

**Exchange university**

Le Mans Université

**Degree programme**

Master's Programme, Engineering Mechanics - TTEMM

## A unique journey combining intense and exciting learning and life

### Before departure

Le Mans University has famous acoustic laboratories and I occasionally knew one exchange student an exchange student who came to KTH from Le Mans University last semester. After talking with him and get some more information for the teachers, yeah, I took this exchange. I chose to join an English master programme in Le mans, so I did not spend much time on the language before departure. Eventually, it turns out to be ok with my poor French as the programme accepts lots of international students and English is the commonly used languages. One of the most important things to be prepared before the departure is applying for the visa. In terms of the France visa, we need to apply for the long-term visa for the case that I am not an European citizen. Nevertheless, the coordinator from Le Mans University offered lots of help in preparing the documents which make it much clearer and easier. I was well excited to experience a new environment thanks to have this chance.

### Upon arrival

I arrived nearly one week before starting the courses when the university was still in holiday. This allows me have enough time to check in the accommodation, do the pedagogical registration, prepare the life and hang around the city. One interesting thing is in their university, the school registration was conducted at the administration of the whole department, while the pedagogical registration was carried out by the programme officer. Because of lack of communication, the programme professors and officer did not know my presence. Both of us were very surprised. Then the programme director and officer quickly handled my situation and scheduled the course selection to make sure that I can follow everything. The international office also organised lots of activities to connect all the international students, which were very nice and easily to make friends. They also have fixed classmates for the whole programme and attend same course schedule for everyone in the same major. So, I met all the classmates when attending the first lecture and quickly blended in with them. They are all very nice and kind.

### Financials

This exchange period was financed by Erasmus+ scholarship, which could ensure very basic life in France. The rent and price of goods in France are a little less expensive than that in Stockholm. They have student restaurant inside campus which offer 3 Euros meal during weekdays.

### Accommodation

My accommodation was applied by the international office from the university. It was inside the university hall of residence offered by Crous, a regional organisation providing life benefits for students in France. The room was 9 m<sup>2</sup> with shared kitchen, costing 245 Euros per month. It is cheap but also small. There are many other accommodation choices but need to find and maybe not so close to the campus.

## University and studies

Le Mans University is public university consisting of several faculties. Among them, Acoustics is one of their biggest and powerful specialisations. I join their master programme in electro-acoustic which closely related to music devices. This is the field I have no experience before. So, I came with high curiosity and desire for knowledge. I took very targeted courses and their courses are all very tightly connected with the practice. The most dominant difference between study at KTH and there is that their courses usually only have 1-3 credits and last around 3 weeks, which means nearly 16 courses should be taken during one semester and the exams were started from November and last till the end of January. The load could be explosive when it turned into November but after that everyone feels that they have learnt a lot. A project was included among their schedule this semester which enables students to cooperate with the companies to solve a real problem by ourselves making use of all the materials in the laboratory.

The professors gave a huge freedom to students to try and build the models during this semester of second year of master, which trains students working and thinking critically and independently. They also have some courses offered by teachers from other universities and companies to give students the up-to-dated and leading knowledge in their field. For example, I've met the teachers working at Bowers & Wilkins, L acoustics, DTU and so on. They all offered very wonderful lectures.



Figure 1 Library of Le Mans University

## Courses

All my courses were transferred with selected courses at KTH, so there is not much difficulty in transferring credits and there exists significant flexibility for me to choose the courses. Upon arriving Le Mans University, I changed my study plan once after communicating with the professors to help me better fit the study here. I am very happy with my course choices and all the courses are very interesting.

## City and country

It might cater to some stereotype, but I truly feel French people are kind of more outgoing and helpful, and they show their feelings and emotions more often, after my 6 months stay in France. This might be

personal point of view. But I made a lot of friends here and received countless help from both friends and strangers. I always feel lucky and appreciative about that. Le Mans is a small city, famous for 24h car race. It was not very convenient to go to the market or somewhere with public transportation, but still it is possible to find everything needed in the downtown. There are also many delicious French food here.

### **Leisure and social activities**

The school offer many kinds of sports courses here. And different associations often organise lots of activities. It is possible to see the post for the activities everywhere. There is a custom that Thursday night is the party night because on Friday many students may have to go home. Therefore, they would go out to talk and have a drink on Thursday night. This is a very good chance to be familiar with the schoolmates and make new friends.

### **Sustainability**

There are many second- hand market in the campus which were highly supported by the university.

### **Other recommendations and observations**

France is a very charming country with lots of beautiful views and also well-known intense study system. It was a very good experience in finding the balance between life and learning.