



PLANNING YOUR BUDGET

Planning your budget is the first step towards a successful stay at PSL. What are the expected expenses? How can you best manage your budget? What kinds of financial aid are available?

We hope this PSL Welcome Desk guide can help!

NOTES:

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



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FIRST MONTH EXPENSES

Your arrival in France involves one-time settling-in expenses that may double or even triple your standard monthly budget. Prepare a budget for your first month to avoid unexpected surprises.

In general, expenses for this first month may include:

- Plane/train/bus ticket to enter France;
- Tuition and other fees (CVEC);
- First month's rent and security deposit;
- Validation of your VLS-TS, if applicable;
- Home insurance and liability insurance;
- Purchase of linen, dishes, furniture, etc., if applicable.

Tuition Fees, CVEC, and Liability Insurance (Students)

Tuition Fees

Tuition fees vary depending on the nature of the diploma (national diploma or institutional diploma) and the level of study (undergraduate/graduate).

For the 2025/26 academic year, the tuition fees for programs issuing national diplomas were:

- €178/year for a bachelor's degree and €254/year for a master's degree for UE, EEE and Switzerland students;
- €2895/year for a bachelor's degree and €3941/year for a master's degree for other international students.

We invite you to contact your PSL school or academic coordinator for tuition information and possible exemptions. For more details, please check the [government web page on tuition fees](#).

The CVEC

The [CVEC](#), or *Contribution Vie Etudiante et de Campus* (Student and Campus Life Contribution), is a mandatory contribution of **€105** that most students must pay each year. Payment confirmation is required to finalize your academic enrollment. Please note that exchange students, refugees, and holders of French government scholarships may be exempt. The CVEC is used to finance student association projects and improve student support services, such as the PSL Welcome Desk.

Liability Insurance

Civil liability insurance is required for university enrollment. It covers any damage you may unintentionally cause. The cost varies between €10 and €15 per year. It can sometimes be included in other insurance packages, including home insurance or complementary private health insurance ("mutuelle").

GOOD TO KNOW

Université PSL has partnerships with [SMENO](#), [SMERRA](#), and [HEYME](#). Email welcomedesk@psl.eu to find out more.



Security Deposit for Your Accommodation

The security deposit is a sum of money that the tenant must pay the landlord once the rental agreement has been signed, usually at the same time as the first month's rent. This amount is cashed immediately and kept by the landlord for the duration of the rental period. The amount of the deposit is limited to two months' rent, charges excluded, if the apartment is furnished. If the apartment is unfurnished, the amount should not exceed one month's rent, charges excluded. To learn about cost of housing in the Paris region, please consult the second part of our guide.

When you leave the apartment, the landlord will be required to reimburse the total amount of the deposit if no damages are observed compared with what is noted in the check-out inventory ("*état des lieux*"). If your security deposit is not returned to you on time (within 2 months after the move-out inspection), [the landlord must pay you an additional 10% of the rent for each month](#).

VLS-TS Validation and Residence Permit Fees

If you arrived in France with a *visa long séjour valant titre de séjour* (VLS-TS), you must validate it on the website of [Administration numérique pour les étrangers en France \(ANEF\)](#) within three months of arrival. The fee must be paid using a [timbre fiscal](#).

If you arrived in France with a long-stay visa (*visa long séjour carte à solliciter*), you must apply for a residence permit card on the website of [Administration numérique pour les étrangers en France \(ANEF\)](#) within two months of arrival. The fee is due at the time of pick-up of the card and must be paid using a [timbre fiscal](#).

For more information, please consult our guide on visas and residence permits ("entry and residence in France").

