



PhD student Guide

Welcome to La Rochelle Université



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Editorial

Welcome to La Rochelle Université !



©Melanie Chaignau

Dear Doctoral Candidates,

La Rochelle Université is delighted to welcome you to its multidisciplinary doctoral school, EUCLIDE. Our school offers you a privileged environment for support and training dedicated to doctoral research, which you will carry out within the various research units of our institution. These units bring together scientists from diverse fields, spanning environmental sciences, science and technology, as well as the humanities and social sciences.

The PhD journey is a unique experience, culminating in one of the highest academic degrees. It embodies values of creativity and provides you with many skills that go far beyond your dissertation topic.

I wish you all the best in your doctoral work alongside your thesis supervisors. May your research be as stimulating as it is inspiring, and rich in discoveries and meaningful encounters.

Welcome to the doctoral community of La Rochelle Université.

Ingrid Arnaudin
Vice President for Research

Introduction

Starting a PhD is an exciting but demanding journey. This guide has been designed to support international doctoral students step by step as they arrive and settle in France. You will find practical information on administrative procedures, housing, healthcare, everyday services, as well as tips for discovering and enjoying the city of La Rochelle.

Our goal is to help you prepare for your stay with confidence, so that you can fully focus on your research and academic experience.

This booklet will enable you to anticipate necessary procedures, better understand your rights and responsibilities, and become familiar with the academic and cultural environment of La Rochelle.

Whether you are arriving alone or with your family, from France, from Europe or elsewhere in the world, we hope this guide will ease your integration and provide you with all the tools you need to succeed in your doctoral journey at our university.



1 Settling in France



Are you moving to La Rochelle for your thesis, already in France or still abroad? To help you prepare for your stay, here are a few keys steps to follow so that you can settle in serenely.



Administrative situation: visa and/or residence permit

To stay and work in France, you need a visa or residence permit that fits your situation.



If you already live in France, you must apply for a residence permit at the prefecture. You can apply directly by making an appointment at the prefecture of your place of residence or via the platform for foreign nationals in France:



Visit the ANEF website :
administration-etrangers-en-france.interieur.gouv.fr



If you do not live in France, you must apply for a visa from the French consulate in your country of residence. In all cases, remember to prepare the following documents. You will need them for various administrative formalities in France.



Documents to bring with you:

- ✓ Copy of your **highest degree**
- ✓ Copy of your **birth certificate** (and those of your spouse and children if they travel with you)
- ✓ Copy of your **marriage certificate** (if applicable)
- ✓ Copy of your **last tax assessment** or **proof of your** most recent **tax return** (if you have one)
- ✓ Your **driving licence** (if you want to drive in France)
- ✓ Your **health record** and any documents relating to your medical information (and those of your spouse and children if they travel with you)
- ✓ Your child(ren)'s **school reports** if they travel with you

All these documents must be translated into French by a sworn translator.



You can find a list of all the required documents when applying for a visa or residence permit here: [Assistant visa - France-Visas](#) (visa application) or [Titres, cartes de séjour et documents de circulation pour étranger en France | Service-Public.fr](#) (residence permit application).

Depending on the duration of your stay, you can apply for different types of visa :

→ **Short stay visa (Visa C)** : I am coming for a **less than 3 months stay**.

→ **Long stay visa as residence permit (VLS-TS)** : I am coming for a **stay between 3 to 12 months**. I must confirm my visa online on the ANEF platform **within three months of my arrival in France**.

→ **Long stay visa with a residence permit to apply for (Visa D)** : I am coming for a stay longer than 12 months. I must apply for a residence permit on the ANEF platform **within three months of my arrival in France**.

Check the validity of your **passport** (and that of your spouse and children, if they travel with you). If your passport expires within the year, we suggest you renew it before arriving in France. If you need support, don't hesitate to contact the **Euraxess center**: euraxess@univ-lr.fr



Accommodation in France

Where to stay?

Student accommodation (CROUS)

Student accommodation is managed by the CROUS. Don't forget to apply for accommodation in July on [trouverunlogement.lescrous.fr](#), as availability is limited!

