

Tests of and Degrees in French as a foreign language

Five countries host more than half of the world's international students: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, and Germany. France hosts more than 260,000 international students, putting it in third place after the United States and the United Kingdom. International students account for 12% of enrollments in French higher education.

Students choose a host country based on several criteria, including the language used in everyday life and in education. The countries in which education is delivered in widely spoken languages -English, of course, but also French and German- are those that enroll the most international students, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

For 4 out of 5 international students not enrolled in structured study-abroad programs, language proficiency is a decisive factor

in the programs choice. France, while offering relatively few programs in English, attracts international students from countries influenced by French culture by providing easy access to French-language training. Most students return to their home countries having achieved proficiency level B1 or B2 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the levels most commonly required by institutions for students completing a period of study abroad.

Since 2001, the Council of Europe's CEFR has set reference levels for foreign-language proficiency. The CEFR has become Europe's standard for language learning, with 6 levels of proficiency defined by criteria of language competency in the situations and settings in which individuals are most likely to be called upon to use a foreign language.

Tests of and diplomas in French language required for admission to postsecondary programs

The levels of academic achievement required to obtain an extended-stay visa for study in France were set forth in an interministerial circular (from the ministries of the Interior, Foreign affairs, and Higher education and research) dated January 27, 2006. The criteria included the candidate's educational level, the quality of the candidate's prior academic program, and the institutional framework of the proposed program of study in France. Criterion 4 deals with the importance of "language proficiency, with assessment of applicants' proficiency in French, including applicants who show exceptional academic potential."

Several tests of French proficiency and diplomas in French language are accepted for purposes of admission into a French institution of higher education

- To enroll in the first or second year of a program in a university (*Licence* 1 and 2) or school of architecture, international students (from outside the European Union) must follow the so-called preliminary admission procedure, known as DAP. As part of their DAP application, they must demonstrate their level of French proficiency by passing a language test (TCF-DAP or TEF) or by earning a degree (DELF/DALF).
- For enrollments in the third year of university study (*Licence* 3), in a Master's program, (Master 1 and 2), in a Doctoral program, or in one of France's *Grandes Écoles*, no uniform requirement applies. Each institution is free to set its own criteria for French proficiency. Prospective students should inquire about the language requirements of the institutions of interest to them.



TCF (*Test de connaissance du français* - Test of knowledge of French)

The TCF, administered by the French Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher education and research, is a standardized test of general French designed by CIEP (Centre international d'études pédagogiques, International center for pedagogical studies), a certifying organization that is a member of ALTE (the Association of Language Testers in Europe). The TCF satisfies the quality requirements of ISO 9001, version 2008, in all of its processes. The TCF test of comprehension may be taken on computer in some countries; the computer-based test of written expression will be available soon. .

Test results are valid for 2 years. Candidates wishing to repeat the TCF or TCF-DAP must wait 60 days from the date of their prior sitting. www.ciep.fr/tcf/

→ Study in France: levels required for applications for preliminary admission (the DAP procedure)

A specific version of the TCF (TCF-DAP) is required for applications for preliminary admission (DAP). The TCF-DAP includes a mandatory test of written French. www.ciep.fr/tcfdap/

The TCF is the only test recognized by the CPU (Conférence des présidents d'université, Conference of university presidents) for admission to *Licence* 3, Masters 1, and Masters 2 programs.

Note: The required score on the test varies from institution to institution and from program to program.

