

# DEPARTURE GUIDE

2025



## Practical guide



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## 1. Administrative documents

### 1.1. For students of French nationality

#### 1.1.1. Renewal of the OCI Card

Individuals of French nationality who already hold the OCI card are presumed to be in compliance with the French and Indian administrations. As such, their entry and exit procedures in India or France are very simple. However, they may be required to renew their OCI card for the following reasons: -

- Change of passport number
- Change in the information on your OCI card
- Loss or damage of the card or passport

#### 1.1.2. Compliance with the Indian administration

French nationals without OCI card must ensure that they are in compliance with the Indian administration and promptly undertake the procedures for the exit visa:

<https://indianfro.gov.in/eservices/home.jsp>

#### 1.1.3. Online request for civil status documents

The new procedure for obtaining civil status documents electronically allows you to receive your documents within ten days. You can now request an extract or a full copy of any civil status document from the

Service-Public.fr website (under the section "PAPIERS-CITOYENNETE," sub-section "État Civil") and receive the document quickly in electronic form.

### 1.2. For students of Indian nationality

You must have a valid passport issued by the Indian authorities.

#### 1.2.1. Visa application

Preliminary: Verify if your passport is valid. If not, you should start with that. If you are of Indian nationality, you can apply for a passport or renewal online and schedule an appointment either in Pondicherry or Chennai to obtain your passport. The visa application process consists of 3 steps:

- 1) Apply for the Certificate of Enrollment from Campus France
- 2) Submit a visa application
- 3) Validate the visa within 3 months of your arrival in France Once you have chosen your higher education institution, you must start the procedure.

### **Step 1: Apply for the Certificate of Enrollment from Campus France**

- Create an account on the website:

[https://pastel.diplomatie.gouv.fr/etudesenfrance/dyn/public/login.html?ecf=IN&locale=en\\_IN](https://pastel.diplomatie.gouv.fr/etudesenfrance/dyn/public/login.html?ecf=IN&locale=en_IN)

To begin with, you need to submit an application by providing the required information and uploading the following documents :

- Baccalauréat certificate (diploma, transcripts, or a simple attestation of completion)
- Acceptance letter from your higher education institution (downloadable from Parcoursup).

Once you have submitted your application, CAMPUS France will review your file, and they may request additional documents or validate your application and grant you an appointment.

Don't worry if CAMPUS France takes some time to respond. The processing time depends on your departure date to France. However, don't hesitate to follow up on your application.

- During the interview, you will be asked to provide the original documents that you uploaded on the website. Don't forget to print the downloaded documents, such as the acceptance letter from Parcoursup. You should also bring your passport and a copy of it.
- As a student from Lycée Français de Pondichéry, you are exempt from paying any fees to CAMPUS France (usually amounting to 17,500 INR).
- Once you receive the attestation from CAMPUS France, you can start the VISA process

### **Step 2: Applying for a VISA**

The VISA application is done through the website: <https://france-visas.gouv.fr/web/france-visas/>.

Before starting the application, make sure to prepare the following documents :

- Financial documents:

a) You must demonstrate that you have the means to live in France, which amounts to a minimum of 615 € per month or 7,380 € per year\* \* This amount does not include potential tuition fees. Even if you have received a scholarship, if the monthly amount is less than 615 €, you will need to provide additional resources to reach the required amount of 7,380 € (615 € per month).

b) The sponsor or financial guarantor (the person who will finance your higher education and stay in France) should prepare a sponsorship letter. It is highly recommended to have this letter prepared by a notary. Follow the procedure below.

- Depending on the amount of resources, you must pay stamp duty. If you don't have a notary to handle these procedures, you can purchase the appropriate stamp paper at the following address: Ground Floor, Registration Department, Kamaraj Salai, Sakthi Nagar, Saram, Puducherry - 605 013, or online at <https://www.shcilestamp.com>. Note: The amount of stamp duty depends on the amount of resources.

- You must obtain a bank attestation from the sponsor's bank. The attestation provided by the bank is usually in English, so it is advisable to have it translated into French. For translation services, you can contact Alliance Française or certain notaries.

