



Sir Syed Global Scholar Award (SSGSA)

Guide for applying for grad programs in France

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Disclaimer

Data from various sources were compiled together to produce this document. The sole purpose of this document is to assist students who intend to pursue higher education in France. This document is not protected under copyright law. The document is written to provide guidance for admission in master's programmes as well as to provide preliminary knowledge about France. The information and guidelines provided are subject to change over time. It is therefore recommended that you refer to other sources together in-depth knowledge. I may be able to assist with some specific questions. Please feel free to reach out to Team SSGSA at contact@ssgsa.us or to me at lubna.arif@etu.univ-lyon1.fr. We will do our best to assist you.



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1. France: The Heart of Europe

France shares its boundaries with several countries , including Germany, Spain, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, and Luxembourg. Studying in France gives you the opportunity to travel and easily explore Europe. It is well-known for its cultural diversity, food, stunning architecture, and vibrant student life. It offers excellent educational and research opportunities to students and researchers alike. Universities such as the University of Paris, Sorbonne University, and Ecole Normale Supérieure are among the best in the world. Paris was named the “best international student city” in 2015.

France offers plenty of scholarships for international students. In a separate section, we will go over the scholarships in full detail. This document covers everything from the ground up, from applying to French universities to getting admission and living in France.

Living in France can be a lot more fun and easy if you know how the French system works beforehand. That is why I decided to write this document so that the readers would not have to deal with any of the major issues I encountered. The following is a simplified depiction of the entire admissions process:

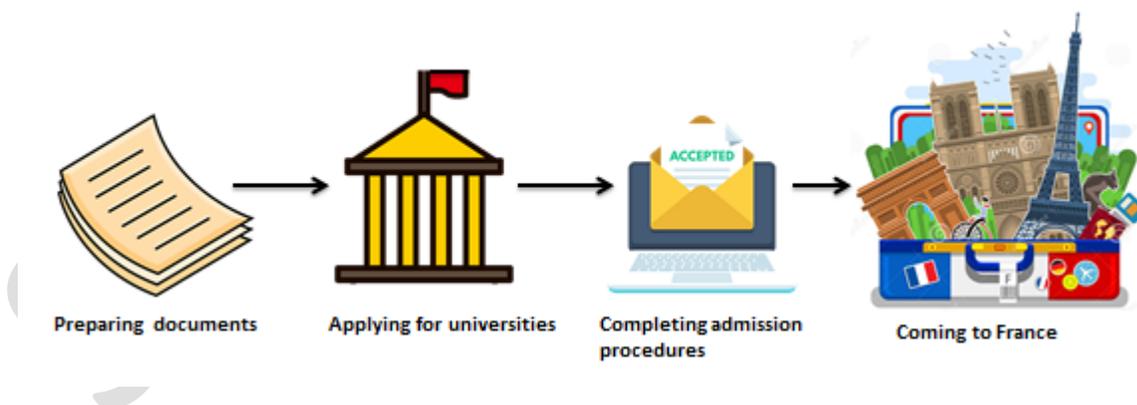


Fig. 1: Admission process



2. Documents preparation

Preparing the required documents for the higher studies is half of the job done. It is the initial step in your journey. It is, indeed, the most crucial and fate-determining step. The following are the primary documents that must be submitted:

S.no.	Document	Details
I.	Identity proofs	It includes the scanned copy of your Id photograph and valid passport.
II.	Reference letter	<p>It is also called a letter of recommendation (LOR). It is a letter written by your supervisor or professor briefly describing your talents, sincerity, and how you can be fruitful to the institution you are applying in.</p> <p>Tip: Try to get at least three letters of recommendation (LORs): two from your college supervisor and one from your internship supervisor.</p> <p>Here's a link to a page with a lot of LOR samples so you can get a good idea: www.thebalancecareers.com/reference-letter-samples-2062971</p>
III.	Resume	<p>It is a showcase of your all-present qualifications and achievements. The CV or resume should be as brief as possible.</p> <p>Tip: write your qualifications and achievements in chronological order. There are many good templates available on internet: https://novoresume.com/resume-templates https://resumegenius.com/resume-templates</p>
IV.	Statement of Purpose (SOP)	<p>It is one of the most important documents. It shows your objective and determination. It is required by foreign universities because just a resume and a transcript are not enough to highlight your strengths and motives. A good SOP should not be more than 2 pages.</p> <p>https://studyabroad.shiksha.com/sample-ms-sop-applycontent11421 https://www.greedge.com/blog/best-sop-format-ms-sop-writing-tips/</p> <p>Kindly go through the links above for more ideas.</p>
V.	Bachelor transcript	If you haven't received the final semester marks, not a problem! It is the usual case for most of the students. Get the transcript until the latest semester. It will work the same.
VI.	Language certificate	It is required by most of the universities to show that you satisfy the minimum English level requirement. Every university has different minimum scores required for different tests. They accept TOEFL (https://www.ets.org/toefl), IELTS (https://www.ielts.org), English proficiency certificate (issued by your present university)



These are some of the cardinal documents required by most universities. Check the university's application form for any additional documents. Also, don't hesitate to save all your documents in the Cloud or your email. It always comes in handy during any urgency.

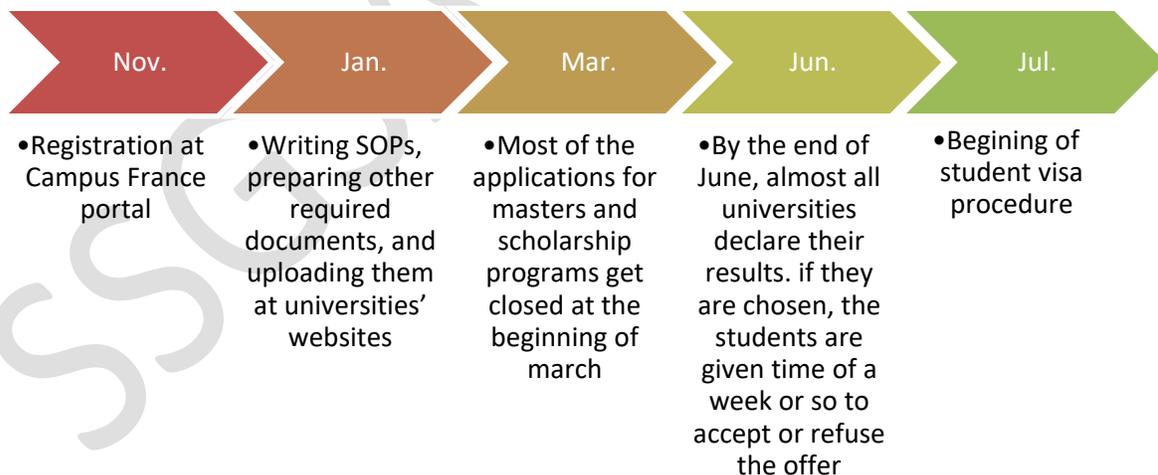
3. Applying for universities

3.1. Programs for international students

Most popular programs include Aerospace Engineering, Computer Science and Master of Business Administration or 'MBA'. French business schools are among the most prestigious and competitive institutions. There is Campus France's catalogue (<https://cataloguem.campusfrance.org/master/#/catalog>) to find the right program that suits you the best.

3.2. Timeline

It is beneficial to keep track of the deadlines for various programs. Mentioned below are the tentative timelines when I was applying for my masters:





3.3. Masters' programmes

When applying for masters, you must first narrow down the universities list to which you are eligible. The filtering criteria include: mode of teaching (select courses taught in English), application fee, and course fee.

