Student Mobility

Higher learning students have several kinds of programmes enabling them to carry out part of their studies abroad: bilateral or multilateral programmes and European-type programmes.

Par ailleurs, il convient de rappeler ici que la France a réformé en 2002 la structure de son système d’enseignement supérieur (licence-master-doctorat) et généralisé le système E.C.T.S. (unités de valeur transférables), en accord avec les principes du processus de Bologne et dans le but de faciliter la mobilité des étudiants dans l’espace européen.

Mobility programs for Students

Foreign language assistant teachers
A multilateral programme
Candidates; 2nd or 3rd university year students preparing a language diploma or, for certain destinations, in letters, history-geography, the education sciences, the language sciences, plastic arts, etc.
Timeframe: 7 to 9 months
Characteristics: French assistant teachers in non-French-speaking countries.
Activities: oral language practice with pupils; participation in certain educational activities in the school; running a language club; language internships; personalised aid; participation in implementing an exchange project; initiation in the home culture.
Funding: compensation varies according to the host country.
Operator: CIEP

Fulbright Scholarship
A Franco-American programme
Candidates: 3rd year licence students or Masters, all disciplines.
Timeframe: one school year.
Characteristics: teaching assistant for French in the United States; teaching assistant at university or school level; 2 compulsory courses in a university on civilisation, history or literature.
Objectives: confirming language skills.
Funding: Fulbright scholarship.
Operators: CIEP; Franco-American Commission; the cultural service of the French embassy in the United States; the Institute of International Education.

Entente Cordiale
A Franco-British programme
Candidates: French and British students at the post-graduate level and under 35 years old.
Timeframe: one year.
Characteristics: individual mobility; a study or research year in the United Kingdom.
Objectives: consolidation of Franco-British ties; experience of daily life in Britain; a study period in the United Kingdom.
Funding: €10,000.
Operator: the British Council

**France is actively involved in 2 major European initiatives designed to enhance student mobility in Europe via the aforementioned EFTLV programme.**

**Erasmus Programme**
A European programme
Candidates: 2nd year pupils in a higher technical section.
Timeframe: 3 to 12 months.
Characteristics: a period of study abroad or an internship in a company; recognition of the time spent in the host institution, with the transfer of ECTS credits or in the host company.
Objectives: strengthening language skills; learning about a new educational system; developing notions of European citizenship.
Funding: mobility allowance.
Operator: 2E2F

**Comenius Assistant**
A European programme
Candidates: Students studying to becomes professors or having finished their teacher training without yet having taught.
Timeframe: 13 to 45 weeks.
Characteristics: a stay in a foreign institution; teaching the future teacher's discipline or the modern languages he or she masters or their mother language and culture.
Objectives: comparison with another educational system; training enrichment; improvement of language skills and an European cultural approach; improvement of teaching skills.
Funding: the national agency pays for travel, living and dining expenses. The overall amount of the scholarship is defined by the national agency depending on the destination country and the length of assistant teaching.
Operator: Agence Europe Education Formation France

Besides, for private technical higher education institutions and institutions under the authority of a Chamber of Commerce, in particular engineering schools and higher business and management schools, student mobility is also reflected in the organisation of compulsory time spent abroad (academic stays in universities and other partner higher education institutions and work placements in companies) and, for some, the signing of double diploma agreements.

**Mobility Grants for Students**

Several types of grants are available to students, enabling them to fund their studies abroad.

**ERASMUS and ERASMUS MUNDUS scholarships**
A student taking part in an ERASMUS exchange may be granted a scholarship (€200 per month on average) to study at another European university for a minimum of 3 months without having to once again pay for their tuition.
And ERASMUS scholarship may also be allocated to enable selected students to carry out an internship in Europe (over €400 per months).
European students who are selected to prepare a Masters or a Doctorate in the ERASMUS MUNDUS community programme (2009-2013) may also benefit from scholarships set up for this purpose.
Other possible grants

Other grants may come from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other ministries, regional councils, etc.

a. Scholarships awarded by the ministry for national Education

Mobility grants for work placements
In the domain of post-baccalauréat vocational training and technical education, scholarships designed to support work placements in a European Union country are provided to students preparing for a BTS diploma. The placement, with a 3 to 10-week duration, must be in a foreign language, within an industrial or commercial company.

