Wooster in Besançon

Besançon, France

Why Besançon?

Wooster students often choose to attend this program because it allows them to leave campus with a beginning level of French and return at an intermediate or upper-intermediate level, ready to take upper- level courses upon their return. The program also permits students to satisfy the language requirement for the International Relations major in a single semester.

French Language Immersion at the Université de Franche-Comté

The Wooster in Besançon program offers beginning and intermediate students of French the opportunity to participate directly in a language-intensive semester or summer program in Besançon, France. Students are directly enrolled in the Centre de Linguistique Appliquée (CLA) at the Université de Franche-Comté in Besançon where they take intensive French language courses alongside students from all over the world.

Students live with a “Bisontin” family and can choose to participate in cultural activities and weekend excursions organized by the CLA, in addition to taking advantage of the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Besançon, a comfortable university town with a population of about 120,000 located in the east of France between Strasbourg and Lyon, on the river Doubs and surrounded by the Jura Mountains.

Students are fully integrated into the classes at the Centre de Linguistique Appliquée (CLA) which is part of the Université de Franche-Comté in Besançon

Academics

Students take a language placement test upon their arrival and are placed in a group that corresponds to their language level. There are 25 hours of intensive course work per week involving review, consolidation and further development of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, with lots of additional practice in listening, reading and speaking French. Each level lasts one month, after which students are evaluated by their teachers and placed at the next appropriate level. The academic calendar includes courses in the Fall semester (September through December), Spring semester (January through May) and summer (one-month sessions in June and July).

Upon their return to campus, students MUST meet with the Chair of the French Department in order to ensure the transfer of credit to the Wooster transcript. Students should bring Wooster Transfer of Credit forms, obtained from the Office of the Registrar or downloaded from the Registrar's website, to the meeting. Credit received on the Wooster transcript depends on the evaluations sent to the Chair by the student's Besançon instructors. Normally, students earn the equivalent of 4 Wooster credits during the semester program (3 months) and 3 Wooster credits during the summer (2 months), but students should be aware that excessive absences or lack of effort in classes in Besançon can result in the awarding of fewer credits. After consultation with the student and consideration of the Besançon evaluation forms, the Chair will forward the Wooster Transfer of Credit forms to the Registrar. ***Students should not contact the CLA directly about credit transfer, but should consult the Chair of Wooster's French Department.***

When You're in France

Arrival On-Site

Students are responsible for organizing and purchasing their own flights to France as well as transportation to Besançon. They are expected to confirm arrival dates with the on-site coordinator upon making travel arrangements. Students should plan to arrive on the Saturday or Sunday before the first day of classes.

It is recommended to take the TGV (high-speed) train from the Charles de Gaulle airport (or from the Gare de Lyon train station in Paris) to Besançon, and to purchase tickets using a credit card upon arrival in France. Students may also purchase tickets online at www.voyages-sncf.com and print them out, but should be aware of costs associated with exchanging or cancelling reservations.

Students should plan on purchasing a phone card and calling the on-site coordinator to inform her of arrival times in Paris or Besançon. She will pick students up from the train station in Besançon.

On-Site Services

The on-site coordinator organizes homestays and meal allowances. This person works for the CLA/University and is available to help students as needed, meeting with each student from time to time throughout the term. Before departure, the coordinator will inform students about schedules, homestay assignments, train schedules from Paris to Besançon, and other important information. Upon arrival, the coordinator will meet students at the train station, take them to their host families, advise them as to rules and life with a host family, and accompany them to the CLA on the first day of classes. This person will also organize an orientation session.

In addition to its "tandems linguistiques" program facilitating language partners between international and French students, the CLA arranges several low-cost excursions and visits to regional and national attractions such as Paris, the Loire Valley, or Strasbourg. The CLA also has information about sports and cultural activities at the University.

