

in France

Introduction

As the landscape of global higher education continues to diversify, France has emerged as a compelling option for students seeking high-quality, affordable, and internationally recognized university experiences—outside of the traditional Anglophone destinations. This guide is designed to support new counsellors in advising students about studying in France, with tangible advice drawn from my experience

Best fit

The "best fit" criteria for choosing a college refers to selecting an institution that aligns with the student's academic, personal, and professional goals.

So, who is a good fit for studying in France?

French higher education appeals to students who are:

- Independent learners: The system expects students to manage their own workload and adapt to lectureheavy environments.
- Multilingual or motivated to learn French: While English-taught programs exist, everyday life and administrative tasks often require functional French.
- Budget-conscious: Public universities in France are heavily subsidized by the state, making tuition low even for international students.
- Curious about global perspectives: France's multicultural academic and social environment fosters intercultural competence and global citizenship.





Career outcomes

There are many!

-Why focus on careers ?

It si important to consider the long-term professional goals and to choose a program that provides the skills needed for success in their chosen field. It is also important for parents to know that their child is set up for a successful career.

-Fields-

- O Business and Management
- O Technology and Engineering
- O Creative Industries
- O Humanities and Social Sciences
- O Law & International Relations
- O Tourism & Hospitality

And so much more ...

Experience-

One of my students, Léo, was passionate about global politics, chose the Europe-North America Program at Sciences Po Reims to explore the complex relationships between the two regions. This program was a perfect fit, offering him the chance to deepen his understanding of political, cultural, and economic ties, and paving the way for a career in international diplomacy or global business.



PRACTICAL INFO



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT HOW TO STUDY

APPLICATION PROCESS



For non-European students, the application process often goes through Campus France, the national agency that manages international admissions:

- Step 1: Create an account on the Études en France platform.
- Step 2: Choose programs (up to 7) and upload documents (transcripts, passport, motivation letters).
- Step 3: Interview at local Campus France office (sometimes virtual).
- · Step 4: Await conditional admissions.
- · Step 5: Confirm enrollment and begin visa process.

Some institutions (like Sciences Po or private universities) accept direct applications and may use rolling admissions or their own portals.

Deadlines vary, but the Études en France portal typically opens in October and closes by January or March, depending on the school.

COST AND FUNDING



- Tuition at public universities: €2,770/year for a Licence (Bachelor), €3,770 for Master's programs. Many students benefit from government subsidies and lower tuition through bilateral agreements.
 Living costs: -€700-€1,200/month depending on the
- Living costs: ~€700–€1,200/month depending on the city (Paris is highest).
- · Funding opportunities:
 - Eiffel Excellence Scholarships (for Master's and PhD)
 - Campus Bourses tool lists scholarships by level and country
 - CROUS housing grants and meal subsidies for student life

Encourage students to look for scholarships through their program or embassy as well.

VISA AND **W**RESIDENCE PERMIT

- Students apply for a long-stay student visa (VLS-TS) after receiving their admission letter.
- Visa allows part-time work (up to 964 hours/year).
- After arrival, students validate their visa online and eventually apply for a titre de séjour (residence pagait) for stave que vere pagains.
- (residence permit) for stays over one year.
- Counsellors should prepare students for administrative formallities which can feel complex—connect them with school admissions teams or alumni to help manage expectations.

INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS

France offers a wide array of institutions:

- Universités publiques (Public universities): Offer broad academic options with low tuition (~€170– €600/year).
- Grandes Écoles: Selective institutions offering programs in engineering, business, and political science, often requiring post-bac preparation (CPCE)
- · Private and international universities, such as:
- The American University of Paris
- Sciences Po campuses

EDHEC, ESCP, or HEC Paris (for business students)

Language Requirements

English-taught programs may require IELTS/TOEFL scores.
French-taught programs require proof of B2-level French (DELF/DALF or TCF).

Regardless of program language, learning basic conversational French is highly recommended. Wany universities offer French language support courses to international students.

Spotlights

Sciences Po: A Gateway to Global Leadership

Sciences Po is one of France's most prestigious institutions, internationally renowned for political science, international relations, economics, law, and sociology. It offers a uniquely interdisciplinary curriculum, with a strong emphasis on critical thinking, global awareness, and civic engagement. For international students, Sciences Po provides several English-taught undergraduate programs at specific regional campuses across France. For example, the Reims campus focuses on North America and Africa, Le Havre on Asia, and Menton on the Middle East and Mediterranean. These programs are ideal for globally minded students interested in diplomacy, NGOs, policy-making, and more. Students apply through the Sciences Po International Admissions portal—not through Parcoursup. The application includes academic transcripts, personal essays, recommendation letters, and sometimes an interview. Sciences Po's admissions process is holistic and looks for students who are intellectually curious, engaged, and open to diverse perspectives. Tuition is income-based, and generous financial aid options are available. The Émile Boutmy Scholarship is specifically designed for non-EU international students. Sciences Po is a strong choice for students passionate about humanities and the social sciences, with aspirations in global careers.

ESSEC Global BBA: A Multinational Business Launchpad

ESSEC Business School's Global BBA is a four-year, world-class undergraduate business program that combines academic rigor with global immersion and professional experience. Students can study in France (Cergy campus), Singapore, or Morocco, and take advantage of partnerships with top universities around the world. The curriculum includes core courses in finance, marketing, management, data analysis, and entrepreneurship—with the option to specialize in later years. The program is fully taught in English, with French as an optional second language.

Students apply through ESSEC's online application portal or via Join a School in France,

depending on their location and background. Requirements typically include transcripts, an English language proficiency score (TOEFL, IELTS), essays, and sometimes a video interview. ESSEC seeks students who are entrepreneurial, open-minded, and globally mobile. Tuition varies, but there are numerous scholarships available, including merit-based scholarships for international students. With strong internship support and career services, ESSEC is a smart choice for globally ambitious students aiming to work in consulting, finance, marketing, or entrepreneurship.

Practical Tips for Counsellors

- Encourage students to join virtual campus tours or speak with current students via Campus France events or alumni networks.
- Prepare students for the cultural shift: less academic hand-holding, more autonomy.
- Support families in understanding the value of a French degree even if the brand name isn't globally famous.
- Use tools like "What Matters Most" and "FutureMe Framework" to guide conversations about fit.

Why it Matters

France's higher education ecosystem offers a powerful mix of academic excellence, affordability, and international opportunities. As counsellors, we need to expand the narrative beyond Anglophone destinations and empower students to consider bold, globally minded choices.

Sharing our expertise in this area not only supports students' success but also strengthens the global counsellor community—one cross-cultural leap at a time.