



Modern and
Classical Languages

College of Liberal Arts
and Social Sciences

**FACULTY-LED SUMMER PROGRAM IN
ANGERS, FRANCE
UNIVERSITÉ CATHOLIQUE DE L'OUEST-CIDEF**

Summer 2024

FAQ

1. Describe the “Angers Program.”

- The “Angers program” has been in existence since 2003. Angers is a medium-size university town near the Loire valley, only 90 minutes from Paris by TGV train.
- The program is hosted by the Université Catholique de l’Ouest in Angers (UCO), a well-established private university located in the heart of the old city.
- Students enroll in UH language or culture courses designed only for our students as intensive “total immersion” courses that both satisfy their language requirements and count toward the major/minor in French. Students receive UH credit upon satisfactory completion of the program. Classes are held in the *Centre International d’Études Françaises* (CIDEF) of the Université Catholique de l’Ouest.
- For more information about the CIDEF go to <http://www.cidef.uco.fr/>
- For more information about UCO go to <https://www.uco.fr/fr>
- The program includes several excursions that are part of the total learning experience and count toward the total contact hours required.

2. What is the advantage of “homestay”? What if I don’t like the idea of staying with a family?

If you are worried about the lack of privacy or the constraints of family life, please rest assured that host families will give you as much independence as you want. Most families host students year-round and are used to giving students full autonomy. Your only obligation is to take your meals (usually dinner) with your host family. Some students prefer a more inclusive “family life” and families will gladly include them in their activities and events. Students should express their preference on the “homestay form”.

Living with a French family is one of the most rewarding experiences of a study program in France, as it is a unique opportunity to see French culture from “inside”. On short-term programs, the isolation and “English-only” environment of a campus dorm are not the proper way to explore French culture or to advance your language skills.

3. Will I know about my host family prior to departure?

Yes, about 3 or 4 weeks before departure, you will get your host family’s address, email and phone number and we encourage you to contact them prior to departure.

4. How will I know that this is the “right” family for me?

Selection of families is based on the questionnaire you fill out. Please be very thorough in your answers. We accommodate all reasonable requests.

5. If I don’t like my family, can I be moved to another?

All families are selected with great care, and many have hosted our UH students for several years. However, there are sometimes unexpected problems or issues that make it preferable to move a student to another family. Remember that families make plans long in advance to welcome you into their homes, and the decision to withdraw a student must be reasonable and fair to both parties.

6. How far will my family live from campus?

Some families live very close, some a bit further out and most likely, you will need to travel to school by bus, a very safe and common mode of transportation in French cities. The average bus ride to and from campus is about 10 to 15 minutes. Bus passes to and from school will be provided to you at no extra cost. However, if your family lives within a 10 minute walk to school, they will probably not be near a bus route to UCO.

7. What should I expect regarding personal expenses?

That depends entirely on your personal budget. This is an all-expense paid program, so you should plan to spend the same amount as in Houston for your personal outings and entertainment.

8. Should I bring euros?

- You should bring some (limited) cash. We suggest 100 euros. You can change your currency in Houston or wait until you are in France. You can get cash at any ATM machine in France using a US credit card. French banks will not charge a commission for the use of their ATMs. However, your US bank will usually charge you a transaction fee each time you withdraw cash. In most cases, you will not have to use cash, credit cards are widely accepted.
- Please inform your bank that you will be traveling abroad, as “unusual” places of purchase will be “flagged”, and you may not be able to complete your purchase.

9. Should I always carry my passport with me?

Only when you travel outside of France or plan to change money will you need your passport. Please leave your passport in a safe place at your host family’s home. Use other IDs for daily need. Lost passports mean a trip to the consulate in Paris, at your own expense. Please also keep a copy of your passport in a safe place.

10. Do all European countries use the Euro currency?

Yes, most of the EU countries do.

11. Is Angers a “safe” place?

Angers, like any other city in France or Europe is only unsafe if you allow it to be. Although there is far less crime in France (where there is a total ban on guns) than in the US, “petty crimes” are common, especially in Paris, and being a foreigner, you may be more of a target than a French person. My advice: be aware of your surroundings!

