Georgia Institute of Technology
BEST (Biomolecular Engineering Science and Technology)-Lyon, France

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can I apply to this program? Is there a deadline? Are there any restrictions? Applications are accepted via the Georgia Tech Office of International Education. February 15 is the program deadline. Students are encouraged to apply early since the program size is limited. Students must have satisfactorily completed course prerequisite requirements (unless waived) by the end of spring semester. Students must also be in good academic and disciplinary standing. The program is open to ALL undergraduate majors. To apply see: http://www.oie.gatech.edu/sa/programs/details/BESTStudyAbroadProgram.php

Applicants to the program are typically notified within 2 weeks of submitting a completed application.

2. What are the dates of the program? The program is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, May 18-Friday, July 15, 2016 (~ eight weeks). Students are expected to arrive in Lyon, France and check in to housing on Wednesday, May 18, 2016. Housing checkout is Friday, July 15, 2016.

3. Where is the program held? What credits may I earn by participating in this program? Participants will reside and complete GT coursework using facilities at CPE, École Supérieure de Chimie Physique Électronique de Lyon, a “Grandes Ecoles”*, institution located in Lyon, France. CPE Lyon was created in 1994 as a result of the merger of two major schools of engineering in Lyon: the École Supérieure de Chimie Industrielle de Lyon (ESCIL), and the Institut de Chimie et Physique Industrielles de Lyon (ICPI). The ESCIL was established in 1883 with the support of the Chamber of Commerce in Lyon. Its very first director was Jules Raulin, one of Louis Pasteur’s students. Among his successors were Victor Grignard, who received the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1912 and Marcel Pretre, founder of the Institut de Recherche sur la Catalyse. The ICPI Lyon was founded 1919 in the framework of the Université Catholique de Lyon by Professor Lepercq. The ICPI Lyon was initially a school of chemistry but electronics and information processing programs of study were opened in 1958 in order to adapt to industry’s new requirements.

As a French center for excellence in chemistry and technology, CPE Lyon is currently viewed as a top school of science and engineering in Rhône-Alpes. CPE Lyon covers several fields of chemistry (organic chemistry, analytical chemistry, process engineering) as well as those of electronics, telecommunications, and informatics. The school trains scientists and engineers that will work in all sectors of the economy regionally, nationally and internationally. It graduates approximately 250-300 Masters degrees in chemistry, chemical engineering, electronics, telecommunications and computer science, and communication networks.

*Note: There are two types of higher education institutions in France: Universities and “Grandes Ecoles”. Both types possess esteem faculties, research and academic environments, technology transfer. However, Ecoles typically have smaller student enrollments, highly selective admission standards, flexible educational programs, significant research activities, high-level of academic exchanges (students, professors, researchers) and strong ties to industry.

Program participants may earn between 5-8 credits by successful completion of CHEM 2311-Organic Chemistry I (flipped format), CHEM 2312-Organic Chemistry II, CHEM 2380-Synthesis Lab I. FREN 1001-French I and BIOL 3450-Cell Biology) are slated to be offered summer 2016. Note: This is a faculty-led GT abroad program. You will be registered for GT courses. Students are only allowed to enroll for a maximum of 8 credits.
4. What are the program costs? Are scholarships available? An estimate of program costs can be found at: http://www.oie.gatech.edu/sa/programs/details/BESTStudyAbroadProgram.php. The program fee (including the application deposit) for Summer 2016 is $4,850.

Program fees are expected to cover housing, site visits, cultural activities, lab/instructional costs, CISI insurance (for the program dates) and some lunches/dinners. **This fee does not include airfare to France (approximately $1300-1900), local transportation, books, lab coat, tuition, Institute fees, passport/visa fees, and some meals.** Students should consult with the GT Office of Financial Aid (or www.finaid.gatech.edu) regarding financial assistance and using HOPE or Zell (if applicable). Out-of-state student are charged in-state tuition plus a $250 out of state fee (plus Institution and technology fees). Students are required to register for at least 6 credits if receiving loans. Scholarships are available for study abroad, see: http://oie.gatech.edu/oie-administered-scholarships.

After you have made your deposit with the application ($500), remaining program payments are made through to Bursar’s Office via your oscar account. Additional program fee deadlines: ½ remaining program fee (due Feb. 28) and ½ of remaining program fee (due March 20). Please check with the program director if you are need additional time to pay the program deposit.

