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Part 1: Pre-Departure Preparation
Visit the French International Engineering Program page to view a timeline and learn more about how to prepare for your year abroad. Part of this preparation will include mandatory paperwork that you need to fill out in URI Abroad for application and permission to study abroad, your host institution application, as well as pre-departure orientations and helpful passport and visa information, so pay close attention to the information and deadlines listed in the timeline. IEP works very hard to ensure that you are selected to attend your chosen program, however nothing is guaranteed. The program is a direct exchange with our partnering universities. Therefore the number of slots at partner universities is limited and may change from year to year.

Scholarships
Make sure to check IEP specific scholarship website (https://web.uri.edu/engineering/academics/iep/scholarships/) as there may be new scholarships posted for which you all could be eligible.

Choosing Classes
Courses at UTC are called UV (unit de valeur). A sample of the course catalog can be found here. URI students who have attended UTC have created a Google Sheets database with courses they took along with comments, recommendations, etc. Editing privileges to this document will be granted to URI students going abroad, although they should not add anything until after they have enrolled in and completed their courses at UTC.

Tronc Commun refers to the first two years of general studies that students at UTC take. After that, the courses are broken down by engineering major. Courses taken at TSH are classified as humanities. When you are looking at a course description, one important aspect is the “Niveau conseillé.” This refers to which semester students should be in in order to take the class. They will be listed as GX04 for example, where X is the type of engineering, and the number is the semester. You should take classes that are either GX03, GX04, or GX05. On the left next to the course description, it states which semester the course is offered, and how many hours per week. C stands for "course” and this represents a time when all students taking this course will meet. TD stands for "travaux dirigés” which is kind of like a recitation. TP stands for "travaux pratiques” and represents a lab time. Depending on the class size, there will be multiple TD and TP sections throughout the week. Most engineering labs run on a biweekly basis (half the class conducts the lab on week A, the other half on week B). Also, most labs are conducted in groups. I recommend taking a class with a lab since the group work will be easier with the help of French students who are familiar with the program.

| GSU – CVE | GP – CHE | GM – MCE |
| GI – CPE and ELE | GSM – ISE | GB – BME |
Once you arrive at UTC and have access to your UTC online account, you can consult https://assos.utc/fr/uvweb/ to read student reviews of each course. You can also search for an updated “calendrier universitaire” to find out when the semester starts and when the holidays are.

If you do not need a specific engineering course in order to graduate, you might consider taking a unique class offered at UTC and transferring it as an independent study credit. **Note!** UTC has specific requirements of what classes need to be taken in order to qualify for an internship.

**Housing**

One option for housing is to live in one of the dorms or résidence universitaire which are part of the CROUS. This is a government organization that provides affordable housing for students. You will receive the housing application from a UTC representative around the beginning of June, which is very late, but do not worry. You will know before your arrival what type of housing you have and where. Residence Roberval is located in a more convenient location near the main UTC building and the centre ville. It includes a single room, a private bathroom, a mini fridge, and shared kitchens with ovens and stoves. Residence du Parc is located near the other UTC buildings: Pierre Guillaumat I & II, Centre de Recherches, and Centre D’Innovation. Residence du Parc is a 10-15 minute bus ride from the centre ville and main UTC building. It has single rooms that include a private bathroom, a mini fridge, a sink, and a stove top. Residence du parc also has four-person apartments that have four bedrooms each with a sink and mini fridge. The apartment has one toilet, two showers, and a spacious kitchen with a sink, table, oven, and stovetop. Each dorm building has a laundry room (feed not included in rent). If you are living in a CROUS residence, you must move in on a weekday before 4 pm since the office is not open on the weekends and you will not be able to check in.

Another option for housing is to find your own accommodations. If you would like to find a shared apartment, there is a Facebook group where UTC students post openings and look for roommates: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/hometu.compi/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/hometu.compi/). You can also look on [www.leboncoin.fr](http://www.leboncoin.fr), which is like the French version of craigslist. See the CAF section on page 14 to learn how to save money on rent! Make sure you visit the housing first or research the housing option thoroughly before putting down a deposit - there are a lot of housing scams out there, and students have been scammed in the past!

**Packing**

A few things that you might forget while packing:

- An Ethernet cord – there is no wifi in the CROUS residences. Even if you plan to buy a wifi adapter, it is good to have the cord for when you first arrive. (You will not be able to access the internet until you receive your UTC account to log in).
- A pocket French/English dictionary, if you have one - you will be allowed to use one
during your exams, but not electronic versions.