- You must attach your own bank statements for the past three months (Bank Statement), which should show sufficient funds to cover your expenses in France. For example, if your total expenses in France amount to 10,000,000 INR, your bank statement should have a balance equal to

or greater than 1,000,000 INR for a period of 3 months. This declaration must be certified by the bank. If you have fixed deposits, you should provide a photocopy of each FD along with the bank's attestation.

You must also include the income tax assessments for the past 3 years of the sponsor, the sponsor's pay slips (for the past 3 months), and the sponsor's identification document. If there is insufficient income, an educational loan is also accepted. In this case, you need to provide evidence that such a loan has been transferred to your account.

- Documents related to your stay in France:

a) If you are staying with someone (family, friend, or other) without any charges: you must request the host to provide a letter of accommodation. You must also include the documents related to the accommodation :

- ✓ electricity/gas bills (for the past 3 months); if not available, a copy of the contract
- ✓ host's identification document
- ✓ the latest tax assessment or family book

b) If you are renting an apartment or staying in a student residence: the housing allocation certificate (CROUS) or the lease agreement you have signed or the tenancy contract (varies depending on the residences) will suffice.

c) If you are a minor: in addition, you must fill out the travel authorization form and have it signed by both of your parents (keep a photocopy of their identification documents). You must also prepare your vaccination record.

- Documents related to your travel

You must include the flight ticket with the departure date corresponding to the visa start date. If you are confident about your documents, you can directly purchase the original ticket; otherwise, some agencies can provide temporary tickets that are also valid. Carte vitale (health insurance card): It takes 1 to 3 months to obtain a carte vitale in France. Therefore, it is strongly recommended to have travel health insurance for a duration of 3 months (which will cost you approximately 2000 INR). Tip: Use Policy Bazaar to purchase travel insurance. It will only take 5-7 minutes.

- Documents related to yourself:

- a) Your CV
- b) A motivation letter specifying the reasons for your choice to continue your studies in France, the duration, and information about your sponsors/guarantors.
- c) Degree and/or academic transcripts.
- d) 2 passport-sized photos meeting the requirements :

<https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/photo-requirements/>

- Documents related to your higher education:

The acceptance letter from your higher education institution.

- Documents related to your previous visas

If you have had a Schengen visa in the past 5 years, you must attach a copy. Once your dossier is complete, you need to make an appointment with VFS. During the appointment, your dossier will be reviewed, and you will be able to submit your passport. You can schedule an appointment with VFS through the following links :

Website: <http://www.vfs-france.co.in/scheduleanappointment.html>

Phone: <http://www.vfs-france.co.in/contactus.html>

On the day of document submission to VFS:

You must bring the originals and a copy of all the aforementioned documents, along with your passport (original + copy).

If you are a minor, your parents must accompany you to this appointment. If you have previous passports, they should also be brought to the appointment.

Note: The consulate or VFS may directly contact you for additional documents/information.  
Retrieving your passport:

During the submission process, VFS will inquire whether you plan to collect your passport in person or have it sent by mail. You will receive regular notifications on the progress of your application.

### **Step 3: Validation of your long-stay VISA:**

Once you have arrived in France, you must validate your VISA. The validation certificate will serve as your residence permit for the first year. Your residence permit must be renewed at the end of your VISA's validity period.

- How to validate the VISA: You have 3 months to validate your VISA. To complete this process online, visit the dedicated website: <https://administration-etrangers-en-france.interieur.gouv.fr>.

You will need :

- a) A valid email address
- b) Information from your VISA
- c) Your entry date into France
- d) Your address in France
- e) Your payment card to pay the residence permit issuance fee

- The consulate will provide you with a flyer when issuing your VLS-TS to remind you of the essential steps and facilitate your arrival in France.

For assistance upon your arrival in France, you can contact : 0806 001 620 or [dgef-support@interieur.gouv.fr](mailto:dgef-support@interieur.gouv.fr) .

### **1.2.2. Documents to prepare for CAF application:**

If you are a foreign/French student renting accommodation, you may be eligible for financial assistance to help pay your rent.