To find out more, visit the [CROUS de Poitiers](#).

CROUS
Contact the CROUS by e-mail
+33 (0)5 46 28 21 30

Accommodation in private homes

The CROUS also offers accommodation in private homes via the [lokaviz.fr](#) website (listing ads from private landlords offering accommodation).

Low-rent accommodation

The *Association Rochelaise Pour l'Hébergement pour les Étudiants et les Jeunes (ARHEJ)* manages over 600 accommodations located in the heart of the campus, near the city centre →

Whether you are applying for a visa or a residence permit, here are the different situations that may apply to you:



Case n°1

I am a **European citizen**
→ I don't need a visa or a residence permit



Case n°2
I am a **non-European foreigner**. I **do not have an employment contract** and I have a grant of less than 1848€/month.
→ I must apply for a **Student visa or residence permit**.



Case n°3
I am a **non-European foreigner**. I **have an employment contract** or I have a grant worth more than 1848€/month.
→ I must apply for a **Talent researcher visa or residence permit**.



Case n°4
If I am an **Algerian** :
→ I must apply for a **Scientist researcher visa or residence certificate**.

Studapart website

La Rochelle Université uses the services of **Studapart** to provide you with booked accommodation; it is also possible (for a fee) to ask Studapart to act as a guarantor.

[Contact Studapart by e-mail](#)



Free classified ads from private individual to private individual

There are several websites where you can access a variety of classified ads:

www.leboncoin.fr



www_seloger.com

→ and the Vieux Port of La Rochelle (acceptance is subject to [registration](#) and availability).

ARHPEJ

Contact the ARHPEJ by e-mail
+33 (0)5 46 45 95 00



➤ If you are under 30, **Yellome by Action Logement** offers 24 furnished flats in La Rochelle and 21 furnished flats in Aytré for short and medium-term stays. Eligibility is based on income. Check your availability [here](#).

Action Logement

4 Rue de la Somme
17000 La Rochelle
+33 (0)9 70 80 08 00
<https://www.actionlogement.fr/>



➤ Are you coming to La Rochelle soon but haven't found any accommodation? You can spend a few nights in a **youth hostel** or rent a flat/room with a local on **Airbnb**.

Auberge de Jeunesse
La Rochelle

Avenue des Minimes – BP 63045
17031 La Rochelle cedex
+33 (0)5 46 44 43 11
[Send an email](#)



Central La Rochelle
16 rue de l'Escale
17000 La Rochelle
+33 (0)5 79 87 02 75
Centralhostel.fr



→ and the Vieux Port of La Rochelle (acceptance is subject to [registration](#) and availability).

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Central La Rochelle
16 rue de l'Escale
17000 La Rochelle
+33 (0)5 79 87 02 75
Centralhostel.fr



French rental requirements



Inventory of fixtures

An inventory of fixtures must be carried out before you move in and before you move out.

Rent

Rent is paid monthly*.

* RENT (excluding utilities) + RENTAL CHARGES (household waste collection, maintenance of communal areas...) + UTILITIES (water, electricity, gas)

Notice

Leaving your home soon? Remember to give **your notice one month** (for furnished accommodation) or **three months** (for unfurnished accommodation) before you leave.

Security deposit

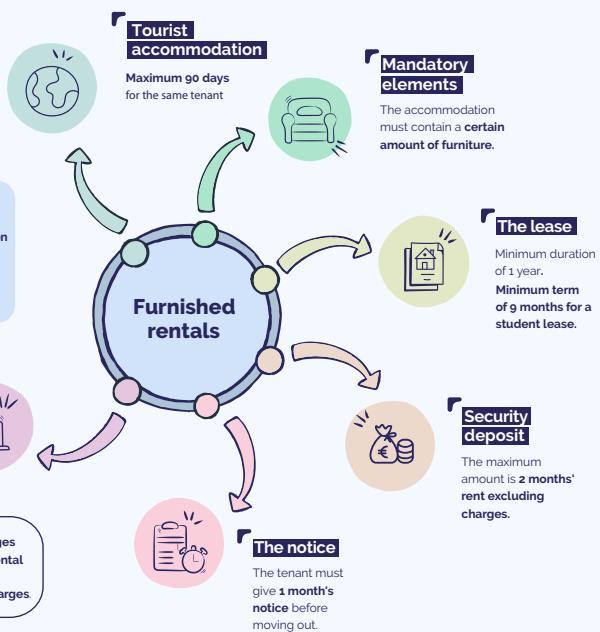
The **security deposit** (one month's rent for unfurnished accommodation, two months' rent for furnished accommodation) must be paid on arrival. It will be returned on departure if there has been no damage to the accommodation.