Procedure	Current amount <i>On July 2026</i>	Total
Validation of Talent VLS-TS	€300	€300
First Talent and scientist-researcher residence permit	€300 + €50	€350
Renewal of Talent and scientist-researcher residence	€200 + €50	€250
Validation of student VLS-TS	€100	€100
Renewal of student residence permit	€50 + €50	€100
Autorisation provisoire de séjour (APS)	€100	€100
Naturalization	€255	€255
Exchange of driver's licence	€40	€40

LEARN MORE

- [To find out the current fees, visit this government website.](#)

Furnishing Your Accommodation

When you rent a furnished studio or room, a bed, desk, and sometimes an individual kitchenette (stove, microwave and refrigerator) will be provided. Sheets, comforters, pillows and dishes may not be provided. Before your arrival, check what appliances/equipment you will need to purchase yourself to prepare your budget accordingly. If you are living with roommates or a host family, check if you have full access to kitchen utensils, appliances and cleaning products.

Here are the main stores where you can find home textiles, furniture, and appliances:

- [Ikea](#)
- [Conforama](#)
- [Leroy Merlin](#)
- [But](#)
- Most supermarkets (see the “food budget” section below for a list)

There are also second-hand options available:

- [Emmaus](#) (solidarity shops)
- [Vinted](#) (sale of goods between individuals)
- [Leboncoin](#) (sale of goods between individuals)
- [Geev](#) (donations of objects between individuals)

YOUR STANDARD MONTHLY BUDGET

Once you have settled in, your standard monthly budget will normally include the following: accommodation, food, insurance, banking, transportation, health, phone and Wi-Fi, and leisure.

Expect to budget €1300-1600 per month in the Paris region. For a more accurate estimate, use this [budget calculator](#).

Accommodation

Expenses related to accommodation may include:

- Rent;
- Charges: for example, electricity, water, garbage collection...

Rental price range in the Parisian region (Île-de-France) Average monthly price (including utilities*)		
Accommodation type	Paris	Parisian region (outside of Paris)
Room in a host's house	From €700	From €600
Room in a co-living house	From €800	From €700
Studio in a student residence (type CROUS)	Between €400 and €600	Between €400 and €600
Studio (18m ²)	Between €800 and €1.000	Between €700 and €900
2 rooms apartment (35m ²)	From €1.200	From €900
3 rooms apartment (50m ²)	From €1.400	From €1.100

*Excluding gas or electricity

In general, if you are a student or researcher, you should budget €800-1.000 for rent in Paris, and €700-900 in the Paris region for single-person housing (room, roommates, or studio).

If you are a researcher with a family, expect to pay around €1.200 for a two-room apartment in Paris and €900 in the Paris suburbs, and at least €1.400 for a three-room apartment in Paris and at least €1.100 in the suburbs.

LEARN MORE

- [Observatoire des loyers à Paris \(Rent Monitor in Paris\)](#)
- [Observatoire des loyers en banlieue \(Rent Monitor in Paris suburbs\)](#)
- [Studapart rental prices](#)

Home Insurance

In France, home insurance is mandatory for tenants. The cost of home insurance depends on your accommodation: area, number of rooms, dependence, number of occupants, etc. The following table has information about the range of prices:

Accommodation type	Monthly price	Annual Price
Independent studio of 20m ²	€8	€97
Apartment of 30m ² (2 rooms)	€9	€111
Shared apartment of 40m ² (2 bedrooms)	€11	€131
Apartment of 60m ² (3 rooms, family with child)	€13	€154

For home insurance, expect to pay €9-€15 per month, depending on the size of your home, and €90-€160 per year.

GOOD TO KNOW

Université PSL has partnerships with [SMENO](#), [SMERRA](#), and [HEYME](#). Email welcomedesk@psl.eu to find out more.



Gas and Electricity

In some types of housing, particularly shared apartments, CROUS housing, or rooms in private homes, the utility bills generally include electricity, heating, and water. In most cases, you'll need to sign up for a monthly electricity plan (and sometimes a gas plan).

