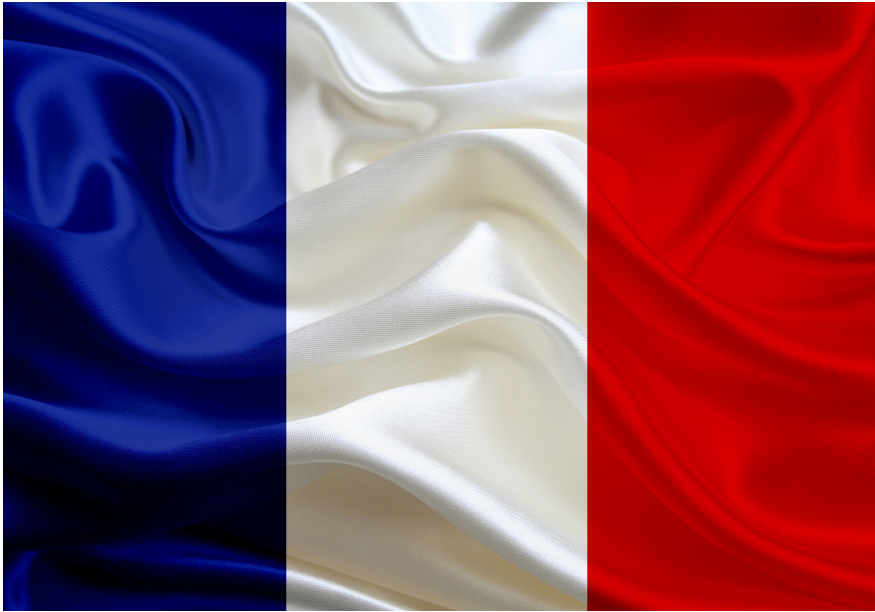


Everything international students need to know about studying in France



Have you ever wondered what it would be like to study at a university in France? Keep reading to learn more about how to apply to university there and other vital facts about life in France as an international student

France is already a popular destination for international students. Not only does the country offer interesting history, incredible cuisine and beautiful landmarks, but it is also the home of many leading universities and international companies (such as L'Oréal). French also happens to be the third most common language in the business world.

Famous alumni from French universities include novelist Victor Hugo, author of *Les Misérables* and *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, wife of American president John F Kennedy, and fashion designer Christian Dior.

If France sounds like the place for you but you are not sure where to start, our guide below will explain everything you need to know when choosing to study abroad in France.

What kind of universities are in France?

France offers many higher education options, including specific schools for doctoral studies, business and engineering. However, out of the 3,500 public and private institutions for higher education, 72 are classed as universities. Out of those, 39 French universities are ranked in the *Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2022*.

Many of France's top universities are located in the country's capital, Paris. However, other locations to consider include Marseille, Bordeaux and Montpellier.

Université Paris-Saclay is one of the oldest universities in Europe (dating back to 1150), while Université de Paris was established in 2019 when it merged Paris Diderot University, *Paris Descartes University* and the Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris.

How do you apply to university in France?





Applying to undergraduate programmes

International undergraduate students must first apply using the national platform for pre-registration for higher education called **Parcoursup**. The best part about Parcoursup is that it is free to register. However, you will later pay a processing fee of €100 (£84) when you are ready to submit your applications to your chosen universities.

Along with this application, you also need to have several documents:

secondary school diploma (translated into French)

copy of your ID

cover letter

CV/résumé.

It is a similar process for graduate students looking to apply for an undergraduate course in France. However, you will need to add a copy of your bachelor's degree certificate in place of your secondary school diploma. You will also need to check the individual university requirements, as some ask for further documentation from graduate students.

For example, **Paris Sciences et Lettres – PSL Research University Paris** requires additional information such as:

online application form

CV

cover letter outlining personal and professional goals

relevant bachelor's certificates

professional references

research project

work-study contract

certified language tests (see more below)

supporting documentation of internships or professional experience

some courses also require an entrance exam.

It is important to note that you will pay an additional application fee of €50 when you submit these documents. You may find at other universities the additional requirements are a shorter list. One example of this is [Sorbonne University](#) where applicants only need to include a letter of motivation and a thesis proposal.

Registration for Parcoursup usually opens in December; the applications then take place between January and March. Admissions usually need to be completed by early April and final acceptances are decided by May.

Applying to graduate programmes

Master's and doctorate applications, terms and deadlines range across several dates, depending on the university you choose to apply to. The best thing to do is to check the individual university requirements and dates before starting your application.

Are French university courses taught in French or English?

University applicants wishing to study French courses must sit the TCF – Test de connaissance du français, the Common European

Framework of Reference for Languages exam or the DELF (Diplôme d'Etudes en Langue Française) and DALF (Diplôme Approfondi de Langue Française). Each university will have a minimum score, and this will be listed with the entry requirements.

Some will also require an English language test, usually the IELTS or TOEFL.

Postgraduate students will be asked to take the same exams but the minimum score for applications will be higher than for undergraduates.

France was one of the first non-English-speaking countries in Europe to offer programmes taught in English. It varies depending on the university and course, but more information is provided in a university's course directory. French universities tend to offer more postgraduate courses in English. If you are a non-native speaker applying to any of these programmes, you are required to sit an English proficiency exam and the minimum grades are often higher than in other European countries.

