K12 ACADEMICS — STUDY ABROAD SERIES

Study Abroad in France

A guide for students planning a semester or year abroad — program types, credit transfer, costs, the student visa, and how to find the right program.

K12 ACADEMICS

Find Your Community

2026 EDITION

ABOUT K12 ACADEMICS

The world's largest education resource.

Online since 2004, K12 Academics has helped millions of families, students and educators **find the right school, college, camp, business and program in their community** — for every kind of learner.

EUROPE'S CLASSIC STUDY-ABROAD DESTINATION

France is one of the world's **most popular study-abroad destinations** — world-class universities, art and history, and a language millions want to learn. This guide is for students planning a **semester or year abroad**: it covers **program types, credit transfer, costs, and the student visa**, and points you to the K12 Academics directory to find and compare programs.

General guidance, not legal, immigration, academic, or financial advice. French rules, fees, and program details change and vary by institution. The details here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with your home study-abroad office, the host institution or provider, Campus France, and the French consulate.** K12 Academics does not run or endorse any specific program — use the K12 Academics directory to find and compare your options.

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STEP 01 OF 10

Understand Why Students Choose France

WHAT TO KNOW

France offers **world-class universities, extraordinary art and history, a beloved language and culture, and a central base for exploring Europe** — one of the most rewarding and popular places in the world to spend a semester or year abroad.

BY THE NUMBERS

World-class	Art, history	Central
universities	& language	for Europe travel

HOW TO HELP

Weigh France's **academics, culture, and location** against the language learning curve — for immersion, prestige, and easy European travel, it's a top choice.

WATCH OUT

France is one of the world's **most popular study-abroad destinations** — strong in the humanities, arts, business, and sciences alike.

2

STEP 02 OF 10

Understand the Types of Study Abroad Programs

WHAT TO KNOW

Your main options: **direct enrollment** (you enroll at a French university — the most independent and immersive), **exchange** (through your home university's partnership — you pay home tuition), **third-party provider programs** (which bundle courses, housing, and support — the most guided), and **faculty-led short programs** (a few weeks with your own professors). Browse and compare options in **the K12 Academics directory**.

BY THE NUMBERS

Direct enrollment	Exchange	Provider / faculty-led
most immersive	pay home tuition	most guided

HOW TO HELP

Match the **program to your goals** — direct enrollment for immersion, exchange for value, a provider for support, or a faculty-led program for a short, guided taste — then find options in the K12 Academics directory.

GOOD TO KNOW

Find and compare **specific programs, providers, and host universities** in the K12 Academics directory — this guide stays program-neutral.

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STEP 03 OF 10

Understand Credit Transfer & Academics

WHAT TO KNOW

French credits use the **ECTS system** (30 ECTS ≈ a full semester). Before you go, **get your courses pre-approved by your home study-abroad and academic advisors** so credits transfer cleanly toward your degree. Note that French **grading (out of 20) and teaching styles** differ, and you'll receive a **transcript** to bring home. Keep syllabi and coursework in case of later evaluation.

BY THE NUMBERS

ECTS	Pre-approve	Grading
30 ≈ a semester	courses before you go	out of 20 (differs)

HOW TO HELP

Protect your credits — get courses **pre-approved by your home office**, understand ECTS and French grading (out of 20), and keep syllabi for transfer.

GOOD TO KNOW

Pre-approve your courses with your home study-abroad and academic advisors before departure — it's the key to clean credit transfer.

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STEP 04 OF 10

Know the Costs & Funding

WHAT TO KNOW

Costs vary by route: **exchange** students usually pay **home tuition**; **provider programs** charge a program fee (bundling tuition, housing, and support); **direct enrollment** at public universities has **relatively low tuition** but you arrange housing and living costs yourself. Look into **scholarships** (such as the Gilman for US students, Erasmus+ for Europeans, and provider aid), and check whether your **financial aid travels** with you.

BY THE NUMBERS

Exchange	Provider	Scholarships
pay home tuition	one bundled fee	Gilman, Erasmus+, provider aid

HOW TO HELP

Budget by route — exchange (home tuition), provider (one bundled fee), or direct enrollment (low public tuition + your own living costs); pursue scholarships and check aid portability.

GOOD TO KNOW

Check whether your **home financial aid can be applied** to study abroad — many students fund part of the cost this way.

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STEP 05 OF 10

Understand the Student Visa & Entry

WHAT TO KNOW

For stays **over 90 days**, you'll need a **long-stay student visa (VLS-TS)**, arranged through **Campus France** and the French consulate; you'll validate it after arrival. You'll typically show **proof of acceptance, sufficient funds, housing, and health insurance**. Shorter programs (under 90 days) often need only the **Schengen entry** your passport allows. Start early — the process takes time.

BY THE NUMBERS

Over 90 days	Via	Under 90 days
student visa (VLS-TS)	Campus France + consulate	often Schengen entry

HOW TO HELP

Know your entry — stays over 90 days need a **long-stay student visa (VLS-TS)** via Campus France; shorter programs often use standard Schengen entry; start early.

GOOD TO KNOW

The **VLS-TS long-stay student visa** is validated after you arrive in France — follow the Campus France steps in order.