Accommodations

Housing and three meals per day are included in the semester program costs. Wooster students live with French host families who provide breakfast and dinner. Students are free for lunch and may choose to dine at the student cafeteria or nearby cafes and restaurants. Semester students receive a per diem stipend to cover lunch expenses. Summer students are responsible for their own lunches. Laundry privileges will be discussed on an individual basis with the host family. Once the on-site coordinator has informed them of host family assignments, students are encouraged to contact their host families via e-mail or letter to start to get acquainted.

Tips for Living with a Homestay Family

1. Get to know your hosts. Begin by writing them a letter about yourself before you go. While you're there, participate in conversations and ask questions.
2. Respect the cultural and family customs. Pay attention to your family's habits and try to do the same.
3. Follow the rules. Make sure you understand what those are and be sure you keep them in mind at all times.
4. Taste everything. Even if you are a picky eater, your family will appreciate your willingness to try different foods that they make for you. If you don't like it, tell them politely!
5. Be courteous and mindful of your hosts. Remember to say "s'il vous plait" and "merci"!
6. Remember that you are not on campus. Don't slam doors, do laundry

where you're not supposed to, be too dirty or messy, abuse alcohol or drugs, be careless with your keys, leave the door unlocked…

7. Communicate! Be polite and respectful, but tell your family when you have any problems or questions. Be sure to inform them of your plans. Take time to participate in conversations with the family.

Money Matters, Cell Phones, Computers

Students may purchase a French cell phone in France. They may also choose to purchase a low-cost telephone card that will allow phone calls from regular telephones at a reduced rate.

It is recommended to have euros on hand for arrival in Paris, but ATM/Debit cards work in most cash machines in France.

Although most host families have Wi-Fi access in their homes, this cannot be guaranteed. Computers, Internet access and Wi-Fi are available for public use at the CLA. Students are expected to limit their use of host family computers and instead use computers or personal laptops at the CLA. There are also a number of cybercafés in the city where students may check e-mail.

Visa Requirements

All students must have a passport valid for at least six months after the end of the program. Semester students are responsible for processing their visas, once accepted into the semester programs. Summer session students do not require a visa.

Once a student is accepted by the CLA, the secretary of the program will send him/her an enrollment confirmation form ("attestation d'inscription") to confirm enrollment in the program. This document is extremely important for obtaining a student Visa. Once in possession of the "attestation", students should register on the CampusFrance website and follow the instructions for getting a Visa. Students should also contact the French Consulate of their respective jurisdictions to be sure of all administrative procedures for obtaining a student visa, and to make an appointment for obtaining the visa. Students should ask that the visa/passport be stamped with the statement "dispensé de carte de séjour" stating that no residency permit is required. Note that it can take several weeks to obtain a visa.

Fees and Billing

Students pay the full Wooster comprehensive fee for this program during the Fall or Spring semesters. This includes housing, three meals per day, and tuition. Students are responsible for organizing and purchasing their own travel to Besançon, as well as for personal expenses, books, and in-country travel.

Summer students must pay the CLA directly via a bank check in Euros made out to "Agent Comptable de l'Université de Franche-Comté". They will also pay their host families directly in cash. A per-day fee is set each year and will be communicated to summer students (23 EUR as of September 1st, 2011).

Application Procedures

Students choosing to participate in the semester program should first apply for off-campus study according to normal OCS procedures, and then also apply directly to the CLA. Mandatory application and housing forms are available in the OCS office. Students should verify with OCS that the application is correctly completed before sending the entire three-part application to the on-site coordinator (via regular US Postal Service only) at:

Mme ALBERT Pamela
1 bis rue Rubens,
apt. 374
25000 Besançon France

Students should indicate participation in the courses entitled "Pratique de la langue" for the entire semester (indicate exact start and end dates).

Students planning to study in Besançon for the summer session need not apply to Wooster for off-campus study unless transferring a semester of financial aid. They must complete the CLA application.

All students should consult the Director of OCS before applying.