Here are some tips:

- do not walk around with your valuables in obvious reach of another person (in your open shoulder bag, backpack, or back pocket).
- When walking in public, hold your purse or bag tightly. When sitting at a café, do not leave your purse on the table or on the floor, or on the back of your chair.
- In public transportation, have your tickets ready before you get on the bus or train.
- Only bring one credit card at a time when you go out.
- Do not get distracted by a stranger addressing you, this is the most basic trick of pickpockets. Don't be afraid to appear rude!
- If you feel unsafe in any given situation, you probably are, and need to seek immediate assistance. ALWAYS carry the director's cell phone number and your French family's phone number with you.
- If you are lost, find a good, well-lit spot to stop and use your phone. Don't be afraid to ask people for help. They will gladly come to your rescue!
- Be discreet. No need to call attention to yourself by speaking loudly in English.
- Report any occurrence of what you might consider "harassment" to the Director, including "street harassment", which is forbidden by French law.
- NEVER VENTURE OUT BY YOURSELF IN PLACES YOU DON'T KNOW. NEVER GO OUT ALONE AT NIGHT.
- Always use the "buddy system" when you go out, especially at night. You may only go out at night if accompanied.

12. Are excursions mandatory?

Yes, excursions are cultural experiences that are part of the curriculum. There will be several excursions to cultural and historical sites during the program, please see the itinerary.

13. Are activities planned for weekends?

Weekends are free to give students time to travel on their own if they wish. There are many things to do around Angers, and many students in the past have chosen to stay in town and enjoy the beautiful surrounding region and the city itself. If you want to travel, you should plan your trips in advance. It is always more fun to travel in small groups. If you need help planning your own excursions, please contact me at giacchetti@uh.edu
Always inform the director in advance of your travel plans.

Optional Paris excursion. Based on student demand.

Students who would like to go as a group on a weekend Paris excursion must reserve their own accommodations in advance. The program director will help them with the organization of their activities, places to visit, and will give them a special orientation session. However, this is not an excursion that is included in our program fee, and students may plan activities in Paris as they wish. Please travel in groups of 2 or more.

14. Where do I go to get information about train tickets for weekend excursions?

The national railroad company (SNCF) has a website where you can purchase your tickets, <https://www.sncf.com/sncv1/en/services/tickets-bookings>

You can also organize day trips once in Angers, and purchase tickets at the train station. Although I do not recommend spending time and money traveling to other countries when there is so much to see in France, some students may want to visit other European cities.

Sometimes, the cheapest way to travel is by air. There are “low cost” airlines, such as Easy Jet that will take you to London, Amsterdam, etc.

15. What is the weather like in France in June?

France has a very moderate, dry climate; temperatures rarely fall below 50 degrees F. in the winter or rise above 90 in the summer. But in the last few years, more “heat waves” have occurred, even in June. In early summer, it is usually cool at night (in the 60s), and pleasantly warm during the day (in the high 70s to mid 80’s).

16. What should I never forget to pack?

Bring a light raincoat and a couple of light sweaters. Comfortable walking shoes are a MUST! French people dress very casually. Jeans or casual pants are best. Shorts are not as common as in the US but are fine. Avoid wearing “flip-flops” to school or on excursions.

17. How about electronics and electric items?

In Europe, you will need an adapter for all electric and electronic devices. All phones, laptop computers and tablets, cameras, come already equipped for both US and European standards. All you need is a small inexpensive adapter (found in stores, on Amazon, or at the airport). Regarding hair dryers, they are usually poorly designed to withstand the electric current in France. Some get too hot, some not enough. At your own risk!

18. What about baggage on transatlantic flights?

Regulations concerning number, weight and size limits for baggage vary from one airline to another. Please go to your chosen airline’s website and find their luggage requirements. However, I urge you to travel light. Laundry is washed every week, so you do not need more than 3 pairs of pants and 4 or 5 tops.

19. What about toiletry and medication?

All toiletry articles can be purchased in France but can be a bit more expensive than in the US.

All “over-the-counter” medication (aspirin etc.) can only be purchased in pharmacies in France. They are usually cheaper than in the US because of government regulations.

Only prescriptions by a French doctor will be filled in French pharmacies.

Please remember to fill your prescriptions before you go. Many prescription drugs available in the US are not sold in France.