- Presents – this definitely isn’t necessary, but a great tip. When you meet people and they have birthdays/parties, having something small to give them from the US can be a cool gift. Examples include magnets, postcards, or other knick knacks.
- Blanket/Fitted sheets/Towels - these are good to bring if you have the extra space, since you will likely be too tired to do a massive haul on the first day

**Tip!** Expect to shop for clothes and souvenirs when you’re there abroad. Pack with this in mind, otherwise you may have to leave things behind or pay extra for more luggage to bring everything back.

**On-Site Checklist for IEP Exchange Students to (UTC)**

Before you go, review the **On-Site Checklist** attached at the end of this document for a checklist of everything you will need to do right before you, right when you arrive or within 30 days of your arrival and what you must do before you depart France.

**Part 2: Semester at UTC**

**Getting to UTC**

**Taxi/Uber**

As part of the foreign student information provided by UTC is the name of a taxi driver that you can arrange to pick you up at the airport at a specific time. He charges a flat rate of 80€ to drive from Charles de Gaulle airport to Compiegne. The ride takes about 50 minutes. While this option is more expensive, it is the easiest as you will likely be tired, unsure of how to navigate, and carrying a heavy load.

**Train** The first step is to take the metro to the Gare de Nord train station. The line is called the “RER B” and is represented by a blue color on the map. This line goes to Gare du Nord without having to change lines, and costs 10€. Once at Gare du Nord, you must buy a ticket for Compiegne (approximately 15€). Follow the signs for the “Grandes Lignes.” You probably won’t see Compiegne on the “Departing Trains” boards in the station since it is not usually the last stop. The ticket purchase can be done at one of the yellow ticket machines (the blue ones are for the metro) or at a ticket window. If you do not see any ticket windows, try taking the escalators up to floor 0. The underground area can be a bit confusing since there are so many metro lines, and it is easier to get your bearings on the main floor where you can see all of the train lines. Once the train arrives you can board and wait for the departure. Once you arrive in Compiegne, you can take a taxi or bus to your residence. Remember that buses are free in Compiegne, just ask for directions in the train station that’s on the opposite side of the river, and a bit far to walk with your luggage.

**The Buddy Program - ESN**

One of the student organizations at UTC is called Esperanto (ESN). This group plans
activities for French and international students as well as organizes the Buddy Program. You will be paired up with a French student that will help you with any questions you have about your classes as well as being one of your first friends.

Compiègne - Getting to Know la Ville

Buses

The buses in Compiègne are free and easy to use. The map can be found at this link under “lignes urbaines” and the timetable is here. There are different bus lines and schedules for Sundays, and on Sundays the bus costs 2€.
Both UTC buildings are located on the green line #5. The main building Benjamin Franklin is in the upper right corner at “Roger Couttolenc” or “Port a Bateaux” and the other UTC building Pierre Guillaumat is located at the lower left corner at “Edmond Rostand” or “Centre de Recherches.” Also in the lower left is the UTC Centre de Recherches where the laboratories are located.

**Le Centre Ville**

Compiègne is located on the Oise river. On the map below, you can see the main UTC building Benjamin Franklin, the train station, and the centre ville highlighted in tan. The centre ville is where you will find the shops, restaurants, town hall, and the palace. Take advantage of the shops, cafes, and restaurants as well as different activities like the Christmas Market and Palace of Compiegne (free for those under 26). Compiegne will be a bit empty during the immersion program because August is the typical vacation month of the region. UTC students and the community of Compiegne return in early September.

![Map of Compiègne](image)

**The Pic'asso**

Pic’asso is the name of the bar that is owned and operated by UTC students. It is located on the lower level of the Benjamin Franklin building. They only sell beer, all drinks are less than 2€, you must pay with your UTC badge, and it is only open on weekdays during the semester. During the day, the bar serves as a café where you can buy snacks and coffee while socializing or studying.

**Summer Immersion Course**

The summer immersion course is a four week session that occurs in August before the semester starts. This course is a great way to become acquainted with the city and meet the
other international students while improving your French.

