



St. John's Semester in Paris

Spring 2024: Student Visa Application Checklist, Details, & Tips

As a participant in St. John's Semester in Paris for Spring 2024, you are responsible for obtaining a French student visa.

The French student visa process is divided in two parts:

1. The first step is to complete the **Campus France Application**
2. The next step is to **schedule a visa appointment with the French Consulate** by December 8th

Note: You **CANNOT** schedule a visa appointment at the French Consulate until you complete Campus France and receive your **Campus France Reference Number, which typically takes 3 weeks**. Please plan enough time to complete Campus France, schedule your visa appointment, and receive your passport in the mail with your affixed visa.

PART 1 – CAMPUS FRANCE

Step 1: Gather your documents:

1. **Passport**
 - Scan of passport (ensure file size is under 300kb)
 - Your passport must be valid until August 10, 2024
 - If your passport is expired or your passport will expire before August 10, 2024, please start your renewal process as soon as possible as passport renewals are taking 13+ weeks
2. **Headshot** (under 50kb)
3. **Statement of Motivation**
 - Short essay explaining why you want to study abroad. Your essay should include how your time in France will benefit your professional and academic goals. The essay can be submitted in either French or Italian.
4. **Official Acceptance letter from academic program**
 - OIE will provide this to you by uploading it to your OIE student portal. It will include the details of your accommodation. Please check your OIE student portal documents to see if this letter has been uploaded. If not, email OIE at studyabroad@stjohns.edu requesting that your letter be uploaded. OIE will need a minimum of 2 business days to upload the letter, so make sure to check in advance of when you need the letter!

Step 2: Complete Etudes en France (Campus France) application

1. This guide will help you complete the simple, pre-consular application required for all international students going to France.
 - a. Below you will find step-by-step instructions on
 - i. [Creating an account on Etudes en France](#)
 - ii. [Completing an Etudes en France application](#)
 - iii. [Accessing your Etudes en France Application](#)

Step 3: Pay Campus France

1. To begin review of your application, you will pay the application fee of \$250 for regular 3-week processing, or \$390 for expedited 3-day processing. Paying the fee allows the Campus France USA team to begin to review your application. You can [pay the application fee](#) on this link.

Step 4: Review and Confirm

1. Once your Etudes en France pre-consular application is reviewed, you will receive a confirmation email from campus France. The length of time for you to receive the confirmation depends on the processing time you chose. Print this confirmation email and bring it to your visa appointment. You will also print an electronic acceptance letter PDF generated by the application.

Having trouble? Here are some tips:

The Etudes en France application platform is optimized for Firefox. If you have trouble accessing the application or have any technical issues, use Firefox after clearing the cache of your browser.

Use the Etudes en France messaging system to contact Campus France USA with questions during your application process.

Important Notes on this Process

- The Campus France USA team is only able to begin processing your application after you have submitted your DocBox. Please ensure that you SUBMIT your payment receipt and acceptance letter on DocBox.
- You need a unique ID number generated by Etudes on France to submit your DocBox, which is why you need to complete the Etudes en France application first.
- After you receive the confirmation email, you can move forward to complete a student visa application via France-Visas and schedule a visa appointment with VFS.

PART 2 – VFS GLOBAL

Read these important notes before getting started on the French Visa Application:

1. St. John's Semester in Paris students are required to submit their visa application directly to a VFS Global Center. Students may submit their visa application to any of the following VFS Global Center locations:
 - New York City
 - Washington DC
 - Atlanta
 - Boston
 - Chicago
 - Houston
 - Los Angeles
 - Miami
 - San Francisco
2. Start looking NOW for a VFS Global visa appointment. **Schedule a visa appointment that is no more than 90 days before your St. John's Semester in Paris program start-date of January 16, 2024. Therefore, the earliest day to schedule your visa appointment is October 16, 2023.** Once scheduled, submit the appointment date on your OIE student portal under "Confirmed Visa Appointment Date."
 - **Note that students...**
 - are not allowed to begin their program after the program start date of January 16, 2024. *Late arrivals are not permitted.*
 - who schedule their French visa appointment after December 16th should review [OIE's refund policy](#).
 - who do not have a visa appointment scheduled by December 16th may want to consider switching to the [Western Europe Semester \(WES\)](#) program.