Studying in the countries of the Council of Europe
French students or students from the European Union who wish to pursue higher education in a public higher education institution in one of the member countries of the Council of Europe can benefit from a grant awarded based on social criteria, in the same conditions as in France, for the preparation of a foreign national qualification. For that they must be enrolled, full time for a university year or two semesters depending on the country, in a higher learning institution officially recognised by the State to pursue advanced studies leading to a national diploma. Courses which, in France, are not under the authority of the ministry of national Education (e.g.: architecture, veterinary studies etc.) and language upgrade courses are excluded from this scope.

b. Scholarships awarded by the ministry of foreign Affairs

International mobility aid
This aid is intended to support the international mobility of students wishing to pursue advanced training abroad as part of an exchange programme or carry out an international internship. This training or internship must figure in the framework of their study curriculum.
It is done in the form of supplementary aid to the social-criteria grant for recipient students. The monthly amount is €400.
Recipients of this aid, which is subject to an annual quota, are selected by the higher education institution where they are enrolled. It should be noted that only those higher learning institutions governed by the four-year contracting procedure with the Ministry of Higher Learning may grant this aid for international mobility.
The aid is paid directly by CROUS based on recipient lists communicated by institutions.

Aid for studying in France
The ministry for foreign Affairs also awards scholarships within the framework of specific programmes. Three scholarship programmes designed to attract the best foreign students are mentioned hereafter:

- "Eiffel" excellence scholarship: set up in 1999, the "Eiffel excellence scholarship" programme is aimed at the best foreign students who want to continue their higher education in France, at master or doctorate level in 2nd and 3rd cycle levels, in three major domains: engineering sciences, economics - management, law – political science.
- "Major" excellence scholarship programme: the objective of this excellence scholarship programme, launched at the beginning of the 2000 university year, is to facilitate the continuation of studies for former pupils of French lycées abroad, holders of a French baccalauréat who already benefit from a first 2-year excellence scholarship programme, managed by the Agency for French education abroad (AEFE). More specifically, the scholarship awarded enables those who completed their first cycle to continue studying for 3 more years, in grandes écoles or university cycles, until they are awarded the master qualification.
- French Government scholarships: these are awarded for studies, placements or language trips
to France. Most of them are awarded by the cultural cooperation and initiative Services of the French Embassies and general Consulates abroad. There are several categories of scholarship:

- **Study scholarship**: the "study scholarship" is granted to students enrolled in the regular cycle of a French higher education institution with a view to obtaining a diploma awarded by this institution;
- **Placement scholarship**: the "placement scholarship", the duration of which varies on average from 3 to 12 months, is awarded with a view to training, perfecting, or specialised study connected with a professional occupation. It can also be a short-term language scholarship or short-term pedagogical placement scholarship (3 months), for training courses authorised by the Ministry for national education;
- **High level scientific trip scholarship**: the "high level scientific trip scholarship", with an average duration of one to three months, is granted within the framework of a high-level cultural, scientific, technical or industrial research and exchange programme.

In addition, it should be underlined that foreign students, who do not benefit from a scholarship, can benefit, in the same capacity as French students, from particularly low enrolment fees for universities and public education institutions on the authority of the Ministry for national education.

**Academic Staff Mobility**

**National policy objectives relating to the mobility of staff in higher education**

France’s strategy for promoting staff mobility in higher education rests in large measure on the country’s participation in EU programmes as part of its European commitments with regard to the Bologna Process. Mobility is a priority at European level, thus it is one for France as well.

Beyond the EU framework, public authorities are involved in international mobility actions at bilateral level: the Department for Higher Education and for Research and the Department for Foreign and European Affairs work closely with their foreign opposite numbers to encourage mobility of French researchers abroad, and of foreign researchers towards France. Target figures, in particular concerning mobility amongst higher-education staff, have not been set at national level, but the "internationalisation" of higher-education establishments (their training and their research projects involving scientific staff) is clearly part of the development strategy of higher education and of research in France. International openness represents one of the aspects of evaluation adopted by the French Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education (Agence d’évaluation de la recherche et de l’enseignement supérieur - AERES).