**UTC Buildings and Class Registration**

The main building for UTC is the Centre Benjamin Franklin or BF, close to the centre ville. This is where the majority of your classes will take place. BF is composed of 5 different towers” that are connected by bridges and labeled A-F. If you see on your class schedule a letter F followed by letter A or B, then by a number, this means your class will take place in this building. If the classroom begins with an R, this means your class will take place in Pierre Guillaumat.

Class, ID, and social security registration are done the week before classes start.

If you end up registering for any classes that you did not get prior approval for, you will need to contact the respective department chairs to try to get them approved.

**Phone Plans**

If you want to continue using your American phone in France you will first need to have it unlocked by your carrier. This will allow you to purchase a new SIM card with a French company that will work in your phone.

If you have T-Mobile, they offer unlimited data in most European countries. In this case you might want to consider keeping your T-Mobile phone plan and buying a cheap flip phone with a French number so that potential employers will be able to contact you.

On the day or after you arrive in France, you will want to buy the mobile carrier Free Mobile SIM card for your phone. Most students abroad have used Free as their carrier, as it is affordable and the process is simple. You may use your American debit or credit card to purchase the SIM card and pay your monthly phone bill which is around 30 EUR a month.

**Bank Accounts**

You will need to open a bank account in order to receive direct deposit payments for your internship. Most companies will not offer any other payment methods besides direct deposit.

In order to open a bank account you must schedule in advance a meeting with a counselor and provide proof of your residence (justificatif de domicile). You can obtain this from your landlord and bring it to your meeting. UTC often will have a deal with one of the banks in town that will start you off with some amount of money when you open an account. In 2015 it was Société Générale. French bank accounts are not centralized; you will be dealing with this one specific person for any questions and concerns that you have.
Once you set up your bank account, you will want to transfer money into it. There are multiple options to do this. If you want to be able to send a wire transfer directly from your American account to your French account you will probably need to have someone else’s name on the account with yours, so that they will be able to physically go to the bank in the US to send the transfer. Another option is to write yourself a check from your American account and deposit it in your French account. This process takes a bit longer than a direct wire transfer.

Another option is to use HSBC as your bank. It is an international bank and allows for easy transfer with no fees. But you will have to open an account in the US first, which can easily be done online. There is a HSBC branch in centre ville in Compiègne where you will make an appointment to open your French bank account. You will need to bring your proof of residence as well.

If you want to try to avoid some of the fees and complete the transfer online, you can set up two PayPal accounts: one American, one French. You can then transfer money from your American PayPal account to your French one, and then withdraw the money into your French bank account.

You will need to consider how you will close your bank account before leaving France. It is probable that you will still be waiting for your last paycheck from your employer before you have to leave. Talk with your bank in advance of this date and see if you can complete the closure paperwork before your departure, and then close the account once you have transferred all of the money out.

**OFII Visa Paperwork**

You must complete some paperwork upon your arrival in France in order to validate your visa. UTC will set up a workshop and assign you a time to see the medical professional, as well as complete the paperwork and send it in for you. Read your emails and pay attention to any deadlines. Some of the paperwork that you use to get your visa will also be used for the OFII, so you need to keep and and bring it to France. While you may not need the visa paperwork, it is a good idea to bring it in case you want to extend your visa.

**If You Get Sick**

It can be scary to get sick and need medical professionals in a different country, but don’t be afraid as there are many resources to help you. There is a free nurse at UTC that is located in the parking garage level of building C. They can give you a free consultation, and a list of doctors in Compiègne, but are not able to prescribe any medication. Going to the doctor in France is different than in the US. Often, the doctor will have an office inside an office building that includes their desk as well as the examination area without any reception area. You should make an appointment in advance by calling ahead. You can also
use doctolib.fr. This website lists doctors registered in your area and list their specialties. You can also use this site to make appointments online. General office visits cost 25 EUR flat. During the visit, the doctor will give you a reimbursement form that can be filled out and filed either with your French insurance or your American insurance. Keep in mind, you are also covered with the university blanket health insurance coverage, CISI, which can help you locate local health resources. CISI can also cover out of pocket expenses qualifying medical appointments are booked in advance. You can take any prescriptions you receive directly to the pharmacy to be filled. The general emergency number in Europe is 112.

Travel

Trains

I highly recommend buying a “Carte Jeune” upon your arrival in France. This pass costs 50€ and allows you to get between 25% and 50% discounts on the train tickets (depending on the peak hours). It lasts for a year and will quickly add up. You can buy it at the counter at the train station. For buying train tickets, the Captain Train website is a good alternative to the SNCF, which is not always the most user friendly.

