



FRANCE

Brief Background: Campus France, an agency of the French government, was created with the purpose of promoting French higher education abroad. The Campus France USA branch serves as the primary contact for US students seeking guidance about admission to French institutions and pre-visa applications. Measures have been taken in recent years to simplify visa procedures, increase student housing options, and boost the number and diversity of programs available to international students in France.

Each year, about 17,000 US students choose to study in France, and more than half (56 percent) pursue programs that last longer than 90 days. In all, French institutions enroll more than 295,000 international students, who make up about 12 percent of the country's total student population.

Undergraduate degrees from France are offered at 74 public universities and 250 *grandes écoles*. *Grandes écoles* are uniquely French institutions and typically offer five-year programs that are equivalent to a master's degree, although some offer three-year bachelor's degrees. A list of *grandes écoles* can be found on the website of the Conférence des Grandes Écoles while a complete list of French universities is available through Campus France, or through the Conference of University Presidents' website.

Technical and professional programs—in fields such as music, gastronomy, visual arts, design, fashion, and

nursing—are offered at approximately 500 specialized schools (*écoles spécialisées*). The credential awarded is specific to each institution.

An undergraduate bachelor's degree is known as a *licence*, and can be completed in three years. Exceptions exist, often for business courses and highly technical degrees, such as architecture, which can take four years to finish. The *licence* entails a course of study that is strictly defined, so a French degree provides a very clear indication of what a student has studied and is thereby capable of doing.

While programs are mainly taught in French and require French proficiency, about 1,000 undergraduate and graduate programs are offered in English, across a variety of fields.

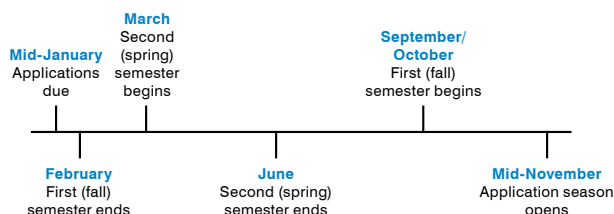
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Academic Calendar: Depending on the institution and program, the academic year begins in September or October and ends in May or June, with a two-week break at the end of the calendar year for Christmas and the New Year. The two semesters are divided by a short break following final examinations at the end of the first semester, usually in February or March. The summer vacation runs more than two months and always includes July and August.



Search: Program-specific information can be found on individual institutions' websites, and through [Campus France USA's searchable database](#), which includes a directory of *licence* degree programs. The Campus France website also allows students to [search for programs taught in English](#).

Apply: International students who wish to enroll as a first-year undergraduate in France apply via Campus France, with few exceptions. Campus France charges an application fee of 180 US dollars. Campus France not only streamlines the process of applying to multiple institutions but also offers applicants advice about degree programs and tips on how students can improve their chance of acceptance at their top choice institutions. Students are assigned a representative who they can contact by email or by phone.

Students can apply to three institutions. Admission offers by the student's first-choice institution are determined in mid-April. If the student is denied admission by the first-choice institution, the application goes to the student's second-choice institution, with a decision rendered in mid-May. If a student is denied admission there, the application goes to the third and final-choice institution, with a decision rendered by mid-June. If denied admission to all three of their choices, a student can apply again the following year.

Photo courtesy of Zoey



"Traveling is one of my favorite things to do, and not only can I say that I have studied in France (in French) but once you're in Europe, you can travel to other countries very easily and inexpensively."

—Zoey Ginsberg, Texas, Universite Nice Sophia Antipolis

Deadlines: The application season opens in mid-November and ends in mid-January.

Application Fees: Universities do not charge application fees.

The Campus France application/admission fee covers the application process for international students entering the first year of an undergraduate degree program.

Admission Requirements:

Note: Due to proposed education reforms, the university admission process will likely change for students applying for the 2019–20 academic year. Check with Campus France or individual institutions for updates.

Students must meet the equivalent requirements of the French Baccalaureate. A high school diploma, the IB diploma, or an equivalent (such as a GED) is required, as are official high school transcripts. US students must also pass at least two AP exams. SAT scores may be submitted but cannot serve as a substitute for AP exam scores or the French Baccalaureate exam. Likewise, SAT Subject test scores in French may enhance an application, but do not count as a substitute credential.

There is no standardized official equivalency recognition of AP, IB, or other non-European Union qualifications. Each institution has full discretion to admit applicants and determine the level at which they will be admitted.

Diplomas and transcripts must be translated into French by a certified translation service (such as one recommended by the American Translators Association) and uploaded as part of the Campus France application.

A curriculum vitae and goals statement are required; in general, universities are looking for information not addressed in the other required application documents, such as motivation to study in France, interests and strengths, and academic and career goals. Recommendation letters and internship documents can improve the chances of being admitted. Although submitting at least one letter of recommendation is strongly advised, it is not mandatory.

International students who wish to apply to a French-language undergraduate program must take the **TCF-DAP** (*Test de Connaissance du Français – Demande d'Admission Préalable*) to demonstrate language proficiency. The required level is B2 of the European Framework for Languages.

Upon Acceptance: A student's application is either accepted or rejected; French institutions do not utilize wait lists. Once accepted, students will be asked to confirm their intent to enroll. Students then receive a pre-inscription acceptance letter from Campus France that will allow them to apply for a student visa.

Upon arrival in France, students must finalize course registration with the institution's registration office.

Tuition and Fees: Tuition rates at French institutions are identical for all students, domestic and international, based on the type of degree they are pursuing. Annual tuition at public universities is set by law. The rate for *licence* programs in the 2015–16 academic year was 184 euros. Additional fees may be charged for an English-taught course. Annual tuition rates at private institutions—including *grandes écoles* and specialized schools, such as schools of business and management—are generally higher, with annual tuition ranging from 3,000 to 10,000 euros.