If you have trouble getting the deposit paid, find out about the [Loca-Pass from Action Logement](#).

Good to know

As La Rochelle is located in a **densely populated area**, this means you can **reduce your notice period to one month**, as long as you state so in your notice letter referring to the legislation in force: *Law n°89-462 (article 15)* and *decree n°2013-392 relating to the scope of the annual tax on vacant accommodation introduced by article 232 of the Code Général des Impôts*.

Furnished rentals



Have you found the home of your dreams? Before you move in, you will need to provide a few documents.

Documents required when submitting your rental application :

- Proof of identity** (identity card or passport)
- Proof of residence** (visa or residence permit)
- Proof of income**: latest payslip, scholarship certificate, capital, tax assessment, employment contract or employer's certificate specifying the job and remuneration offered, as well as the start date and duration of the contract
- Proof of professional status: employment contract, employer's certificate, student card or **certificate of enrolment** for the current year, if applicable

A third-party guarantor: a family member, friend, colleague or legal entity who undertakes to pay in your place if you fail to pay the rent or utilities. Your guarantor will have to provide the same supporting documents as you, and must live in France.

- If you are **under 30**, you can apply for the **Visale guarantee**. This Action Logement service can provide you with a guarantee free of charge.
- If you are **over 30**, you can apply for a private guarantor (for a fee).

Once your application has been accepted, you will sign a **lease** (rental contract). This is when you pay the first month's rent, the deposit and any agency fees. You should also take out house insurance.

House insurance is mandatory and will cover your expenses in the event of water damage, theft or fire

Housing benefit

The **Caisse d'Allocations Familiales (CAF)** can provide you with monthly financial assistance to pay part of your rent. Run [simulation online](#) and check your eligibility.

CAF de la Charente-Maritime

4 bis Av. du Général Leclerc
17000 La Rochelle

<https://www.caf.fr/>



Please note :
in order to be eligible, you must have a valid residence permit. If you have a visa with the words "dispense temporaire de carte de séjour", you will not be entitled to housing benefit from the CAF.

Leaving your accommodation

Is it time to move out? Don't forget certain formalities...

Is it time to move out? Don't forget certain formalities...

- Terminate the lease** by sending a registered letter with acknowledgement of receipt to your landlord (don't forget to give notice!)
- Arrange for an **inventory of fixtures on departure** (and clean the accommodation!)
- Terminate** water/electricity/gas/insurance/internet contracts – 15 days before your departure.





Health in France

In France, you are covered by a free, mandatory health insurance scheme called **Sécurité Sociale**. There are two options for subscribing to social security:

- Case n°1** I have a **Student visa/residence permit**
 - I register on the **Ameli platform** via the following link: [Étudiants Internationaux | CNAM](#)
- Case n°2** I have a "Talent researcher" visa/residence permit
 - **I have a work contract:** The Human Resources department of the university will take care of my Social Security registration to the CPAM of Paris.
 - **I do not have a work contract:** I register to the **CPAM** of my place of residence.
- Case n°3** I have a **Scientist researcher permit**
 - I register to the **CPAM** of my place of residence

Once you have received your personal Sécurité Sociale number, you will need to create an account on the Ameli platform, which will enable you to manage all your Sécurité Sociale formalities: [Créer votre compte ameli | ameli.fr | Assuré](#)

Social security only reimburses around 70% of medical costs. You must pay the remaining 30%. If you would like better health insurance cover for the remaining 30%, you can take out a private insurance policy called **a mutuelle**.

