



ENTRY AND RESIDENCE IN FRANCE: VISAS AND RESIDENCE PERMITS

Are you an international student or researcher at PSL planning to arrive in France or extend your stay?

Administrative procedures depend on the duration of your stay, funding, planned activity at the University, and your nationality.

We hope that this PSL Welcome Desk guide can help!

NOTE:

The information provided is for reference only and is not contractually binding on PSL University. The information has been compiled from various government websites and based on the PSL Welcome Desk's experience; however, it is subject to change depending on changes to services or other factors. Please feel free to email us at welcomedesk@psl.eu with any questions or comments.

Validated on July 13, 2026

SUMMARY

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTRY AND RESIDENCE IN FRANCE.....	3
European Nationals	3
Non-European National Students.....	3
Student with a Stay of More Than 3 Months.....	3
Student Registered for an Entrance Exam	4
Student with a Stay of Less Than 3 Months.....	5
Minor Student Under 18.....	5
Algerian National Student	6
Non-European National Doctoral Students and Researchers	7
Doctoral Student or Researcher with a Hosting Agreement (Convention d'accueil) Funded by a Contract, Scholarship Eligible for "Talent-Researcher" Status, or Employed by Their Home University	7
Algerian National Doctoral Student or Researcher with a Convention d'accueil	8
Accompanying Family	9
CHANGE OF STATUS	10
The " <i>Recherche d'emploi / création d'entreprise (RECE)</i> " Residence Permit.....	10
Other Residence Permit Categories.....	10
Multi-Year "Talent" Residence Permit	10
Employee or Temporary Worker (" <i>salarié or travailleur temporaire</i> ") Residence Permit	11
Change of Status for Algerian Nationals	11
Change of Status to a Family-Based Residence Permit (<i>titre de séjour vie privée / vie familiale</i>)	11
DOCUMENTS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER	12
Confirmation of Submission (<i>Confirmation de dépôt</i>)	12
Temporary Extension of Stay (<i>Attestation de prolongation d'instruction</i>)	12
Favorable Decision (<i>Attestation de décision favorable</i>)	12

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTRY AND RESIDENCE IN FRANCE

It is crucial that your arrival in France complies with the regulations according to your circumstances. Your initial status may impact your right to work, your eligibility for certain benefits, and your future plans in France. It is recommended to discuss your situation with your PSL school and the PSL Welcome Desk before starting administrative processes. The type of visa granted depends on the duration of your stay, funding, planned activity, and your nationality.

The first step is to use the [Visa Assistant](#) to identify which visa is best adapted to your situation.

If you are already in France, you may need to change your status according to your activity (example: "student" to "talent-chercheur" to start a PhD contract).

GOOD TO KNOW

A visa is issued by a consular office abroad and allows entry into the country. It cannot be renewed.

A residence permit is issued by a prefecture in France. It can be renewed with the same or a different category.



European Nationals

European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA), and Swiss nationals do not need a visa to live or work in France. If you are not a European national but reside in another Schengen Area country, please contact the PSL Welcome Desk for guidance on entry and residence procedures for France.

Non-European National Students

If you are a non-EU/EEA/Swiss student over the age of 18, once your admission has been confirmed, you can begin the process of obtaining your visa. Depending on your country of residence, you can apply through the "[Études en France](#)" program or directly with the French consular authorities in your country. Please note that a tourist visa does not allow you to study, work, or participate in an internship.

Student with a Stay of More Than 3 Months

Before Arrival

For a program lasting more than 3 months, you must apply for a long-stay visa. If your application is approved, you will be issued a **"student" long-stay visa serving as a residence permit (VLS-TS) (VLS-TS "étudiant")** with a validity period of 4 months to 1 year. Use the [Visa Assistant](#) to view the list of required supporting documents.

Required conditions:

- Enrollment in a higher education or training institution.
- Financial resources equal to or greater than 47% of the gross minimum wage (SMIC) (€877 in 2026).
- An address in France.

Once in France

You must validate your VLS-TS within 3 months of entering the country. The confirmation of validation will serve as your residence permit. You are authorized to work 964 hours per year, which is 60% of full-time work in France. If your VLS-TS is valid for 6 months, [work authorization approval](#) is also required if you plan to work.