The application deposit may be fully refunded if the program is full or if the applicant wishes to withdraw his/her application by January 1, 2016. Additional program fee payments are non-refundable after February 28.

5. What cultural and scientific excursions planned for the program?
Below is a tentative list of course-related activities/excursions to be spread over the 8 weeks which directly relate the topics covered in the BEST disciplines:

- Visit to the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) (in Geneva, Switzerland)
- Visit to the High Field NMR centre in Lyon (contains a 1000 MHz instrument)
- Visit to a local chemical company (possible companies are Sanofi-Aventis, Rhodia, Institut Français du Pétrole)
- Visit Louis Pasteur Museum, Pasteur Research Institute, and Marie Curie Museum in Paris

Students will also visit the historical part Lyon (Vieux). These visits will provide perspectives on understanding Lyon in all its facets: urban planning, economic, social, religious, political and cultural. The program director and local faculty/students will be accompanying the students on these visits.

6. What language preparation will I need? Instruction for CHEM 2311RBT, 2312RBT, CHEM 2380RBT/RB1, BIOL 3450RBT will be provided in English. Prior to arrival at CPE in Lyon, participants will receive resources to learn basic French vocabulary/communication in order to conduct daily functions (greetings, order food, ask for help, etc). **Students are encouraged to these materials prior to departure.** Student participants may elect to enroll in FREN1001RBT if not already fluent in French.

7. What housing will be used while in residence at Lyon? Each student will be assigned to a private room with a small private bathroom. The room contains a standard single bed, 80cm wide by 190cm long. Bed linens (sheet, cover) and pillows are provided. There is personnel in the housing residence reception office, 24 hours every day, and have instructions concerning fire safety. Coin-operated washing (laundry) facilities are present at the residence. Students will have a small fridge in the room, and there is a shared kitchen on the floor. The appliances available in the kitchen are a microwave oven and electric hotplates to warm or cook food.
Note: Most housing in France (northern Europe) does NOT have air conditioning (this includes the above student dorms), however, you may purchase a fan (20-35 euros) that runs on 220 volts upon arrival in Lyon if needed. The average temperature for June-July is Lyon, France is 73-80 ° F in the day and 53-61° F at night with humidity at ~10-20% (most days are very nice).

8. What dining areas are accessible? What appliances exist in the room?

Le Double Mixte (cash)
19 rue Gaston Berger,  69100 Villeurbanne
Open 6:30 am to 7:00 pm
Salads, sandwiches, yogurts, fruits, drinks

Restaurant L’univers Café (cash, bank card)
128 boulevard du 11 novembre 1918, 69100 Villeurbanne
Open 7/7 days from 11:00 am to 11:00 pm
Kebab and pizzeria

Mosaic restaurant (cash, bank card)
8 rue Léon Fabre,  69100 Villeurbanne
Open 7/7 days from 11:00 am to 11:00 pm
Kebab

There is also one supermarket approximately 10 minute walk from the residence:
Carrefour market (cash, bank card)
61 avenue Roger Salengro,  69100 Villeurbanne
Open from Monday to Saturday: 8:30 am to 7:00 pm
Food, drinks, bread...

Other than dining halls, students will have a small fridge in the room, and there is a shared kitchen on the floor. The appliances available in the kitchen are a microwave oven and electric hotplates to warm or cook food. Students may use the restaurants listed above for dining which are close to campus. There are also local fast food restaurants near housing and a few tram stops away (e.g. McDonalds, food court at La Part Dieu Mall). Most student have breakfast in their rooms in the morning, use the meal voucher for lunch at Le Double Mixte, and visit fast-food restaturants (pizza, gyros, mcdonalds, or other places in the evening).

9. How do I make flight plans? Students are required to purchase their own roundtrip ticket. Websites such as www.bing.com, www.kayak.com, www.expedia.com, www.travelocity.com or others can provide comparisons on different ticket prices. Students are encouraged to monitor fares prices to find the best deal (usually on Tuesdays or Wednesdays at least 1 month prior to departure). Be sure to signup for the airline’s frequent flyer program. Students may fly round trip to Lyon, France. However, if you are planning additional time after the program, you may also want to consider your arrival and departure dates as well as cities (example: arrive in Paris, use the TGV rail to Lyon, and depart from Lyon for home) or (example: roundtrip to Paris, use the TGV rail to Lyon). The link to the TGV is http://en.voyages-sncf.com/en/. The fare may not be much different. Students may look for program travel partners via the group contact list or group Facebook page.