**National mobility programmes for higher-education staff**

In France, mobility amongst higher-education staff concerns young researchers in particular (doctoral and post-doctoral students) and teaching staff (research professors, university professors). Outside the numerous exchange programmes (like the “Marie Curie” programme) and international mobility programmes set up at the initiative of other countries (e.g. the USA “Fulbright” programme), mobility amongst higher-education staff essentially comes within the framework of:

1. bilateral exchange programmes and financial assistance for mobility, set up under the supervision of the Department for Foreign and European Affairs as well as the Department for Higher Education and for Research;
2. partnerships set up by higher-education establishments exercising their educational and budgetary independence.
National programmes under the supervision of the Department for Foreign and European Affairs as well as the Department for Higher Education and for Research

Those are programmes and financial assistance to mobility that fit into the framework of the Department of Foreign Affairs’ policy of supporting international scientific and technological exchanges; they are implemented with the support of the Department for Higher Education and for Research. Here are a few examples:

- The **Hubert Curien partnerships** (Partenariats Hubert Curien – PHC), the aim of which is to develop scientific and technological exchanges of excellence between research laboratories attached to scientific communities, by encouraging new co-operation. PHCs are aimed at public and private research laboratories that are attached to higher-education establishments, research bodies, or businesses. The support allocated is aimed at financing mobility amongst researchers engaged in partnerships;

- The **Hermès programme**, the aim of which is to enable young post-doctoral researchers in the human and social sciences from countries in Asia, Latin America, and South Africa to undertake research placements in France. Those placements last for between three and nine months. They are designed to enable invited researchers to carry out an individual research project within a host laboratory, and to set up long-lasting co-operation between their home institutions and the host establishments. The Hermès programme was set up at the initiative of the Department for Foreign and European Affairs, in relation with the House of Human Sciences Foundation (Fondation Maison des Sciences de l’Homme – FMSH), the Department for Higher Education and for Research, and the “Humans and Society” Department of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (Centre national de la recherche scientifique – CNRS). The FMSH provides scientific and administrative management for the programme;

- The **Diderot Scholarships**, established in July 1989 by a joint initiative of the Department for Foreign and European Affairs, the Department for Higher Education and for Research, the Department for Culture and Communication, and the CNRS. Its aim is to invite post-doctoral researchers in the human and social sciences to spend long-term research placements in French research laboratories that provide them with a scientific host context. Since 2010, the Diderot Scholarships – whilst retaining their own identity – have been incorporated into the new “Fernand Braudel - IFER” (International Fellowships for Experienced Researchers”) programme, which is supported by the European Union (Mare Curie Action Programme);

- The **CAPES-COFECUB Agreement** (Co-ordination for Training Higher-Level Staff - French Committee for Evaluating University Co-operation with Brazil – Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Comité Français pour l’Évaluation de la Coopération Universitaire avec le Brésil ) was signed in 1979 between France and Brazil. It aims at continuing high-level scientific exchanges between the two countries. It enables equal-shares co-financing of short missions by university researchers and lecturers, as well as the provision of training for Brazilian doctorate holders in France and French doctorate holders in Brazil who work on projects of scientific excellence across the range of disciplines;

- The **USP-COFECUB Agreement** (University of São Paulo - French Committee for Evaluating University Co-operation with Brazil – Universidade de São Paulo - Comité Français pour l’Évaluation de la Coopération Universitaire avec le Brésil ) was put in place in 1994 at the joint initiative of the Department for Foreign and European Affairs and the University of São Paulo. It aims at setting up a system of academic exchanges that enables Brazilian and French research professors to develop high-level joint research across the range of disciplines;

- The **Zhang Heng programme**, aimed at young French researchers from research laboratories
attached to higher-education establishments or to public bodies. It enables finance to be provided for a one-week stay in China with the purpose of giving French researchers knowledge of research carried out in China in the field of infectious diseases, more particularly in relation to topics chosen for implementing Franco-Chinese scientific co-operation in the field of emerging infectious diseases;

- The **Franco-Argentine Bernardo Houssay programme**, which provides finance for mobility amongst post-doctoral students (up to a maximum of 10 years following thesis defence) in the context of common research projects;

- The **Partner University Fund** (PUF): set up in 2007 to facilitate the implementation of long-lasting academic partnerships between the USA and France. It enables financial support to be provided for large-scale calls for projects that are open to all French and USA higher-education establishments and research bodies. The actions are financed for three consecutive years by the Department for Foreign and European Affairs as well as by private USA donors, and are very diverse by nature: student mobility and joint honours, joint supervision of theses, lecturer visits, joint publications, etc.

**Partnerships put in place by higher-education establishments exercising their independence**

By virtue of the independence that is granted to higher-education establishments under law (law no. 68-978 of 12 November 1968, law no. 2007-1199 of 10 August 2007), they can set up international partnerships with other universities in Europe and around the world, in order to develop common research projects. Those partnerships very often include mobility amongst researchers and research professors. In a context of increased international competition in the field of research and innovation, French higher-education establishments are strongly engaged in putting in place strategies to boost their visibility on the international scene, which involves mobility and co-operation actions with their partners abroad.