3. OIE is here to help you prepare for your visa application appointment. **Follow the “[French Student Visa Process Guide for Campus France and VSF Global](#)”, paying close attention to each link and video**, and you’ll be on your way to getting your visa in no time.
4. After you’ve prepared your visa materials, we recommend that you sign up for a VDR session to have OIE review your *completed* documents before your visa appointment. Read on our website [here](#) to learn about what types of VDR appointments are available and how to schedule one.

Remember:

December 1st is the VDR appointment deadline. The VDR appointment is optional; however, you must **let OIE know when you’re ready to register with Campus France**, so your French visa acceptance letter can be uploaded to your OIE student portal.

5. Do not plan any travel outside the U.S. until you know the date of your French visa appointment and confirm processing time with your VFS Global Center.
6. Questions? Email oielisa@stjohns.edu for answers!

The French government does not issue a standard set of requirements for study abroad students. It is critical that you follow the instructions generated for you by the France-Visas website. This checklist on page 4 serves as an explanation for the most common requirements generated by the France-Visas website.

The charts below contain a summary of the **most common** items required to complete your French visa application and the steps required to complete your OIE Pre-Departure Requirements. Further instructions for each item are provided in the pages following. Have questions? Email OIE at oielisa@stjohns.edu.

Action Item
1. Campus France Reference Number
2. Campus France Confirmation Email (Copy)
3. Campus France Payment Receipt (Copy)
4. Visa Application Form (Printed and signed)
5. Three Passport Photos (Originals)
6. Passport (Original + Copy) (+ 2 Copies of Proof of Legal Residence in U.S. for non-U.S. citizens)
7. OIE Acceptance Letter (Original + Copy)
8. Proof of Financial Support (Original, if document includes signature + Copy)
9. Visa Fee Payment Receipt (Copy)
10. Pre-registration certificate generated by EEF-Pastel
11. Attend your visa appointment
12. Pick up Passport & Visa from VFS Global
13. Upload a copy of your French visa & Passport to OIE
14. Bring copies of OIE Acceptance Letter & Proof of Financial Support to Paris

1. Register with Campus France (you should be done with this step before starting Part 2)

2. **Schedule** your appointment with VFS Global as soon as possible – they always book up fast! Once scheduled, **submit** your visa appointment date through the Confirmed Visa Appointment Date Questionnaire in your online study abroad student portal.
 - The first possible date for your appointment is 90 days prior to the start of your Paris semester program: October 16, 2023, **but can and needs to be booked now. OIE encourages you to book a visa appointment ASAP between October 16th and December 15th. Remember that you cannot book a visa appointment before October 16th.**
 - Processing time should be approximately 6 weeks but we expect this to be much longer due to the pandemic. Please confirm processing time during your in-person appointment.
 - To book an appointment with VFS Global you will need to create a VFS Global account. Please note that it could take several hours to receive the account activation email.
 - Go to https://france-visas.gouv.fr/en_US/web/france-visas
 - Select Step 3 “Submit your application”
 - You will then need to select the Americas region and pick United States of America
 - Click on “English” on the upper right-hand corner of the page to translate the page to English (do not use the Google translate feature)
 - Select “Whom should I contact?”
 - Select “Book an appointment,” this can be the link under any of the locations
 - Select either “New User” or login
 - Once logged in, click “Schedule Appointment”
 - From here you can see the earliest appointment available at the VFS Global locations
 - Purpose of Travel: Long Stay Visa
 - Add yourself as the applicant: You will be required to enter your passport information during this step, which must be valid until at least March 15, 2024.
 - Proceed to review the earliest available date and book the appointment.
 - Pay the appointment-booking fee.

3. **Sign up** for a [Visa Document Review \(VDR\) Session](#) starting October 1st
 - All Spring 2024 Paris Semester participants are strongly encouraged to meet with an OIE advisor to have your completed French visa application documents and Pre-Departure Requirements reviewed between October 1st and December 1st.
 - Students should visit OIE’s website [here](#) for more information on scheduling an VDR appointment.

