



**BOSTON COLLEGE**  
OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

**Institut International d'Etudes Francaises**  
**2011-2012**  
**Program Information Guide**

Institut International d'Etudes Francaises (IEF)  
<http://iief.unistra.fr/>

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**Preparing for Study Abroad**

- To maximize your study abroad experience, you should prepare yourself by learning about your host country, its history, and culture. You might want to begin with: [www.economist.com/countries](http://www.economist.com/countries) or <http://www.britannica.com/> for a summary.
- Know what is happening in the news in your host city by reading the local newspaper at: Les Dernieres Nouvelles D'Alsace: <http://www.dna.fr/>
- Engaging with and adapting to a different culture is an inherent component of study abroad. You may find the following websites useful to learn about intercultural communication before you leave home: <http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/> and <http://www.peacecorps.gov/wvs/educators/enrichment/culturematters/index.html>
- Customs and traditions in your host country are different from those at home. To learn a little about the local customs and traditions you may want to visit the following websites: [http://www.otstrasbourg.fr/rubrique.php?id\\_rubrique=23&lang=en](http://www.otstrasbourg.fr/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=23&lang=en) and <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/france-country-profile.html>
- You and your parents should refer to the Office of International Programs website ([www.bc.edu/international](http://www.bc.edu/international)) and specifically to the *Study Abroad Handbook* for more information regarding the abroad experience.
- Prior to your departure you will meet with your International Study Advisor at an orientation to help you further prepare for your study abroad experience.

**On-Site Contact Information**

- The on-site coordinator is Susan Witkowski. She is available to assist you in all aspects from adjusting to life in Strasbourg, getting settled into your housing assignment, registering for courses at the university and transitional issues/concerns/questions. She is also available 24 hours a day to assist with any emergency/crisis situations. She is the person you will contact in the event of an emergency.

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## Travel Information

- Your host family will meet you at the airport or the shuttle stop at the Hilton Hotel Lufthansa bus stop. If for some reason you arrive on an earlier day, you will need to make your own arrangements from the airport and it will also be your responsibility to set up your own accommodations for the earlier nights. Students should not arrive in Strasbourg later than the designated arrival date. Please send your flight itinerary to Susan Witkowski at [smwitkowski@yahoo.com](mailto:smwitkowski@yahoo.com) (and to your host family ) at least 2 weeks prior to your arrival. Students should contact Susan to determine the best way to meet up with the group if they do not plan to be met at the airport or the Hilton Hotel Lufthansa bus stop.
- Students enrolled in Boston College programs make their own flight arrangements. It is recommended to travel to Strasbourg either via Frankfurt (Lufthansa) or via Paris. Some students fly to Paris and continue their trip by Train. This can be quite a hassle as the airport in Paris is not directly connected to the Gare de l'Est (the train station where you get the train to go to Strasbourg). Lufthansa is much more convenient as it arrives in Frankfurt; you pick up your luggage and continue to Strasbourg by specific Lufthansa bus, labeled as a flight, right outside the customs area on ground level. Take the bus to the Hilton; it is the easiest arrival and pick-up location.

## Passport/Visa Information

- The French government is instituting a new visa application procedure this year. As a result, all students planning to study in France will be required to register with CampusFrance, <http://www.usa.campusfrance.org/> an organization housed in the French Embassy in Washington D.C. This will begin the student visa process.
- You will need to apply for a visa in person at the nearest French Consulate. You will need all your forms stating that you have been accepted by the French University you will be attending.
- To locate the appropriate consular office and the required student visa documents, you should contact the Boston Consulate General of France at (617) 542-7374 or look on the web <http://www.consulfrance-boston.org/>. Start this process as soon as possible as it sometimes takes several weeks to gather the necessary documents. Please refer to the French consulate web site for the most up-to-date information on obtaining a student visa.

## Academics

- Program dates:  
Arrival: Sept 1  
Orientation: Sept 2  
IEEF placement tests and orientation: Sept 5 to 9th  
Classes begin: Sept 12  
Fall Break: Oct 24 through November 1  
Exams: Dec 12 to 16th  
Departure Date: Dec 17th
- All course selection and registration will take place in Strasbourg with guidance and assistance from Susan Witkowski, the on- site coordinator. Once you arrive at the IIEF,

you will take a French language placement test. Based on your test results, you will be placed in a section that is appropriate for you. You will select your courses once you are in France. You will take your courses in French at the level that you placed into. If you place in an advanced level at the IIEF, you will have the opportunity to take a course at either the IEP or UdS.