Tip: note down the respective deadlines for each university in a word or excel file. So, you don't overlook any applications. I've listed a few universities that have no or very low course fees. Here are some courses for various topics:

Master's course	Requirement	University	Link
Nanoscale Engineering	A bachelor's degree in a field of science or engineering	École Centrale de Lyon	http://master-nano.universite-lyon.fr/how-to-apply/
Aerospace Engineering	A bachelor's degree in an appropriate Engineering discipline or in Applied Physics	École Centrale de Lyon	https://master-aerospace-engineering.ec-lyon.fr/
Light Sciences and Technologies	A bachelor's degree or equivalent qualification in Physics, Chemistry, Biology or Engineering	Université de Bordeaux	https://light-st.u-bordeaux.fr/Master-program/How-to-apply-in-Master
Environmental Policy	A bachelor's degree in arts/ sciences/ licenciatura/ license.	Paris School of International Affairs	https://www.sciencespo.fr/psia/content/master-environmental-policy.html
Public Policy and Development	For bachelor students in economics, mathematics or social sciences.	Paris School of Economics	https://www.parisschoolofeconomics.eu/en/teaching/masters-program/ppd-public-policy-and-development/applications/
International Development	A bachelor's degree in arts/ sciences/ licenciatura/ license.	Paris School of International Affairs	https://www.sciencespo.fr/admissions/en/content/graduate-international-eligibility.html



4. Scholarships application

When you have finished your documents and done the research for universities, the next step is to register with [Campus France](https://www.campusfrance.org/). It is a mandatory registration for students. They help you apply to French universities, verify your documents, find housing in France, and manage your scholarship file etc. In addition, they conduct interviews for visa applications and host a variety of webinars to provide assistance. It is a one-stop shop for any student planning to study in France. It walks you through the entire process, from soup to nuts.

France provides numerous scholarships to international students to help them finance their studies and living expenses. Because there are scholarships specifically for Indian students, being an Indian student gives you an advantage when applying for them. Here are the details of the scholarships available:

Scholarship	Eligibility	Duration	Benefits	Application link
Eiffel excellence Scholarship	Students applying for masters and PhD	The master's component offers 12 to 36 months of funding while the doctoral component supports up to 12 months	€1,181 monthly allowance + €1,031 maintenance allowance + €150 stipend + round trip international air travel ticket	https://www.campusfrance.org/system/files/medias/documents/2020-10/Vademecum_Eiffel_2021_en.pdf
MOPGA Scholarship	Eligible countries: Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New-Zealand, Singapore and South Korea	Every year different programs are financed under MOPGA therefore it needs to be checked on Campus France website		https://www.campusfrance.org/en/make-our-planet-great-again-funding-programs
Charpak Master's Scholarship	Indian students, maximum 30 years old	For 1 or 2 years of studies in France at	€700 per month + upto €5000 tuition fee waiver + student visa	https://www.industryfrance.org/campusfrance.org/



		the Master's degree level		harpak-master-s-scholarship
UGAM Legrand Scholarship	Indian students applying for Masters, knowledge of French is an added advantage	For 1 or 2 years of studies in France at the Master's degree level	Upto €1000 tuition fee waiver or stipend, upto €7500 per academic year	https://www.inde.campusfrance.org/ugam-legrand-scholarship-program
Shikhar Thales Scholarship	Indian students applying for Masters in the field of Aerospace, Artificial Intelligence, Communication and Control Systems, belong to low-income families	Throughout the Masters studies	€700 per month stipend + visa, Campus France fee waiver + social security assistance + assistance	https://www.inde.campusfrance.org/shikhar-thales-scholarship-program
Ampère Excellence Scholarship	For excellent international students who wish to pursue one of the eligible master's programs offered at ENS de Lyon	For one year. It is renewable in the 2nd year	€1,000 per month stipend	http://www.ens-lyon.fr/en/studies/admissions/application-masters-degrees-scholarships
Emile Boutmy Scholarship	For students arriving at Sciences Po for their first year of study	Covers 1 or 2 years of the Masters	€12,200 per year or €6,100 per year for two years of the Masters	https://www.sciencespo.fr/students/en/fees-funding/financial-aid/emile-boutmy-scholarship
Université Paris-Saclay Scholarship	check at https://www.universite-paris-saclay.fr/en/admission/bourses-et-aides-financieres/international	These scholarships are awarded for 1 or 2 years depending on the admission level (M1 or M2)	€10,000 per year, paid for a period of no less than 10 consecutive months per year, a maximum of 1,000€ for travel and visa expenses	https://www.universite-paris-saclay.fr/en/admission/bourses-et-aides-financieres/international-masters



