



Please note that this information was updated in **March 2019**. Visa requirements are subject to change. **It is the responsibility of each student to verify all requirements.** Questions regarding specific visa requirements should be directed to Campus France or the French Consulate/VFS Global Center. Please note that these instructions apply to U.S. Citizens living in the U.S.; other students should contact their consulate for specific requirements.

What is a student visa, and do I need to apply for one?

A student visa is an endorsement (usually a printed sticker) placed in your passport by the French authorities granting you permission to enter and/or reside in the country for a specified period and purpose; in this case, as a student.

The French government requires that U.S. students studying in France for more than **90** days obtain a student visa—therefore, CIEE participants spending a semester or more in France must apply for a student visa and obtain it prior to departure.

Students are responsible for obtaining the student visa on their own. CIEE will provide you with some of the specific paperwork you will need to submit with your application.

The application is a **two-part** process in which a student must first apply for approval through Campus France and must then apply in person for a visa at a French Consulate or VFS Center. Since the process is complicated, it's important that you read these instructions thoroughly.

Visa Requirement guidelines here are based on and the Campus France [website](#) and the France-Visas [website](#), as of February 2019.

How long does it take to get a visa?

The entire process can take 5-8 weeks, so it is important that you begin as soon as possible! Processing times vary, but the following is typical:

1. **Campus France:** The Campus France process typically takes 3-4 weeks from the time you submit your online application.
2. **Consulate/VFS:** You must receive your Campus France approval *prior* to attending your appointment at the Consulate/VFS Center. From the time of your appointment, it typically takes between 2-3 weeks to process the visa application.

Starting in April 2018 French Consulates in the United States will begin outsourcing the visa application process to VFS Global. Depending on when you apply for your visa and where you apply, you may be required to appear at a VFS Center instead of a French Consulate. Please reference the [France-Visas](#) website for more detailed information.

How do I get a visa?

1. Research the Application Process

First, verify that your passport is valid. Your passport must be signed and valid for 90 days after the duration of your program, plus any post-program travel. If you do not have a passport, you **must** apply for a passport immediately! CIEE recommends that you have a passport valid for at least 6 months after you plan to complete your travels.

Determine which VFS Center you will need to use and find out the requirements for that location – note they may vary in their requirements, so it is important to research **your** specific VFS Center. Please refer to the [France-Visas 'Whom should I contact?'](#) webpage to determine where you must apply.

Once you have determined your Consulate/VFS Center, read **all the visa information available on applying for a [student long-stay visa](#)**.

**If you were not born in the United States and/or are not a U.S. citizen, please contact the French consulate that has jurisdiction in your state or country of residence as soon as possible. Your visa process will most likely be more time-consuming! If you are applying in a different country, you should not use the U.S. based Campus France. Find other Campus France offices [here](#).*

2. Receive Your Official Letters from CIEE

To apply through Campus France and your Consulate/VFS Center, you will need official letters from CIEE.

These letters are:

- **Proof of Acceptance** into your program. This letter will come on the letterhead of the host university or the CIEE Study Center in France and will be signed by your program's Center Director.
- **Proof of Insurance and Accommodation**. This will be a notarized letter on CIEE letterhead signed by your CIEE Study Abroad Advisor. It will confirm that you have international health insurance while abroad as well as that you will be provided housing while on the program.

For the Fall 2019 semester, you should expect to receive these letters within your acceptance to the program. When your letters are ready, you will receive them electronically to your email associated with your CIEE My Account. **The letters are critical so be careful not to misplace them.** Be sure to print them on clean, white paper for your appointment.

Campus France requires that you upload a copy of your letters to your application online. This will allow you to submit your Campus France application as soon as you receive the electronic letters!

3. Apply to Campus France

The first part of the visa process requires that you submit an online application to a French organization called Campus France. Please make sure **not** to use a Mac computer or Safari program when completing your Campus France application.

Campus France: <https://www.campusfrance.org/en>

TIP: You can start your CampusFrance application when you receive your electronic CIEE acceptance letters!

How to Submit Your Campus France Application – Follow Instructions EXACTLY

1. Create an [Estudes in France](#) account and submit the online application.

- a. In addition to submitting the online application, you will need to upload the following items to your Campus France Account:
 - i. Headshot
 - ii. Photo ID
 - iii. Copy of your official acceptance letters (CIEE will provide)

2. Pay Online* and Submit Required Materials

- a. After you've completed the application, pay the processing fee and submit materials to the Campus France [Docbox](#) – be sure to fill out the form carefully!

*In addition to the [regular service](#) (generally 3 weeks), Campus France offers an [expedited service](#) if you need to have everything processed within 3 business days. Please make sure to follow the separate expedited service instructions. The expedited fee is \$150 on top of the regular \$190 fee.

Once your application has been approved, you will receive an email confirmation directly to your Campus France account so please check your account regularly.

Campus France Resources

- [Step-by-Step Guide](#) for completing the online application
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Facebook](#)

Questions?

If you have questions about your online application or anything else related to Campus France, please email them directly. Their email address is washington@campusfrance.org.