Good to know :

If I am European, I remember to request my "carte européenne d'assurance maladie" (CEAM) for short stays.

→ **If you have a work contract**, I take steps to register with the MGEN health insurance provider in my place of residence.

*European health insurance card



Consultation with a general physician



Opening a bank account and paying taxes

Opening a bank account

To have a **French RIB** (bank account details), you will need to open a bank account in France. This RIB will be required for a number of administrative formalities, as well as by your employer if you have an employment contract.

You are free to open a bank account with the bank of your choice or online. Banks also offer various types of **insurance**, such as home insurance, which we mentioned in the accommodation section.

Documents required to open a bank account in France

- A copy of **your proof of identity**
- Proof of address** (water, gas or electricity bill, home insurance or rent receipt, tax assessment, copy of rental contract)



Paying taxes in France

If you live in France for more than **183 days**, you are considered to be a French resident for tax purposes. You will have to declare your income once a year when you file your tax return, which takes place between April and June.

Please note: tax returns are based on income earned in the previous year. For example, the 2025 tax return is based solely on income earned during 2024. Tax returns are mandatory. You must file a return even if you have not earned any income.

We invite you to contact your local Public Finance Centre for information and assistance with your tax returns: [Annuaire des services dgfip - data.economie.gouv.fr — Ministère de l'Économie, des Finances et de l'Industrie](https://www.data.economie.gouv.fr).



Mobile phone deals

➤ A few tips for choosing a mobile phone package in France :

Choose a **package without commitment period** (so that you can cancel it easily when you leave the country)

Find out more about **eSIMs** or go to a shop with your debit card and proof of identity to get a standard SIM.



2 Vivre à La Rochelle



Useful addresses

Préfecture de la Charente-Maritime

Welcome point : 5 Place des Cordeliers,
17000 La Rochelle
(Only with appointment)
Address : 38 Rue Réaumur, CS 70000,
17017 La Rochelle Cedex 1
prefecture@charente-maritime.gouv.fr
+33 (0)5 46 27 43 00



Public Finance Centre

5 Place des Cordeliers, 17000 La
Rochelle
+33 (0)8 09 40 14 01



→ <https://www.impots.gouv.fr/accueil>

Tourist Information Centre

2 Quai Georges Simenon,
17000 La Rochelle
+33 (0)5 46 41 14 68



→ <https://www.larochelle-tourisme.com/>

Town Hall

8 place Jean Baptiste Marcket,
17000 La Rochelle
+33 (0)5 46 51 51 51



→ <https://www.larochelle.fr/>

CPAM (Public Health Insurance Body)

55 Rue de Suède CS 70507,
17014 La Rochelle CEDEX
+33 (0)1 84 90 36 46



→ <http://www.ameli.fr/charente-maritime>

MGEN (Health insurance)

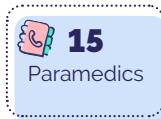
8 rue Belgique - ZAC de Beaulieu 2
17138 Puilboreau
(+33) 36 76



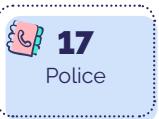
→ [MGEN Charente-Maritime >](#)



Emergency numbers



15
Paramedics



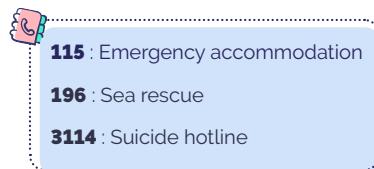
17
Police



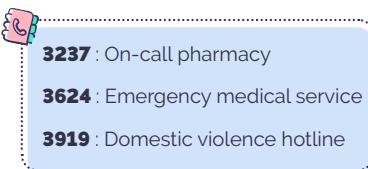
18
Fire department



112
European Emergency
Number



115 : Emergency accommodation
196 : Sea rescue
3114 : Suicide hotline



3237 : On-call pharmacy
3624 : Emergency medical service
3919 : Domestic violence hotline



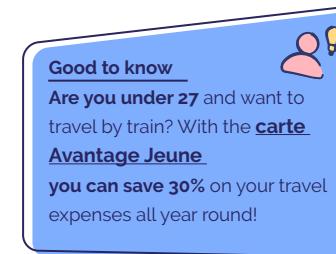
Coming to La Rochelle



By train

La Rochelle-Ville railway station: this is the terminus of the [TGV INOUI](#) and [OUIGO Grande Vitesse](#) from [Paris-Montparnasse](#), and is La Rochelle original station.

