

HOW TO STUDY ABROAD IN PARIS



QS

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Bienvenue à Paris!

Paris is one of the most iconic cities in the world, with novelists and poets throughout history trying to do justice to the beauty and romance of the place, from natives such as Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Proust to expats such as Henry Miller, Ernest Hemmingway and James Baldwin.

One of the best things about living in Paris is the sheer volume of cultural offerings on your doorstep. There's the Louvre, of course, with the Venus de Milo, Mona Lisa and Egyptian mummies, as well as the Musée d'Orsay on the Left Bank, which has the largest collection of impressionist paintings in the world, and the Musée Rodin, a gorgeous 18th century mansion in the seventh arrondissement dedicated to the works of the French sculptor Auguste Rodin.

Then, there's the food. You don't really need to spend a huge amount of money to eat well in Paris. There's a never-ending supply of delectable crêpes suzettes, croque monsieurs and steak frites to be had in one of the city's hidden bistros for under €10 (US\$11). But, as any cash-

strapped student living in Paris will have no doubts discovered, a trip to the nearest boulangerie will usually suffice for a little pick-me-up.

The city of lights, the city of love...whatever your preferred descriptor of Paris, it's undeniably a place where students can find inspiration in their surroundings, whilst being secure in the knowledge that they're in one of the top academic hubs in the world. Paris is particularly popular with business studies students, as one of the commercial and finance centers of Europe.

So, what are you waiting for? Read on to discover the best universities in Paris, how you can apply for them, and to find out what life is like for students living in this vibrant, cosmopolitan capital..

“The whole of Paris is a vast university of art, literature and music... it is worth anyone’s while to dally here for years. Paris is a seminar, a post-graduate course in Everything.”

James Thurber



Top Universities in Paris

One of the world's higher education capitals

Considering its status as one of the top cities in the world, it's unsurprising that it's also one of the world's higher education capitals. It is home to 12 universities featured in the most recent QS World University Rankings®, it lays claim to more world-leading institutions than almost any other student city – with the exceptions of Seoul and London (both have 18).

In fact, four of these Parisian universities feature in the top 150 universities in the world: Université PSL (Paris Sciences & Lettres, 52nd); Ecole Polytechnique (joint 61st); Sorbonne University (83rd) and CentraleSupélec (138th).

If you're looking for a more specialized field of study, there are plenty of private universities in the French capital that can help you reach your career goals. As one of the business capitals of the world, Paris is home to a number of specialist business schools, such as HEC Paris, ESSEC Business School, ESCP Business School and IÉSEG School of Management.





IÉSEG School of Management

Credit: Barbara Grossmann

IÉSEG is a private business school with campuses in both Lille and Paris, with the latter being established in 2017 as a vibrant, modern campus in La Défense, the central business district (CBD) of the city (and premier business district in Europe), with strong links to both French and international corporations.

“The school holds a ‘Triple Crown’ of business school accreditations (EQUIS, AACSB and AMBA)”

The school holds a ‘Triple Crown’ of business school accreditations (EQUIS, AACSB and AMBA) – less than 1 percent of business schools worldwide have this honor. It ranks among the top 100 business schools in the world in the most recent QS Business Masters Rankings for four subjects: Marketing, Business Analytics, Management and Finance.

IÉSEG also offers a plethora of specialized business master’s programs (including Big Data Analytics for Business, Digital Marketing, Capital Markets and FinTech, Entrepreneurship), as well as the gold standard for business schools around the globe, MBA programs.

Most programs are taught in English (with a few exceptions), which contributes to the school’s impressive proportion of international students.





How to Study in Paris

Applying to Study in France



Much like French nationals, international students will apply directly to the institution that they wish to study at. Most universities have a deadline of the end of January of the year you wish to start your course, but many business schools operate on a rolling admissions basis.

Most business masters and MBA degrees in France are taught in English. Therefore, if English is not your first language, you will need to provide proof of your proficiency in the language either through bachelor's studies conducted in English, or by taking an English proficiency test like the TOEFL or IELTS.

All applications will require proof of all previous academic study, including transcripts (with transcripts from non-English or French institutions translated and verified).