This assistance is provided by the Caisse d'Allocations Familiale (CAF) and covers a portion of your rent. To apply from India, you will need your birth certificate apostilled and translated into French.

Here is the procedure for apostilling your birth certificate :

- Obtain your birth certificate from the municipal office of your place of birth.
- Obtain a notary stamp on the back of your original birth certificate.
- Visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the state where your birth certificate was issued and obtain a certification/authentication stamp from the certification office. This can also be done online.



Here are the steps to follow:

- ✓ First, you need to pay a fee of 50 INR on the NTRP portal at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- ✓ You need to go to Chennai to submit the birth certificate. If you submit it in the morning, you can collect it the same evening (remember to bring your Aadhar card, original and copy).
- ✓ Have the document translated into French either at the Alliance Française or by a notary.

### **1.2.3. Sources of information:**

- Consulate of Pondicherry
- <https://www.campusfrance.org/fr>
- <https://france-visas.gouv.fr/web/france-visas>
- University campuses have prefecture branches responsible for visa renewal matters.
- <https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/pid24759/venir-etudier-en-france.html>
- <https://www.welcometofrance.com/fiche/visa-de-long-sejour-valant-titre-de-sejour>

### **1.3. Useful documents:**

Whether you are of Indian or French nationality, be involved in the procedures carried out by your family for your departure and gather a copy or original of all the documents that allowed you to obtain your passport, visa, etc. Follow the authentication/translation procedures by a sworn translator, apostille (French administration), or red seal (Indian administration).

Compile a complete file with these documents, their references, relevant offices, etc. This will facilitate your future procedures.

### **1.4. Registration for Social Security**

Are you a French or Indian student? Do you want to start or continue your studies in France? Are you enrolling for the first time in a higher education institution in France? Do you not have a social security number?

You must register on this website to benefit from health coverage during your studies.

This registration is free and mandatory, and it will allow you to be reimbursed for your healthcare expenses. You will be asked to provide a set of documents during the registration process, which you can directly upload on your account on the website.

To maximize reimbursement of your healthcare expenses, you can also consider subscribing to a complementary health insurance or mutuelle upon your arrival in France.

<https://etudiant-etranger.ameli.fr/#/>



## 2. Take with you

### 2.1. In your handbag

In both paper version (originals + multiple photocopies) and digital version on a USB drive or external hard drive, we recommend bringing the following documents :

- Passport, national identity card (front and back), health insurance card (front and back), parents' social security certificate, academic transcripts, certificates, attestations, DNB diplomas, census documents, B2I (computer and internet certificate), ASSR (road safety certificate), your parents' family record book, recent birth certificates (within the last 3 months, following the procedure mentioned above), and other documents mentioned in section 1-3.

- Several color passport-sized photos in Schengen format.
- Postal address and telephone number of your family.
- Your medical records in case of specific medical conditions.

We also recommend bringing :

- A laptop computer + charger.
- 1 or 2 pens (blue/black ink).
- A mobile phone, charger, and headphones/earphones.
- Masks and hand sanitizer for the first few days. • To buy: an adapter for Indian plugs (available at Ganesh Electricals in front of Pothys).

### 2.2. In your suitcase

- A small first aid kit (paracetamol, tiger balm, Vicks vaporub, remedies for a common cold, band-aids, cough syrup, moisturizing cream, Neosporin or Neomycin for minor wounds, cotton, Dettol, etc.).
- Toiletries (shower gel/soap, shampoo, comb, toothbrush, toothpaste, razor, shaving foam if needed, aftershave, sanitary napkins, nail clippers, etc.).
- Summer clothes. For winter: it's advisable not to bring a coat or jacket as it's better to buy one in France. You can simply bring a small denim jacket or a cardigan.
- Shoes, socks, slippers, sneakers, and sportswear.
- If you have a medical treatment, ask your doctor for a prescription and a letter explaining the protocol for the attention of your future doctor.

### 3. Organising your arrival in France

#### 3.1. Airport

- Before departure, provide all necessary information (arrival time, terminal, etc.) to the people who will pick you up at the airport.
- Take multiple phone numbers and postal addresses with you.
- Plan a way to reassure your family (WhatsApp or Messenger) as Wi-Fi is available almost everywhere!

