



Student Visa Guide France

France Student Visa Guide

Essential Information for International Students

TYPES OF FRENCH STUDENT VISAS

1. **Short-Stay Student Visa (Visa de court séjour pour études)**
 - Purpose: For courses less than 90 days
 - Duration: Maximum 90 days within any 180-day period
 - Requirements: Proof of enrollment, financial resources, accommodation
 - Key Feature: Non-renewable and does not allow conversion to long-stay status
2. **Long-Stay Student Visa (Visa de long séjour valant titre de séjour - VLS-TS)**
 - Purpose: For academic programs lasting 3-12 months
 - Duration: 3-12 months, serves as both visa and residence permit
 - Requirements: Acceptance letter, financial proof, health insurance
 - Key Feature: Must be validated within 3 months of arrival in France
3. **Temporary Long-Stay Student Visa (Visa de long séjour temporaire - VLS-T)**
 - Purpose: For specific programs between 3-6 months
 - Duration: Length of program (3-6 months)
 - Requirements: Similar to VLS-TS
 - Key Feature: Cannot be extended or converted to residence permit
4. **Talent Passport Student Visa**
 - Purpose: For Master's or PhD students with exceptional profiles
 - Duration: Duration of program up to 4 years
 - Requirements: Acceptance into high-level programs, financial resources
 - Key Feature: Simplified procedures for multi-year stays
5. **Étudiant en Recherche d'Emploi Visa**
 - Purpose: For graduates seeking employment after studies
 - Duration: 12 months (non-renewable)
 - Requirements: Minimum Master's degree from a French institution
 - Work Rights: Unrestricted during validity period

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for a French Student Visa, you must:

1. **Have academic admission**
 - Acceptance letter (attestation d'inscription) from a French institution
 - For language courses: registration in an accredited language school
 - Pre-registration confirmation (pre-inscription) for certain programs
2. **Meet financial requirements**
 - Demonstrate minimum resources of €615 per month (2025 figure)
 - Options to prove financial capacity:

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- Bank statements showing sufficient funds
 - Scholarship certificate
 - Guarantor letter with proof of income
 - Proof of student loans
3. Health insurance coverage
 - Public French student health insurance (covered when enrolling)
 - European Health Insurance Card (for EU students)
 - Private international health insurance for initial period
 4. French language proficiency
 - Required level depends on program and institution
 - Programs in French typically require B1-B2 level certification
 - TCF/TEF/DELF/DALF certificates commonly accepted
 - Some English-taught programs exempt from French requirements
 5. Academic requirements
 - Baccalauréat equivalent for undergraduate programs
 - Bachelor's degree for Master's programs
 - Previous qualifications must be recognized in France
 6. Valid passport
 - Valid for the duration of your stay plus 3 months
 - At least 2 blank pages for visa

APPLICATION PROCESS

Step-by-Step Guide

1. Academic admission
 - Apply through Études en France platform (required for most countries)
 - Or apply directly to institutions (where applicable)
 - Receive acceptance letter or pre-registration confirmation
2. Create account on France-Visas website
 - Complete the online application questionnaire
 - Obtain list of required documents specific to your situation
 - Schedule visa appointment at French consulate/Campus France
3. Prepare documents for visa application
 - Completed application form
 - Passport and passport-sized photos
 - Acceptance letter from French institution
 - Proof of financial resources
 - Proof of accommodation for at least first 3 months
 - OFII form (Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration)
 - Academic certificates and transcripts
 - Language proficiency certificates

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- Flight reservation or travel itinerary
- Proof of civil status (birth certificate, etc.)
- 4. Submit application and attend interview
 - Present all documents at scheduled appointment
 - Pay visa application fee (approximately €50-99)
 - Complete biometric data collection
 - Brief interview about study plans and intentions
- 5. Wait for processing
 - Processing times range from 2-4 weeks
 - Track application status online (France-Visas)
 - Respond to any additional document requests
- 6. Receive visa decision
 - Collect passport with visa if approved
 - Verify all information on visa sticker is correct
- 7. After arrival in France
 - Validate VLS-TS online within 3 months of arrival
 - Pay the OFII tax (approximately €60)
 - Schedule medical examination if required
 - Register with your institution

MAINTAINING STATUS & COMPLIANCE

Residence Permit Requirements

As a student visa holder, you must:

- Validate your visa online within 3 months of arrival
- Attend classes regularly and make academic progress
- Apply for renewal 2 months before expiration if staying longer
- Notify authorities of address changes
- Maintain sufficient financial resources
- Not exceed allowed working hours (964 hours annually)
- Maintain health insurance coverage

Work Opportunities

- During studies:
 - Up to 964 hours per year (approximately 20 hours/week)
 - Must not interfere with academic studies
 - No separate work permit required for VLS-TS holders
 - Full-time work permitted during scheduled holidays
- Internships:
 - Mandatory internships included in curriculum require no additional authorization
 - Optional internships require "Convention de Stage" from institution
- Post-Study Work Rights:

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- 12-month job-seeking permit for Master's graduates
- Possibility to switch to work permit if job related to studies
- Simplified procedures for certain qualified positions

