

Country and Education Guide : France



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Country Guide



General Country Information

France is recognised as a major contributor to the world of art, architecture, music, literature, cuisine and wine. France plays a key role in the European Union and has a robust economy that competes powerfully on the world stage.

Name of country: French Republic

Capital city: Paris

Key cities: Lyon, Marseille

Population: 65.8 million (January 2013 est.)

Language: French

Currency: Euro (EUR)



Time zones and climate

Time zones

Paris Time is in the Central European Time Zone. Central European Standard Time (CET) is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+1).

Like most states in Europe, Summer (Daylight-Saving) Time is observed in Paris Time, where the time is shifted forward by one hour; two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+2).

After the summer months, the time in Paris Time is shifted back by one hour to Central European Time (CET) or (GMT+1).



Climate

France is primarily located in the southern part of the temperate zone. The North Atlantic Drift on the west and the Mediterranean Sea in the south attribute to oceanic influences. There are four climatic types in France: Oceanic, Mediterranean, Continental and Alpine.

City	Full year
Paris	9–16°C
Lyon	9–18°C
Marseille	11–21°C
Nice	13–20°C
Bordeaux	9–19°C
Rouen	7–15°C

Telecommunications

Calling France

IDD	Major cities' code	
country code : 33	Bordeaux (556)	Cannes (556)
	Lille (320)	Lyon (562)
	Marseille (491)	Montpellier (467)
	Nantes (240)	Paris (1)
	Reims (326)	Strasbourg (388)
	Toulouse (5)	Tours (247)
	Vichy (470)	

Emergency numbers: 112 (universal European number)

To reach emergency services from a local phone, dial:

Medical: 15

Fire: 18

Police: 17



Transportation

France boasts efficient, modern and affordable transportation across the country.

Getting around

Train

The SNCF, France's national rail service, is known for its comfort, speed and comprehensive network. There are local trains, overnight trains with sleeping accommodations and the high-speed TGV (Trains à Grande Vitesse). TGV trains go to 50 major towns and cities, allowing you to travel almost anywhere in France within hours.

Bus

Because France's train system is so extensive, long-distance buses are rare. Regional buses exist where train service is spotty, but service can be unreliable in rural areas and the schedules are only written in French. The main French-based operator is Eurolines France.

Metro

In France, many big cities also have an extensive underground (metro) system to supplement their public transportation. The Paris Métro or Métropolitain is the second busiest metro system in Europe after Moscow. It has become a symbol of the city, noted for its density within the city limits and its uniform architecture influenced by Art Nouveau.

Bike

Vélib' is the biggest bike-sharing system in the world run by the Paris town hall since 2007. It covers the city with over 20,000 bikes available 24/7 all year long, with 1,208 bike stations spread across every 300 meters. In addition, the bike-sharing system is also integrated into other large cities in France such as Lyon, Bordeaux, and Dijon.

Driving

Traffic drives to the right. Cars can be hired at the airport, in the city centre and through many hotels. Some rental car companies may require an international driver's license upon request. If you prefer automatic transmission, you must specify upfront, since most cars are manual. Since 2012, the new Autolib' service allows you to rent a "Bluecar" in 46 towns that run through all Ile de France region, without having to go back from the starting point.

Cost of living

The cost of living in France varies greatly by location, with costs usually higher in big cities.

Average cost of living

	EUR	USD*	
Public Transportation	Daily metro ticket in Paris (Zone 1-5)	1.70 – 13.30	2.29 – 17.95
	Annual public transportation pass in Paris (Zone 1-5) Students	314 – 680	424 – 918
	Annual public transportation pass in Paris (Zone 1-5) Adults	680 – 1,170	918 – 1,580
Newspaper	0.90 – 2	1.21 – 2.70	
Fast food set meals	5.90 – 14.50	7.96 – 19.57	
University restaurant / canteen meals	3	4.05	
Fresh milk per litre	1.20	1.62	
Movie ticket per person	10	13.50	
Museum entry fee*	0 – 17	0 – 23	

* Exchange rate EUR1 = USD1.35

Admission to the permanent collections at some museums is free for 18-25 year-old residents of the EU, Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein (on presentation of ID).

Above costs are indicative only and current.