For an example of that type of strategy, please consult the international section of the University of Paris – Descartes.

**Authorities responsible for organising, co-ordinating, and financing those programmes**

As has been mentioned above, in France, the mobility of higher-education staff fits into the framework of exchanges and financial assistance for mobility set up under the supervision of the Department for Foreign and European Affairs as well as the Department for Higher Education and for Research; partnerships set up by higher-education establishments exercising their independence. Concerning the first category of mobility programmes, the bodies responsible for organising and financing them are the Department for Foreign and European Affairs and the Department for Higher Education and for Research. The latter is often more involved in implementing programmes, for example as regards the evaluation of projects presented by candidates for mobility. The management of arrangements is generally given to a public establishment placed under the supervision of the Department for Foreign and European Affairs as well as the Department for Higher Education and for Research. Campus France: the Campus France Agency was set up by the law of 27 July 2010. It is tasked with managing international mobility amongst students, researchers, experts, and guests. The decree of 30 December 2011 sets out the Agency’s organisation and terms of action.

Furthermore, mobility partnerships and plans put in place by higher-education establishments are managed by bodies within the establishments. By way of example, at the University of Paris – Descartes, those plans are managed by the “International Partnerships Directorate” (“Direction des partenariats internationaux”), placed under the responsibility of the University Vice-Chancellor and of
the Director General of the departments; its mission is, inter alia, to manage the means made available for the development on the international scene of the university in all its aspects: mobility amongst students and research professors, joint training or research programmes. Since law no. 2007-1199 of 10 August 2007 was passed, universities have enjoyed full independence in terms of budget management: thus, it is possible for them to finance part or all of an exchange programme. In general, that takes the form of “financial assistance for mobility”, a grant intended to finance mobility costs for researchers involved in a scientific co-operation project with other partners in Europe and around the world.

The financial means made available by universities – and that come from their budgets – can be added to by other sources of finance for mobility, such as:

- finance granted by the French National Research Agency (Agence nationale de la recherche - ANR) (a public establishment that is administrative in character) to projects of excellence. The ANR has included amongst its priorities the development of European and international collaboration; in the context of signing agreements with foreign finance agencies, it sets up bilateral or multilateral partnerships on topics of common interests that are deemed strategic by the agencies;
- scholarships for help with mobility that are made available by certain local authorities (municipalities, départements, and regions).

**Evaluating the impact of those programmes**

The AERES is tasked with evaluating higher-education and research institutions, research bodies, higher education training programmes and degrees and with validating their staff-evaluation procedures. Examining the strategy of international openness amongst various institutions (setting up international partnerships; availability of mobility scholarships for students and researchers; transparency and legibility of training programmes, etc.), are part of its task of overall evaluation of each institution.

**Financial conditions for taking part in the programmes**

In the majority of cases, financial support for mobility is represented by scholarships. They cover all travel costs, and may include a per diem payment for day-to-day expenses. In the case of partnerships between universities, mobility is financed by “additional” scholarships, aimed at financing only the additional cost of travel abroad; thus, one speaks of mobility “assistance” (made available by: universities and research bodies; national agencies like the ANR; local authorities, etc.).

**Mechanisms for encouraging participation in those programmes (e.g. career advancement) for the staff concerned**

In the case of research professors, the provisions of articles 39 and 55 of decree no. 84-431 of 6 June 1984 setting out the common statutory provisions applicable to research professors, and giving special status to the corps of university professors as well as the corps of lecturers and university professors, provide that a seniority bonus of one year, taken into account for advancement along the scale, is granted on request to lecturers (article 39) and university professors (article 55) who have, in that quality, completed a period of mobility of at least two years, or of one year if the mobility was accomplished within a higher-education or research establishment of a Member State of the European Union or the European Economic Area, other than France.

A similar provision is in place in favour of researchers who come under decree no. 83-1260 of 30 December 1983, which sets the common statutory provisions for the corps of civil servants at public scientific and technological establishments.
Article 11 of that text provides that a seniority bonus of one year, taken into account for advancement along the scale, is granted to researchers who, from the date of publication of the decree, complete a period of mobility of at least two years in another research or higher-education body, abroad, or within a State administrative body, a local authority, or a public or private business.

In addition, various actions are carried out at local or international level in order to foster possibilities for joining research teams in other countries.