4. **Campus France Reference Number**
 - Students are strongly encouraged to use the [French Student Visa Process Guide for Campus France and VSF Global](#) posted on the [Apply for a Visa Page](#) to help walk you through the steps needed to complete the online Campus France registration (and VSF Global steps).
 - Use the Campus France Reference Number Form Questionnaire found on your OIE student portal to submit your Campus France Reference Number.
 - Students will need to submit payment to Campus France for \$250 (regular processing: 3 weeks) or \$390 (expedited processing: 3 business days), depending on the date of your visa appointment with VFS Global. **NOTE:** Expedited services are currently not available.

5. **One Copy, Campus France Confirmation Email**
 - You will receive this by email directly from Campus France
 - Note: Depending on when you submit your Campus France application, you may not receive the Campus France Confirmation Email prior to your VDR session. It takes approximately 3 weeks for Campus France to process applications (after you’ve submitted payment) and generate the Confirmation Email.

6. **One Copy, Campus France Payment Receipt**
 - You will receive this by email directly from Campus France

7. **One Original, Completed, Signed, Visa Application Form**
 - Use the Online Visa Application Form Guide and the [Johnny Thunderbird Sample Visa Application](#) (posted on the [Apply for an Entry Visa Page](#)) as a guide to complete your visa application.
 - The completed Visa Application Form must contain **no** mistakes, errors, cross-outs, or white-out.

- **On the day of your visa appointment**, sign and date the visa application at the bottom of page 3. This portion of the Visa Application Form needs to be completed by hand, in either blue or black pen. It cannot be typed.
- Be sure to use European date format (DD/MM/YYYY, so March 5, 1998 would be 05/03/1998).

8. **Three Original, Recent Passport Photos**

- Standard passport photo format (2 x 2 inches in size, with your face comprising 70% of the photo)
- Taken within the last 6 months
- This does not need to be the same photo included in your passport.
- You cannot be smiling (and your lips must be closed)
- The picture must be front facing, in color, on a white background, and on photo-quality paper. Photos with an off-white or grey background will not be accepted by the French Consulate.
- Please note you cannot have your hair covering your eyes and if you have long hair you need to tuck it behind your ears, and you cannot be wearing glasses, a scarf, a hat or other head covering in these photos. (Please contact the Office of International Education if you wear a head covering for religious reasons.)

9. **One Original + One Copy, Passport**

- Your Passport must (1) be valid until at least August 10, 2024, (2) have been issued in 2014 or later, and (3) include at least 2 blank pages (or more if you plan to travel!)
- **Non-U.S. Citizens:**
 - In addition to providing your *Original, Signed Passport and Bio Page Copy*, you need to provide **Two Copies of your Proof of Legal Residence in the United States**: for permanent residents, a Green Card (valid until at least August 10, 2024). For international students, a U.S. visa (valid until at least June 10, 2024) and a Form I-20 signed within the last year (valid through date of SJU graduation). I-20 travel signature is valid for one year. **NOTE: Please contact International Student and Scholar Services at (718) 990-6083 or iss@stjohns.edu to verify this information.**
 - Make sure you have a valid US visa for re-entry into the United States prior to the fall 2024 semester.
 - One set of copies will be for the French Consulate and the second set of copies will be for OIE.
 - All international students must make an appointment with ISSSO to discuss studying abroad and their Form I-20.

10. **One Original, OIE Acceptance Letter**

- OIE will provide this to you by uploading it your OIE student portal. It will include the details of your accommodation. Please check your OIE student portal documents to see if this letter has been uploaded. If not, email OIE at studyabroad@stjohns.edu requesting that your letter be uploaded. OIE will need a minimum of 2 business days to upload the letter, so make sure to check in advance of when you actually need the letter!

11. **One Original + One Copy of Proof of Financial Support**

All Proof of Financial Support documents must be recent. Recent means issued within 30 days prior to your visa appointment date. ***In prior semesters, many students have been asked to show a balance of \$2,990 USD, please do so if at all possible.*** Students are responsible for checking the currency exchange rate prior to their visa appointment.