Health and medical



Healthcare overview

The National Health Insurance program (Sécurité Sociale) is subsidised by the government and contributions from employers, employees and self-employed professionals. Expatriates may apply for Sécurité Sociale by registering at their neighbourhood Sécurité Sociale office where they will be issued a temporary Sociale card with a French social security number. One card is issued per person over 18.

Patients may visit the doctor of their choice. There is no need to have a General Practitioner (GP) referral to see a medical specialist. French doctors conform to the fee schedule set by Security Sociale (called conventionnés) or charge higher fees (called non-conventionnés). Many doctors can be seen either in their office or at their affiliated hospital. Charges for office visits made at the hospital are generally lower than those made in the office.

Medical facilities and practitioners are very expensive. Health insurance is recommended, even for EU citizens. Many French citizens carry private health insurance that reimburses 90% of what is not covered by Sécurité Sociale.

In France, you will be required to pay the full bill at the time of treatment. You will be reimbursed at a later date by the public health insurance fund (Assurance Maladie). In order to be reimbursed the maximum amount, you must first register with a primary doctor (médecin traitant).



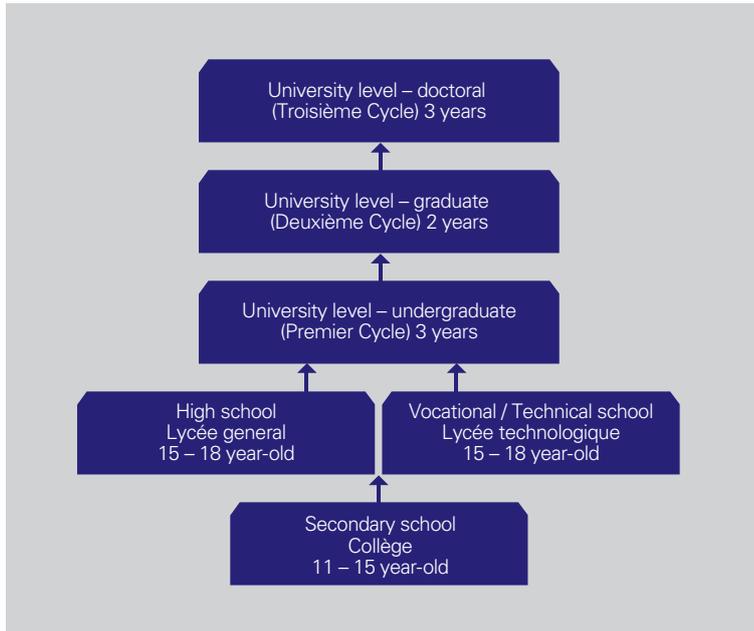


Education Guide

Education in France

France has over 3,500 institutions of higher education (both public and private), and its internationally renowned research centres deliver top-notch educational programmes. The network comprises 83 universities, 200 engineering schools, 200 schools of business and management, 120 public art schools and 20 schools of architecture. In addition, more than 3,000 specialised schools and institutes provide instruction in specific sectors, such as social work, paramedical functions, tourism, sports and physical education, fashion and design. Many High schools (lycées) offer postsecondary programmes that prepare students for the entrance examinations to the Grandes écoles (business schools) or to a BTS (Higher National Diploma), a 2-year technical certificate.

Education system overview



Education system overview

There are both government-funded (state) schools and private (mostly Catholic) schools. Many private schools are subsidised by the government and have lower tuition fees than non-sponsored schools.

State schools are selected on the basis of the neighbourhood (UKSP) and are often closed on Wednesday afternoons. Education is compulsory for children ages 6 to 16. About 15% of students attend private primary schools and nearly 20% attend private secondary schools.

All French schools follow the same national curriculum, so parents who move to a different town or region can enter their children into a new school without disrupting their education.

If you decide to enrol your child in the French public school system, the choice of school will be subject to what is known as the *carte scolaire*, a map that divides the public school system into geographical districts. A student is essentially required to attend the school nearest to their home address.

For primary school, your local Mairie (town hall) decides which school you need to enrol your child in. For *collège* and *lycée*, the French educational authority (Education Nationale) decides.

If you wish to bypass the *carte scolaire* system and enrol your child in a different *collège* or *lycée* to the one imposed, you are normally required to request a specific waiver (*dérogation*) from the local School Inspector (*inspecteur d'académie*). Private schools are not subject to the constraints of the *carte scolaire* system.