Planes

Charles de Gaulle Airport and Orly Airport are both accessible on the RER B metro line in Paris. There are special metro tickets that you must buy in order to access the airports and they cost between 10€ and 12€.

The Beauvais Airport is closer to Compiegne, and accessible by a bus that costs 2€, but does not run very frequently, so pay attention when you schedule flights at this airport. This bus rui the Compiegne train station to the Beauvais bus station, so then you must take a local bus from the Beauvais train station (just down the street) to the airport. A good website for finding cheap flights is www.skyscanner.com and BlaBlaCar is a good option to get to the airports.

Buses

Traveling by bus is a cheap way to get around France. There are often overnight buses that travel to the cities that are farther away, allowing you the maximum time at your destination for the lowest cost of lodging. A good website to compare the prices and times of different bus companies is www.busradar.com. Flixbus is a common bus company in the area that people use.

BlaBla Car

BlaBlaCar is a ride-sharing app where users post routes that they plan to drive on specific days, and how many seats they have open in their car. This is a cheaper and easier way to get to the airport, and anywhere else that you would like to go.
**Luggage**

Most trains do not care about the size or weight of your luggage (unless you are taking Ouigo). Pay attention to what it says when you are buying a ticket. If you are intending to purchase a travel backpack, the sporting goods store Decathlon has cheap ones. There is one near Compiègne that you can get to by bus. Most airline tickets that you will buy will not include a checked bag, and there are size restrictions on the carry-on luggage.

**Maps**

Travelling can be even more challenging when you don't have internet access in the country that you are visiting. A great option is to download an offline map of the place you are visiting that will be accessible on your phone even if you don't have data. If your phone has GPS capabilities, these will work even without an internet connection. An example of this type of application is called Maps.Me for android phones.

**Visiting Paris**

One of the great things about Compiègne is its proximity to Paris. It takes about 1 hour to arrive at the Gare du Nord from the Compiègne train station.

Once you arrive in Paris, there is a great app you can download for navigating the metro called “Visit Paris by Metro” by RATP. It analyzes your current location and allows you to input the destination and will direct you on which lines to take. You can also use Google or Apple Maps. When buying metro tickets it is often the best option to buy a t+ carnet, which gives you a discount on 10 tickets, and there is a further discount for being “jeune.” A carnet of 10 jeune tickets costs approximately 15€.

Another great thing about Paris is the number of museums. As a young resident in France (less than 26), all of the museums in Paris (including the Arc de Triomph and the Cathedrale Notre Dame, but unfortunately not the Eiffel Tower) are free upon showing your visa. This also applies to young people from all EU countries.

**Inter-semester Week**

In the week that follows the end of the semester, many UTC student organizations plan trips to different locations. Some to look out for include the engineers without borders trip, the skiing trip in the Alps, and the surfing trip. Registration for these trips will take place during the semester.

**Part 3: Internship Semester**

**Finding an Internship**

It is important to start your search for internships as early as possible. Also don't forget to utilize any networking you may have at your disposal. Some of your professors may have
contacts in French companies. The first step to finding an internship is to create a resume/CV and a cover letter in French.

Check out the FIEP Sakai site for some good examples. Next, you should search for companies you are interested in. Once you apply for an internship, let your FIEP advisor know, so that he/she can help you via any contacts they might have at the company. UTC also hosts a career fair known as Comutec that takes place in the middle of October, which is a great way to find internships. There is even a UTC advisor whose sole job is to help international students at UTC find internships. UTC has an internship database, Demeter, which lists a number of great opportunities. You must approach finding an internship with the same professionalism you would in finding a job. Make sure companies can contact you easily and check and respond to emails promptly.

**What the Heck is a Convention de Stage?**

Since the internship is part of a course that you will be enrolled in at UTC, you will be required to complete a Convention de Stage. This is a contract between you, the company, and UTC that outlines your internship agreement. You will complete it with the internship advisor at UTC and then mail it to the company. You will be officially enrolled in a course called TN09 or TN10 at UTC during your internship. This course has a few requirements throughout the semester including an end-of-the-semester report with a 10-minute presentation and a research paper that you will present at the end of your internship.

