people at a time, and do not allow anyone in front. They tend to get irritated if you get in or out on the traffic side. They expect a tip between 10 % and 15 %, but this is not

mandatory.

They are generally reliable and honest. If they are going off shift, they will only accept customers going somewhere that is on their home route, in which case they will ask you where you are going (and say yes or no).

You can call them also at the local taxi stand. You will find the number of the one closest to you in the phone book under "Taxi". Several companies operate radio call networks. The largest ones are: Taxi Bleu (08 25 16 10 10), G7 (01 47 39 47 39) and Alpha Taxi (0145 85 85 85).

## 15. Traffic and drivers

Driving is interesting to watch when one arrives the first time... As a pedestrian, don't expect drivers to stop at a crossing unless there is a red light.

In fact, if a car does stop, either you are of car stopping beauty or, by checking the number plate you will see that it is someone who is from out of town and hasn't yet understood the rules of the corridor.

With a bit of luck, you will witness an *embouteillage* or traffic jam. This brings out the best or the worst of Latin behavior in French drivers and is great fun to watch.

If you are driving a car, you will catch on quickly to the particular style of Paris driving. The main thing to know is that unless otherwise indicated, the car coming from your right has the right of way, and does not even slow down to check that you are stopping to let it pass. This applies at traffic circles and squares also.

Wearing seatbelts is required by law in France, even in the backseat. Lots of French only wear them in front though. There are strict laws about drinking and when driving in France, you might meet a roadblock for alcohol tests if you are driving in Paris, the suburbs or the country.

## 16. Exchange facilities

Many local banks offer exchange facilities to their regular customers only. The banks that advertise the exchange rates outside will usually change money for you. Banks in Paris city limits generally open at 9:00 a.m. and close at 5:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday. Outside these hours, and until about 8:00 p.m., you can change money or travelers checks in exchange offices.

The *Bureau de Change* at the *Gare de l'Est* train station, close to the IGS Parodi Campus, is open from 7.00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. every day.

There are several others around Paris. You will find ones at the *Gare du Nord* train station, on the Champs Elysées (at the top on the right near the *Arc the Triomphe*), on boulevard Saint Michel (on the left as you go down, between Boulevard Saint Germain and the place Saint Michel) or at the *Drugstore Publicis* (two outlets at the top and bottom of the Champs Elysées). Many more are opening up all the time, you should not have any trouble finding them.

You want to get the best rate? They can vary widely, and a spread of 8% or even sometimes 15% on a \$1,000 is the cost of a several good nights out. Probably the safest bet is to go directly to the *Banque de France*, rue Croix des Petits Champs, 75001 Paris, open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on week days.

## VII. Medical

France is a country at the forefront of medical research and treatment and practice. There are doctors one trusts more or less in any country, but you can certainly trust the medical and paramedical profession in France.

### 1. Emergency numbers

We hope you will not have to avail yourself of these services, but just in case, here they are:

#### **Emergency medical hotline: 01 47 07 77 77**

You can phone this number if you want a house call outside normal doctor's office hours. They will send an English speaking doctor.

#### **American Hospital** (They speak English...)

Tel: 01 46 41 25 25

63, boulevard Victor Hugo

92200 Neuilly-sur-Seine

(suburb very close to Paris)

If you require any other form of medical advice, contact the International Programs Office which will refer you to a doctor.

### 2. Health insurance

If you are under 28 and you are coming for a year you must, by law, register with the French Student Social Security. The cost is 198 € per academic year (October -> September). You will be able to do this on campus.

If you under 28 and coming for a semester, you must take out medical coverage in your country of origin that will cover you when in France in case of illness or an accident.

If you are over 28, you must take out your own policy.

Whatever the policy you have, we strongly advise you to organize a meeting and ask your insurer what happens if you :

- a) need dental care,
- b) need new glasses or contact lenses,
- c) break a leg,
- d) need to consult a doctor or a specialist.

Go through scenarios seriously and thoroughly with your insurer and make sure what your coverage is. If you have time, ask for it by letter; if they have to commit to something in writing they will be a lot more careful about the information they will give you. Check notably if you can go to any doctor or if there is a limit on the amount that will be reimbursed to you.

## **VIII. A little campus orientation**

### **1. Address**

You will be attending class on one of IGS University's newest campuses in Paris, the Parodi Campus.

The address is :                   12, rue Alexandre Parodi  
  75010 Paris  
  Tel: 01 40 03 15 04 (International Programs Office - IPO)

Métro stations:

*Louis Blanc* (line 7) or *Jaurès* (line 2).

A few practical details. We are French, n'est-ce-pas ? and a few things may be different from what you are accustomed to.

### **2. Opening hours**

The building is open from 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. from Monday to Friday every week. On Saturdays you may access the campus between 9 am and 5 pm.