→ Description of the TCF and TCF-DAP: www.ciep.fr/tcf/

→ **Registration fees and locations:** Candidates can take the TCF in 626 centers approved by CIEP. Centers are located in 141 countries, including France. To register, candidates should contact an approved center for information on testing dates and for the costs of the required and elective components of the test. In cooperation with the courses in French language and culture offered at the Sorbonne, CIEP offers monthly TCF sessions. To register, visit : www.cafs-sorbonne.fr/-Centre-CIEP-Sorbonne-.html

Approved TCF centers: www2.ciep.fr/tcf/centres/



Le TEF (*Test d'évaluation de français - French assessment test*)

The TEF, administered by the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIP), accurately measures test-takers' skills in general French, placing them on a scale of proficiency levels indexed to the CEFR and to Canadian language-proficiency levels. The TEF consists of a series of modules in multiple-choice format (written comprehension, oral comprehension, vocabulary, and structure) and two open-ended modules (written and oral expression). Since 2005, an electronic version of the multiple-choice modules known as e-tef has allowed test-takers to learn their results immediately.

Candidates may take the TEF as often as they wish. The validity of TEF results is open-ended; institutions and organizations make their own decisions about how recent a candidate's results must be. CCIP recommends that results should be accepted for one year from the date of the test.

→ Study in France: levels required for applications for preliminary admission (the DAP procedure)

To meet DAP requirements required for admission to years 1 and 2 at a university or school of architecture, the TEF is accepted in lieu of the TCF-DAP (ministerial decree of May 3, 2007), provided the candidate passes all of the mandatory components of the test and earns a score of at least 325 out of 450 on the test of written expression, a score that corresponds to level B2 of the CEFR and a grade of 14/20 in the French marking system. www.fda.ccip.fr/tef/

Note: Passing scores may vary from institution to institution and from program to program.

→ Description of the TEF: www.fda.ccip.fr/tef/epreuves

→ Registration fees and locations

The TEF is administered in about 100 countries by some 400 approved test centers. To register, contact an approved center of your choice. Each center sets its own test dates and fees.

Approved TEF centers: www.fda.ccip.fr/tef/centres



The DELF (*Diplôme d'études en langue française - Diploma of French-language studies*) and DALF (*Diplôme approfondi de langue française - Advanced diploma in French language*)

The DELF and DALF diplomas, conferred by the French Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Higher education and research attest to the holder's level of proficiency in the French language. Six different diplomas are offered, corresponding to the six levels of the CEFR: DELF A1, A2, B1, and B2, and DALF C1 and C2. To earn any of the diplomas, candidates must pass tests in four competency areas: oral comprehension, oral expression, written comprehension, and written expression. **Unlike the results of language tests, which expire after a certain period, the DELF and DALF diplomas are valid for life**

→ Study in France: levels required for applications for preliminary admission (the DAP procedure)

To meet DAP requirements required for admission to years 1 and 2 at a university or school of architecture, applicants must obtain a DELF B2 diploma (decree of January 18, 2008, published in the *Journal officiel de la République française* n°30 on February 5, 2008, p. 2206) or a DALF diploma (C1 or C2). Holders of these diplomas are exempted from any language test that might otherwise be required for admission to a French university. www.ciep.fr/delfdalf/

Note: The level of the diploma required may vary from institution to institution and from program to program.

→ Description of DELF tests: www.ciep.fr/delfdalf/presentation-epreuves-delf.php

→ Description of DALF tests: www.ciep.fr/delfdalf/presentation-dalf.php

• Candidates must score at least 5/25 on each of the four tests. • The total score required to obtain a DELF or DALF diploma is 50/100.

→ Registration fees and locations

1,000 test centers are found in secondary schools, language schools, universities, and cultural institutes (such as the Alliance Française) in 164 countries. Candidates should register directly with the test center of their choice. Fees associated with the diploma are set by each approved test center. Fees vary from country to country. For more information on registration and fees, contact a test center in your country or in France. CNED, the Centre national d'enseignement à distance (National center for distance learning) offers preparatory courses for DELF levels A1, A2, B1, B2 (30 hours for each level) and DALF levels C1 and C2 (30 hours each): www.cned.fr/vie-active/formation-professionnelle/fle

Approved DELF/DALF centers:

- Outside France, directory of Centers: www.ciep.fr/delfdalf/annuaire_centres.php
- In France, list of Centers: www.ciep.fr/delfdalf/docs/liste_centres_fr.pdf



Other evidence of language proficiency

Various other credentials (such as the certificate of the *Alliance Française* and diplomas offered by CCIP and various universities) are recognized and accepted by institutions. International students must verify that a particular credential is recognized by the institutions to which they intend to apply.

