



# University of La Rochelle Exchange Program Guide

You have chosen to study at the University of La Rochelle (ULR) as an exchange student. It seems that:

- ⇒ You come within the framework of a partnership between the ULR and your home university;
- ⇒ You are enrolled for a degree in your university but not at the ULR;
- ⇒ You pay registration fees to your university but not to the ULR.

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## A. Budget

You have to think about the financing of your stay before arriving in France. Here are some information to prepare your budget.

### 1. Monthly outlay

To live in La Rochelle, you need approximately 750 €/month

• <b>Average rent :</b>	<b>350 €</b>
• <b>Food * :</b>	<b>230 €</b>
• <b>Transport :</b>	<b>30 €</b>
• <b>Miscellaneous (laundry, phone ...)</b>	<b>140 €</b>

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<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>750 €</b>
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\* A meal in a university canteen costs approximately 3€

### 2. Other expenses on arrival

- **Housing insurance:** **50 €**
- **Rent deposit :** **at least one month's rent**

The rent deposit has to be paid when you enter your accommodation.

- **Compulsory social security (health insurance): 203 €**

The social security is compulsory for non-European students. It has to be paid when you enrol in the ULR.

### 3. Advice

On your arrival, you will have some important expenditure: rent deposit, social security, transport, food and maybe a transit night to go from the airport to Paris and then to La Rochelle.

Be sure that you have enough money (in cash or other means of payment, like a credit card valid in France).

## B. Luggage

Before booking your plane ticket, check the maximum number and weight of luggage authorized by your airline company.

## C. Personal documents to bring in France

### ⇒ **European students**

- Identity card or a valid passport
- European Health Insurance Card
- Vaccine book

### ⇒ **Non-European students**

- Identity card or a valid passport
- Student visa (in your passport)
- Consulate or French embassy form : “*Visa long séjour*”
- Vaccine book

## D. Social security (health insurance)

This medical insurance is **compulsory** if **your stay lasts more than 3 months in France, except for European students**. This will be proceeded upon your arrival during registration.

- ⇒ Students from the **European Union** must obtain a **European Health Insurance Card (E.H.I.C.)**. The card is free and you have to ask for it in your country of origin. It allows students not to pay for the French social security.
- ⇒ **Non-European citizens** who are **younger than 28** must register with the **student Social Security scheme**, which is **compulsory when you enrol in the university and costs around 200 €** (203€ for the academic year 2011-2012).
- ⇒ **Non-European citizens** who are **older than 28** may present a **certificate of health insurance, translated into French, valid in the French territory for the duration of the academic year**.

Student social security reimburses a part of your medical costs in France.

Upon university enrolment, you have to choose between: SMECO or LMDE.

These two organisms propose exactly the same cover for the social security.

If you want, you can subscribe to a complementary health insurance (optional) that will make up the difference between the money reimbursed by the social security scheme.

For more information about the French healthcare system: [http://www.cnous.fr/etudier\\_94.htm](http://www.cnous.fr/etudier_94.htm)

## E. “Long stay student visa” (non-European students)

### 1. Before your arrival

Students have to ask for a **student visa**. You can get it from the **French Consulate** or the **French Embassy** in your country who will inform you about the visa application procedure.

**BE CAREFUL:** do not ask for a “short stay visa”, often called “tourist visa”. It is not renewable and can't be extended in France. It does not allow you to enrol at a university or to get a Residence Permit, compulsory to legalise your stay in France.

### 2. On your arrival in France

To be in a legal situation on the French territory, you have to do the following steps to get your VLS stamped:

- Fill in and send the French Consulate or Embassy form
- Go to the appointment for a medical visit
- Go to the appointment given by the French Immigration Integration Office (OFII) and pay a tax stamp (55 €).

These steps can be re-explained to you by the SRI upon your arrival.

**BE CAREFUL:** do not forget to bring with you at La Rochelle the « request form » for the OFII (the French Immigration Integration Office), given to you by the French Consulate or Embassy when obtaining your visa.

You need to carry on with some administrative procedure upon registration at the University of La Rochelle or within the next month of your arrival in France.

If you do not meet the official deadlines, you could be considered “in illegal situation” by the French authorities.

## F. Accommodation

The University of La Rochelle does not own students residences. The SRI works with the CROUS and the ARPAE (organisms in charge of residence halls). Because of the short number of accommodations, housing is proposed first and foremost to the exchange students who come by far, out of Europe.

The International Office contacts directly the exchange student (proposition of accommodation or list of accommodation).