The main providers are [EDF](#), [Engie](#), and [Total Énergie](#). For electricity, expect to pay about 60€/month for a single person in an 18m² studio, €75/month for a single person in a 30m² apartment, and €126/month for two people in a 50m² apartment. If you have gas heating, expect to pay about the same amount for both gas and electricity combined.

GOOD TO KNOW

[Study watt](#) is a free service partnered with PSL that helps you through the process of signing up for an electricity plan (green energy) to find the best rate.
Promo code: **PSL**.



Food Budget

Your food budget will account for a significant part of your monthly expenses. Please note that the cost of living is significantly higher in Paris than in other regions.

Restaurants

Examples of prices in Parisian cafés and restaurants:

- Coffee in a bar or restaurant: €2
- Meal at a fast-food restaurant: €9
- Meal in a classic restaurant: €12 to €20
- Sandwich in a bakery with a drink: €5 to €8

GOOD TO KNOW

As a student, [with your Izly account](#), you have access to CROUS cafeterias, which offer [complete meals for €1](#). There is a point system for each meal component. When you get your tray, be sure to check the sign explaining your choices.



Food Shopping

You can save money by cooking at home. An average budget is €200 per month. For shopping, you can visit supermarkets or open-air markets.

Common supermarket chains include:

- **Low prices:** Lidl, Leclerc, Aldi, etc.
- **Intermediate/more expensive prices:** G20, Franprix, Monoprix, Magasins U, Casino, Auchan, Carrefour, Intermarché, Coccinelle, etc.
- **Organic supermarkets:** Naturalia, Biocoop, Bio c' Bon, etc.

There are also low-cost and anti-waste solutions:

- [To good to go](#): pick-up unsold food baskets close to you for low cost
- [Geev](#): food donation between individuals

Other Essential Goods

Most personal care products (deodorant, soap, shampoo, beauty products, etc.), school supplies, and baby products (milk, diapers, baby food, creams, etc.) are also available at supermarkets.

Health-Related Expenses

As an international student or researcher, you can benefit from the French social security system and be reimbursed up to 70% of your medical expenses. To learn more, please check our guides on registration to the Social Security system and the French health system. In general, the cost of a doctor's consultation is €30.

Expenses related to hospitalization, vision care, and dental care can be very expensive. It is therefore strongly recommended that you purchase complementary health insurance ("*mutuelle*"). If you are a **student**, expect to pay €5-€40 per month, depending on the *mutuelle* you choose. If you are an **employee**, your employer may offer a health insurance plan and cover a portion of the cost. Check with your human resources department. If you are on a **tight budget**, you may be eligible for the complementary solidarity health insurance (C2S) offered by the government. For more information, please consult our guide to the healthcare system in France.

GOOD TO KNOW

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Banking

Opening a French bank account is necessary for your daily life in France. You can find both physical and online banks in France. Physical banks may offer you more comprehensive services, but their fees of service are higher. Online banks have lower fees, but you may be required to provide a French RIB (bank account identification number) before opening an account.

Student associations often establish partnerships with banks, allowing students to benefit from certain advantages. Ask your PSL school and more particularly your BDE (*bureau des étudiants* (student office association)) for more information. Banks generally have attractive packages for students, with welcome offers (for example, they can offer you around €80 on your account) and reduced fees.

Some examples of "physical" banks (in alphabetical order):

- [Banque Populaire](#)
- [Banque Postale](#)
- [BNB Paribas](#)
- [Crédit Agricole](#)
- [LCL](#)
- [Société Générale](#)

Some examples of "virtual" banks (in alphabetical order):

- [N26](#)
- [Nickel](#)
- [Revolut](#)
- [Wise](#)

GOOD TO KNOW

Depending on the geopolitical situation, it may be more difficult to open a bank account. Know that there is a **right to a bank account** in France. If you need help: welcomedesk@psl.eu.



