



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 and international students residing in the US seeking guidance about admission to French institutions and pre-visa applications. An excellent overview of the

free, online Campus France resources for counselors and students can be [found here](#).



Significant nationwide efforts in recent years have focused on attracting and supporting international students. These efforts include a simplification of the visa and immigration process, new support for student housing options, and continued development of programs taught in English—of which there are currently over 1,500—within French institutions. Additionally, through the [Bienvenue en France](#) initiative, significant public funding has been made available to French institutions seeking to improve international student services.

Each year, about 17,000 US students choose to study in France, and 50 percent pursue programs that last longer than 90 days. In all, French institutions enroll more than 358,000 international students, who make up about 12 percent of the country's total student population. At the doctoral level in France, international students make up 40 percent of the 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.

Good to Know

An undergraduate degree is known as a *licence*, and can be completed in three years. Exceptions exist, as some professional degrees follow a different curriculum and may be longer programs. Students can also choose to pursue [short programs](#) or [summer programs](#) in France to prepare themselves for a degree program.

While programs are mainly taught in French and require French proficiency, more than 1,500 undergraduate and graduate programs are offered in English, across a variety of fields. Students can search programs with English as the language of instruction using Campus France's [Taught in English platform](#).

Photo courtesy of Zoey Ginsberg



“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.”

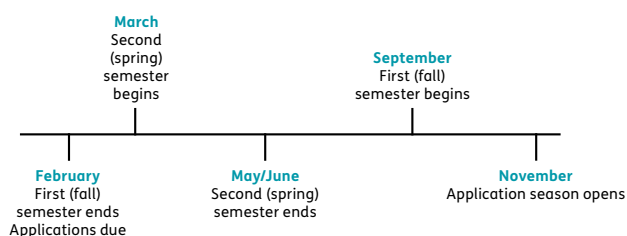
—Zoey Ginsberg, Texas,
Université Nice Sophia Antipolis

International students who obtain French degrees in certain specific fields—for example medicine, law, architecture, accounting, and engineering—may have to complete additional courses/exams and meet other requirements in order to be able to practice outside of France.

France strongly supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is reflected in higher education. Students come to France from around the world to study urban design, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, social-impact economic policy, ethical supply chains, and more. France invests heavily in renewable energy development, and French higher education is recognized for its expertise in training engineers and scientists to lead the renewable energy transition.

Academic Calendar

The university academic year typically begins in September and ends in May or June, and is always divided into two semesters of between 12 and 14 weeks each. The academic calendar, including dates of vacations, varies widely among institutions. Students should check with the institutions to which they hope to apply to learn about their specific calendars.



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.

Bienvenue en France certification

As of spring 2022, 134 higher education institutions in France have been awarded the label [Bienvenue en France](#). This is a certification of high-quality international student services and the capacity of the institution to welcome, retain, and support international students. Students can search for this label when researching programs on the Campus France catalogs.

Apply

International students who wish to enroll as a first-year undergraduate in France apply via Campus France, with several exceptions, such as students seeking admission to a *grande école*, engineering school, preparatory classes, or other selective programs. Campus France charges an application fee of US\$250.

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 chances 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 up to three programs, offered by the same university or by different universities. Admission examinations will simultaneously start in March by all three selected choices at the same time. All institutions respond—either accepted or refused—to candidates by April 30. All candidates will have to accept one admission offer by early May. If denied admission to all three of their choices, a student can apply again the following year.

Deadlines

The application season typically starts in November and ends in early January. The exact dates are usually released in November.

Application Fees

Public universities do not charge application fees.

The Campus France application fee covers the application process for international students who choose to use the [Etudes en France](#) common application to apply to multiple French degree programs at the licence and master's levels.

Admission Requirements

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. It is recommended, though not mandatory, that students submit scores from AP exams, the SAT, or other tests. While these additional performance indicators are not officially recognized by French institutions, they add value to admission applications.

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.

All French and European citizens complete the admission procedure for French institutions via the [Parcoursup](#) application platform. Deadlines and requirements may differ from those of [Études en France](#), which is the common application platform for non-European international students in many countries (including the US) seeking entry to French institutions.

Students who have completed a French Baccalaureate within a French curriculum school abroad may consult the [Guide: Étudier en France après le baccalauréat](#) for further information on admission procedures and higher education pathways. Students are always advised to contact the institutions directly with specific questions about admission requirements.

A curriculum vitae and goals statement in French 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 an undergraduate or graduate program taught in French must take an official French language test such as the TCF, DELF, or DALF to demonstrate language proficiency. The required level is B2 of the European Framework for Languages. Students who have completed a French Baccalaureate are exempt from this test and, in some cases, other French proficiency tests.



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

The cost of studying in France is among the lowest in the world. For both French and foreign students, the government subsidizes two-thirds of the tuition fees in public institutions of higher education.

For 2022–2023, the tuition fees for international students at French public universities will be 2,770 euros per year for a *licence*. Annual tuition rates at private institutions—including *grandes écoles* and professional schools, such as schools of business and management—are generally higher, with annual tuition ranging from 3,000 to 20,000 euros.

Many universities, however, offer tuition exemptions for international students. Candidates should check with the institutions to which they intend to apply to verify their tuition fees for the upcoming school year.

Many [scholarship options](#) are available for US students. Some [institutions accept US federal student financial aid](#), but 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. Either should be able to provide a list of housing options along with tips on how to get started. [Campus France](#) also has housing resources.

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 for a student visa. Students should first log on to [France-Visas](#), the official website for visa applications. The “visa wizard” will assist students in preparing their applications and includes a list of required documents. Students will then apply in person through their [local VFS visa center](#). Students are advised to take into account possible processing delays when scheduling their visa appointments. It may take up to three weeks after a visa appointment to receive the student visa. The appointment must take place within the 90-day period before the start date of the program.

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 [Directorate General of Foreigners in France](#).

For information about visa fees, consult the [France-Visas website](#).

Registration to social security is free and mandatory for all students in France. Students will need to [register online](#) in order to cover most of their health care expenses throughout their time in higher education. Students may choose to increase the amount of health care expenses that are reimbursed by taking out complementary health insurance, or *mutuelle*. Practical information about social security, health, and insurance is provided on the [Campus France website](#).

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. 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.

In recent years, French universities have developed dedicated resources for international students and made international student recruitment, retention, and support one of their top priorities. Many French universities have dedicated departments to help international students find housing, adjust to life in France, and succeed academically. Furthermore, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, French institutions have continued to prioritize support for international students, and have exempted international students from travel restrictions allowing them to begin and continue their studies in France.

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.

As the world’s fifth largest global donor of official development assistance, France supports nations worldwide in their efforts to protect the environment, improve public health, and reduce poverty. As such, French higher education offers some of the best training in the world to prepare students for careers in international development. Home to UNESCO’s world headquarters, neighboring UN offices in Switzerland, and located in the heart of Europe, France also offers invaluable opportunities for students to gain exposure to the work of many intergovernmental agencies. Learning in French, one of the UN’s six official languages, prepares students around the world for international careers in development and diplomacy.

In France, there are a number of support structures to help students with disabilities succeed academically and professionally. Campus France has a [website](#) dedicated to being a student with a disability in France.