Many [INTERCITÉS](#) et [TER](#) trains also arrive at this station. Various bus routes provide easy access to the city centre.



Good to know

Are you under **27** and want to travel by train? With the [carte Avantage Jeune](#) you can save **30%** on your travel expenses all year round!

La Rochelle-Porte-Dauphine station is served by a number of [TER Nouvelle-Aquitaine](#), en lien avec Angoulême, Bordeaux ou encore Saintes.



By plane

La Rochelle - Ile de Ré Airport

Located just a few kilometres from La Rochelle city centre, the airport offers **direct flights to 12 European destinations**, including London, Dublin and Porto.

When you arrive at the airport, you can take the bus to Place de Verdun. Buses run from Monday to Sunday, **departing every 10-15 minutes**.

Bordeaux (BOD) - Mérignac Airport

→ From Bordeaux airport, take a bus to Bordeaux Saint-Jean, in Hall B, Gate 7. The "30'Direct" bus takes you directly to the station. Tickets cost between €7 and €8. Buses run every day of the year, departing every 30 minutes. For more information: <https://30direct.com/en/>

→ Once you arrive at the station, you need to catch a train to La Rochelle station. You can book your ticket on the SNCF website [here](#).

→ If you arrive **from Nantes or Paris**, you need to go to the SNCF station (Gare de Nantes or Gare Montparnasse) and take a train to the Gare de La Rochelle. More information on the SNCF website.



Good to know :
The SNCF is the national company that manages the entire railway network in France.



Getting to and from La Rochelle

The essential tools for getting around La Rochelle:



→ **Yelo.fr**:
to discover the transport offer by bus, bike, TER, car and fares for those under 26.



→ **Modalis**:
to check your travel options by different modes of transport.

Schemes to promote sustainable mobility

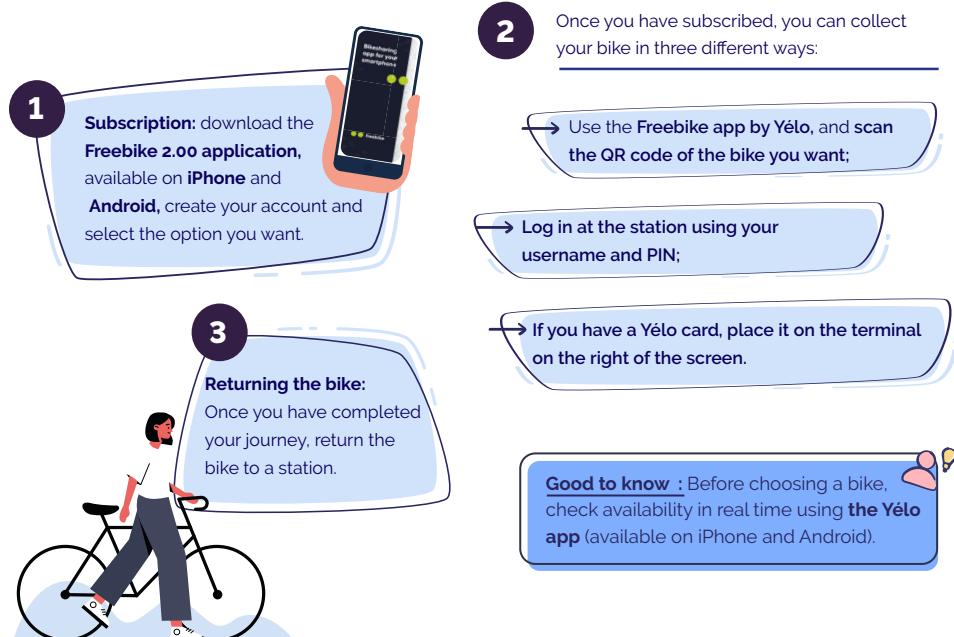
La Rochelle Université has a number of schemes in place to promote the use of eco-friendly means of transport among its employees:

- **Covering up to 75 % of transport costs** for home-to-work journeys (TER season tickets, bus passes, Yélo bike hire, etc.)
- **Sustainable mobility package:** up to €300/year for home-to-work journeys by bike, car-sharing, scooter, shared vehicle and public transport (application to be made at the end of the calendar year)

Getting around by bike

Yélo's self-service bikes are located throughout La Rochelle and the surrounding area, making it quick and easy to get from one place to another.

