



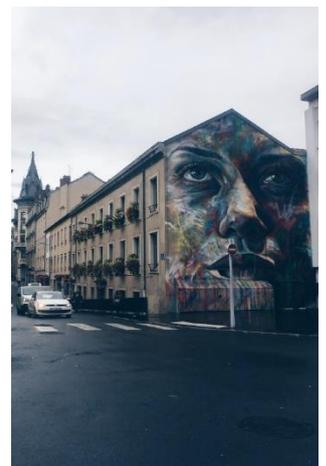
France has never been a country of my dream. Nevertheless, when I first heard about a semester abroad I decided to go to France. There were multiple reasons for it. The most important one is a possibility of double degree, others are less important: recommendations from friends and parents' willing. So ICN became my first choice among French schools because of its good certification and recommendations.



Formal stuff. To get a grand to ICN School was not a big deal compare to process of getting a visa and housing. I am not an EU- citizen, so I had to apply for a French visa. This process could seem complicated but if you did all the paper work right it will take one or two daily trips to Frankfurt am Main. And this is the most complicated thing with the French visa! I strongly recommend making an appointment first and then collect the documents! If you won't have something, you can send it later per post.

Another time- and passion-taking aspect is housing. In April or May, you will get a brochure with a list of student's residences. In most of the agencies there are people who speak English and it makes the process much easier. Do not hesitate to contact school representatives, they will also help you to get your French bank account.

However, the bureaucracy of France is not the only barrier that I met. Before my year abroad, I honestly took French class and thought that was going to be enough, at least for the beginning. I was never that wrong! Before France, I thought it is not a big deal to order coffee in Starbucks even without knowing the language. French people most often don't speak English and will make you feel awkward without saying anything. That why you always need internet, just in case you got lost. And here comes the good thing – “free”, almost unlimited mobile provider of 100Gb a month!





Now I want to tell about the school, first about the building. ICN moved their campus from an ugly building downtown to a modern glass campus in the middle of nowhere. And here again comes the problem! The public transport in Nancy is horrible. There is only one tram and one bus that can take you to school. The Tram in the morning is always full! Overall the way to school from Phytagore Residence takes 35-40 minutes. If you love long walks, like I do, you can enjoy them in the morning, it will take 30-40 minutes. Before you will decide which apartments to choose, think first what is more important

for you: to sleep longer in the mornings or to live closer to coffee shops and nightclubs. I also want to mention the coffee shops: even if you are not a fan of coffee, it is a perfect place to study with your team that is opened on Saturday and Sunday. There are three of them: Starbucks, which is good only because of the working time, Columbus, which has rare golden Latte and tasty muffins, and Kensington, sometimes a quiet place with a closed space to study. In none of them coffee is great but let's not be coffee snobs.

Study. That all what I wanted to highlight before going directly to study.

The school is a private 'Grand École'. "École is not just school or university" that you will hear thousand times from one of the professors. However, ICN reminded me of high school. We had fixed class and fixed groups that were not large where you knew everyone, and the teacher knew you per name even if you were not often active. We also had a lot of in class activity



and class assessments. The great thing here is that you can monitor your progress and your final grade. However, it does not work with every subject.

In ICN you will have a team project for each of the classes. Most of the time it includes paper report and presentation. If you are free to choose team members, do it carefully. Do not take friends just because of your good relations. However, projects do not exclude final exams. All of them are in written form. Two were open questions, three were essays and others were multiple choice.

The Bachelor thesis at ICN is a year project. First you will know your team, for two years students could choose groups, so do not sleep and take best people you are comfortable with in work, because the bachelor thesis will take not only your time but also a lot of effort. The first semester is given to decide which topic you will work on. After a first semester, students receive a feedback that should tell whether a team goes in right direction. My experience was really bad! I was in a team with a

friend of mine and two guest members. 80% of the work was done by two of us, other 20% by three members. Unfortunately, there was no way to separate us or change the group, we tried hard! The only advice that administration gave us was to evaluate peers after the oral presentation. I still do not know whether the peer evaluation influenced our grades or not.

Leisure. Nancy is middle-sized town. There are several coffee shops that I mentioned before, several bars, nightclubs and cinema, lucky us available in English! For the first months that was enough but later it might get boring. If you will feel the same way I recommend you get yourself TGV max card that allows you to travel in many directions for zero price. Nancy is perfectly situated between Paris and Strasbourg. In both destinations there are free tickets by TGV max. With this card you can travel without a limit, just book tickets for 4-5 days. If you do not want to buy TGV max, you can always go to Metz. A very cozy city where you



can go shopping, sit in the very authentic coffee shop 'Fox' or visit Pompidou museum.

A school organization "Globe and Co" doing its best to help foreign and native students. They organize parties and weekend trips. If you do not like to plan by your own, you can always join them!

It may seem that I did not like my abroad year, but it is not true! I really loved it! I tried to remember everything that made it a bit complicated, so you can learn from my experience and have the maximum fun! Not government or school make your abroad semester but people around you. Do not be shy and take everything you can!