### **3. Classrooms**

Classrooms can change each week. The classrooms are posted each Friday for the following week on the ground floor and on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. They are also published on the extranet each Friday.

### **4. Computers, Xeroxing, telephones, faxes and mail**

The PC's at IGS are equipped with the French versions of **Microsoft Word and Excel for Windows**. The keyboards at IGS are also "French" and slightly different from what you may be used to.

**We recommend, if you have already have them, to bring a laptop computer and a modem** (for Internet). Please note that the campus is Wireless (Wi-Fi)

You have access to photocopying facilities in the student library. To use these machines, you have to buy a credit card from the librarian (5 € for 50 copies, 10 € for 100, and 11€ for 200). Any credit left on the card will be reimbursed at the end of your stay.

You can use the pay phones in the lobby on the ground floor. Urgent faxes can be sent or received from the International Programs Office. The fax number is + 33 1 40 03 15 05. The IPO retains the right to decide if a fax is urgent or not and charge for incoming faxes if the fax is not deemed urgent.

At lunch, there is a sandwich and salad bar in the lobby of the building. There are also lots of small restaurants, bars and bistros in the area.

## 5. Campus rules

The Parodi campus is a non smoking campus. Smoking is forbidden inside the building. Professors are accustomed to slightly different standards of behavior in France and this is reflected in the campus rules which are posted in the building. Notably, food and drinks are forbidden in the classroom, the study room, and the computer rooms.

## 6. Socializing on campus

Numerous social and sports activities are organized by the French students. They will be happy to welcome you into their associations and clubs if you make the request. You will find information on these events posted in the lobby.

Some of your classes will be taking place at Eaubonne, a suburb city North of Paris. Eaubonne has high-tech sports facilities. You can play team sports as well as athletics, gymnastics, swimming pool... The school has successful basketball and football (soccer) teams, so be sure to contact the Student Council to be part of those teams. Other teams, such as volleyball, are on their way.

All too often foreign students complain that they do not meet anybody. Remember the way international students used to hang out together on campus back home? Well that happens in France too, except that this time you are the international student.

Meeting people is a two way street. It is up to you also to initiate contact with other students. You cannot expect them to do it spontaneously. Did you go out of your way to meet international students on campus back home?

So, how do you go about it? A good way of meeting people is to join an association. If you practice a sport or a hobby every week with people you will get to know them. You can join the student associations or sports association run by the *Mairie de Paris* where you live or the ones from the school.

If you are following courses with French students, there will undoubtedly be work groups. Just go up and tell a group that you want to work with them. They will be happy to work with you, and who knows, you may be able to give them the benefit of a different viewpoint.

A final tip: very often, when you meet people initially, you will end up saying to each other "We must get together sometime" or something along those lines. This usually means you will never get together. To avoid that, make a date on the spot and do not hesitate about being a bit pushy about it. If you are unsure about the person, make a date to see a movie. It will always give you something to talk about afterwards over a drink if the person turns out to be a bore.

## **IX. What should I bring with me? Can I bring things any other way?**

Basically, most things are expensive in Paris, even T-shirts and jeans, so bring clothes, both summer and winter wear (if you are coming for a semester).

Remember that voltage is different in France if you are bringing appliances (Chapter III, paragraph 10).

Remember that there are weight limits on the amount of luggage travelling with you. As it differs from airline to airline, check with them. The cost for excess baggage is punitive so you might want to consider mailing things instead. You can mail boxes to yourself, c/o the International Programs Office. If you do that, make sure that you plan on about three weeks travel time. Also make sure that you put the customs labels on each of your boxes. Otherwise they will not be delivered and you will have to go and claim them at customs.

## **X. Some advice from your friends in Paris**

Foreign students in past years at IGS have made some comments we thought would interest you:

### **a) On adjusting to Paris:**

"Arrive one week before the start of class. You need time to get acquainted and more importantly to settle into an apartment. "

"People were so nice from the beginning, contrarily to the stereotypical 'French hate Americans' attitude."

"No matter how much anybody tells you about Paris, it's a different experience for everyone. The French, despite popular belief are warm friendly people. Except the grocer on a bad day !"

"Don't be deceived by the weight you'll lose at first without even trying, even though you eat pastries and eat like a fiend. Soon enough you'll have no time to walk around and those pastries will come back to haunt you. Just try to get into healthy habits when you get here. We are currently trying to break our own bad habits."

"Guys in the street are always asking me to have coffee, just for five minutes. Just for five minutes? But they do take 'no' for an answer."

### **b) On apartments:**

"I was surprised at how fast the apartments go, you need to get the ads right when they come out."

"Be patient and don't expect too much. Apartments here are not like in Germany. Try to see the positive things and not be too critical. Apartments are not modern and have little storage space."