1. Validate on [the ANEF website](#).
2. Fill in the information according to the instructions.
3. Select the regulatory reference: CESEDA R311-3 6°.
4. Upload the required documents and pay the fee using a [timbre fiscal](#).
5. A document titled "*Confirmation de la validation de l'enregistrement de votre visa long séjour valant titre de séjour*" will be sent to you as a PDF via email. Keep this document!

Renewal of the Student Residence Permit

Holders of a "student" residence permit must submit their renewal application between 4 and 2 months before its expiration, or they will be required to pay an additional fee of €180. To submit your renewal application, log into [the ANEF website](#), click on "I am applying for or renewing a residence permit," and follow the instructions.

GOOD TO KNOW

You do not need to have all the required documents to submit your application. For example, you can include an explanatory letter in place of the requested document if you are still waiting for it. The priority is to meet the deadline.



Supporting documents:

- Visa or residence permit.
- Passport.
- [E-photo](#).
- [Proof of address dated within the last 6 months](#).
- Enrollment certificate or proof of pre-registration for the coming year. The duration of the residence permit granted depends on the duration indicated on the document provided; be sure to submit the certificate for the coming year, not the current year.
- All transcripts from the past year, your most recent degree obtained in France, and a certificate of successful completion.
- Financial resources equal to or greater than 47% of the gross minimum wage (SMIC) (€877 in 2026).
- [Signed pledge to uphold the principles of the French Republic](#).

Once your application has been approved, the prefecture will notify you in your ANEF account. Once your residence permit card has been issued, the prefecture will notify you by text message or email. If you do not receive a message, contact the prefecture using the form available on their website, or contact the PSL Welcome Desk for assistance. Once you have scheduled an appointment to pick up your residence permit, pay the fee using a [timbre fiscal](#) and present proof of payment at your appointment. You must pick up your residence permit, and the card is required for your next renewal on the ANEF website.

If your residence permit expires but you have not yet completed your studies, you can apply for an extension of a few weeks or months. You must be certain of the date and intend to leave France afterward. Whether or not the extension is granted is at the discretion of the prefecture.

[Student Registered for an Entrance Exam](#)

Before Arrival

If you wish to travel to France to take an entrance exam, you must apply for a visa from your country of residence. If your application is approved, you will receive a **"student-entrance exam" visa (visa "étudiant-concours")**. Use the [Visa Assistant](#) to see the list of required supporting documents.

Required conditions:

- Notification of admission to an entrance exam or test.
- Financial resources equal to or greater than 47% of the gross minimum wage (SMIC) (€877 in 2026).
- An address in France.

Once in France

The "étudiant-concours" visa allows you to enter and stay in France for up to 90 days within a 180-day period in order to take the exam. If you pass the exam, you can apply for a student residence permit directly at the prefecture. If you fail, you must leave the country.

Student with a Stay of Less Than 3 Months

Before Arrival

For a program of 3 months or less, you must apply for a visa. If your application is approved, you will be issued a **"student" Schengen short-stay visa (visa Schengen court séjour mention "étudiant")** valid for up to 90 days within a 180-day period. Use the [Visa Assistant](#) to view the list of required supporting documents.

Required conditions:

- Enrollment in a higher education or training institution.
- Financial resources equal to or greater than 47% of the gross minimum wage (SMIC) (€877 in 2026).
- Address in France.

If your nationality exempts you from needing a short-stay visa for the duration of your program, we still recommend that you apply for one. Please note that "visitor" status does not authorize you to work or participate in an internship.

Once in France

Upon arrival, no further steps are needed.

Next Steps

A visa is not renewable, and a short-stay visa does not allow you to apply for a residence permit. You must leave the country at the end of your stay. If you wish to return to France, you must submit a new visa application from your country of residence.

Minor Student Under 18

Before Arrival

Regardless of the length of your program, we encourage you to contact the French consular authorities in your country of residence to apply for a visa. If your application is approved, you will receive a **"minor student" short- or long-stay visa (visa court ou long séjour "mineur scolarisé")**. Use the [Visa Assistant](#) to view the list of required supporting documents.

Required conditions:

- Enrollment in a higher education or training institution.
- Financial resources equal to or greater than 47% of the gross minimum wage (SMIC) (€877 in 2026).
- Address in France.
- Permission from your legal guardian.

Once in France

Upon your arrival, you do not need to complete any procedures to reside in France. Please note that many administrative procedures, such as opening a bank account, require a legal representative.