HEALTHCARE & INSURANCE

Health Insurance System

- Student Social Security (Sécurité Sociale Étudiante)
 - Free and mandatory for all students
 - Register online at etudiant-etranger.ameli.fr
 - Covers approximately 70% of healthcare costs
- Complementary Health Insurance (Mutuelle)
 - Optional but recommended to cover remaining 30% of costs
 - Student rates from €10-30 per month
 - Providers include: LMDE, SMEREP, HEYME
- European Students:
 - EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) valid for initial period
 - Should register with French system for longer stays
- Registration Process:
 - Register after arrival and validation of visa
 - Required documents: passport, visa, enrollment certificate, birth certificate, banking information

HOUSING & ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation Options

- University Residences (CROUS)
 - Most affordable option (€150-400 per month)
 - Limited availability, apply early through DSE (Dossier Social Étudiant)
 - Basic but functional rooms, often with shared facilities
 - Priority given to scholarship holders
- Private Student Residences
 - Modern facilities with more services
 - Higher cost (€500-900 per month)
 - Often include utilities and internet
 - Providers include Studéa, Nexity Studéa, ARPEJ
- Shared Apartments (Colocation)
 - Popular option among students (€300-600 per month)
 - Find through websites like Appartager.fr, Leboncoin.fr
 - Usually requires guarantor with French income
- Private Rentals
 - Studio apartments (€400-800+ depending on city)
 - Requires security deposit (1-2 months' rent)
 - Documentation needed: proof of income, guarantor, ID
 - Housing allowance (CAF) may apply after 3 months

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Housing Benefits

- CAF (Caisse d'Allocations Familiales)
 - Government housing subsidy available to students
 - Amounts vary based on rent, location, and income
 - Apply online at caf.fr after securing accommodation
 - Can reduce housing costs by 30-40%

FRENCH EDUCATION SYSTEM

Institution Types

- Public Universities
 - Minimal tuition fees (€170-380 per year for EU; €2,770-3,770 for non-EU)
 - Wide range of disciplines
 - More theoretical approach
- Grandes Écoles
 - Prestigious, selective institutions
 - Higher tuition fees (€500-15,000+ per year)
 - Strong emphasis on professional development
 - Types include business schools, engineering schools, political science institutes
- Specialized Schools
 - Focus on specific fields (art, architecture, etc.)
 - Varying fee structures
 - Often require portfolio or entrance exams

Academic Calendar & Structure

- Semester System:
 - First semester: September to January
 - Second semester: February to June
 - Examination periods at end of each semester
 - Major holidays: Christmas (2 weeks), Winter (1 week), Spring (1-2 weeks)
- Degree Structure (LMD System):
 - Licence (Bachelor's): 3 years (180 ECTS)
 - Master: 2 years (120 ECTS)
 - Doctorat (PhD): 3+ years
- Grading System:
 - Scale of 0-20 (passing grade typically 10)
 - 16-20: Très bien (Excellent)
 - 14-15.9: Bien (Very Good)
 - 12-13.9: Assez bien (Good)
 - 10-11.9: Passable (Satisfactory)
 - Below 10: Fail

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LIVING IN FRANCE

Transportation

- Public Transport:
 - Extensive networks in major cities (metro, bus, tram)
 - Student discounts available (up to 50%)
 - Monthly passes: €30-75 depending on city
 - National rail (SNCF) offers youth/student cards
- Bicycles:
 - Bike-sharing programs in most cities
 - Student rates for annual subscriptions
 - Vélib' in Paris, Vélo'v in Lyon, Le Vélo in Marseille

Banking & Finance

- Student Bank Accounts:
 - Free or low-cost accounts available
 - Major banks: BNP Paribas, Société Générale, Crédit Agricole
 - Online banks: Boursorama, Hello Bank, N26
 - Required documents: passport, visa, enrollment certificate, proof of address
- Average Monthly Budget:
 - Paris: €1,000-1,500
 - Other major cities: €800-1,200
 - Smaller cities: €650-1,000
 - Breakdown:
 - Rent: €350-900
 - Food: €200-300
 - Transportation: €30-75
 - Phone/Internet: €20-50
 - Books/Supplies: €50
 - Leisure: €100-200

CULTURAL ADAPTATION

French Etiquette

- Greetings: "Bonjour" (daytime) and "Bonsoir" (evening) are essential
- La bise (cheek kisses) is common between friends
- Formal address using "vous" until invited to use "tu"
- Punctuality expected for appointments and classes
- Meal times are important social occasions

Academic Culture

- Independent study expected outside of class hours
- Active participation valued in seminars
- Formal relationship with professors (address as Monsieur/Madame/Professeur)
- Critical thinking and analysis emphasized
- Written assignments often require specific methodology

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Integration Tips

- Join university clubs and associations
- Participate in language exchange programs (tandems)
- Attend cultural events and university welcome programs
- Consider buddy programs for international students
- Explore weekend trips to discover regional France

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Official Resources

- Campus France: www.campusfrance.org
- France-Visas: france-visas.gouv.fr
- Student Social Security: etudiant-etranger.ameli.fr
- CAF (Housing Benefits): www.caf.fr
- CROUS (Student Services): www.etudiant.gouv.fr

Student Support Services

- International Office (Bureau des Relations Internationales) at your institution
- CROUS social services
- Student unions and associations

Emergency Contacts

- European Emergency Number: 112
- Police: 17
- Ambulance: 15
- Fire Brigade: 18
- SOS Médecins (house calls): 3624
- English-speaking crisis line: 01 46 21 46 46

Note: This guide is for informational purposes only. Requirements and procedures may change over time. Always verify current information with official sources before proceeding with your application.

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