France's universities and other educational institutions do not distinguish between international students and French students. Both groups face identical admission and tuition requirements; both receive the same degrees.

The degrees conferred in French universities and other institutions of higher education are certified by the French government.

LEVELS		THE LMD SYSTEM		
		Universities		
9	18 Semesters (+9 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State diploma of doctor of medicine 	DOCTORATE DEPARTMENT	
8	DOCTORATE 16 semesters (+8 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doctorate / PhD 		
7			Grandes Écoles Schools of business Schools of engineering	Schools of art Schools of architecture Other institutions (lycée, specialised schools)
6	12 semesters (+6 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State diploma of doctor of dental surgery State diploma of doctor of pharmacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialised Mastère – MS Master of Business Administration – MBA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HMONP (professional credential for independent practice of architecture)
5	MASTER 10 semesters (+5 years) 300 ECTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research master Professional master Engineering degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engineering degree Master of Science – MSc Business school diplomas Degrees of the Grandes Écoles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diploma of art schools (DNSEP) State diploma of architect Diplomas of specialised schools (health, social work, tourism...)
4				
3	LICENCE 6 semesters (+3 years) 180 ECTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licence (bachelor) Licence professionnelle (professional bachelor) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diplomas of art schools (DNAT – DNAP) Architecture diploma
2	4 semesters (+2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University diploma in technology (DUT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admission to the first year of a Grandes Écoles programme Preparation for admission to Grandes Écoles (CPGE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diploma of art schools (DMA) Higher technical certificate (BTS)
1				

Completion of secondary school + Baccalauréat or equivalent (eligibility to enter higher education in home country) = access to French higher education
 The system of degrees awarded in French higher education reflects a common European architecture. The LMD system— for Licence (bachelor), Master, and Doctorate—is based on the number of semesters completed after leaving secondary school and their equivalent in European credits under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS):

- Licence = 6 semesters = 180 ECTS (Baccalauréat or equivalent + 3 years)
- Master = 10 semesters = 300 ECTS (Baccalauréat or equivalent + 5 years)
- Doctorate = 16 semesters (Baccalauréat or equivalent + 8 years)

Tuition fees

For higher education, tuition rates charged by public institutions are pre-determined by degree. Students may also have to pay additional fees for specific services or special programmes. Private institutions, including business schools, are more expensive.

All international students with or without financial aid enjoy the same low tuition rates as French students at universities and other public institutions.

Annual Tuition Fees (reference only)

Institution		EUR	USD*
Secondary School		N/A	N/A
Public Institutions	Licence	181	244
	Master	250	338
	Doctoral	380	513
	Engineering	596	805
Private Institutions		2,000 – 30,000	2,700 – 40,500
Cost of living		9,600 – 12,000	12,960 –16,200

* Exchange rate EUR 1 = USD 1.35

Above fees are current as of the 2012-2013 school year.



Student accommodation

More and more universities and schools are providing services for international students. This includes assistance in locating housing, help with security deposits, pick-up upon arrival, orientation sessions and assistance in complying with administrative and regulatory requirements. International students may also be eligible for housing assistance.

Accommodation Types	Description	Price Range
On-campus	University residences are run by CROUS (Centres Régionaux des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires), France's regional student service centres. Residences feature furnished rooms and studios which are generally well-equipped. Space in university residence halls remains in very short supply, especially in Paris where priority is given to the recipients of French government scholarships and students participating in exchange programmes.	<p>CROUS: The monthly rent is between €200 and €300.</p> <p>Most Grandes écoles and private institutions have a sufficient supply of on-campus housing. Monthly rent ranges from €250 to €500.</p> <p>Note that residence halls will often close during the summer. If you will not be returning to your home country during that time, you will have to find alternative housing.</p>
	Privately operated student housing: Private buildings designed for students are found in most large cities. Most were built in recent years to compensate for shortage in university housing.	Monthly rent ranges from €600 to €700 in Paris and from €400 to €700 elsewhere.
Off-campus	Private-sector rentals: Renters are generally required to make a deposit as guarantee of rent payment. Costs are high, especially in cities such as Paris. In general, renters must show a certificate that their monthly income is at least three times the rental amount.	Under certain circumstances (eg, for recipients of French government scholarships or for salaried professionals), the government may pay the security deposit or guarantee payment of rent.
	Rooms in private houses: More suitable for short stays, eg renting a furnished room in a private home.	In Paris, approximately €200 per week (breakfast included) or €300 per week (breakfast and dinner included). Costs are lower outside of Paris.