Next Steps

As soon as you turn 18 and within two months of your birthday, you must [apply for a residence permit at your local prefecture](#).

Algerian National Student

Before Arrival

You must apply for a visa through the "[Études en France](#)" process. For a program of more than 3 months, if your application is approved, you will be issued a **"student" long-stay visa (VLS "étudiant")**. Use the [Visa Assistant](#) to see the list of required supporting documents.

Required conditions:

- Enrollment in a higher education or training institution.
- Financial resources equal to or greater than 47% of the gross minimum wage (SMIC) (€877 in 2026).
- Address in France.

Once in France

Within two months of your arrival in France, you must submit your application for a residence certificate on the [ANEF website](#) with the following documents:

- Visa.
- Passport.
- [E-photo](#).
- Birth certificate showing filiation or full copy of your birth certificate.
- If you are married: marriage certificate and sworn statement of non-polygamy.
- If you have children: birth certificates for your children showing filiation.
- [Proof of address dated within the last 3 months](#).
- Income equal to or greater than 47% of the gross minimum wage (SMIC) (€877 in 2026).
- Certificate of enrollment or pre-enrollment at a French educational institution.
- [Signed pledge to uphold the principles of the French Republic](#) (optional).

This certificate authorizes up to 50% of full-time work in France, subject to obtaining [work authorization approval](#). Pay the tax using a [timbre fiscal](#) and present proof of payment when you pick up your certificate.

Residence Permit Renewal

As an Algerian student, you must renew your residence certificate every year on the [ANEF website](#), no earlier than 4 months and no later than 2 months before its expiration date. There is a fee for each renewal. The documents you must provide are the same as those required for your initial application, plus your current, valid certificate.

Non-European National Doctoral Students and Researchers

If you are a doctoral student enrolled at the University without funding or a scholarship that qualifies you for "talent-researcher" status, we invite you to follow the procedure for non-EU students outlined previously.

Doctoral Student or Researcher with a Hosting Agreement (Convention d'accueil) Funded by a Contract, Scholarship Eligible for "Talent-Researcher" Status, or Employed by Their Home University

Before Arrival

You must apply for a visa with French consular authorities in order to enter the country. If your application is approved, you will receive a **"talent-chercheur" visa**. Use the [Visa Assistant](#) to view the list of required supporting documents.

Required conditions:

- Hold at least a master's degree.
- Have a [host institution agreement \(convention d'accueil\)](#).

Once in France

If you hold a **long-stay visa serving as a residence permit (VLS-TS)**, you are required to validate it within 3 months of entering the country. The confirmation of validation will serve as your residence permit.

1. Validate on the [ANEF website](#).
2. Fill in the information according to the instructions.
3. Select the regulatory reference: CESEDA R311-3 9° or CESEDA R431-16 10° (either).
4. Upload the required documents and pay the fee using a [timbre fiscal](#).
5. A document titled "*Confirmation de la validation de l'enregistrement de votre visa long séjour valant titre de séjour*" will be sent to you as a PDF via email. Keep this document!

If you hold a **long-stay visa marked *carte de séjour à solliciter***, you must apply for a residence permit within 2 months of your arrival.

1. Apply for a residence permit online on the [ANEF website](#).
2. Select "I am applying for or renewing a residence permit for: myself" and "I hold only a long-stay visa."
3. Log in or create an account and fill in the information according to the instructions. Depending on what is indicated on your visa, select "Talent Passport for Researchers" or "Talent Passport for Researchers (Mobility)" (L421-14) from the drop-down menu.

Supporting Documents:

- Visa.
 - Passport.
 - [E-photo](#).
 - [Proof of residence dated within the last 6 months](#).
 - Diploma equivalent to at least a master's degree.
 - [Host institution agreement \(convention d'accueil\)](#).
 - [Signed pledge to uphold the principles of the French Republic](#).
4. Receive confirmation of submission via email and notice of approval (*attestation de décision favorable*) in your ANEF account once your application is approved.
 5. Receive a text message or email when your residence permit card is ready to be picked up at the prefecture. Pay the fee using a [timbre fiscal](#) and present proof of payment when you pick up the card.

Residence Permit Renewal

You can renew your “talent-researcher” residence permit based on a new hosting agreement, and thus with new funding, from the same institution or a new one. The application process is available on the [ANEF website](#) under the section “I am applying for or renewing my residence permit.” The documents you must provide are the same as those required for your initial application, plus your current, valid residence permit.

