

**Grenoble Ecole de Management**  
**2014 Semester 2**  
**BCom: INTB**

**Accommodation**

I didn't live in a student residence. When I arrived in Grenoble I went to the Welcome Desk and they showed me two apartments available for rent. They were quite far away from GEM and the centre of town. I eventually found an apartment by walking around the streets and calling the phone numbers on hand written signs. This ensured the apartment was not owned by an agency as they charge fees. I lived on Cours Berriat by the Casino supermarket. I saved a lot of money however this is risky. I shared my room with another girl and we paid 240 euro per month for the room, kitchen, bathroom and separate toilet. It was very secure with two door codes and three locks. We had to sign up with the gas, water and electricity companies separately and in person. Wheely bins were provided for the whole building and taken care of.

I had several friends at the Europole student residence but they felt very ripped off in the end when contesting their bond money. They also had terrible internet and a general lack of cleanliness. Privilodges residences are nice however the same issues arose with some studios.

The tram system is super easy to use so living further away by a tram line is a great option.

**Visa**

I am 'Non EU' so required a visa. This process is rigorous in Grenoble to complete your visa status if you are only there for one semester. If there is an issue it is likely you will not be notified and just put to the side.

1. Send in the OFII letter with your address as soon as you arrive. GEM advised me this needed to be my official address however Immigration said it didn't matter.
2. You should receive an Attestation (a confirmation letter) around 15 days after they receive your OFII letter. This ensures you are in the system to receive an email with confirmation when your medical appointments are.
3. The first medical appointment is a chest X-Ray. For me, this was a little out of Grenoble. They do around 30 students at a time with no particular appointment slot so be early. We waited inside the medical centre and were then taken outside to the white X-Ray van as a group. Two people at a time are processed. Take your passport.
4. The next medical appointment is with a nurse and a doctor. Make sure you have your inoculation history from your parents or doctor. They check your medication, weight and check how you are settling in.
5. You then will be given your medical certificates along with the chest X-Ray. This needs to be taken to OFII along with the other documentation.

The whole process takes four months, maybe more. As I was only in Grenoble for four months and only found a permanent address with three to go, I had to battle to get my medical appointments earlier. There was a spelling mistake in the printing of my blue sticker for my passport which finalized the visa status. This meant I needed to wait 10 more days, at which time I would have left for NZ. Luckily, the correct sticker arrived in time. It is seen as my mistake for not allowing enough time for them to process everything so be careful!! Without the blue sticker it could be very difficult in the future to obtain a visa for the Schengen zone.

## **Food**

I bought all fruit, veggies, dairy and some meat at the outdoor markets. There are also supermarkets everywhere. However, getting food past 10pm at night is pretty impossible. There are great restaurants just have a google or ask a local in your class where to eat.

## **Fun**

The train station is super easy to navigate and was right beside my campus. Traveling from Grenoble is simple but more expensive than I anticipated. You should download the SNCF app and book tickets nice and early. The more times you refresh a pricing page it will increase responding to more demand. The galleries and museums in Grenoble are awesome and you can go up the famous bobble gondola to the top of the Bastille.

There are a few bars but quite a different scene to the scarfie Dunedin life. People have parties in their apartments and depending on the culture it would be polite to take a bottle of something for the hosts. Often everyone will chuck their drinks on a table and share everything, so don't be offended if a classmate starts drinking your wine!

Try and get away as much as possible. I travelled to Nice where we hired a rental car and stayed in a backpackers. They had free champagne every night and the club scene was super fun. I went via train to Milan for the five day break which was really easy. There we hired an apartment so we could have strong wifi and a shower! (Our apartment only had a bath, not unusual in France). Of course Paris is incredible in every way. Most people speak English there and it is an art freaks paradise!

My school put on parties often and they were a great way to meet other students. Keep note the tickets sell out fast so get up to the Aloha team ASAP. These are usually around 10 - 15 euros.

## **Danger**

It is very dangerous after dark in Grenoble. This is before 8am and after 4.30 pm in winter. Make sure you always have a friend with you, your key to your apartment and your phone!

## **Admin**

Queuing in France is insane. Make sure you only have to do one or two jobs a day and plan a week in advance.

I took my iPhone and purchased a sim card from Free Mobile just down from Victor Hugo. I had the 25 euro a month pre-paid plan, however I often went over the limit and I still do not know why. Canceling this plan is a mission. You must send a hand written letter in French to the company in the mail, the content can be found online following the instructions on a sheet from the store.

You must pay for social security even if you only get around to doing this within three months of leaving. It is believed this will give you a 70% refund on medical visits however from two 35 euro appointments I received a cheque in the mail for 2 euro. This can be avoided by purchasing a full cover. It means paying twice however if you plan on breaking

your leg skiing I recommend it. There are different rules around this if you are EU or Non EU.

LCL bank is terrible to deal with, choose any other bank.

## **Language**

I had studied 200 level French at Otago however this was very basic for the region. As soon as I boarded the Eurostar in Paris everything became strange. Moving through Lille people spoke less English. I took the English track at school and not very many French students are in this class. My landlord, the shop keepers, the water and gas companies strictly only spoke French. They speak basic English at the bank, insurance, pharmacies and doctors. If you can find some bilingual friends get their phone numbers and ask if they can be your translator in the event things go wrong.

## **School**

I had a very heavy workload from around the third week of the semester. Classes are three hours at a time, sometimes several in one day. Near 50% of each grade was internal and predominantly group work. This meant if you are the native English speaker you became the editor. My class was around 40 students and we did all the same subjects. There were no more than three people from the same country. The academic standard was significantly lower than Otago, however the skills learned from negotiating with different cultures in doing five presentations at once was a huge learning experience. Grades are assessed out of 20, between 12 and 15 is normal. If you have an overall average above 15 you pass with distinction.

## **C'est fini!**

An exchange is an incredible roller coaster. I had both the best and worst days of my life traveling and can't wait to get back! I have become more pro-active, tripled my network, cried a million times and never laughed more. Good luck for your exchange and I hope you have the time of your life too!

My email is [annamcdonaldnz@gmail.com](mailto:annamcdonaldnz@gmail.com) if you have any questions :)