Phone and Internet

Telephone Subscription

Many mobile plans are offered by traditional operators ([Orange](#), [Bouygues Telecom](#), [SFR](#), [Free](#)) or by MVNOs (Mobile Virtual Network Operator). MVNOs may offer packages that cost less, but they usually do not have a physical store. You can choose your plan according to your specific needs, such as unlimited calls/SMS, international calls, 4G/5G, etc. In general, the monthly fee for your plan is deducted from your French bank account on a fixed date of the month, which means that you can only order a French mobile card after your bank account has been opened. In the meantime, you can get a prepaid card when you arrive, good for one or two weeks, and once your bank account is open you can switch to a classic provider. Usually, you can keep your initial phone number.

In general, you can subscribe to a package covering unlimited calls/SMS and 50 GB of mobile data for about 10 euros. The mobile card itself is not free and costs €10.

Please note that there are offers "with commitment" and "without commitment." If you choose a package "with commitment", you cannot cancel your contract during the commitment period, otherwise you will have to pay significant fees. If you choose a "no commitment" package, you can cancel your contract without any additional costs. In the case of a change of operator, you will need to order a new mobile card from your new operator; nevertheless, it is possible to keep your phone number.

Internet Subscription

While you can use the free Wi-Fi on campus, you'll probably need to subscribe to an internet package for your home. For a room or a studio, you can choose a package that costs around €20-€30 per month, which may include additional services. If you choose a mobile package and an internet package from the same operator, it is advisable to choose a "box + mobile" package, because it's cheaper. Before subscribing, remember to learn about the rules associated with your contract's cancellation.

Daily Transportation

Public Transportation

The metro network provides transportation within the city of Paris and its immediate suburbs, while the rail network RER (*Réseau express régional*) and *Transilien* (*réseau de trains de banlieue*) allows you to travel to the farther suburbs. Hundreds of bus lines and tramways complete this network. If you choose public transportation as your primary mode of travel, there are different fare options:

- The [Imagine'R card](#) is reserved for students in the Île-de-France region under the age of 26. This pass allows for unlimited travel throughout the Île-de-France region for €401.30 per year.
- The [annual Navigo pass](#) costs €90.80 per month. If you work, your employer will generally reimburse 50% of this cost.
- If you only use public transportation occasionally, the [Navigo Liberté +](#) may be a good option. With this pass, you pay only for the trips you take, at a discounted rate, with payment automatically deducted the following month.
- For children under 11, there is the [Imagine R Junior pass](#) for €25.20 per year. For children enrolled in school and over 11 years old, there is an [Imagine R Scolaire pass](#) for €401.30 per year.
- There is also a [special airport fare](#) of €14 for those without a pass.
- Finally, individual tickets are available.

[Find all the public transportation rates here.](#)

GOOD TO KNOW

If you are more than 26 and have modest income, you may be eligible for [the Tarification Solidarité Transport](#) (transportation rates for low-incomes households).



Self-Service Bicycles

In Paris, self-service bicycles are available via the city or private companies.

Vélib' offers affordable service packages for young people and students from 14 to 26 years old. Depending on your situation and your needs, you have the following options:

- V-plus package: With this subscription, you can use the standard (green) Vélib' bikes freely, up to 30 minutes per trip. For those under 27, the monthly rate is €3.22. The standard monthly rate is €4.30.
- V-Max package: This subscription gives you one hour of free use of a standard Vélib' bike (green) and up to 30 minutes of free use of an electric Vélib' bike (blue) on all trips. For those under 27, the monthly fee is €7. The monthly standard fee is €9.30.

Please note that for subscribers, trips outside the package are not included in the monthly rate. You can learn about all the conditions and rates on velib-metropole.fr.

Residence Permit Renewal

You must submit your renewal application 4-2 months before your current status expires on the [ANEF website](#). Please note that if you submit your application after the deadline, you will have to pay €180.

More information in our guide on entry and residence requirements.