20. How about using my cell phone in France?

US phones can be used in France. You should find out about international plans from your phone company. You can also use your phone with internet connection only, but don’t forget to turn off your data. For calls, WhatsApp is a preferred alternative.

Keep in mind that there are many public places in Angers that have free Wi-Fi access.

Also, when calling home or getting calls from home, remember that France is 7 hours ahead of the US (CT). Please tell your family not to call you after 10PM except in case of emergency. Phone conversations tend to be louder and are disruptive at night.

21. Will I have free internet access in France?

Yes you will! The CIDEF will provide wireless access during business hours. Angers is equipped with free internet access in many public areas and commercial venues. Your family will also provide free Wi-Fi connection.

22. Will I need my laptop computer or tablet in France?

You will need Internet access for class in upper-level courses, so you will need your laptop. It is not required in second-year classes. However, we ask that you limit your time on the internet. After all, your time in France is best spent.....in France!

23. How do I get in touch with the rest of the group before departure?

All names and addresses of participants will be disclosed to the group (with your permission), to allow students to communicate among themselves. A WhatsApp group will be created prior to departure.

24. How do I stay in touch with the rest of the group while in Angers?

A list of all the families' phone numbers/emails/street addresses will be given to all participants. The director's cell phone number will also be given to you, so that you can be "in touch" at all times.

25. How do I get my airline ticket? Which airline do you recommend?

Group travel is expensive and limits your choices. Students will purchase their own airline tickets directly from the airlines or from a "discounter", which may offer cheaper flights. **Air France (or their partner airline, Delta)** is the only carrier with direct flights to Paris. However, you can find much cheaper flights if you are willing to make stops.

26. WHAT ABOUT GETTING FROM PARIS TO ANGERS?

You will have a choice of travel dates from Houston and back. But you must start your travel at the latest on MAY 31, as all flights to Europe have a next day arrival. The group will meet at **PARIS CDG AIRPORT** on **JUNE 1 at 1PM**. We will then travel to Angers as a group. The group usually meets in terminal F at CDG, in the arrival lobby.

27. What is included in the program fee?

All living expenses for the duration of the program are included, i.e. room and board (private room, 3 meals per day), all class materials, all excursions including lectures and orientation tour, admission to museums and monuments, all ground transportation (transfer to and from airport, private bus for excursions, public transportation to and from school), all UCO fees (including use of facilities, library, internet access, health clinic with attending nurse) 24/7 staff assistance, farewell meal. Free tutoring will be available.

NOT INCLUDED: airfare, UH tuition and fees, required student insurance:

<http://www.uh.edu/learningabroad/health/cisi/>

Note: once you have been admitted, we will collect a \$50 non-refundable application fee.

28. Are there scholarships available?

Yes, scholarships are available through Learning Abroad and the French program. Please go to <http://www.uh.edu/learningabroad/>

Four French program scholarships are also available.

These scholarships will probably not cover the entire cost of the program. When making the decision to apply, please keep in mind that scholarships are competitive in nature, and not everyone will be awarded one, although most participants will.

29. How do I register with LEARNING ABROAD?

Please contact learningabroad@uh.edu or go to <https://www.uh.edu/learningabroad/>

You can enroll with Learning Abroad after admission into the Angers Program.

30. Who are the program leaders/administrators?

At UH:

Program Director: Dr. Claudine Giacchetti, Giacchetti@uh.edu

Graduate Assistant: Pepa Pueyo-Castan, jpueyoca@cougarnet.uh.edu

CLASS/MCL Business Administrator: Suleyka Cruzalta, scrozalt@Central.UH.EDU

At UCO/CIDEF (Angers):

CIDEF director: Florence Plessis, fplessis@uco.fr

UCO director of student housing: Dominique Le Gal, dlegal@uco.fr

31. What is the application deadline?

The application deadline is March 13, 2024. After the deadline, only “emergency” requests may be approved (such as graduating seniors needing the courses), based on availability.

IMPORTANT: the program will be closed when the maximum quota of 18 students is reached, even if it is earlier than the deadline.

32. Note on email: all correspondence with the students will be done via UH email. No major information will be given via texting or through social media or private groups. It is the students’ responsibility to keep track of their incoming email messages. Make sure that your email account is set to accept “multiple recipient” emails from giacchetti@uh.edu or giacchet@cougarnet.uh.edu