Secondary education

At the age of 15, pupils move on to high school (lycées) where they prepare for their Baccalauréat examinations (called le bac) which is known as high school diploma.

At the end of the first year of Lycée (seconde), a key decision is made as to which career path to choose. There are 3 general baccalauréat: literature stream (L), science stream (S) and economics and social science stream (ES).

There are 8 additional baccalauréat technologique, diplomas based on technical skills. A baccalauréat guarantees entrance to a state university.

The baccalauréat examination process begins the following year, called the première. At the end of the following year, the terminale, students aged 17 to 18 will take their final high school exams.

Vocational / Technical Education

More practically-oriented students can follow a different education route in the final 4 years of their school education. They may choose between studying a “baccalauréat technologique” to prepare them for professional higher studies, or a “baccalauréat professionnel” that readies them to enter the job market immediately through vocational training.

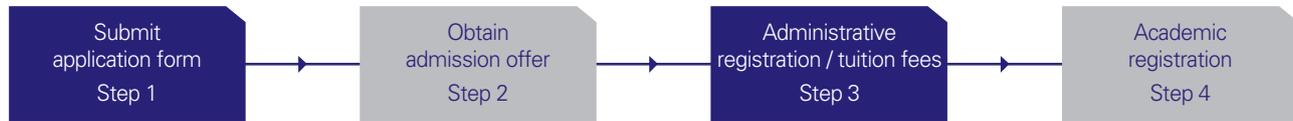


Applying to schools

This section covers the application process to schools in France.

General process

Applicants may go through the following process:



A convenient online application process is in place for applicants from 31 countries (listed below). Nationals of those countries must use an online process known as the CEF procedure. With internet access, students can:

- Submit a single application to multiple institutions
- Track the progress of their application
- Apply for a visa, in co-operation with a Campus France local office
- Communicate with Campus France

The process also involves taking a test of French proficiency (if required by an institution to which the student has applied) and ends with a personal interview in which the student has the opportunity to present his or her educational plan.

Participating countries

- Algeria
- Argentina
- Benin
- Brazil
- Burkina Faso
- Cameroon
- Chile
- China
- Colombia
- Republic of Congo
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Gabon
- Guinea
- India
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Lebanon
- Madagascar
- Mali
- Mauritius
- Mexico
- Peru
- Morocco
- Russia
- Senegal
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Tunisia
- Turkey
- United States
- Vietnam

Applying to schools

Documentation:

- 1 Passport
- 2 Certificate of acceptance from a French educational institution
- 3 Certificate of financial support
- 4 Certificate of French language level (depending on consulates)
- 5 Certificate of health insurance coverage (depending on consulates)
- 6 Certificate of vaccinations (depending on consulates)

Student visa application

All prospective students intending to study in France for more than 3 months who are not nationals of one of the 31 countries of the European Economic Space, or of Andorra, Monaco, Switzerland, San Marino, or the Vatican must obtain an extended-stay student visa. The extended-stay visa and residency permit is known as the VLS-TS and marked "student".

For stays of less than 3 months, students must obtain the short-stay Schengen visa, except nationals of some designated countries. Please refer to the website of French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/france/coming-to-france/getting-a-visa>) for details.

Students can apply at the French embassy or consulate in their home country.

Applying to schools

Required examinations

French Proficiency Tests

Since 2001, the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) has set levels for foreign-language proficiency. The CEFR has become Europe's standard for language learning, with six levels of proficiency defined by criteria of language competency in the situations and settings in which individuals are most likely to be called upon to use a foreign language.