#### 3.2. Informing oneself, researching, and planning ahead

- Start asking for information from your friends or family and check websites related to the city, high school, university, or school on the internet. Take note of useful addresses and phone numbers.
- Plan to keep your Indian WhatsApp or transfer all your contacts to your new phone number.
- Try to show interest and gather information about your environment once in France (how is my curriculum organized, how does the administration work, student life, student associations, who are the contacts, what services are offered by Crous, the campus, the school, etc.). BE CURIOUS!
- Visit the Pass Culture website to benefit from this program.
- There are different websites offering advice for students (prefer public and institutional websites and those of the university).
- Another resource: <https://www.campusfrance.org/fr/indicateurs-label-bienvenue-en-france>

#### 3.3. Banks and budget

Regardless of your nationality, French law allows everyone to open a bank account in France.

##### 3.3.1. Opening a bank account

- Seek assistance from your family or friends to open a bank account. La Banque Postale is a practical and affordable bank to accompany student life. You will need proof of address (the host family providing an electricity bill less than 3 months old + a sworn statement stating that you are hosted).
- Possibility of having an Indian account with a withdrawal card initially, or check with Indian banks like ICICI, HDFC, Axis, etc., for an overseas travel card.
- Possibility of opening an account with an online bank (Hello bank, Orange Bank, Boursorama...) or at a tobacconist (Compte Nickel).
- To open a bank account, you will need an identification document, an address, and a bill related to the indicated address. This should be established in connection with the person or organization hosting you.

See the advice in the following link: <https://www.campusfrance.org/fr/ouvrir-un-compte-bancaire-en-france>

#### **Note :**

For minors, the procedure for parental signature and consent takes place via emails. It is therefore better to create an account with a traditional bank after making an appointment.

For non-French individuals, you can make an appointment with any bank to open a bank account. Specify that you are financially linked to your parents who will regularly deposit funds into your account. To minimize conversion costs, it is advisable to obtain an international card from your Indian bank (forex card). However, creating a bank account in France is essential to obtain an RIB (bank identification).

### 3.3.2. Regular Expenses

- Public transportation/Navigo for Île-de-France
- University restaurant + evening meals
- Small groceries
- Laundromat/laundry
- Entertainment expenses
- Mobile phone plan (Free offers a plan for €19.99 with unlimited calls, messages, and internet in France, and free calls to landlines in India. It works well in Paris.)

### 3.3.3. Initial Expenses

- School supplies
- Clothing, bag, coat
- Comfortable shoes and sportswear
- Tuition fees for non-scholarship students or Indian nationals (including social security)
- Campus fees, approximately €50 for international students and €80 for non-scholarship French students
- Rent: Don't forget to budget for:
  - First month's rent not covered by CAF (French housing assistance)
  - Security deposit (which will be refunded at the end of the lease)

### 3.3.4. Budget

You will need an average of around €700 per month. It is absolutely essential that your parents are involved in financing your studies and assist you as much as possible in developing a financial plan

If you are a scholarship recipient, a portion of this amount will be covered (up to a maximum of €500).

Otherwise, you may need to rely on a student loan (see the student loan section) or personal/family funding.

You can supplement your budget with housing assistance (see the CAF section). The remaining expenses should be covered through part-time student employment (see dedicated section).

In your second or third year, some of you may consider an apprenticeship contract.

## 4. Studying in France

### 4.1. Finalizing enrollment at the university, school, or CROUS.

- ✓ Gather information in advance about the procedures using the internet. Typically, there is an online pre- registration process. Check the opening hours, whether you need to make an appointment, send documents via email, etc.
- ✓ Prepare Schengen-sized passport photos (required for everything).
- ✓ Make sure to collect all LFIP documents before departing: certificate of withdrawal, proof of payment for cafeteria bills, academic record results, scholarship certificate, etc
- ✓ Submit the complete application file to the university as early as possible, along with the passport photos, high school diploma results, scholarship certificate, a copy of your ID card, Parcoursup document, and CROUS document.
- ✓ Your enrollment will provide you with a certificate of enrollment, student ID card, and login credentials for your student portal. Make sure to verify that you provide the correct email address, phone number, etc.
- ✓ Enrollment also allows for affiliation with social security and enrollment in a health insurance plan. The certificate of enrollment will be required for all registrations and subscriptions.
- ✓ Civil liability insurance costs around €10 to €20 per year and is mandatory. Banks and insurance companies offer this type of insurance (April, MAAF, etc.).
- ✓ Information on housing assistance and social security: <https://www.ameli.fr/>