If you are a doctoral student and your residence permit is about to expire but you have not yet defended your thesis, you can apply for an extension for a few weeks or months. You must be certain of the date and intend to leave France afterward. Approval is at the discretion of the prefecture.

Finally, you can contact the PSL Welcome Desk to discuss the possibility of renewing your permit based on your eligibility for unemployment benefits.

Algerian National Doctoral Student or Researcher with a Convention d'accueil

Before Arrival

You must apply for a visa with the French consular authorities. If your application is approved, you will be issued a **“scientist-researcher” long-stay visa**. Use the [Visa Assistant](#) to view the list of required supporting documents.

Required conditions:

- Hold at least a master’s degree.
- Have a [host institution agreement \(convention d'accueil\)](#).

Once in France

After obtaining your long-stay “scientist-researcher” visa, you must make an appointment at the prefecture to submit your application for a residence certificate with the following documents:

- Visa.
- Passport.
- Birth certificate showing filiation or a full copy of the birth certificate.
- If you are married: a marriage certificate and a sworn statement of non-polygamy.
- If you have children: birth certificates for your children showing filiation.
- [Proof of residence dated within the last 3 months](#).
- 3 passport-size photos.
- [Host institution agreement \(convention d'accueil\)](#).
- [Signed pledge to uphold the principles of the French Republic](#) (optional).

The “scientist-researcher” residence certificate is valid for 1 year and is renewable. The first application is free of charge. Visit this website for more information: [1-Year Residence Certificate for Algerians](#).

Residence Permit Renewal

As an Algerian doctoral student or researcher, you must renew your residence certificate annually, no earlier than 4 months and no later than 2 months before its expiration date. The procedure depends on your prefecture. The documents you must provide are the same as those required for your initial application, plus your current, valid certificate. While the initial application is free, a fee is required for renewal upon issuance of the certificate.

Accompanying Family

If your family (spouse and child) is traveling with you, then they must also apply for a visa before departure to France.

Before Arrival

Your family must apply for a visa through the French consular authorities in your country of residence. This application can be submitted at the same time as yours or later. The type of visa they will be eligible for depends on the purpose of your stay. Consult the [Visa Assistant](#) to identify which visa is appropriate, as well as the application fees and required supporting documents.

If you hold a "talent-researcher" visa, your family will be issued a ["talent-family" visa \(visa talent-famille\)](#) and will benefit from a simplified process. If you are not married to your spouse, your spouse will not be eligible for the "talent-family" visa but may apply for a "visitor" visa.

Once in France

Upon your arrival, if your spouse has been granted a **"talent-family" VLS-TS or a "talent-family" visa requiring a residence permit card (VLS-TS "talent-famille" or visa "talent-famille" avec carte de séjour à solliciter)**, the process will be the same as yours.

If your spouse enters France on a **"visitor" VLS-TS**, validation is required on the [ANEF website](#). If it is a short-stay visa, no action is required.

Once in France, **minor children** do not need a residence permit to live in the country. However, it is strongly advisable to apply for a [travel document for minor foreigners \("document de circulation pour étranger mineur \(DCEM\)"\)](#) on the [ANEF website](#) so that your children can return to France after a trip abroad without having to apply for a new visa. The DCEM is valid for 5 years.

Residence Permit Renewal

Your spouse must apply to renew their residence permit between 4 and 2 months before it expires; otherwise, there is an additional fee of €180. To submit the renewal application, log into the [ANEF website](#), click on "I am applying for or renewing a residence permit," and follow the instructions. Whether or not your spouse's residence permit is renewed depends primarily on the duration and renewal status of your own permit.

GOOD TO KNOW

Depending on your situation, you may also be able to use [the family reunification process \(regroupement familial\)](#) to obtain family-based status.



CHANGE OF STATUS

If, upon completing your studies or research, you wish to remain in France to pursue a doctoral degree (if you were a student), look for work, start your own business, or start working, there are several options. No later than two months before your current permit expires, you must apply for a change of status to the appropriate residence permit depending on your situation. Please note that your path should follow a logical sequence (example: student > RECE > worker). Otherwise, it may not be viewed favorably by the prefecture, and your application will likely be subject to higher scrutiny.