The credentials conferred by the *Alliance Française*, which operates in France and abroad, are recognized in Europe by ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe). The DHEF (*Diplôme de hautes études françaises*, diploma of advanced study in French) corresponds to level C2 of the CEFR. www.alliancefr.org

The Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIP) offers a series of diplomas in professional French (DFP). The DFPs corresponding to levels A2 and B1 of the CEFR certify basic competence in French and indicate that the holder can understand and express himself in simple and common situations of everyday social and professional life. 3 business-oriented DFPs (levels B2, C1, and C2 of the CEFR) are designed for users of business French. 6 other DFPs attest to French proficiency in specialized areas: office administration, tourism and hotel management, science and technology (level B1 of the CEFR), and legal and medical (B2). www.fda.ccip.fr/examens

University programs

An assortment of university diplomas (DUs, *diplômes d'université*) attests to various levels of French proficiency, with equivalences to the CEFR: the DUEF (*Diplôme universitaire d'études françaises*, A1 to C2), the DUAE (*Diplôme universitaire avancé d'études*), the DEF (*Diplôme d'études françaises*, B2), the DULF (*Diplôme universitaire de langue française*, all levels), and the DUSEF (*Diplôme universitaire supérieur d'études françaises*).

ADCUEFE, the Association of directors of university centers for the study of French as a foreign language for foreigners, has developed a set of DUs specific to university language centers: the CPLF (*Certificat pratique d'études françaises*, B1 and B2), the DEF (*Diplôme d'études françaises*, B2), the DAEF (*Diplôme approfondi d'études françaises*, C2), the DSEF (*Diplôme supérieur d'études françaises*, C1 and C2), and now six DUEFs (*Diplômes universitaires d'études françaises*) for levels A1 to C2 www.campus-fle.fr

Some DUs are designed to complement training in diplomatic French and international relations, international business and trade, communication and negotiation in French, economics and management, French language and civilization, or literature and humanities (e.g., SELFEE at Université Paris IV-Sorbonne). Still other diplomas are offered by private institutions, such as the DULCF (*Diplôme universitaire de langue et de culture française*) awarded by the Université Catholique de Lyon.

→ A DU in French for academic purposes prepares students for university study

Applicants are admitted at 2 levels :

- with a *baccalauréat* or equivalent secondary-school credential to prepare students to enter a *Licence* program ;
- with a *Licence* or equivalent 3-year postsecondary degree to prepare students to enter a Master's program.

Students choose a concentration that matches their academic plans: humanities and letters, management, the exact and experimental sciences, law and economics, tourism and international hotel management

Note: *DUs are institution-specific credentials. They are not national diplomas, which are regulated by the French government and recognized throughout France. International students should inquire about the cost of DU programs of interest and ensure that the institution in which they wish to enroll upon completion of their DU program will recognize the credential.*



Assessment of french proficiency for non-french-speakers reference levels for required tests

CECRL Council of Europe		DELFDALF Valid for life	TCF Results valid for 2 years		TEF Recommended validity of results: 1 year		Required hours of study (approximate)
Proficient user	C2	DALF C2	Advanced proficient	Level 6	Complete command	Level 6	<i>Varies</i>
				600–699		834–900	
	C1	DALF C1	Proficient	Level 5	Good command	Level 5	
				500 - 599		699 - 833	
Independent user	B2	DELFB2	Advanced Intermediate	Level 4	Fair command	Level 4	500h–690h
				400–499		541–698	
	B1	DELFB1	Intermediate	Level 3	Limited command	Level 3	
				300–399		361–540	
Basic user	A2	DELFA2	Advanced beginner	Level 2	Command of basic structures	Level 2	180h–300h
				200–299		204–360	
	A1	DELFA1	Beginner	Level 1	Basic knowledge	Level 1	
				100–199		69 –203 0+ 0–68	