Leisure

The cost of entertainment and cultural activities varies greatly. In Paris, you can find activities for all tastes and budgets. It is quite often that you can have access to discounts and special rates if you show your student card or if you are under 25 years old. Here are some examples which can help you estimate your budget for entertainment:

- 1 entry to the cinema at the under -26 rate: between €5 and €15; between €10 and €20 for standard rate.
- 1 visit to a museum or a national monument: free for all European Economic Area citizens under 26 years old, or between €5 and €15.
- 1 entry to the swimming pool: between €1,50 and €4.
- A theater ticket: from €10.
- 1 national daily newspaper: between €2 and €4.

GOOD TO KNOW

As a student, you have access to the CROUS de Paris ticketing service, which offers advantageous rates for many activities: www.culture-crous.paris.



LEARN MORE

Within Université PSL, there are many activities such as concerts or sports activities. You will find them here:

- [Agenda culture PSL](#)
- [PSL sport](#)



Books, Photocopies, and Printing

Book Purchases and Access to Libraries

In general, the price of an academic book or textbook can be around €30. In some cases, you can find good deals in bookstores or on platforms selling used books.

Your Université PSL enrollment provides access to PSL libraries. You also have access to all of PSL's resources via [PSL Explore](#). Outside of PSL, you may access Paris public libraries for free and the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* (BNF), the National Library of France, for a low annual fee.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you are a student under 35 years old, you can benefit from reduced rates for the Research Pass. In this case, the annual fee is €35. In addition, students of the École nationale des Chartes can benefit from a fee waiver.



Photocopying and Printing

The cost of photocopying and printing varies according to the size, color and number of pages you need. For example, if you print your documents at an off-campus print shop and you want the documents to be black and white (A4 size), the cost of printing a single page may be €0.20. If you print more, the cost of printing each page will decrease. The same goes for photocopying and scanning. Printing services in your school may or may not be free of cost.

Travel in France

You can travel within France by plane, [train](#), or [bus](#), the latter being the least expensive option. You can also rent a car (be sure to check foreign license and insurance requirements) or try a [carpooling application](#). Young people under 26 years old can benefit from many transportation discounts.

Here are some good deals for traveling by train:

- [Prem's ticket](#).
- [The carte avantage jeune](#).
- [The TGV max pass](#).
- [The Max Actif and Max actif+ pass](#).
- [The Interrail Pass](#).

CALCULATE YOUR SALARY CORRECTLY

If you are a researcher with a work contract or a student with a part-time job, be sure to distinguish between your gross pay (*salaire brut*) and your net pay (*salaire net*) when calculating your budget. Gross pay is the amount paid to you by your employer before various social security deductions. Net pay is the amount remaining after these deductions, which is what you actually receive.

In addition, with [income tax withheld \(prélèvement à la source\)](#), income tax is deducted monthly directly from your salary at a rate you can adjust. Adjustments may be made following the filing of your tax return. If you'd like to estimate your net pay based on your gross pay, we invite you to use [this calculator](#).

Feel free to check out our guide explaining how to read your pay slip.

FINANCIAL AID AVAILABLE

To learn more about financial aids and services available for students and young people, please visit [the website "1jeune1solution" for an aid simulator](#).

Aid for Students

Punctual Financial Aid

If you are in financial difficulty or if you face unexpected expenses, you can apply for punctual financial aid from your institution. This aid is financed by the FSDIE (*Fonds de solidarité et de développement d'initiative étudiante*, Solidarity and Student Initiative Development Fund). For more information, please contact the social service office of your school.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you need to meet with a CROUS social worker, make an appointment on messervices.etudiant.gouv.fr.