The accommodations booked by the SRI are available on the beginning of the study period (September 1 / January 1). If you arrive before these dates, you will have to look for a temporary accommodation (hotel, youth hostel...) La Rochelle is a very touristic city; think about booking before your arrival to be sure to have a shelter.

### **Youth Hostel:**

The University of La Rochelle has a special membership card. Specify to the Youth hostel that you come to study at the ULR and you will benefit from a concessionary rate.

The youth hostel is closed for two weeks at the end of December / beginning in January. The SRI can give you the exact dates on inquiry.

## 1. Accommodation details

### 1.1. Before your arrival

- A deposit (*caution*) is payable before or on arrival, and is returned on departure (provided that there is no damage to the accommodation).
- The CROUS or the ARPAE will contact you directly and will send you the lease by email.

Before signing the lease, read it carefully

- If you choose to rent a private housing, in some cases, a guarantor is required, i.e. someone in France who agrees to pay the rent if you defaults.

### 1.2. Throughout your stay

- For any housing (student or private), an inventory (*état des lieux*) is compulsory before getting the keys.
- In France, rent is paid on a monthly basis, and at the beginning of the month.
- You have to comply with the rules of the residence (CROUS or ARPAE).

### 1.3. Before your departure

- If wishing to break the lease or to leave the accommodation, you have to respect the legal advance notice (1 or 2 months) and notify the landlord by registered letter with recorded delivery.
- An inventory (*état des lieux*) is compulsory before your departure.
- Your deposit shall be returned, provided that there is no damage to the accommodation

## G. Academic calendar

### 1. Beginning of courses

⇒ French as a Foreign Language (FLE) courses (see the paragraph below)  
Dates are given on the registration form

⇒ Academic courses:

- 1<sup>st</sup> semester: at the beginning of September
- 2<sup>nd</sup> semester: at the beginning of January

⇒ Exams:

- 1<sup>st</sup> semester: before Christmas holidays
- 2<sup>nd</sup> semester: between May 15 and 30

If you cannot be present at the University of La Rochelle at the beginning of courses, you have to inform the SRI (International Relations Office). An arrival 3 weeks after the beginning of courses can be an important risk of studying failure.

**The University of La Rochelle may refuse exchange students who would arrive very late without any notice to the SRI or without having been allowed for a late arrival.**

## **2. Holidays**

- ⇒ All Saint's Day (November 1): one week at the end of October
- ⇒ Christmas (December 25): 2 weeks between December 20 and the beginning of January
- ⇒ Winter: 1 week in February
- ⇒ Easter: 2 weeks in April

## **3. Advice**

It is recommended that you arrive one week before the beginning of courses to discover La Rochelle and the university, to have time to start administrative procedures (opening a bank account, asking for your resident permit, enrolling in the ULR...)

# **H. Courses at the University of La Rochelle**

## **1. Administrative registration**

Upon your arrival, and before starting courses, you have to enrol at the University of La Rochelle. Therefore, you have to come to the Technoforum (see the map). Non-European students must bring the amount of money to pay the student social security (in cash or by credit card valid in France).

## **2. Pedagogical registration**

Preparing your exchange program, a learning agreement has been accepted. It may be changed: on your arrival, the SRI will give you an appointment with the teacher who will be in charge of the follow up of your studies at the University of La Rochelle, and who will explain you how to proceed.

## **3. French as a Foreign Language (FLE) courses**

Exchange students are allowed to follow 6 hours a week of French as a Foreign Language (FLE) courses **free**, which represents 90 hours per semester.

- ⇒ FLE classes give you 6 ECTS per semester.
- ⇒ At the beginning of September or January, you will be tested to determine your current level. You will follow classes with other exchange students who have the same French level than you.
- ⇒ Calendar:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> semester: 15 September-15 December, and exams before the end of the semester.
  - 2nd semester: 15 January-15 May, and exams before the end of May

## I. Buddy program

The SRI will get you in touch with a senior student of the University of La Rochelle. He/she will support you and make your integration easier into the university community and into the city life of La Rochelle.

This buddy will help you to:

- ⇒ Prepare your stay before your arrival
- ⇒ Discover the university (classrooms, schedules, university library, sport and culture...)
- ⇒ Discover the city of La Rochelle
- ⇒ Carry on your administrative procedures

Your buddy will contact you by email several weeks before your arrival.

- ⇒ He/she is appointed to help you but be aware that he/she is not available at all time. **Tell your buddy the exact date of your arrival as soon as you get in touch with him/her.**
- ⇒ He/she will not do everything on your behalf.

**If you don't want a buddy, please let him/her know, and do not forget to inform the SRI as well.**

**The University of La Rochelle is happy to welcome you and wishes you a fruitful and pleasant stay!**

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