Many applications will also require you to complete an essay or entrance exam, and almost all business schools will have an interview process, often with multiple stages.

You will also need to provide a copy of your birth certificate, plus a certified translation showing the birthplace of your parents (this is something required of all international students regardless of their nation of origin).

Non-EU applicants will also need to provide proof that they have enough money to cover their university expenses (this is also needed for a visa).

The French healthcare system is considered to be one of the best in the world

Visas and Health Insurance



Moving to a new city, let alone a new country, can be quite stressful at times. Fortunately, when it comes to organizing the necessary paperwork, sorting out a visa is probably one of the easier things to do as France's visa system for EU and EEA students is extremely straightforward.

There is no need for a visa if you're from the EU, you'll just need to provide a valid passport or travel document, formal proof of acceptance onto your course, health insurance and evidence of your ability to support yourself financially (such as a recent bank statement).

Non-EU students will need to apply for a visa to enter France – you'll need the VLS-TS visa, which lasts for the duration of your course. You can also get short-term visas for the purpose of attending interviews or sitting entrance exams.

When it comes to healthcare, or 'sécurité sociale', the French healthcare system is considered one of the best in the world, covering up to 70 percent of medical expenses. Non-EU students who plan on studying in France must enroll in the French healthcare system, while EU and EEA students should make sure they have their own EHIC card.



Student Life in Paris



Credit: Barbara Grossmann

*“Ranked in the top 10
in the most recent QS
Best Student Cities
Ranking”*

Paris is a fantastic city in which to be a student – indeed, it was ranked in the top 10 in the most recent QS Best Student Cities Ranking, listed in seventh place. As the capital of France, it’s a bustling international hub with its own distinct and much lauded personality.

Paris’s consistently strong performance in the QS Best Student Cities Ranking is largely due to its high concentration of internationally ranked universities – 12 are ranked in the QS World University Rankings 2021. It also scores highly in the employer activity indicator (showing which cities are most highly rated as recruiting grounds by employers), where it ranks eighth in the world.

Things to do in Paris

As a student in Paris, you'll be absolutely spoilt for choice for activities in Paris – it's unlikely that you'll manage to check off everything on your 'to do' list before graduating! Even on a student budget, there's no end of things to do...



Arts and culture

One of the cultural capitals of the world, Paris is home to countless museums, galleries, theatres and monuments. Entry to some of the more famous museums like the Louvre and the Musée D'Orsay can be expensive, so look out for student discounts where you can. Many museums and galleries have free entry on the first Sunday of every month, so as a student you're well placed to take advantage of these deals.

Aside from the galleries, other institutions offering special deals for students include The Catacombs (a maze of underground tombs), riverboat services like the Batobus, and the Kiosque Jeunes which offer free and discounted tickets to theater performances, concerts and comedy events for people up to the age of 30.



Delicious food

Aside from romance, there's probably one other thing that Paris is most synonymous with – we are, of course, talking about food. Paris is home to some of the best food in the world, from Michelin starred restaurants to small neighbourhood boulangeries selling perfect croissants daily.

Most restaurants offer fixed price menus, which allow you to try food that otherwise might be a bit out of your budget (and often include wine in the price!) Most boulangeries make fantastic sandwiches which are great for a quick lunch, and the numerous street crepe vendors around the city are not to be missed.



Buzzing nightlife

Paris comes alive at night – it doesn't have the nickname 'City of Lights' for no reason! You can start your night with an aperitif, people watching from a street-side bar in The Marais and end up in one of the trendy clubs in Oberkampf – or anything in between!

Popular areas with students for nightlife spots include Bastille, Ménilmontant and Gambetta, Oberkampf, The Marais, Belleville (best known as Edith Piaf's birthplace), Pigalle and Montmartre (home to the famous, although touristy, Moulin Rouge).



Day trips and further afield

Due to its fantastic transport links, Paris is a great base to explore the rest of Europe from – you can hop on the Eurostar to other capital cities like London or Brussels, or simply explore the diverse regions France has to offer, from the coast to the mountains.