Food Aid for Students

The City of Paris and several solidarity associations offer free food aid for all students. If you have difficulties, do not hesitate to apply. Here are a few examples of the food aid program:

- **Solidarity grocery store of Crimée:** This solidarity grocery store is located in the 19th arrondissement of Paris and is open to families, young people, working people, students, and elderly people in temporary or long-term precarious situations. In this store, you can find fresh and various food products, as well as household cleaning products, personal hygiene products, baby products and other types of products which are offered at a price of 10 to 30% of their market value.
Address: 166 rue de Crimée, 75019 Paris.
- There is also a **monthly food distribution organized by PSL's Student Life Office** to help you supplement your groceries. An email is sent to all PSL students to inform them of the next distribution. You can also find information about the distributions on [the Student Life Instagram channel](#).
- **Linkee Paris:** Linkee is an association supported by the city of Paris. It offers balanced and sustainable food aid to all students in need, without any prerequisites. To benefit from its food aid, pre-register by email. For more information, [please visit the Linkee website](#).
- **Les Restos du Coeur de Paris**, in partnership with the CROUS de Paris and supported by the city of Paris, have opened a center of reception and food aid for students. Food aid is offered free of charge to students who have accommodation in Paris, and who meet the resource criteria. [To learn more about the food assistance available, visit their website](#).
- **Other types of food aid accessible to students:**
 - [AGORAé](#)
 - [Co'p1 – Solidarités étudiantes](#)
 - [Maison-etudiante.paris/epiceries-sociales/](https://maison-etudiante.paris/epiceries-sociales/)

Caisse d'Allocations Familiales Aid

The CAF is a Social Security agency responsible for family-related benefits. It provides assistance in two ways:

- Various social assistance programs that help fund facilities such as daycare centers and afterschool programs, thereby reducing costs for families.
- Direct financial assistance to households, paid based on eligibility criteria (housing assistance, birth grants, family allowances, childcare supplements, disability allowances, back-to-school allowances).

As a foreign national, if you can justify principal and regular residence in France, you may be eligible for most of these benefits depending on your personal, family, and professional circumstances.

Feel free to [visit the CAF website to learn more about the available benefits and eligibility criteria](#).

Housing Aid

The CAF offers personal housing aid to people with low incomes. There are three types of aid: APL ("*Aide personnalisée au logement*"), ALF ("*Allocation de logement familiale*"), and ALS ("*Allocation de logement social*"). Researchers, students, and doctoral students can apply. The types of financial aid available to students are the APL and the ALS. The ALF is available to families and young married couples. You can find more information on the housing guide.

IMPORTANT

To apply for this aid, please sign up on the [CAF website](#).

Before applying, please **make sure you meet the [new eligibility requirements](#)** that have been in effect since July 2026.

Please note that this process can take several months, and the aid should be considered an "extra" in your budget.



Family Aid

The CAF offers various forms of financial assistance for families, such as the back-to-school allowance (*allocation de rentrée scolaire*), the birth allowance (*prime à la naissance*), and monthly family allowance payments (*allocations familiales*). [You can find a complete list of available family benefits, check your eligibility, and apply on the CAF website](#).

The CAF also helps you cover the cost of daycare or after-school care.

Other Aid

The CAF also offers [disability benefits](#), whether in the form of assistance paid directly to the person recognized as having a disability or to those caring for a sick person with a disability.

If You Are a Refugee

If you are from Syria or neighboring countries, you can benefit from the HOPES project (Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians). The objective of the HOPES project is to improve the situation of young Syrian refugees, as well as of youth in vulnerable positions, in five countries that have taken in Syrian refugees (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey) and to make it easier for them to access higher education. A page dedicated to this project is available on the [Campus France website](#).

If you are eligible for the temporary protection status, introduced since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, [you have access to many resources that you will find in part here](#).

As an asylum seeker or a refugee, you can benefit from all the CAF aids regardless of your nationality.

Please feel free to contact a refugee aid organization ([La Cimade](#), [France Terre d'Asile](#), [Groupe accueil et solidarités](#), [Groupe d'information et de soutien des immigrés](#)).

CONTACT THE PSL WELCOME DESK



welcomedesk@psl.eu



[PSL Welcome Desk – website](#)



[Book an appointment](#)