### 4.2. Transportation

- ✓ Reduced fares with a certificate of enrollment, enrollment stamp, or student ID card.
- ✓ For the Paris region: <https://www.iledefrance-mobilites.fr/titres-et-tarifs/detail/forfait-imagine-r-etudiant>
- ✓ Plan your commute from home to school using Google Maps, Citymapper, or RATP: <https://www.ratp.fr/> or <https://me-deplacer.iledefrance-mobilites.fr/itineraire>

### 4.3. CAF Procedures

If you are a student, you may be eligible for housing assistance if you meet the following 4 conditions :

- ✓ You are a French citizen or a foreigner with a valid residence permit.
- ✓ You rent a decent accommodation
- ✓ You do not have a family relationship with the owner of the rented housing.
- ✓ Your income (salary, scholarship, etc.) is below certain thresholds.

In the case of shared housing (colocation), you can receive housing assistance. The rent considered for the calculation of the assistance is then divided based on the number of roommates. Each roommate must submit their own application for housing assistance.

To estimate the amount of housing assistance you may be eligible for, you can use a simulator:

<https://wwwd.caf.fr/wps/portal/caffr/aidesetservices/lesservicesenligne/estimervosdroits/lelogement/#/stateaccueil>

Your housing assistance application must be submitted online :

<https://wwwd.caf.fr/wps/portal/caffr/aidesetservices/lesservicesenligne/estimervosdroits/lelogement/#/stateaccueil>

### 4.4. Student Housing and Insurance Guarantee

#### 4.4.1. Housing

It's possible that you may not have any leads for housing through CROUS like some of your peers. Here are a few suggestions to help you:

Typically, all universities and schools have partnerships with the regional CROUS. So, start by sending an email to your university/school explaining your situation (being a student coming alone to France from abroad for the first time).

There are also social housing options for students, which are affordable housing units with specific eligibility criteria.

You can also consider searching for shared housing (colocation). Here are some websites:

- <https://www.vivastreet.com/immobilier-colocations/fr>
- <https://www.appartager.com/>
- <https://www.lacartedescolocs.fr/colocations/fr/ile-de-france/paris>
- <https://fr-fr.roomlala.com/colocation/FR-France>
- <https://whoomies.com/>

If you have a bit more resources, you can explore private student residences:

- <https://www.studapart.com/fr/logement-etudiant>
- <https://www.nexity-studea.com/>

Other websites to find housing:

- <https://www.fac-habitat.com/fr/residences-etudiantes>
- <https://www.aljt.com/en/residences/>
- <https://www.espacil-habitat.fr/devenir-locataire/etudiants/residences-etudiantes/>

#### 4.4.2. Home Insurance / Liability Insurance

You will need home insurance for your accommodation. In theory, the price depends on the size of the property, but often insurance companies offer bundled packages for home insurance and liability insurance at promotional prices.

It is important to get home insurance before the day you receive the keys, and your insurance policy should start on the same day. The liability insurance protects you against any damages caused to third parties, and it will be required during your registration.

Here are some links:

- <https://www.assurances-etudiants.com/fr/5311-assurance-logement-etudiant-tarifs-garanties.html>
- <https://www.lecomparateurassurance.com/86934-devis-habitation/86523-logement-etudiant>

#### 4.4.3. Guarantor for Accommodation

Obtaining accommodation in the private sector often requires the presence of a guarantor (an individual or legal entity who will assume responsibility for rent payment in case of default).

For an individual guarantor, you will need to provide documents such as their ID card, tax notice, and sometimes the last three pay stubs.