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Many a time I get asked for their chances of receiving fully funded education in France. The answer to this question cannot be given in a line with certainty. Your past work experience, bachelor's grade, the SOP, standardize test scores, and other factors all have a significant impact on the jury's decision when selecting candidates. According to my experience, a bachelor's degree with a CGPA of at least 8/10 and a TOEFL iBT test score of at least 80 out of 120 is preferred. Plagiarism in the SOP reduces the selection chances and, in the worst-case scenario, may result in rejection. Previous work experience determines which applicants have the best chances of acceptance. The jury mostly look for students with relevant work experience. It can be acquired through internships at foreign universities, research labs, and relevant industries, as well as through the publication of research papers. The aforementioned factors contribute to your good CV and, as a result, increase your chances of selection.

5. Completing admission procedures

Following the issuance of the university's acceptance letter, a number of formalities must be completed. These include:

- I. **Visa** - Campus France conduct an interview to verify your documents and obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from them. NOC is required for the visa application process. Once you have received the NOC, you must apply for a long-stay visa for your studies at <https://france-visas.gouv.fr/>. In French, this is known as a visa long séjour valant titre de séjour "étudiant" (VLS-TS "étudiant"). For students, this visa also serves as a residence permit. It is valid for four months to one year, depending on the length of the study. You do not have to pay the visa fee if you have a Campus France scholarship.



II. Accommodation - The accommodation in France can be broadly categorized into two types:

University accommodation or student residences and hostels

Inquire with your university about accommodation assistance; they can help you find a room in any of the university residences. This is, without a doubt, the simplest and most straightforward method of locating housing near your desired university. However, because of the exceptionally low rents, most students in France prefer to live in residences managed by CROUS (centres régionaux des oeuvres universitaires et scolaires). If you are a Campus France scholarship holder ask them to book CROUS for you.

- More details at <https://international.lescrous.fr/accomodation/>
- Finding accommodation in CROUS <https://trouverunlogement.lescrous.fr/>

Rooms and apartments rented

You can choose this option if you want to live in a shared apartment or live alone in private hostels or residences.

<https://www.lokaviz.fr/> can help you in finding student accommodation with private individual.

- Finding accommodation in France: https://www.campusfrance.org/system/files/medias/documents/2021-03/liste_logements_2021.pdf

III. CVEC (Contribution Vie Etudiante et de Campus) - This includes students enrolling in a program to prepare them for admission to a Grande École (classe préparatoire aux grandes écoles, CPGE), students in dual degree programs, and students in apprenticeship programs.

Registration at <https://www.messervices.etudiant.gouv.fr/envole/> is required, then connect to the <https://cvec.etudiant.gouv.fr/>

Pay and download the proof of payment, which you will need to show when you register at your university or other institution. It costs 92 euros per year.

IV. Birth certificate (apostille) - apostille is a legal process that proves the authenticity of a document. You should have your birth certificate translated into French (for an authorised official translation, contact the Alliance Française network in India). Other documents, such as an affidavit or a notarized document, are not valid.