Some scholarship options are available for US students. Students are advised to check directly with their prospective institutions for loan options.

Housing: Students are encouraged to secure housing upon being accepted to a university and well before they arrive in France. Contact the institution's office for incoming international students or student association. Both should be able to provide a list of housing options along with tips on how to get started.

FRENCH SUBJECT STREAMS

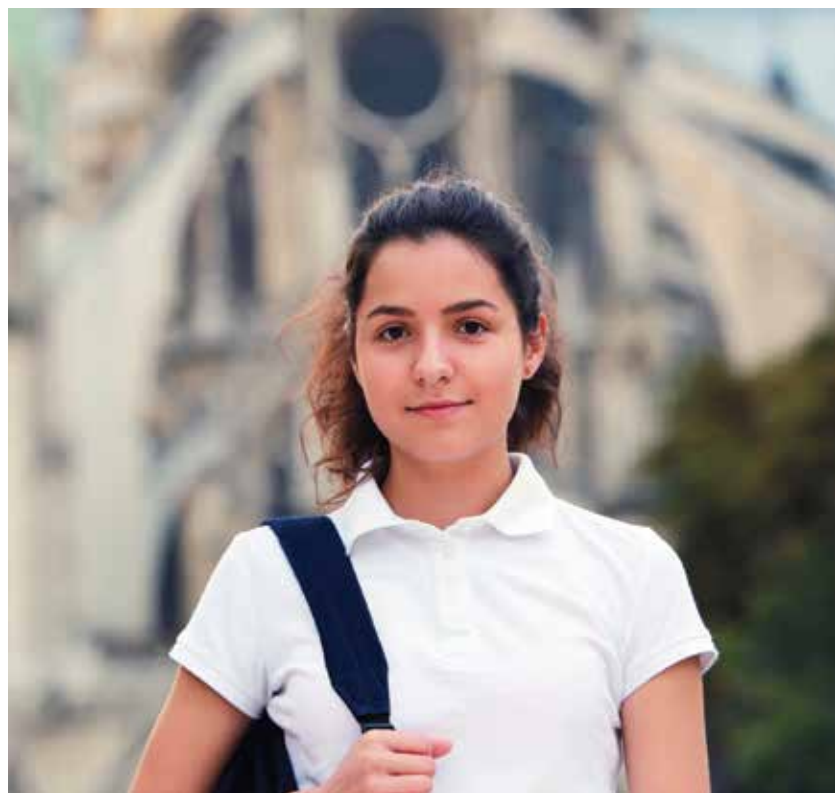
The French Baccalaureate has three subject streams: sciences, social sciences, and literary. As a result, French universities are used to seeing candidates “present as” one of these tracts. If a student knows early on that they want to apply to a French university, selecting courses aligned with one of these subject streams is advisable.

France

Many students choose to live in student dormitories. Dormitories for students enrolled in public universities are managed by regional student-service agencies known as CROUS (*Centre régional des œuvres universitaires et scolaires*). As CROUS dorms are the most affordable form of student housing, they are highly sought after. Rent varies from 120 euros to 350 euros per month.

There are also a number of privately-run dormitories that house students. These residences are also highly sought after and typically more expensive, their rent ranging between 300 and 700 euros per month depending on location.

International students are eligible for government assistance for housing expenses. Short-term accommodations, including homestays with host families, are another option.





Visas and Other Permits: International students who plan to study for more than 90 days in France must apply in person for a student visa through their assigned consulate in the United States. Students are advised to take into account possible processing delays when scheduling their consulate appointments. It may take up to three weeks after the consulate appointment to receive the student visa. The appointment must take place no more than 90 days before departure.

International undergraduates pursuing their first year of study are eligible for a long-stay visa with residency permit (VLS-TS – *Visa Long Séjour Valant Titre de Séjour*), which must be validated once they arrive in the country by the French Office of Immigration and Integration.

For information about visa fees, students and counselors should consult their assigned consulate's website.

All students, regardless of their country of origin, are enrolled in France's national student health care plan. The cost is an estimated 215 euros per year, and is added to the institution tuition fee. Health care is subsidized by the French government, and about 60 percent of health-related expenses are reimbursed. Students can elect to purchase a supplemental group health plan to obtain coverage for some or all of the expenses not covered by the basic national plan. Annual premium rates start at 200 euros.

International students have the right to work while studying in France as long as they are enrolled in an institution that participates in the national student health care plan. US students must also hold a valid residency permit. The law allows students to work 964 hours in a given year, which corresponds to 60 percent of full-time employment for the year.

Advice from the Field: Campus France is available to respond to follow-up questions from counselors regarding student applications, but French institutions will respond only to requests from students. US counselors may contact Campus France at Washington@campusfrance.org. Include "NACAC counselors" in the subject line of the email.

Campus France USA's Facebook page is another good source of information. France Alumni, a digital bilingual platform, was created to unite, inform, and guide professionals who have completed part of all of their studies in the French education system, and may also be a useful resource for prospective students looking to begin their studies.

Student support services vary across institutions. Should a student reach out to an institution or Campus France with inquiries, they should make note of the person with whom they were in touch to facilitate future communications.

Study of economics, social and political history, and the hard sciences, is popular at French institutions. Furthermore, graduates of French universities in fields strongly associated with France and French culture—such as gastronomy, hospitality, and fashion—may have a competitive advantage in related job markets.

Students who have a strong command of the French language will have an easier time transitioning to life in France both on and off campus, regardless of whether their program is taught in English.