There are platforms that offer free guarantees for moral guarantors, such as :

- <https://garantme.fr/>
- <https://www.visale.fr/>

### 4.5. Finding Financing for Non-Scholarship Students

#### 4.5.1. Student Loan: How Does It Work?

Similar to a consumer loan, a student loan is granted to finance one's studies. This loan is used to cover tuition fees as well as daily living expenses. Repayment is typically scheduled after completing the studies, according to predefined terms. These loans are available to both French and international students.

Access conditions:

- Being between 18 and 25 years old (or up to 30 years old depending on the organization).
- Providing proof of student status (enrollment certificate, student ID card, or proof of enrollment in a higher education institution).
- Having a strong guarantor.

Meeting the conditions does not guarantee obtaining a student loan. Each application will be assessed, and the decision will be made by the bank or financial institution. The more complete the application and the stronger the guarantors, the higher the chances of success.

#### Person or Organization Acting as a Guarantor:

In theory, French law does not require a guarantor to obtain a student loan. However, in practice, it is often a necessary condition to obtain approval from the bank. When reviewing your student loan application, the bank first assesses the financial solvency of your guarantor. The guarantor must be capable of repaying the loan. If the financial situation of the guarantor is deemed insufficient by the bank, they have the right to refuse the student loan request and may request another guarantor.

Typically, parents act as guarantors. It can also be another close person such as a friend, uncle, brother, or sister, etc. However, even if your parents are unable to act as guarantors, they should be involved in all processes related to your studies.

For individuals of French nationality, there is a government-guaranteed student loan available: (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F986>).

While having a guarantor is an important option for foreign students, there are organizations that can act as guarantors. For example, Studely offers bank guarantees for foreign students.

Another way to obtain a student loan without a guarantor is by applying to the Fonds de garantie des solidarités étudiantes (FGSE). Supported by Banque populaire and La Mutuelle des étudiants, this fund provides a maximum loan guarantee of €25,000. It provides financial assistance to students who do not have a guarantor in their personal network (<https://fsde.fr/>).

### **Tips:**

Study all the market offers and compare them. You can simply search for "student loan simulation" and find simulators based on various criteria:

- Repayment terms
- Loan duration
- Repayment rate

Verify the conditions and don't hesitate to consult your LFIP Alumni mentors for reviewing an offer before accepting it.

### **4.5.2. Finding a Job:**

Finding part-time work can be a good source of additional income. Many French students do it. There are opportunities on campuses, at CROUS, university libraries, mutual funds, local stores, and supermarkets, etc. There are also specialized websites affiliated with your campus where you can find reliable job offers. Make sure to have a CV and a bank account information (RIB) ready.

Having part-time job experiences can be useful when searching for internships or apprenticeship contracts. It should not be underestimated.

Don't hesitate to consult your LFIP alumni contacts for CV reviews and guidance

## **4.6. Flourishing as a Student**

Your student life is going to be a real adventure! We encourage you to take care of yourself and ask yourself the right questions at all times.

### **4.6.1. Health, Lifestyle, and Guidance**

- Find a general practitioner (médecin traitant) who is a participating healthcare provider (conventionné secteur 1).
- For girls, you can consult a private midwife for advice related to femininity. You can discuss prevention topics, etc. It is cheaper than seeing a gynecologist, and they are very competent and attentive.



- Listen to yourself and don't isolate yourself. If you feel worried or melancholic, don't stay alone and contact your support network, including family, LFIP Alumni, etc.
- Eat well (include raw vegetables and fruits in your cafeteria meals) and stay hydrated (even in winter, it's important to drink enough).
- Engage in regular physical exercise (see point 4-5).
- Find stability and maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Be diligent in attending classes and studying, but also maintain a social life and give yourself moments to relax.
- Channel and manage newfound freedom. Start reflecting on it from now on and establish boundaries.
- Points to consider: handle administrative tasks as they come, be mindful of extravagant expenses, eat properly, prioritize your health, never skip classes, be cautious about the people you meet, late-night outings, consider suitable part-time jobs (avoid working illegally except for private tutoring to a child), if working night shifts, target safe environments (medical field, museums, universities, schools, etc.).