How does it work?



How much does it cost?



Classic bikes

- **Occasional bike hire:** €1 for the first 30 minutes. After that, you will be charged **€1.50 per additional half-hour**.
- **Annual subscription:** €50 (€20 for holders of an annual Yélo bus subscription). You are then billed according to the time you use the bike: **the first 30 minutes are free, then rental costs rise to €1 per additional half-hour**.



Electric bikes

- **Occasional bike hire:** €1.50 for the first 30 minutes. After that, you will be charged **€2 per additional half-hour**.
- **Annual subscription:** €50 (€20 for holders of an annual Yélo bus subscription which can only be bought at the Maison de la Mobilité). You are then billed according to the time you use the bike: **€1.50 per half-hour from the first minute**.

Long-term bike hire

for **€50 a year**, Yélo offers you a bike with maintenance included.



Getting around by bus

The Yélo bus network enables you to get around the 28 towns of La Rochelle's Conurbation Authority.

→ To travel legally, you need a valid Yélo ticket. Your **valid ticket** entitles you to travel for one hour, including transfers on all lines on the Yélo network.

→ If you don't have a ticket, **you can buy a single ticket** with your contactless card by touching the card reader, or in cash from the driver.

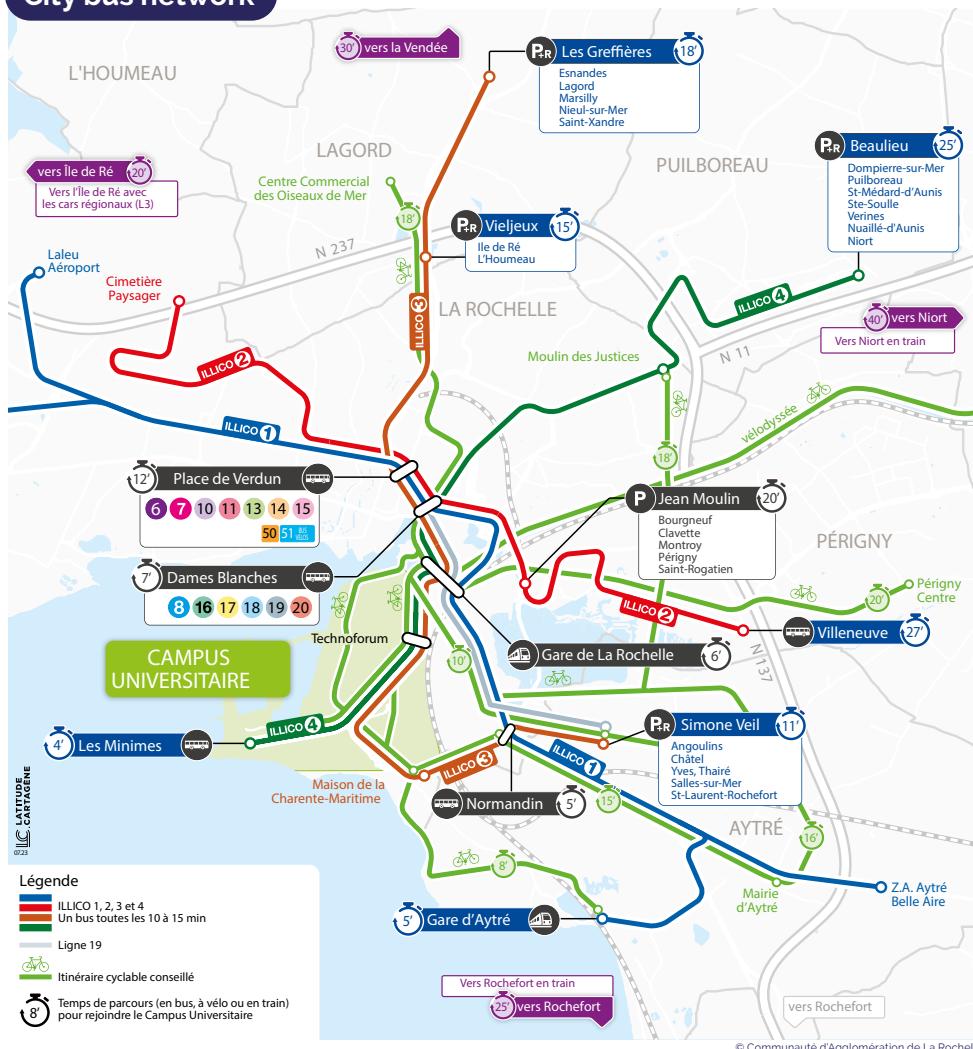
Good to know :
Illico lines **3** and **4** cross the campus with regular frequency (**about every 10 minutes**).