6. Coming to France

You must complete the following steps upon arrival:

- I. **University registration** - validate your presence and complete the registration process at the international relations department or international student section to receive the "scolarité certificate". This completes your enrollment, and you will also receive a student ID card.
- II. **Bank account** - pay a visit to your preferred bank's local branch office and fill out an application form known as a "mandat." To open a bank account in France, only three documents are required: identification, proof of residence and an attestation of enrolment or a student card. The main high street retail bank in France includes BNP Paribas, Société Générale, LCL, and Banque Populaire (BP).
- III. **Visa Validation** - visit <https://administration-etrangers-en-france.interieur.gouv.fr/> to validate your visa upon arrival. The visa must be validated within three months of arrival in France, at the latest.
- IV. **CAF (Caisse des Allocations Familiales)** - the CAF is provided by the French government to help students and families to pay their rents. For a studio apartment, you could receive up to €200 per month, and sometimes even more. Isn't it incredible? Visit <https://www.caf.fr/> to register.
- V. **Social security** - while studying in France, you need to apply for membership in the French social security citizen by signing up via the <https://etudiant-etranger.ameli.fr/#/> after registration and verification you will receive a "carte vitale" that covers for your medical expenses.
Make an appointment to visit any doctor via <https://www.doctolib.fr/>
- VI. **Complimentary health insurance** - it is also known as "mutuelle". It is required to increase the amount of reimbursement during healthcare expenses. It becomes mandatory for scholarship holders. You can do so with traditional student healthcare mutual (e.g. <https://smerra.fr/>), insurance companies or banks.



7. Post master's opportunities

Obtaining a master's degree signifies the end of an era. While for many students, the dilemma of primarily two paths appears. One path leads to a PhD, while the other gets you a job. I've seen the majority of my seniors pursuing a PhD. In France, a PhD can be completed in three years. France is well-known for its prestigious universities and research facilities. It is relatively easy to find a PhD at top research laboratories such as CNRS (Le Centre national de la recherche scientifique). <https://doctorat.campusfrance.org/en/phd/dschools/main> website is dedicated for finding you a PhD. According to the 2019 OECD ranking, France ranked third in terms of the number of international doctoral candidates hosted in 2017. However there are many students who immediately commences a job right after their masters. But most companies demands the knowledge of French language (generally B2 level). The France Alumni network (<https://www.francealumni.fr/en>) is available to assist you, particularly with job searches.

8. Learning French

Learning a second language is always beneficial because it opens up more doors to career opportunities. It will not only help you develop skills, but it will also help you communicate with the locals, which will make your daily life in France easier.

<https://afindia.org/learn-french/> website can help you in learning French.

In my case, I was the kind of person who was very reluctant to learn a new language. But I realised that learning French would allow me to not only enjoy my time in France but also improve my skills. I began by memorising the words and sentences that we use in our daily lives (<https://www.elearningfrench.com/>).

The second step in learning any language is to listen to conversations and try to understand what is being said. There is a YouTube channel called 'Easy French' (<https://www.youtube.com/c/EasyFrench/videos>) that has been extremely helpful in improving my French.



9. Student life in France

Bienvenue en France! When you arrive in France, go to your reserved lodging and complete the necessary paperwork. Unpack your belongings, relax, and don't forget to take a look around the area. Some students want to work while studying, to do so you can search student jobs at:

<https://www.jobaviz.fr/>

<https://www.leboncoin.fr/>

<https://www.studentjob.fr/>

Take advantage of the many benefits and discounts available to students in France. For example, if you present your student ID card at any national museum, theatre, or cinema, you will be given discount passes. There are university restaurants that serve meals for as little as €3.30. In addition, CROUS restaurants offer a €1 meal to scholarship students only. Check out this website dedicated to student discounts: <https://www.tarif-etudiant.com/>

Finally, in addition to your studies, go out and explore new places, and don't forget to contact the student associations to learn about the activities they offer throughout the year. In your daily student life, take advantage of the amazing French culture. It is an excellent time to learn, grow, and adopt new healthy habits. There is very much to get experience.