Source : MAEE/DGMDP/Office of Linguistic Diversity and the French Language; CIEP; CCIP

Exemptions from requirements to demonstrate proficiency in french

Applicants who meet one of the following criteria may be exempted from the requirement that they demonstrate their proficiency in French:

- Holders of the French *baccalauréat*, the international or European *baccalauréat*, and the Franco-German *baccalauréat*;
- Nationals of states where French is the official language: Benin, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Republic of CongoSenegal, and Togo;
- Nationals of multilingual states where French is one of the official languages: Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Haiti, Madagascar, Mauritania (except for students in the Arabic-language curriculum), Rwanda, Seychelles, Switzerland, and Vanuatu. In order to be excused from taking the TCF-DAP, applicants must have completed all of their secondary education in a French-language institution;
- Students graduating from bilingual programs in which French was one of the languages;
- Nationals of states in which final examinations for graduation from secondary school are conducted primarily in French;
- Applicants participating in a program governed by an intergovernmental accord or interuniversity agreement;
- International recipients of scholarships from the French government, international organizations, or foreign governments whose grants are administered by an approved French entity;
- Children of diplomats serving in France;
- In some cases, students enrolling in programs taught entirely in English:
www.campusfrance.org/fr/d-catalogue/programs_taught_english/programs.html

Applicants who are citizens of a state in the European Economic Area or Switzerland are exempted from the preliminary admission procedure (DAP) and may apply directly to universities of their choice. However, applicants to preparatory programs for the *Grandes Écoles*, University institutes of technology (IUT), university-based professional institutes (IUPs), and postsecondary technical programs (STS, sections de techniciens supérieurs) are subject to a specific requirement. They must apply online for preliminary admission at the postbac admission Website. The same online preliminary admission Process is required of international applicants who hold or will soon receive a French *baccalauréat* earned abroad; a European or Franco-German Baccalaureate; or effective July 2011, a Franco-Spanish *Bachibac* or franco-italian *Esabac* www.admission-postbac.fr

The countries of the European Economic Area are:

- European Union: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovénie, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom;
- Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway.



Centers, schools, and university departments specializing in French as a foreign language

A large number of schools and centers (some private, some nonprofit, some university-affiliated) offer courses in French as a foreign language and often other specialized courses, along with language-related tourism and travel, language testing, and preparation for language tests and diplomas. Such centers may or may not be members of a network (*Alliances Française*, ADCUEFE, the FLE group, Catholic universities and institutes, Souffle, Unosel). They may or may not have earned national certification for quality in French as a foreign language (the “*Qualité FLE*” label). And they may or may not have partnerships with universities in France and abroad. In the field of engineering, *EPF Écoles d’Ingénieurs* (in collaboration with ESTP, the *École Spéciale des Travaux Publics du Bâtiment et de l’Industrie*) is the only private center to have earned both the “*Qualité FLE*” label and the European Language Label of the European Commission. It offers courses designed especially for engineering students. www.epf.fr/html_gb/foreign/fle.html#program

A ministerial mark of quality: “*Qualité FLE*”



(quality in French as a foreign language)

The French ministries of Foreign and European affairs, Higher education and research, and cultural and communication established the “*Qualité FLE*” certification program in 2006. Its implementation was assigned to CIEP (Centre International d’Études Pédagogiques, International center for pedagogical research). CIEP publishes an annual directory of the centers in France that have earned the “*Qualité FLE*” label (77 centers as of July 2009). www.qualitefle.fr

Professional groups and networks

• **ADCUEFE**, the Association of directors of university centers for the study of French as a foreign language for foreigners, brings together 38 university-based centers for French as a foreign language that offer courses for international students and faculty. Experts representing the ADCUEFE network conduct annual missions (involving audits and advice on curricula, as well as consulting on language training and education) for the French overseas network and for departments of French in foreign universities www.campus-fle.fr