"Do it ASAP! It is not necessary to be in the center of town, there are métro stations everywhere."

" Focus on the charm and not the difference to your country."

"Be ready to use an agency and pay an agency fee; it's a lot simpler."

## **XII. Useful addresses and information**

**General info. website about Paris (in English) : [www.paris-anglo.com](http://www.paris-anglo.com)**

### **1) Travel**

USIT (specialized student travel) 08 25 08 25 25  
12, rue Vivienne, 75002 Paris – 01 44 55 32 60 and  
85, boulevard Saint Michel, 75005 Paris – tel : 01 43 29 69 50

### **2. Moving**

#### **Inside Paris**

Check out ads in the "Services" section of FUSAC and compare them with rental rates for trucks from AVIS, Hertz etc.

#### **International**

Allship Worldwide Movers      01 45 51 56 68  
18, avenue Bosquet, 75007 Paris

Neer Service                      01 48 35 47 00 or 01 48 35 11 11  
2, rue Désiré Lemoine  
93300 Aubersvilliers

### **3. Swimming pools and sports facilities**

Use the municipal pools, as they are cheaper. You can get a list of locations from your local "Mairie d'arrondissement"

For working out, aerobics and other health fiend activities :

Check out the *Gymnase Club* network. You will see signs posted on campus and elsewhere. Nobody ever pays the full subscription rate so check with the campus students associations if there is a group rate through them. If not, negotiate directly with them.

Espace Vit'Halles      01 42 77 21 71  
48, rue Rambuteau 75003 Paris (beside *Beaubourg* - the Pompidou Centre)

### **4. English language videos**

V.O. Only                              01 43 80 70 60  
25, boulevard de la Somme 75017 Paris

Prime Time Video  
12, rue Léonce Reynaud 75116 Paris      01 40 38 39 83

## 5. English/American Books

Brentano's  
37, avenue de l'Opéra  
75002 Paris

WH Smith's  
248, rue de Rivoli  
75001 Paris

Calignani  
224, rue de Rivoli  
75001 Paris

Shakespeare & Co.  
37 rue de la Bûcherie  
75005 Paris

Tea and Tattered Pages  
24, rue Mayet  
75006 Paris

Some of the FNAC (French chain of book stores) have a good selection of foreign books.

## 6. Emergency and useful numbers

Ambulance/medical emergency: dial 18 for the Fire Brigade for first aid and assistance. They will come for a medical emergency and always arrive faster than the SAMU (dial 17), which is the emergency medical service.

Fire:	dial 18
Police:	dial 17
Anti-Poison Center: Hôpital Fernand Widal	01 40 05 48 48
SOS Medecin:	01 47 07 77 77

for a house call by a doctor in an emergency situation

All night pharmacy : 84, Champs Elysées in the 8<sup>th</sup>, and place Felix Eboué M° Daumesnil in the 12<sup>th</sup>  
Other pharmacies will indicate the *pharmacie de garde* (open-all-night-and-on-Sunday-and-holidays-pharmacy) in the neighborhood, where you will be allowed in if you ring on the bell and show your prescription.

Drug related emergencies:	Hôpital Marmottan	01 45 74 00 04
	Hôpital Sainte-Anne	01 45 65 80 00

Electrical emergencies:	01 44 70 73 51
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Gas emergencies:	01 44 70 73 51
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Lost and found, for Paris:	01 45 31 14 80
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Lost something in the sewers (good luck!)?	01 43 43 16 19
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SNCF train information: 01 53 90 20 20  
They are frustratingly slow to answer, so try [www.sncf.fr](http://www.sncf.fr).

RATP subway and RER information: 01 43 46 14 14  
As with the train, it's faster to try [www.ratp.fr](http://www.ratp.fr)

Airport information: Orly 01 49 75 15 15  
Charles de Gaulle 01 48 62 22 80

Weather information: 36 65 02 XX  
Add the number of the French *département* to get local weather forecasts.  
Dial 36 65 02 75 for Paris or 36 65 02 06 for Nice for instance.

## **7. Religious services**

(Other addresses can be obtained from the International Programs Office)

### **Catholic**

St. Joseph's (English language service)  
50 Avenue Hoche  
75008 Paris

### **Protestant (Interdenominational)**

American Church (English language service)  
65, quai d'Orsay  
75007 Paris

Church of the Holy Trinity (English language service)  
23, avenue George-V  
75008 Paris

### **Protestant (Baptist)**

Eglise Paris-Centre  
72, rue de Sèvres  
75007 Paris

### **Protestant (Lutheran)**

Temple du Bon Secours  
20, rue Titon  
75011 Paris

### **Jewish**

Synagogue  
26, rue des Tournelles  
75004 Paris

### **Muslim**

Mosquée de Paris  
Place du Puit-l'Ermite  
75005 Paris