

# Erasmus Experience Report

Université Clermont Auvergne Clermont-Ferrand, France

Program Fall 2018/2019

## Courses (all undergraduated):

- Business Law (4 ECTS)
- International Business (2 ECTS)
- International Business Export (3 ECTS)
- International Business Communication (4 ECTS)
- Macroeconomics 2 (4 ECTS)
- Français Général (Centre FLEURA) (7 ECTS)
- Project Management (3 ECTS)
- Managerial Accounting (4 ECTS)

## **Preparation**

I received a list of classes taught in English to choose my courses at the Université Clermont Auvergne and a request-letter for a room in a student hall. Since I was interested in business and management classes, I took the opportunity to mix law and business classes.

Also I needed some important documents, the travel health insurance, a copy of my birth certificate for the CAF (français Wohngeld), some passport photos for example for the student card, my transcript of records from the university of Cologne, registration papers and personal documents.

The University of Clermont-Ferrand offered me a room in one of the student halls, called CROUS, which I accepted, so I didn't have to find an apartment on my own. But I met many other students who had their own apartment downtown. They paid around 300-400 Euro for their room.

## **Trip**

Clermont-Ferrand has a small airport, a good train connection to Lyon and Paris and a good FlixBus connection to many cities. Nevertheless I took my own car to be independent and be able to discover the region. I can recommend to take your own car, we often did carpooling with other students for traveling through France during the weekends.

If you have to take public transportation to travel to Clermont-Ferrand I would recommend BlaBlaCar or taking the ICE from Germany to Lyon or Paris.

## **Housing / Student Residence:**

As I already mentioned, I got a renovated room at the student residence St. Jacques Dolet. I rented a room with 9m<sup>2</sup> with my own bathroom for around 250 Euros a month. It was a good choice because the standard rooms with shared bathrooms are horrible and I can't recommend them. So if you want to live at CROUS, it is better if you choose a "chambre rénovée".

The room was alright. It has a bed, a big desk, a chair, shelves for food and other stuff, a wardrobe for the clothes and a little fridge without a freezer. The bathroom is very small but okay for daily use. You need to buy linen or bring your own.

Nevertheless you need to decide for yourself, if you want to live on 9 square meters. It's okay for one semester, but I would recommend finding your own apartment if you're staying longer

We had one kitchen on the floor for around 30 people are living on the floor. The kitchen has a table with six chairs. It was totally fine cooking there, most of the time there was a free hot plate for cooking (an induction heating cooker, so you need special pots). You can buy a new pot and pan at a supermarket called Auchan in the centre. There you can also buy some plates and cutlery. Or you go to IKEA which is around 30 min away by tram.

St. Jaques Dolet has his own cafeteria where you can get food. It was totally fine for the price (3,50 €), so I didn't cook very often. The opening hours were 11.30 - 14.00 and 17.30- 19.00, they served different dishes.

### **Transportation & Services**

St. Jaques Dolet is a 15 minute walk away from the centre of Clermont, it takes 15 minutes to go to the language school Centre FLEURA and to the Mabagement Building and less than 10 minutes to the Law Building and La Rotonde where I had most of my courses. You can reach everything by foot, but you can also buy a ticket for the tram for 25 Euros a month, but it isn't necessary. I didn't take the tram very often. Furthermore the City of Clermont-Ferrand offers bikes like nextbike, which you can use for 30 min for free.

The other student residence available was Philippe Lebon, it is nearly the same as St. Jaques Dolet and the rooms are also 9m<sup>2</sup> and a shared kitchen. The most of the people who lived there said that everything is okay.

Furthermore you can apply for CAF which is money from the French government granted to all students. You get around 30% of the rent a month back and you can apply it online at [caf.fr](http://caf.fr). You need your birth certificate, a confirmation that you are a student, a special sheet from the Crous and a French banc account. I opened my account at Credit Agricole. Usually the CAF is sent to the Crous directly. Sometimes the French organisation is annoying so it took me a few times to correct my documents until I finally received the CAF.

### **University**

The organisation of the university, especially for exchange students, is not very good. I didnt have a real schedule and needed to look up my classes every week. You have to find your classes in a large catalogue, since the program for the schedule didn't work for Erasmus students. The courses changed from week to week, depending on the professors schedule.

Nevertheless the contact persons for international students were very helpful, even if they couldnt change much on the mess.

The first two weeks were very stressful to find and select the right classes, but I got used to it and figured out how to find my classes.

The faculties are all over the town. The undergraduate courses for economics and management students are in La Rotonde or in the management building near downtown, the Law and Language classes in other buildings.

In general, the courses in France were not very difficult in comparison to Cologne and the teaching concept was different. I had to do many presentations and discussions. I had mid-term tests, project work and only a few final exams.

It is a bit like school in Germany, we were only 20-30 students in one room. I had most of the courses with the same people and it felt like a class. It was a mix of French people and international students from all over the world. Sometimes we met in the evening, which helped to get to know the french culture.

### **Courses**

I chose the courses Managerial Accounting, International Business Export, Project Management, International Business Communication and International Business which are management courses. Project Management and International Business Communication were a mess, because the teachers did not really know what they are talking about. I can recommend International Business, Managerial Accounting and Export. One task f.e. was to write country reports at the end of the semester or hold presentations in front of the class.

I had two economics courses called Economics and Macroeconomics 2. They were the most difficult course and the English of one of the professors wasn't very good. But nevertheless it was still easier than the German classes.

The Law course was interesting too, but since the regulatory in France is different I couldn't participate much.

The French language course was good because it was not too easy or hard for me, but I think it depends on the level and the teacher. I had to do some homeworks and class presentations as well. It helped me to renew my French skills and it was useful in everyday's life.

### **Leisure time**

Clermont-Ferrand is a small city but nevertheless you can do a lot of things. The historical downtown is beautiful for shopping or sightseeing. There are many smaller bars, pubs and cafes around the cathedral. Furthermore the region „Auvergne“ is known for its nature. We often drove to small typical french villages around Clermont to try some cheese, french food or go hiking.

If you would like to do some sports, then you can register at SUAPS. It's the sports club of the university, offering different sports and a gym. You can practice almost every kind of sport you like and join them on various trips

I visited a Rugby game of ASM Clermont or football games in Clermont or Lyon. Clermont also has a ice hockey team which you can visit as well.

Sometimes there are events from the Erasmus club World Top ESN. There you can meet the most international people. Usually every Tuesday there is an event called Cafe des Langues in different bars or Erasmus parties every month.

During the weekends I went to different cities. I wanted to visit as many locations as possible: I went to Vichy, Lyon, Marseille, Bordeaux, Paris and Nice. It is better if you do that at the beginning of the semester because at the end you have to do some work.

All in all, it was fun and interesting staying one semester in Clermont-Ferrand. I met new friends, learned more about our neighbor country and improved my french skills. I am looking forward visiting it again.