• **Alliance Française**

Founded in 1883, the *Alliance Française* is a network of 1,072 associations in 130 countries that endeavor to make French language and culture accessible to all audiences. The Alliance Française de Paris, as well as branches in several regions of France, welcome students from every country in the world. The Website of the Fondation Alliance Française offers a directory of branches around the world. www.fondation-alliancefr.org

• **CELAF, Centre de langue française**

CELAF, the French language center in the office of international educational relations at the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIP), joined ALTE in May 2010. The center is active in French language testing, training, and certification of proficiency in professional French. It develops tools for assessment of proficiency in general French (TEF, TEFAQ) and for certification in specialized French (10 diplomas in professional French). CELAF’s tests are administered by a network of more than 1,000 approved test centers www.fda.ccip.fr

• **CIEP, Centre international d’études pédagogiques**

Formed in 1945, CIEP (International center for pedagogical research) is a joint unit of the ministries of national education and higher education and research. A member of ALTE, CIEP has two branches of activity: the first is education -general, postsecondary, and professional, including recognition of degrees and diplomas; the second is language -the French language, language and mobility, assessment, and certification (including the TCF, DELF, and DALF, which are described elsewhere in this profile). www.ciep.fr

• **FIPF, Fédération internationale des professeurs de français**

FIPF brings together more than 70,000 teachers of French in 165 associations, including several national federations. With various partners -including government ministries in France, Canada, and Belgium- FIPF contributes to the international diffusion of French language and culture. Every 4 years, FIPF organizes a world congress for teachers of French and their institutional partners. www.fipf.info

• **Groupement FLE**

Founded in 1994, *Groupement FLE* brings together specialists in French as a foreign language from 33 different schools. It has created its own quality-assurance system based on the quality of the information and services offered to students, the availability of instruction consistent with the CEFR, and compliance with legal requirements related to safety, security and labor law. www.groupement-fle.fr

• **SOUFFLE, Groupement professionnel des organismes de français langue étrangère**

SOUFFLE is made up of 19 French-language centers, all of which have earned the “*Qualité FLE*” label. www.souffle.asso.fr

• **UNOSEL, Union nationale des organisations de séjours éducatifs, linguistiques et des écoles de langues**

Founded in 1978, UNOSEL is a national federation of 70 language schools and organizations active in educational and language-related travel. Its membership includes 8 schools of French as a foreign language that offer courses in French language, culture, civilization and French economy. www.unosel.com

For more information

- “Anciens étudiants étrangers: les Clubs France, relais francophiles et réseaux”, (*Former international students: Club France and francophile networks*), *Les Notes de CampusFrance*, March 2010, n° 20: http://editions.campusfrance.org/notes/NOTE_CAMPUSFRANCE_20.pdf
- Decree of May 3, 2007, recognizing the TEF : http://www.fda.ccip.fr/documents/pdf/tef/arrete_men_2007.pdf
- Europass: European language levels of the European Commission, self-assessment tool: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/LanguageSelfAssessmentGrid/fr>
- “Visas étudiants, visas scientifiques”, (student visas, scientific visas) *Les Notes de CampusFrance*, June 2010, n° 23: http://editions.campusfrance.org/notes/note_campusfrance_23.pdf

Useful Websites:

- Abbreviations of diplomas: www.qualitefle.fr/Abreviation.aspx/
- ADCUEFE, the association of directors of university centers for the study of French as a foreign language for foreigners: www.campus-fle.fr
- ALTE, The Association of Language Testers in Europe: www.alte.org
- Apprendre TV, le français avec TV5 Monde : www.apprendre.tv
- Asdifle, Association de Didactique du Français Langue Étrangère (Association for the teaching of French as a foreign language): www.asdifle.org
- AUF, Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (Francophone universities agency): www.auf.org
- CCIP, Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry: www.ccip.fr
- CEFR, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of the Council of Europe: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE_EN.asp
- CELAF, Centre de langue française (part of CCIP): www.fda.ccip.fr
- CIEP, Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques (International center for pedagogical research): www.ciep.fr
- CNED, Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance (National center for distance learning): www.cned.fr/vie-active/formation-professionnelle/fle/
- DELF, Diplôme d'études en langue française (diploma of French language studies), and DALF Diplôme approfondi de langue française (advanced diploma in French language): www.ciep.fr/delfdalf/
- DFP, Diplôme de français professionnel (diploma in professional French): www.fda.ccip.fr
- Directory of centers for French as a foreign language in France: www.qualitefle.fr
- FIPF, Fédération internationale des professeurs de français (international federation of teachers of French): www.fipf.info/
- Fondation Alliance française, the network of Alliance Française branches around the world: www.fondation-alliancefr.org
- FOU, Français sur objectifs universitaires (French for academic purposes) : <http://cuef.univ-perp.fr>
- *Le Français dans le monde*, review published by FIPF : www.fdlm.org
- *Franc-Parler*, Web portal of the global community of teachers of French: www.francparler.org
- GERFLINT, Groupe d'études et de recherches pour le français langue internationale (research group for French as an international language): <http://gerflint.eu>
- HERACLES (Hautes études et recherches pour les centres de langues de l'enseignement supérieur, advanced study and research to support postsecondary language centers) world forum: www.forumheracles.org
- Learn French in France: www.campusfrance.org/fr/d-catalogue/n_accueil_fle.asp/
- OIF, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (International francophone organization): www.francophonie.org
- Organization for the promotion of French as a foreign language: www.groupement-fle.fr
- RFI, Radio France internationale : http://www.rfi.fr/lffr/statiques/accueil_apprendre.asp/
- Study French in Paris – Winter and Summer language programmes - , courses in French as a foreign language for engineering students: www.epf.fr/html_gb/foreign/fle.html#programms/
- TCF, Test de connaissance du français (test of knowledge of French): www.ciep.fr/tcf/
- TCF-DAP, TCF for applications for preliminary admission (DAP procedures): www.ciep.fr/tcfdap/
- TEF, Test d'évaluation du français (French assessment test): : www.fda.ccip.fr/tef/
- TEFAQ, TEF Quebec version: www.fda.ccip.fr/tef/tefaq/
- TV5 Monde, French language television: www.tv5monde.com/premiereclasse

GOOD TO KNOW

- Tests of and diplomas in French as a foreign language enable applicants for *Licence* and Master's programs to demonstrate their level of French proficiency.
- Many language schools, branches of the Alliance Française, university departments of French, and cultural institutes in France and abroad provide rapid preparation for tests of French as a foreign language such as the TCF and TEF. Preparing for the DELF and DALF examinations requires more structure and greater planning but guarantees a good command of French. Plus the diplomas are valid for life!
- Students who prepare in France for a test of or diploma in French as a foreign language earn higher scores and have a greater likelihood of success because they have the benefit of cultural and linguistic immersion.
- Achieving a level B1 or B2 on the CEFR is desirable for postsecondary study in France, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. Some institutions in various fields (such as political science) may require a higher level of proficiency (C1 or C2).

www.campusfrance.org

CampusFrance's online catalog displays every program in France from the *Licence* to the Doctoral level as well as a directory of grant programs

• [campusfrance.org](http://www.campusfrance.org)>Find your course

- *Licence* and Master's levels: A search engine operating by degree level and field of study enables users to find degrees of interest and the institutions that offer them.

- Doctoral level: The online directory of doctoral departments uses its own search process.

- Specialized search for programs taught in English >Programs Taught in English

• [campusfrance.org](http://www.campusfrance.org)>Finance your studies

CampusBourse, a directory of grant programs