→ **Voir la carte >**

You can also purchase a ticket (for 1 or 10 trips) from the **Yélo mobile app** or at one of the **sales points** located throughout the metropolitan area.

As the bus approaches, **signal the driver** to stop. Enter through the front door and remember to **touch in on the card reader** each time you board the bus and each time you make a connection.

City bus network



Getting around by train

As the station is close to the campus, **you can get to the university by TER**.

Two lines La Rochelle:

→ **L14 Poitiers-La Rochelle**

(Niort, Surgères, Aigrefeuille, La Jarrie...)

→ **L15 Bordeaux-La Rochelle / Rochefort-La Rochelle**

(Saintes, St Laurent de la Prée, Chatelaillon, Angoulins, Aytré...)

Good to know : TER journeys between stations in the conurbation are included in your **Yélo season ticket** or **single ticket**.



single Yélo card for all transport!

A single card for all the transport services provided by the **Yélo network**: credit and top-up passes.

You can use it to take **buses, bikes, boats and self-service electric vehicles**, and to get to the city centre from the park-and-ride facilities using **electric shuttles**.

To get your card, go to the Maison de la Mobilité (Place de Verdun): Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 7pm and Saturday from 8am to 6.30pm.

→ [Learn more >](#)



Getting around by car

To make it easier for you to get around, Yélo has **55 cars available for hire**, with or without a reservation, from Yélo mobile near you, or simply by geolocating a car nearby.

For more information: [Autopartage Yélomobile - Yélo](#)

Good to know

Go out and come back whenever you want with **Yélo la nuit**! Yélo by night operates by reservation on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and the eve of public holidays from 9pm to 6am in all 28 towns of the La Rochelle conurbation. Book your journey via the [Yélo à la demande](#) app or by phone on **+33 (0)5 46 55 59 91**.



Culture and museums



Cinemas and shows

Cinéma CGR La Rochelle Dragon

8 cours des Dames, 17000 La Rochelle
<https://www.cgrcinemas.fr/>



Cinéma CGR La Rochelle Les Minimes

Av. Henri Becquerel, 17000 La Rochelle
<https://www.cgrcinemas.fr/>



La Coursive, scène nationale de La Rochelle

4 Rue St Jean du Pérot,
17000 La Rochelle
<https://www.la-coursive.com/>



Museums and aquarium

If you have an appetite for culture, La Rochelle is the place for you. The city boasts many museums and spaces dedicated to art and history. Here are a few must-sees:

Aquarium La Rochelle

With over 12 000 marine animals and 82 ecosystems, La Rochelle Aquarium is one of Europe's largest private aquariums. The aquarium helps to fund a wide range of scientific research projects, and is active in raising public awareness of the need to preserve biodiversity.



Musée du Nouveau Monde

Housed in a magnificent 18th century town house, this museum invites you to discover the history of relations between La Rochelle and the Americas. Works of art, ethnographic objects and period documents are on display.