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STEP 06 OF 10

Plan Health, Safety & Insurance

WHAT TO KNOW

Arrange **health insurance** that covers you in France (some programs include it; long-stay students may register with French social security). France is **generally safe**, with normal big-city precautions. Know your **program's support and emergency contacts**, register with your **home country's embassy** if advised, and keep copies of key documents.

BY THE NUMBERS

Health insurance	Generally	Know
required (some included)	safe	program support

HOW TO HELP

Cover the essentials — health insurance (some programs include it), sensible city precautions, and your program's support and emergency contacts.

GOOD TO KNOW

Know your **program's in-country support and emergency contacts** before you go — a good provider makes this easy.

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STEP 07 OF 10

Prepare Language & Culture

WHAT TO KNOW

French is the main language of instruction, though **English-taught courses and programs are growing**. Even basic French **enriches daily life and immersion**, so brush up before you go. Housing options include **university residences, homestays (great for language), and shared apartments**. Embrace the cultural differences — they're the point.

BY THE NUMBERS

French	Housing	Immersion
main (English-taught growing)	residence, homestay, apartment	the point

HOW TO HELP

Prepare to immerse — brush up your French (English-taught options are growing), choose housing that fits your goals (a homestay boosts language), and embrace the culture.

GOOD TO KNOW

A **homestay** is the fastest route to language immersion — living with a French household accelerates fluency.

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STEP 08 OF 10

Plan the Timeline & Apply

WHAT TO KNOW

Apply **well ahead** — typically **a semester or two before** you go. The usual order: **meet your home study-abroad office**, choose and apply to a **program**, secure **course pre-approval**, then arrange your **visa, housing, and insurance**. France offers **fall, spring, summer, and full-year** options. Deadlines and visa processing drive the schedule, so start early.

BY THE NUMBERS

Apply	Order	Intakes
a semester+ ahead	home office → program → visa	fall, spring, summer, year

HOW TO HELP

Plan the sequence — start with your home study-abroad office, apply to a program, pre-approve courses, then handle visa, housing, and insurance; apply a semester or two ahead.

GOOD TO KNOW

Start with your **home study-abroad office** — they guide approvals, credit, aid, and often have partner programs ready.

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STEP 09 OF 10

Make the Most of It

WHAT TO KNOW

Once in France, **engage fully**: speak French daily, travel the regions and wider Europe, join university clubs, and build friendships beyond other exchange students. Keep an eye on **credit and attendance requirements**, document your experience, and use your program's support. A semester abroad is as much about growth as academics.

BY THE NUMBERS

Engage	Travel	Track
speak French, join clubs	France & Europe	credit & attendance

HOW TO HELP

Thrive abroad — speak French daily, travel widely, join clubs, and stay on top of credit and attendance while making the experience your own.

GOOD TO KNOW

Build friendships **beyond fellow exchange students** — local connections deepen both language and experience.

10 STEP 10 OF 10

Find Your Program & Get Started

WHAT TO KNOW

Once you know your route, **find and compare specific study-abroad programs, providers, and host universities in the K12 Academics directory**. Work with your home study-abroad office, pre-approve credits, apply, and arrange your visa. Confirm current rules with Campus France, the host institution, and the French consulate.

BY THE NUMBERS

Find & compare	Work with	Arrange
programs & providers	your home office	credits & visa

HOW TO HELP

Use **the K12 Academics directory** to find and compare study-abroad programs, providers, and host universities, work with your home office, pre-approve credits, apply, and arrange your visa.

WATCH OUT

Browse **the K12 Academics directory** to find the specific programs and providers that fit your goals and field of study.

QUICK REFERENCE

Study Abroad in France: The Essentials

A snapshot — program-neutral. Confirm details with your home office, the host institution, Campus France, and the consulate.

The destination

One of the world's most popular study-abroad destinations — world-class universities and grandes écoles, art, history, and language — with popular bases in Paris, Lyon, Aix-en-Provence, Bordeaux, and Montpellier.

Program types

Direct enrollment (most immersive), exchange (pay home tuition), third-party provider programs (bundled courses, housing, and support), and faculty-led short programs — find and compare in the directory.

Credit & academics

Credits use ECTS (30 ≈ a semester); get courses pre-approved by your home study-abroad and academic advisors so they transfer cleanly; French grading is out of 20, and you receive a transcript — keep syllabi.

Costs & funding

Exchange (home tuition), provider (one bundled fee), or direct enrollment (low public tuition plus your own living costs); pursue scholarships (Gilman, Erasmus+, provider aid) and check whether home financial aid travels with you.

Visa & move

Stays over 90 days need a long-stay student visa (VLS-TS) via Campus France and the consulate (validated after arrival); shorter programs often use standard Schengen entry; arrange health insurance and apply a semester or two ahead.

YOUR STUDY-ABROAD-IN-FRANCE JOURNEY STARTS HERE

Find Your Community.

Explore our other Study Abroad in [Country] guides, and find and compare programs and providers in the K12 Academics directory — among **1,297 free resources**.

tools.k12academics.com →

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