Indulge your inner child at Disneyland Paris, or explore real castles in the Loire Valley, just 2 hours from Paris. Get in touch with your artistic side at Claude Monet's garden at Giverny, or really blow the budget with a wine tasting in the Champagne region close to the city. As much as Paris has to offer within city limits, studying there gives you the perfect opportunity to visit further afield, so give it a go!



Careers in Paris

“Paris in particular, is renowned for its dominance in the fashion, cosmetics and luxury goods industries.”

As the capital of France, Paris is a fantastic place to live and work after graduation. France, and Paris in particular, is renowned for its dominance in the fashion, cosmetics and luxury goods industries. Other key industries include tourism, finance, energy, agriculture, technology, transport and manufacturing.

If you want to work in Paris after graduation, you’ll need to have a certain level of proficiency in French, even though there are some English-speaking jobs available, particularly at international organizations. You may be required to show your French proficiency with a certificate from DELF or DALF, tests offered by the French Ministry of Education.

You can expect a good work-life balance in Paris, with 35-hour work weeks the standard, plus 30 days paid holiday and 11 public holidays throughout the year.



Working in France: Getting a French visa

If you're from the EU/EEA or Switzerland, you won't need any sort of work permit to work in France. However, if you come from outside the EU/EEA or Switzerland, you'll be able to apply for a post-study work visa, which will allow you to stay in France for one year after your studies to look for work.

Once you've found a job, you can then apply for a work permit. You will most likely need authorization to gain a work visa. If you find a job in France, your prospective employer will organize this for you.

Those with a master's degree or equivalent, a degree categorized as level 1 by the Conference of Grandes Écoles, or a professional license, will be able to apply for temporary residence permit. This will be non-renewable and last for one year. This will enable you to work part time, for up to 60 percent of a normal working week (around 21 hours), to support yourself while looking for full-time work.

A Talent Passport visa may be available for recent graduates. This is a four-year residence permit for specialized graduates.

How to find a job in Paris

Paris is a huge start-up hub, which can be great places to look for jobs, particularly if you speak more than one language. However, that's not to say that major multinational corporations aren't worth applying to, as they're always looking to hire good graduates (particularly those with business degrees). A good starting point is to look for the French equivalent or branch of a large company you'd like to work for in your home country.



La Défense is one of Europe's major business hubs, and the companies there are always looking for bright new graduates. The district is home to many of the top companies in Paris, according to the CAC Index.

The top 10 companies in the Paris area according to this index are:

- LVMH
- L'Oréal
- Total
- Sanofi
- Airbus
- Hermés
- Kering
- BNP Paribas
- Safran
- AXA

It's good to use job portals in your initial search but being even more proactive will be looked upon very favorably – it's not uncommon in France to call the person in charge directly, or even visit the office in person with your resume. Networking is an essential part of business in France, so be hands-on and contact companies directly.

There are multiple job portals to help you find available positions in France, including:

- Indeed France
- The Local France
- Monster France
- EURES – European Job Mobility Portal
- Reed – Jobs in France
- LinkedIn
- L'Étudiant



Careers services at your institution

Your university careers service is a key resource to use when searching for a job in Paris post-graduation. They usually offer mock interviews, CV workshops and helping you prepare for assessment centers and graduate recruitment events.

“IÉSEG is rightly proud of its TALENT program... Through workshops with consultants, students can establish their personal career goals and motivations and develop the correct path to get there.”

Some universities offer even more specialized assistance to help you find the right job. IÉSEG is rightly proud of its TALENT program, which is a support system for the professional development of students. Through workshops with consultants, students can establish their personal career goals and motivations and develop the correct path to get there. Topics consultants help with include pitching, networking, evaluating experiences and personality & motivation tests.

Another great service offered by IÉSEG is ‘Meet the Companies’, where international managers are invited to the Paris campus weekly to discuss their jobs and company culture. This gives you the opportunity to learn detailed knowledge about businesses and organizations to better figure out your career path.

These services, plus careers fairs, company visits, regular business challenges, alumni network talks and events help current students to build their own professional networks. Careers services are usually still offered for students post-graduation, further helping your prospects for finding a job in Paris.