#### 4.6.2. Cultural Focus

France offers wonderful cultural opportunities such as museums, monuments, festivals, concerts, theater, opera, art-house cinema, etc., accessible to all students at very interesting prices. Gather information from the tourist office, your university, the student union, and the [pass.culture.fr](https://pass.culture.fr) website. You may also have access to music, theater, photography courses, etc., at reduced rates.

#### 4.6.3. Student Jobs Focus

All students in France have the right to work during their studies. Indian students can also work, as a side job, up to 964 hours per year, which is equivalent to 60% of the legal working time, as long as they have a student residence permit. This should only be a supplementary income (<https://www.campusfrance.org/fr/travail-etudiant>).

Note that universities offer part-time jobs to all students, regardless of their nationality.

There are also specialized websites and student forums where students share job opportunities. Inquire at the student union for more information.

#### 4.7. Being a Student with Disabilities in France

In France, there are numerous support systems and assistance programs in place to ensure that students with disabilities can pursue their studies under the best conditions.

Each university has a student support service that provides information about the available support systems for students with disabilities. These students often benefit from dedicated administrative support, adapted access to facilities, and pedagogical aids such as tutoring, academic support, note-takers, etc.

Within French universities, the healthcare of students is overseen by the university health and preventive medicine service (SUMPPS). They offer free preventive check-ups, various services (such as vaccinations or screenings), and even provide certain healthcare services for students with disabilities.

The representatives of CROUS (Regional Center of University and School Works) assist students with disabilities in finding suitable adapted student accommodation. They also ensure that university restaurants are accessible to everyone.

Do not hesitate to get in touch with the university's social service department for guidance and support in your specific situation.

### **4.8. How to Engage in Sports in France**

Take advantage of your studies in France to exercise your mind and body. There are many accessible and affordable options for students to engage in sports within their institution or outside. Half of the French population regularly participates in physical activities. The quality of sports facilities and the geographical diversity in France allow for the practice of various sports year-round.

#### **4.8.1. Engaging in Sports at University**

Within universities, the University Sports Service (SUAPS) allows students to participate in sports activities for a modest annual fee. There is a wide range of sports disciplines available, and participation is open to students of all levels.

For those more competitive athletes, the French University Sports Federation organizes sports competitions among student teams from various higher education institutions.

#### **4.8.2. Sports Associations and Clubs**

France has a large number of sports associations and clubs. Joining a club enables you to attend training sessions with qualified coaches and regularly access specialized sports facilities.

For certain activities, such as fitness or yoga, there are numerous sports clubs and private centers. Students or those under 26 years old sometimes benefit from discounted rates. Make sure to gather information and compare the prices offered.

If you cannot afford to join an association or sports club, or if it does not interest you, you can engage in sports independently. For example, you do not need to join a club to swim. There are many public swimming pools accessible to all, and students often enjoy reduced rates.

Running is obviously the most economical solution for exercising. If you don't enjoy running alone, join one of the running groups that meet up through social media to run together. You'll have the opportunity to make new friends, practice your French, and discover the city in a different way.

In major cities, some sports associations offer free bike or rollerblade rides. These often take place in the evenings, towards the end of the week. The most well-known of these is the Paris Roller ride. Every Friday night, several thousand participants gather for a nearly three-hour ride through the streets of the capital.

### **4.9. How to get around/travel in France**

There are numerous ways to get around in France. Whether by plane, train, or car, you have plenty of choices. As a student, you can take advantage of budget-friendly travel options.

#### 4.9.1. Tips for traveling by train

- Prem's tickets: These tickets are sold on regular lines three months before the departure date and offer very attractive prices.
- Ouigo trains: These low-cost trains mainly serve stations located outside city centers but accessible by public transportation.
- Troc des trains: On this legal train ticket resale website, you can find cheap last-minute tickets.
- Carte Jeune: Reserved for individuals under 28 years old, this card costs 50 euros per year and entitles you to at least a 25% discount on all trains.
- TGV Max subscription: Also available for individuals under 28 years old, this monthly pass costs 79 euros and allows you to take unlimited TGV trips under certain conditions.
- Interrail Pass: This unique ticket allows you to travel freely by train in over 30 European countries.