**Finding a Place to Live**

For your internship, you will almost certainly move to a new part of France. In your new city, you can continue living in a CROUS residence if you so choose, or you can search for an apartment on your own or another student residence organization such as CLJT or ARPEJ. Some good websites to search for listings are [www.leboncoin.fr](http://www.leboncoin.fr), [www.appartager.com](http://www.appartager.com), and [www.lacartedescolocs.fr](http://www.lacartedescolocs.fr). You might consider moving to a city that has a university because it is easier to meet other students, and you can attend some of the university events to make friends. Again, be aware of online scammers!

**La CAF**

In France there is a financial aid service called la CAF (Caisse d'Allocation Familiale) for lodging that you can apply for to receive money back on your housing. This is a long and tedious process so make sure you start early! You need to have social security in order to be eligible.

**FRN 315/316**

FRN 315 and FRN 315 are the two courses that you will receive credit for at URI as part of your internship. In order to receive these credits, you must complete 10 assignments that you will send to your FIEP advisor, as well as creating an IEP poster. For the assignments, you will recount events related to your learning (cultural, linguistic, technical, or professional), commenting on your progress and recording positive and negative events.
that you experience. For the poster, the template will be provided. You will need to take pictures for the poster, preferably of you doing something in France. You will complete the poster presentation around the end of your internship.

**Sharing Your Experiences!**

Did you have one of the biggest life changing experiences this past year and wish you could do it all over again? Then why not help out the next generation of IEP students?! They are going to want to hear all about your adventures and ask you lots of advice and questions. You could even be the next person to write a pamphlet like this! See the IEP Coordinator (TI House office) about being a Student Ambassador. You’ll get to talk to prospective IEP students and 3rd year students about to embark on their own journey, and help make the IEP a better program. What better way to remember your time abroad than by giving back to the program that made it possible?

While you’re at it you can keep your French skills sharp by going to French Chat Hour or even living with international students at the IEP House! The Assistant Director of the IEP Living & Learning Community will send applications to live in IEP housing via email in spring when you are abroad.
# Checklist for IEP Exchange Students to the University of Technology of Compiègne (UTC)

## Pre-Arrival

### August/September

**Prepare**
- Read all emails from UTC carefully & respond if needed
- Read the [UTC Student Guide](#)
- Take out (or be able to get) enough € to cover housing deposit & rent
- Email [incoming@utc.fr](mailto:incoming@utc.fr) Céline de Araujo & Samira Lakbir re: housing & when to arrive. Plan your arrival (do not arrive Sat/Sunday)
- Extra passport photos
- Get supporting docs ready for arrival in France
- Complete the [International Travel Certificate](#) (includes negative COVID test from last 72 hrs)

**To Do**
- Confirm your arrival with OIE through URIAbroad
- Attend FREE 4-week Intensive Training Course in August
  - Intensive French language courses (100h), with excursion tours, cultural and sports activities
- Pay for accommodation plus deposit & move into Housing (CROUS/ALESC or private)
  - Sign & obtain original contract

### Within the First Two Weeks

- Attend UTC Orientation
  - Receive welcome packet, insurance info, etc.
- Meet with UTC’s Directorate (Ms. Céline de Araujo & Ms. Samira Lakbir, G202 office)
  - Fill out a form
  - UTC will organize a mandatory medical visit 58 € with the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII)
- Open a French Bank Account
- Subscribe for Health Insurance / *Sécurité Sociale* (student) FREE
  - Information will be sent by email ([incoming@utc.fr](mailto:incoming@utc.fr) in September)
- Matriculate at UTC
  - MUST bring ALL docs listed in Acceptance Letter
  - Obtain enrollment certificate

### Within 90 days of your arrival to France:

- Validate your **ÉTUDIANT**–R311-3 6° visa on the [website of the French Ministry of the Interior](#)
  - If you fail to do so, you will no longer be legally present in France and will be unable to re-enter the Schengen Area

## End of Study

**To Do**

- If leaving Compiègne:
  - Register with local city of internship
  - Fill out OIE Internship Application in [URI Abroad](#)
  - Note: While doing an internship, you remain enrolled at UTC
  - Inform the staff of ALL courses taken, even if you failed. Fill out the transcript release form
  - Only after the semester ends OR on final day:
    - Ex-matriculate / De-register from the university
      - Inform Health Insurance company & receive pro-rated refund
      - De-register from the city of Compiègne or the city of your internship