Assessment of French proficiency for non-french-speaker reference levels for required tests

CECRL Council of Europe		DELFDALF Valid for life	TCF Results valid for 2 years		TEF Recommended validity of results:of 1 year		Required hours of study (approximate)
Proficient user	C2	DALF C2	Advanced proficient	Level 6 600 – 699	Complete command	Level 6 934 – 900	Varies
	C1	DALF C1		Proficient		Level 5 500 – 599	
Independent user	B2	DELFD B2	Advanced intermediate	Level 4 400 – 499	Fair command	Level 4 541 – 698	500h – 690h
	B1	DELFD B1		Intermediate		Level 3 300 – 399	
Basic user	A2	DELFD A2	Advanced beginner	Level 2 200 – 299	Command of basic structures	Level 2 204 – 360	180h – 300h
	A1	DELFD A1		Beginner		Level 1 100 – 199	



Applying to schools

Several tests of French proficiency and diplomas in French language are accepted for purposes of admission into a French institution of higher education:

- TCF (Test de connaissance du français - Test of knowledge of French)
- TEF (Test d'évaluation de français - French assessment test)
- DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue française - Diploma of French-language studies) and DALF (Diplôme approfondi de langue française - Advanced diploma in French language)
- Other evidence of language proficiency

Various other credentials (such as the certificate of the Alliance Française and diplomas offered by CCIP and various universities) are recognised and accepted by institutions. International students must verify that a particular credential is recognised by the institutions to which they intend to apply.

Higher Education Admission Examinations

Each institution is free to set its own criteria for admission examinations. Prospective students should inquire about the relevant requirements of the institutions according to their interests.

Frequently asked questions

1. Can international students in France work part-time?

Yes, French law permits international students to work. Students from the member countries of the European Economic Space (plus Switzerland) may work freely and without restrictions while studying in France. Since July 1, 2007, French law has allowed other international students to work under the following conditions: A residency permit (VLS-TS, validated by OFII, or a residency permit in addition to a visa) marked "student" entitles the student to accept paid employment for up to 60% of the legally defined working year (or 964 hours per year) without prior administrative authorisation.

Note: The time that students spend in internships connected with their academic programme (and covered by a written internship agreement) are not counted toward the maximum allowable working hours, even if the student is compensated during the internship.

2. Do international students need to get medical insurance if they study in France?

Yes, they do.

- Students from countries outside the European Economic Space who are under 28 years of age on October 1 and enrolled in a recognised educational institution for a programme of at least 3 months are automatically enrolled in the student segment of the national health insurance plan, part of France's social protection system. Students join the plan when they register at their educational institution. For the 2012/2013 academic year the cost of participation is €207. Some students (notably scholarship recipients) are exempted from paying the fee.

After age 28, non-European students must join the social security system through the health insurance consortium closest to their residence.

- Students from within the European Economic Space (plus Switzerland) may take advantage of the French social security system without the additional cost provided they obtain a European Health Insurance Card valid for the entire academic year.



Frequently asked questions

- All other students (those staying for less than 3 months, and students enrolled in institutions that do not participate in the French social security system) must purchase an individual medical insurance policy from a private insurance company. In France, the annual cost of such policies run from €300 to €700.

3. Do French educational institutions distinguish between international students and French students?

No, both international students and French students face identical admission and tuition requirements; both receive the same degrees. All international students, with or without additional financial aid, enjoy the same low tuition rates as French students at universities and other public institutions.

4. Can international students apply for grants or financial aids in France?

Yes, there are many ways to finance a period of study or research in France. Some organisations offer programmes from national and local government agencies, corporations, foundations, academic institutions, France's embassies abroad, foreign governments and institutions and multilateral organizations.

Acknowledgements

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About Campus France

Dedicated to international academic and scientific mobility, Campus France operates under the oversight and authority of two French government ministries: foreign and European affairs; higher education and research.



Role and missions

Under the oversight of the French government and in close cooperation with institutions of higher education and their associations, Campus France promotes French higher education programmes throughout the world, offering international students a pathway to success through postsecondary study in France. Campus France is also in charge of coordinating services for international students in France, and of making mobility arrangements for recipients of international grants and scholarships conferred by the French and foreign governments.

Campus France's websites

Designed especially for international students, Campus France's website, published in French, English, and Spanish, allows easy access to all the information needed for preparing one's studies in France, from choosing one's study programme via the online catalogue, to arriving in France. In order to better respond to local demand, 61 country-specific websites have been developed in 28 different languages. In 2011, the Campus France websites received 11 million visits, corresponding to more than 60 million page views.

For more information, please visit their website at www.Campusfrance.org.

Campus France operates 175 local offices in 108 countries.

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