4. Submit Your France-Visas Application and Schedule an Appointment with Your Consulate/VFS Center

DO NOT WAIT to complete this step! As the time draws closer to the beginning of the semester, appointments can be very difficult to obtain. We recommend booking your appointment at the Consulate/VFS Center as soon as you submit your online Campus France application – just be sure to factor in the amount of time it will take to process your Campus France application (up to 4 weeks).

- The visa processing time is usually **2-3 weeks** after your in-person appointment. This part of the process cannot be expedited!
- All Consulates/VFS Centers require an **in-person appearance** to apply for your visa. Applications cannot be submitted by mail because all applicants must submit biometric data at the time of the appointment.
- **All Consulates/VFS Centers in the U.S. require you fill out the France-Visas application and schedule your appointment online prior to attending your appointment. You can do both [here](#).**

TIP: You cannot schedule an appointment and appear at the Consulate/VFS Center more than 90 days *prior* to the start of your program. However, you can submit your Campus-France application and your France-Visas application more than 90 days prior.

5. Gather ALL Materials Required by Your Consulate/VFS Center

The requirements listed below are intended to provide you with a *guideline*; all requirements should be verified with your specific Consulate/VFS Center. Be sure to take **extra copies** of all documents as Consulates/VFS Centers will **NOT** make photocopies for you.

1. **Official acceptance letter or acknowledgement of enrollment** (Your official acceptance letter from CIEE Study Center in France, signed by your Center Director, sent to you via email)
2. **An e-mail message from Campus France** entitled "Your Campus France file has been processed or Confirmation Email" informing the student that he or she may begin preparations to apply to the consulate for the visa (make appointment, collect documents). This may be sent to your CampusFrance online account message box, and not your personal email account. Please check your Campus France Account regularly.

Note: Different Consulates/VFS Centers require different proof of your CampusFrance application – some require the proof of payment, others require the proof of approval. *If you are not sure, it is always best to bring extra documentation rather than not enough.*
3. **Receipt of payment from Campus France.** You can print out a receipt from your Campus France online message box after they have processed your application.
4. **2 original long stay application forms filled out in black ink.** Please do not forget to write your phone number and e-mail address. This form can be found on your Consulate/VFS Center's website.
5. **2 photographs.** All photos must be recent, identical, and passport size - 1,4" x 1,7" (3,5cm x 4,5cm) showing face front the forehead hairline and ears on a white background; the face must take up 70-80% of the photograph.
6. **A passport** and photocopy of face page, valid at least three months after the last day of your stay within the Schengen Zone. Please make sure at least two blank pages remain in your passport for the visa stamp.
 1. For non-American citizens, a proof of your status in the US: green card, a valid US visa WITH the I-94, the I-20, the valid I-AP66, I-551 or Advance Parole; proof of residence (plus one copy) in the jurisdiction of your Consulate/VFS Center
 2. Please also bring a photocopy of the passport pages containing your photo and personal information
7. **Visa processing fee.** Personal checks are not accepted. You should check the rate on the website of the Consulate/VFS center you intend to use for the visa process.
8. **Proof of sufficient funds/financial means.** See your Consulate/VFS Center's website for specific requirements.
9. **Flight reservation or itinerary**
10. **Proof of residency** in one of the states under the jurisdiction of your Consulate/VFS Center (see specific consular/VFS requirements), usually a driver's license or student ID.
11. **OFII Form** (this form is only available in French) this form should be completed by those students in the following situations:
 1. ALL students who will be staying in France for more than 6 months (Academic Year students)
 2. Students who will be staying in France for a period between 4 and 6 months, who wish to be allowed to work in France while studying
 3. Students who will be staying in France for a period of time between 4 and 6 months, who wish to be able to extend their visa once they are in France (students who are semester students who think they might want to stay for an additional term)

If your visa is granted, the Consulate/VFS Center will stamp the OFII form and give it back. You will then fill in the last portion of it upon your arrival in France and send it to the closest local branch of the OFII of your home in France. (CIEE Center Staff will assist you with this after you arrive on site).

12. Provide a prepaid self-addressed Express envelope from a secure trackable service if you want your passport and visa returned to you by mail. Check with your Consulate/VFS Center to determine if they prefer USPS Priority Express Mail, FedEx, UPS, etc.

PLEASE NOTE: Make copies of all documents before submitting them to the Consulate/VFS Center and bring these copies with you to France. You should also bring any original documents that the Consulate/VFS Center give back to you after the visa process, along with an official copy of your birth certificate.

6. Attend Your In-Person Appointment

Be sure that you review **all requirements** from your Consulate/VFS Center's website before you go and take everything with you that you need.

Remember that the Consulate/VFS Center processes hundreds of visas for U.S. students each year in addition to carrying out their primary duty, which is to serve French citizens living in the United States. Consular/VFS Center staff are often extremely busy. Even if the process is frustrating, try to smile, be polite, and follow all instructions. **Remember that the issuance of your visa is at the sole discretion of your Consulate/VFS Center.**

Once you've received your visa, congratulations! You've completed what is often the most difficult part of your pre-departure process!