#### 4.9.2. Choosing the bus

Buses cover numerous destinations in France and Europe at very affordable prices. Unlike trains, prices remain low even when purchasing tickets at the last minute. With reclining seats, Wi-Fi, and power outlets, the comfort of buses improves every year. You can book your tickets with the following companies: Ouibus, Isilines, or Flixbus, or use the Comparabus comparison tool.

#### 4.9.3. Traveling by plane

There are approximately 45 airports that connect various cities in France. From Paris Orly or Paris Charles de Gaulle airports, the Parisian airports, you can reach cities like Nice, Toulouse, Lyon, Marseille, Strasbourg, or Bordeaux in a little over an hour.

Many low-cost airlines operate in France. Air France also has its low-cost subsidiary, Transavia, and created Hop!, a subsidiary specializing in domestic flights. They offer a youth card for individuals aged 12-24 and a weekend card.

#### 4.9.4. Carpooling

Carpooling is an economical and social solution that is very popular in France for getting around, and it's also a great opportunity to practice your French. The BlaBlaCar app is the industry reference in France.

#### 4.9.5. Driving in France

Good to know: In France, people drive on the right side of the road with the steering wheel on the left side, and seat belts must be worn in both the front and back seats. Note that you are not allowed to use a mobile phone while driving, even with a hands-free kit. For safety reasons, the vehicle must have a reflective safety vest, a warning triangle, and two breathalyzers. By the way, did you know that the designated driver is the one who doesn't drink?

Drivy, Ouicar, and Koolicar connect individuals who need a vehicle with others who rent theirs.

These rentals have fewer restrictions than rental agencies, especially regarding foreign driver's licenses.

### 5. Important safety measures - emergency numbers to know

In case of emergency, different emergency hotline numbers can be dialed for free and at any time:

- ✓ **112** : European emergency hotline number if you are a victim or witness of an accident within a European Union country.
- ✓ **15** : Samu (Emergency Medical Services) number to request medical assistance in life-threatening situations.
- ✓ **17** : Police emergency number to report an offense that requires immediate police intervention.
- ✓ **18** : Firefighters emergency number to report a perilous situation or an accident involving property or people.

#### 5.1. Climate and weather in France

Overall, metropolitan France enjoys a temperate climate. The weather is often mild, but there are significant differences between seasons and regions. Keep this in mind when packing your bags.

In spring, from March to May, the weather is pleasant. Temperatures are mild, and the sun makes frequent appearances despite occasional rainfall. In summer, from June to September, it can be hot, especially in the south and east of France, but temperatures rarely exceed 35 degrees Celsius.

From October to December, autumn still offers beautiful days, but the weather is often humid. While not very severe, winters can be cold. Snow sometimes follows rain, and temperatures can be below freezing, especially at higher altitudes.

#### 5.2. Additional Resources

Here are some guides for students arriving in France from abroad or from overseas territories that are full of information:

- Campus France: <https://www.campusfrance.org/fr>
- Etudes en France: <https://www.etudes-en-france.net/doi-faire-apres-arrivee-france>
- University of La Rochelle International Student Guide : [https://www.univ-larochelle.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/guide\\_etudiant\\_etranger\\_univ-larochelle.pdf](https://www.univ-larochelle.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/guide_etudiant_etranger_univ-larochelle.pdf)
- University of Reunion Island International Student Guide (2021-2022): [https://www.univ-reunion.fr/fileadmin/Fichiers/Relations\\_internationales/venir\\_etudier\\_reunion/guide\\_de\\_l\\_etudiant/ Guide\\_des\\_etudiants\\_internationaux\\_2021-2022.pdf](https://www.univ-reunion.fr/fileadmin/Fichiers/Relations_internationales/venir_etudier_reunion/guide_de_l_etudiant/ Guide_des_etudiants_internationaux_2021-2022.pdf)

These resources provide valuable information for students arriving in France, including information about studying, living, and getting settled in the country.



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