Musée maritime

museum in the harbour to discover the maritime history of La Rochelle and board historic ships such as the weather frigate France 1.



Bunker de La Rochelle

The La Rochelle bunker, built in 1941, was a place of power during the occupation. Now open to the public, it tells the story of daily life during the Second World War.



Good to know

The city also offers a range of themed museums with specialised collections, such as [the Fine Arts Museum](#) and the [Natural History Museum](#).

Useful information

[Events calendar](#)
[Calendar of major events](#)



Beaches

La Rochelle boasts three beaches with lifeguards on duty in July and August:

- [Chef de Baie](#)
- [Minimes](#)
- [La Concurrence \(in the town centre\)](#)



Everyday life

Markets

At the market, you'll find plenty of stalls and traders selling their products directly to you. You'll find fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, cheeses, yoghurts and much more. There are several markets in La Rochelle.

City centre

→ **Central market in la Rochelle** (covered food market): open every morning all year round until 1:30pm.

→ **Street market around the covered market** (food and other, with priority given to food on Saturdays): Wednesday and Saturday mornings from 7am to 1:30pm.

→ **Place de Verdun, rue Gargouilleau and Place du marché** (food only): Every Friday afternoon from 1:30pm to 7:30pm.

→ **Flea Market, Place de la Motte Rouge and rue Saint-Nicolas** (for professional sellers only): Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 8:30am to 7pm.



Supermarkets

You can also do your shopping in supermarkets, where you'll find not only food products but also household products, hygiene products and so on.



Good to know :

Opening hours are indicated in each supermarket, generally **from 8:30am to 7:30pm**. Some supermarkets may be closed on Sundays and public holidays.

Anti-waste solutions

To avoid throwing away edible food products, there are options for "saving" products with a short use-by date. They are also a cost-effective way of doing your shopping.

Too good to go & Phenix

→ Two apps that fight food waste by putting citizens and sellers in touch with each other. Every day, you can find baskets of products at bargain prices, to be collected from one of the partner sellers (e.g., bakers, Asian caterers, restaurant owners, etc.).

- <https://www.toogoodtogo.com/fr>
- <https://www.wearephenix.com/>



Short-date products - Supermarkets

→ Don't forget to look out for supermarkets that have "short-life products" trays or labels showing a discount on products that are close to their expiry date.



Sorting your waste

As part of the utilities you pay, you have to pay a tax on your household waste, which is used to fund the sorting and removal of household waste. There are four types of household waste: recyclable, non-recyclable, glass and compostable

There are two types of bins in your accommodation: **yellow** and **grey**.

- **The yellow bin** is for all your recyclable waste: plastic, cardboard and metal packaging.
- **The grey** is for all the waste you cannot sort.
- For your glass waste, **dedicated containers** are available and self-service. You can find the collection points [here](#).

If in doubt, you can find details on the [agglomération de La Rochelle website](#).

To find out the schedule for the removal of household waste, click on this [link](#).

YELLOW BIN

All cardboard, plastic, metal, and paper packaging should be placed in your yellow bin.



GREEN BIN

Bottles, jars, pots... all glass packaging is fully recyclable. They must be taken to one of the glass collection points located throughout the Municipal Area, or to the recycling center.

Empty well without rinsing

Glass, mirrors and dishes should be taken to the waste disposal center



What to do with caps lids ?

➤ **Metal lids and caps:** in the yellow bin or bag

➤ **Synthetic wine bottle corks:** in the blue/grey bin or black bag

➤ **Cork stoppers:** drop them off at the recycling center or in the **association Echo-Mer** collection bins.

→ [echo-mer.com >](http://echo-mer.com)

Food waste accounts for 30% of your waste. It is compostable, which means that it decomposes naturally and can be used to make compost. You may have an individual or collective compost bin in or near your home. If not, the university offers various collection points:

→ **Humanities, Languages, arts and Sciences campus:** back of the hall

→ **Science and Technologies campus :** Orbigny gardens

→ **Institut Universitaire de Technologie (IUT):** shared gardens to the right of the administration building

→ **Near the Technoforum and the CCA:** rear of the Marie Curie building





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