- **(3) Student Bank Statements;**
 - Verifying student's personal checking and/or savings account has the equivalent of at least 2,460 Euros (or 615 Euros per month of stay) in France. **Students are responsible for checking the currency exchange rate prior to their visa appointment.** Proof of Financial Support must be provided to VFS Global as **3** actual bank statements **for the 3 consecutive months prior to the date of the visa appointment**, not a screenshot printout from online. This can be a joint bank statement between the student and another person, so long as the student's name is listed on the bank statement.

or

- **(3) Bank Statements of a Relative or Friend Supporting You Financially Plus Financial Guarantee Form;**
 - (A) **Guarantor Bank Statement:** verifying 2,460 Euros (615 Euros per month of stay) in the Guarantor's personal checking and/or savings account **for 3 consecutive months prior to the date of the visa appointment** (the Guarantor is your relative or friend who will support you financially); *plus*
 - (B) A completed **Financial Guarantee Form**, which *must be notarized*. If the Guarantor's bank statement is a *joint account* held with another individual, the Financial Guarantee Form only needs to be completed by **one** person whose name is listed on that joint bank account.

or

- **Office of Student Financial Services Letter** verifying that the student has a credit/remaining balance of at least 2,460 Euro (615 Euros per month of stay) that will be dispersed to the student **after** tuition and fees are covered;
 - **Please be advised that VFS Global prefers Option 1 or 2 as some students who have shown proof of financial support via financial aid have been asked for alternative sources of funding.**

Proof of Financial Support Tips!

- Where payment is indicated as Euros, students are responsible for checking the exchange rate prior to their visa appointment to make sure they are showing the most accurate amount in USD.
- The bank statement cannot be a screenshot from your bank's website. However, if you receive your monthly bank statement electronically in PDF format, a printout of this PDF is acceptable. In addition, the printout from the internet will not be accepted by the French Consulate unless the name of the bank and the name of the account holder are clearly stated.
- Bank Statements for retirement accounts or stock portfolios are not accepted by the French Consulate
- What does it mean when it says the Financial Guarantee Form must be notarized?
 - When a document is notarized, it means that a Notary Public has watched you sign the document and puts a stamp on it verifying that your signature is authentic.
 - The Notary cannot be someone you are related to.
 - Most bank branches have a notary and will provide their services at no charge if you are a bank customer.

12. One Copy, Visa Fee Payment

- You will pay the VFS Global fee approximately \$30 when you schedule the VFS Global visa appointment online.
- A visa fee of approximately \$60 may be paid by Visa or MasterCard during your VFS Global appointment. Personal checks/cash are not accepted.
- There is a fee of \$35 for express mailing of your passport once your visa has been processed. If you live close to the VFS Global Center, you may choose to return to VFS to pick up your passport and visa in person when it is ready, in which case you would not pay this fee.
- Expect the total cost of the French student visa process, including Campus France, to be between \$340 and \$515, depending on services selected.

12. One, Copy, Pre-registration certificate generated by EEF- Pastel

- The PDF is generated when Campus France has processed your Etudes en France application
- This document will be entitled 'Confirmation d'acceptation'
- To find this document, log-n to your Etudes en France account. From the Welcome page, click on your application tab (either 'Not Yet Accepted' or 'Already Accepted' depending on your application type), and click on 1 – Finalize the procedure. The PDF icon will be under the Select a Program section.

13. **Attend** your visa appointment at the VFS Global Center. The NY location is 145 West 45th Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036. The address for **other VFS Global Centers** is available here: <https://visa.vfsglobal.com/usa/en/fra/attend-centre>

14. Pick up your Passport and Visa

- At the end of your visa appointment, you will receive instructions on how you will be notified to pick-up your passport and visa. It could take 6 weeks or more for visas to be processed and ready for pick-up.
- Before leaving VFS Global, be sure to double check that your name is spelled correctly on your visa and that it is issued for the correct program dates.
- You will also be given an option to pay for your passport and visa to be returned to you via mail.

16. **Upload** a scanned copy of your French visa to your OIE "Visa Copy" Questionnaire.

17. **Bring copies of your OIE Acceptance Letter and Proof of Financial Support to Paris**, as an immigration official may request to review this as additional support for your visa.