- Course approval information will be found at:  
<http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/academics/transcripts.html>
- Information about Transcripts and grades is available at:  
<http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/academics/transcripts.html>

## **Housing**

- The on-site coordinator will find home stays for you. Housing arrangements will differ in details and amenities. It is important that students know that although housing accommodations are carefully chosen, living conditions are different in France than in the US.
- Homestays:  
In homestays you live with French families in the city center. They have daily continental breakfast with their families as well as 4 evening meals, usually Monday through Thursday. These can be traditional families, single parent homes, empty-nesters, or young professionals. They enjoy the company of international students and seek discussion and the exchange of ideas. You must be attentive to differences in life style and consumption (see remarks above.) The homestays are an excellent means of developing insight into French culture.
- Additional information about the estimated cost of housing may be found at:  
[http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/offices/international/pdf/Updated\\_Budget\\_2010-.pdf](http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/offices/international/pdf/Updated_Budget_2010-.pdf)
- Local Transportation Strasbourg is a walking/bicycle riding friendly city. Most students will either walk or take a bus around the city.
- BC-sponsored activities: The IEP organizes activities for international students so as to encourage integration with French students. These include visits to the city, exchanges with French students, day trips, Happy Hours, etc. Boston College offers one weekend trip in France each semester in addition to group meals and cultural activities available in Strasbourg. Students receive the “Le Strassbuch” a student guide book published by the EMS as well Guide Culturel from the Université de Strasbourg upon enrollment.
- Cell phones: The on-site coordinator will assist you with this process once you are in Strasbourg. You will be able to purchase a plan where you can add minutes as necessary.

## **Wellness, Health and Safety**

- Make sure that you have had any required or recommended vaccinations for your travel destinations by consulting the Centers for Disease Control website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).
- HTH Worldwide Insurance Services is an emergency health and emergency services provider. All registered BC students are covered by our blanket policy while living and traveling outside of the United States. For more information, visit the following website:  
<http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/travel-health-safety.html>

- You are advised to visit the U.S. State Department website: <http://www.state.gov/> for important travel information including travel advisories.
- Adjusting to a new culture and environment can be stressful. You will have a smoother transition by making sure that you prepare to remain healthy. Following are some websites that provide important information and advice about how to have a healthy and safe experience abroad:  
[http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/emotions/culture\\_shock.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/emotions/culture_shock.html)  
<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/cultural-services/articles/cultureshock-stages.html>  
<http://www.bravenewtraveler.com/2007/11/20/the-4-stages-of-culture-shock-and-how-to-beat-them/>
- Be sure to visit the OIP website for additional information about Health and Safety:  
<http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/travel-health-safety.html>
- Alcohol and Drugs  
 In many cultures, alcohol consumption is an acceptable part of the culture and people are taught to drink in moderation at home. Many countries have a lower drinking age than the U.S. while other countries have drinking and drug abuse laws that may be more severe. You are subject to the laws of your host country, so if you choose to drink alcohol abroad, always drink responsibly and be knowledgeable about your host country's laws by visiting: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips\\_1232.html#drug\\_offenses](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#drug_offenses)
- All students MUST pay for health insurance in Strasbourg (which is approximately 195€ for both the semester or the academic year). This basic insurance covers hospitalization fees, 65% medications and 70% doctor fees according to the basic rate. You will complete the paper work for this insurance at upon your arrival in Strasbourg. The health insurance structure and sign-up process will be explained during orientation. Students will receive an orientation package with lists of doctors, vocabulary, and information on medical emergency procedures as well as a guide book, "Window to Strasbourg" with practical tips for new residents.
- BC emergency contact information:  
 OIP: 617-552-3827 (Monday to Friday 9am-5pm)  
 BCPD: 617-552-4444

### **Finances**

- The OIP website provides information about estimated expenses for study abroad:  
[http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/offices/international/pdf/Updated\\_Budget\\_2010-.pdf](http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/offices/international/pdf/Updated_Budget_2010-.pdf)
- Scholarships and Financial Aid information can be found at:  
<http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/financesawards.html>
- Banking information- in the past students will use their US bank, ATM card. Check with your local bank for international fees, etc.

### **Returning to BC**

- Complete a Program Evaluation. Upon completion of your program OIP will e-mail the link to the evaluation
- Mentor an exchange student Strasbourg by contacting [oiexchange@bc.edu](mailto:oiexchange@bc.edu)
- Volunteer for Discovery Night, Pre-departure Orientation, Re-entry seminar by contacting your International Study Advisor at [oiadvise@bc.edu](mailto:oiadvise@bc.edu)

- It is not uncommon when you return from studying abroad to experience “reverse” culture shock. The following may help you transition back to home:

<http://www.cie.uci.edu/prepare/shock.shtml>

<http://www.studyabroad.com/guides/handbook/handbook5.html#shock>

### **References**

- Useful websites: <http://iief.unistra.fr/>
- Student and parent guides at <http://www.studyabroad.com/guides/index.html>

UPDATED BY Caitrin Sheils 04/26/11