How much does it cost to study in France?



Tuition fees in France are often lower than in other areas of Europe. For international students outside of the EEA, a bachelor's degree is €2,770 per year, €3,770 for a postgraduate and €380 per year for PhDs. Non-EU PhD candidates are treated the same and

therefore are not subject to differentiated tuition fees. If you are a citizen or permanent resident of an EEA country, the costs are significantly lower with a bachelor's degree costing €170, €243 for a master's degree, €601 for a specialist engineering degree and €380 for PhD programmes.

France's more selective private *grandes écoles* charge more, ranging from €500 per year to €10,000 depending on the establishment. Some only offer postgraduate programmes or allow a transfer after the first few years of an undergraduate programme elsewhere. On the other hand, private engineering, business or management university can cost up to €30,000 for international students.

Accommodation in France is cheaper than in other parts of Europe, but it again depends on the city you choose to study in. The universities offer a few options for students looking to live on or near campus. You can consider student halls, renting an apartment or home-stay (which also includes at least one meal a day). These range in price from €120 to €800 per month depending on which option you choose and what is included.

Bills in France usually break down to about €60 for gas and electricity, €25 for internet, €50 to €100 for books and supplies, and €20 to €50 for health insurance, which is highly recommended. If you wish to have a phone, you can get deals beginning at around €10 a month, and renting cars, travel cards and student bikes are also an option.

France is one of the best countries for student discounts, so you can often ask for a discount when dining out, shopping for clothes and groceries, or visiting a museum.

What scholarships are available for international students in France?

There are a few scholarships that students can apply for which can help towards living expenses and tuition fees. However, these are often reserved for Erasmus exchange students and some selective business, engineering and medical students who come from former French-speaking countries or colonies. Here are a selection of some of the scholarships available in France, but there are many more, so be sure to do your own research.

The Émile Boutmy Scholarship

This scholarship is offered to non-European first-time applicants. It has several formats and can offer a grant ranging from €3,600 to €13,000 for the three years of an undergraduate programme. It also provides €12,200 per year for a master's programme.

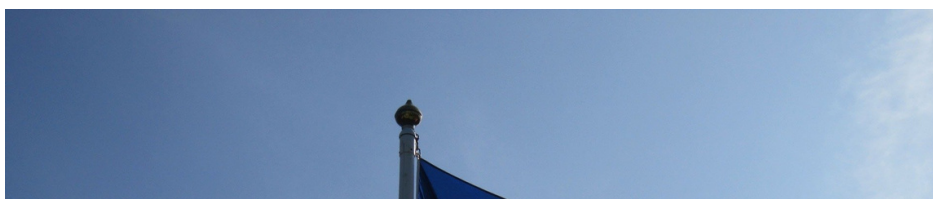
ENS International Selection Scholarships

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Each year **École Normale Supérieure** selects international students who show promising skills in science or arts and humanities to help fund their master's degrees. They offer 10 positions in science and 10 in arts and humanities, and each recipient receives a monthly grant of €1,000 for the three years of their programme and are also given a room on the ENS campus.

Erasmus Mundus Scholarships for International Students

The Erasmus Mundus Scholarships are exclusively given to students from EU and non-EU countries that have been selected to attend an Erasmus Joint Programme at the master's or doctorate level. The candidates split into two categories: category A – nationals from countries outside the EU, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein and category B – nationals from the EU, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein.





How do you apply for a student visa for France?

The **application process for international students** who wish to study in France starts each September. The first steps are to check your financial requirements, prepare your application requirements, apply to your chosen universities and apply for a student visa.

To apply for a student visa, you will need an acceptance letter from your university, proof of accommodation, proof of sufficient funds (€120 per day), proof of medical insurance, and proof of return ticket. You also must be at least 18 to apply.

If you come from an EEF-procedure country, you must pay a visa fee of €50. If you come from anywhere else, you will pay €99 (although some cases may lead to different rates).

For a three-month course, you will be given a short-stay visa. If your programme is between three and six months, you will receive a temporary long-stay visa. For courses over six months (which is the most common for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees), you will be given

a long-stay visa, which is like a residence permit. The government now offers options for long-stay visa applicants to send supporting documents in digital format, which makes the process slightly faster.

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Can I stay and work in France after studying there?

International students with a study visa can work while they are in France for up to 964 hours a year (which is about 60 per cent of a full-time job). Another option that international students have is to work for their university. Most of the university job contracts span from September to August and reduce the working hours during the summer period from July to August.

After you graduate, if you have a master's degree or higher, you can apply for a one-year temporary residence permit, which will allow you to continue working 60 per cent of a normal working week to support yourself while you look for full-time employment.

If you are offered a full-time role that is at least 1.5 times the minimum wage (€10.25 per hour), then you can change your visa status from student to employee and will then be allowed to work full time.

After graduation, it is possible for students to organise a post-study work visa and stay in France for up to a year. Once you find a job, you can then apply for a work permit. The final visa option is a **Talent Passport visa, which is a four-year permit that is reserved for specialised graduates, artists and other creatives.**