The “Recherche d’emploi / création d’entreprise (RECE)” Residence Permit

If you earned your master’s degree in France or have completed your research and would like to look for a job or start your own business, you can apply for a [“Recherche d’emploi / création d’entreprise \(RECE\)” residence permit](#) within one year. If you leave France, you will have up to 4 years to apply for a “RECE” visa. The residence permit is valid for one year and is not renewable.

Some countries have bilateral agreements with France. In such cases, you will not be eligible for the RECE but may instead receive a provisional residence permit (APS). The countries concerned: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, the Republic of Congo, Mauritius, Gabon, Tunisia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and India. For more information, please consult [the bilateral agreements on professional mobility](#).

The RECE and APS are not available to Algerian nationals.

Before your “RECE” residence permit or APS expires:

- If you have found a job, you may apply for various types of residence permits depending on your salary.
- If you have started a business, you may apply for various types of residence permits depending on your situation.

If you are applying for a residence permit following a RECE, please note that there is a minimum salary requirement, and you must demonstrate a connection to your studies or research.

Other Residence Permit Categories

Multi-Year “Talent” Residence Permit

You can apply for a multi-year “Talent” residence permit, which comes in several categories (researcher, artistic and cultural professional, skilled employee, etc.) depending on your field and funding. You can find the list and eligibility requirements here: [Talent: Multi-Year Residence Permit for Foreigners in France](#). Applications are submitted on the [ANEF website](#).

If you are a student and wish to pursue a doctoral degree after completing your studies, and if you meet the following conditions, you must apply to change your status to a [“talent-researcher” residence permit](#):

Required conditions:

- Hold at least a master’s degree.
- Have a [host institution agreement \(convention d’accueil\)](#).



Employee or Temporary Worker ("salarié or travailleur temporaire") Residence Permit

If you have found a permanent employment contract (CDI), you can apply for [an "employee" \("salarié"\) residence permit](#). Your employer must apply for a work authorization document, which you must include in your residence permit application. This permit is valid for one year and is renewable.

If you have found a temporary contract (CDD), you can apply for [a "temporary worker" \("travailleur temporaire"\) residence permit](#). Your employer must apply for a work authorization document, which you must include in your residence permit application. This permit is valid for one year and is renewable.

Change of Status for Algerian Nationals

As an Algerian national, you can apply to change your status to a different type of residence certificate. For more information on the procedures and available options for changing your status, please visit this website: [1-Year Residence Certificate for Algerian Citizens](#).

Change of Status to a Family-Based Residence Permit (titre de séjour vie privée / vie familiale)

Depending on your family situation, you may apply to change your status to a family-based residence permit (*vie privée / vie familiale*). For example, if you are married to a French citizen, a parent of a French child, or in other situations, you can find the corresponding procedures on the dedicated website: [Public Service - Residence Permit for Private and Family Life](#). If you are a family member of a European Union citizen: [Residence permit as a family member of a European Union citizen](#).

DOCUMENTS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER

Here are the main documents you may encounter when applying for or renewing your residence permit on the [ANEF website](#).

Confirmation of Submission (*Confirmation de dépôt*)

Once you have submitted your application, you will receive confirmation of submission (*Confirmation de dépôt*) via email. The sole purpose of this document is to confirm that an application has been submitted. It does not constitute proof of legal residency and does not entitle you to the rights associated with the residence permit you applied for. Be sure to check your spam folder!

Temporary Extension of Stay (*Attestation de prolongation d'instruction*)

You may receive a Temporary Extension of Stay (*Attestation de prolongation d'instruction* (ADP)). The ADP is issued when you have submitted an initial application or residence permit renewal and once the previous residence permit or visa has expired. In the case of renewal, the ADP is valid only when accompanied by the previously held residence permit, even if it has expired. In this case, the document certifies that your rights remain in effect, including the right to work if permitted by the previous status, and authorizes the holder to cross Schengen Area borders.

Favorable Decision (*Attestation de décision favorable*)

The Favorable Decision (*Attestation de décision favorable* (ADF)) is issued when the prefecture has approved your application, and the process of producing the residence permit card has begun. The ADF is valid only when accompanied by the previously held residence permit or visa, even if it has expired. The ADF grants its holder the rights associated with the corresponding residence permit and authorizes the holder to cross Schengen Area borders.

LEARN MORE

<https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr>

CONTACT THE PSL WELCOME DESK



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