10. What are the exchange rates? How do I get cash? Can I use my credit card or bank card? For exchange rates, please see http://www.x-rates.com/
You should notify your credit card company of your location so that it does not get “locked” when first used outside the US. ATM credit cards and bank debit cards may be used in many locations in France. However, some places, such as train stations, may require credit cards that contain a smart chip (ICC chip). These types of credit cards are uncommon in the US (though a few exist but have an annual fee). Thus, it is recommended that you have cash (Euros) or a bankcard ATM so that you can withdraw any Euros if needed. Be sure to check your bank or credit card’s fee policy prior to using internationally.

11. When am I in class? Are the weekends open? Classes are expected to be held M-F (program schedule to be sent to participants in March). There will be an excursion to Paris as part of the program. Other weekends (i.e. Saturdays and Sundays) are expected to be open. Students do often travel in small groups to neighboring countries/cities for the weekends.

12. Will I need a laptop? Will I have access to the internet? Will I need an electrical adapter? Yes, you should bring a laptop with wireless capability. You will have access to the internet while on campus in Lyon. Much of the coursework material will be posted on the web (via t-square).

Most of modern electronics use dual voltage/dual frequency adapters. There is a big possibility that your gadgets might work on European grid. If you take small plastic adapter (on your power supply cable) where S/N is located, there should say something like: 100-240V, 50-60Hz then you’re set. If it's just 110V and 60Hz then you really need power adapter. In case it is dual, then you only need adapter plug. Be sure to get a few (~2) outlet adapters before leaving the US (it is cheaper here…check Walmart, Target, etc). European outlet adapters have two metal prongs.

13. What about cellphones, phone cards, skype? Check with your local phone carrier. Calling internationally can be expensive, however, texting can be reasonable. In regards to a SIM card, check the internet for possible vendors prior to leaving for Europe, you may be able to get a cheap card if you have an unlocked phone. Otherwise, you can get an international SIM card with you arrive in Europe (assuming you have an unlocked phone). I encourage you to use skype or similar web-based program to communicate with family and friends.

As an alternative, you may wish to bring with you an “unlocked” cell phone and then purchase a SIM card for the phone when you arrive in Lyon. You would be able to text (no too expensive) as well as call (if needed).

14. I am a US citizen. How do obtain a passport? You may apply for a passport at http://travel.state.gov/passport/. Students are highly encouraged to apply at least 2 months prior to departure.

15. Is a visa required to participate in this program? Am I restricted to France or can I travel to other countries? US citizens are only required to have a valid passport since the program is less than 90 days and France does not require a short-term visa. Your passport must be less than 10 years old and valid for at least 90 days after your date of departure from the Schengen territory. In case you do need a visa, it must have at least two blank “visas” pages available.

US citizens are allowed to travel to other countries Schengen area (25 other EU countries). Though the UK is not a part of the Schengen agreement, it is possible to travel from France to the UK (e.g. Eurostar train or air). Just be sure to take your passport; you will pass through passport control.

Non-residents and US permanent resident (green card holders) should check to see if they are required to obtain a short term visa, http://www.campusfrance.org/en/page/short-stay-visas-less-90-days or
http://www.consulfrance-atlanta.org/spip.php?article2740. If a short-term visa is required, the student should visit the French consulate in Atlanta within 3 months prior to departure (but not less than 3 weeks prior to departure). To apply for short-term visa, please see: http://www.consulfrance-atlanta.org/spip.php?article2740. Non-residents should also consult with a GT International Education Advisor prior to departure. Travel for non-residents should carefully review the number of allowed entries on the short-term visa (if applicable). If nonresidents and green-card holders wish to travel to the UK, a UK-approved visa from that country is also likely required.

16. Is insurance required? All students in the BEST-Lyon program must have health insurance prior to departure. Via your program fee deposits, GT Office of International Education will purchase insurance on your behalf with provider, CISI, that corresponds to the program departure and return dates. For a summary of the insurance plan, please see information provided at OIE information sessions prior to departure.

If you wish to purchase insurance coverage outside the dates of the program, information will be provided at the mandatory student orientation meetings. It is highly encouraged that you have insurance coverage for any additional dates outside the program.

17. Who may I contact if I have additional questions? The Program Director is Dr. Cameron Tyson, cam.tyson(at)chemistry.gatech.edu.