

Visas étudiants, visas scientifiques

CampusFrance Note n°35 reviews current legislation on short- and long-term visas for students, doctoral candidates, and research scholars and scientists.

It updates Note n°23 of June 2010, taking into account recent changes in French law.

Foreword

Legal origins

A visa is an authorization granted by the French consular authorities to foreigners wishing to enter France. Stamped into the passport, the visa enables the traveler to appear before the French authorities responsible for admitting foreigners into France.

The visa has long existed in one form or another (*laissez-passer*, safe conduct, letters of introduction, passport, papers carried by sailors and migrant workers, and so on), but in prerevolutionary France usages were far from consistent. During the Revolution, passport and visa requirements were linked to the monitoring of foreigners in a time of war. By 1795, foreigners arriving in France had to surrender their passport to municipal authorities, who forwarded it to the Committee for General Security to be stamped (Law of 23 Messidor, Year III). But only after 1830 did the practice of states issuing passports to their citizens for travel purposes become widespread. Until then, it was the destination country that usually issued the passport.

Obviously, the legal basis for visas has changed greatly since then. Today, either European Community law or national law applies, depending on the length of the traveler's stay. Stays of up to 90 days fall under community law, whereas extended stays continue to be governed by national law.

Contents

Part 1 (page 2)

Current law and regulation

- 1.1 Schengen area regulations: short stays
- 1.2 French regulations: extended stays

Part 2 (page 3)

Short-stay visas (Schengen visas)

- 2.1 Features
- 2.2 The student examination visa
- 2.3 Obtaining a Schengen visa

Part 3 (page 4-7)

Extended-stay visas

- 3.1 Combined extended-stay study visa and residency permit (VLS-TS)
- 3.2 Extended-stay research scholar visa

Part 4 (page 7)

Appeals of visa denials

- 4.1 Short-stay visas
- 4.2 Extended-stay visas

Part 5 (page 8)

Obtaining and renewing a residency permit

- 5.1 Where to apply
- 5.2 When to apply
- 5.3 Documents required
- 5.4 The role of the préfecture

Current law and regulation

1.1 Schengen area regulations: short stays

The European Union's visa code took effect in April 2010. It unifies the formerly disparate European legal provisions governing visa decisions.

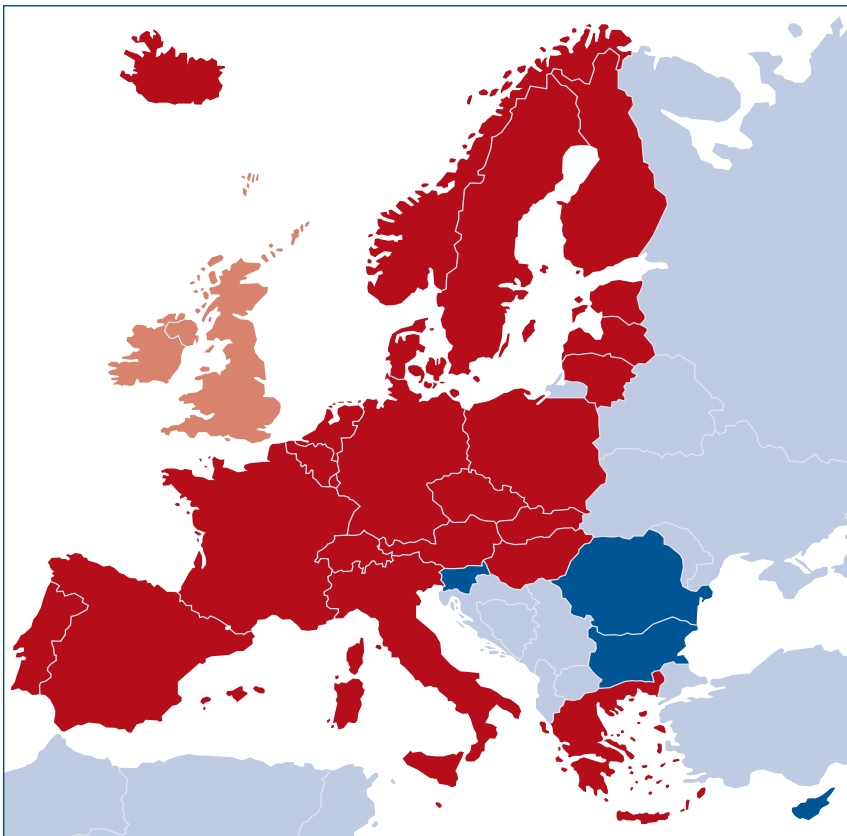
The new code increases transparency, reinforces security, ensures equal treatment of applicants, and harmonizes the rules and practices applied by the nations of the Schengen area (22 EU member states and 3 associated states: Switzerland, Iceland, and Norway) that apply the common visa policy. Four other states (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, and Romania) have signed Schengen agreements but have not yet fully implemented them.

1.2 French regulations: extended stays

In metropolitan France and its overseas departments and territories, applications for visas for stays exceeding 3 months (extended stays) are subject to the provisions of France's national legislation on entry, residency, and asylum (known as CESEDA), and on related interministerial regulations. France's consulates process visa applications based on procedures and criteria that are not disclosed to the public, as disclosure might be prejudicial to France's foreign policy (Council of State, 17 February 1997).

The decision to grant or refuse a visa, as well as the adjudication process leading up to that decision, are the exclusive preserve of France's consular authorities, who enjoy a great deal of discretion within the guidelines provided by their superiors (Decree of November 13, 2008, concerning the visa-granting powers of heads of diplomatic and consular posts). Consular officials are not required to explain their decision to refuse an extended-stay visa, except for certain categories of applicants (CESEDA, article L 211-2).

The Schengen area (2010)



The Schengen area

Applicants may now use a European visa application form.¹

Normally, it takes less than two weeks to obtain an appointment in connection with an application for a Schengen visa, except in special circumstances (such as "high season"). The waiting period to receive the visa is 15 calendar days (community visa code, article 23). Effective April 5, 2011, the grounds for refusal of a Schengen visa must be disclosed to the applicant (article 32).

The community visa code is accompanied by a manual on the processing of visa applications. Designed for diplomatic posts that grant this type of visa, the manual is available to the public on the website of the European Commission.²

■ Espace Schengen
■ Pays signataires sans application des accords
■ Pays de l'UE non signataires

Source : UE

1- URL for the form : http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/france_829/venir-france_4062/entrer-france_4063/colonne-droite_4266/services-formulaires_4269/formulaires-visas_46412.html

2- Community visa code (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:243:0001:0058:FR:PDF>) and manual (http://www1.mfa.gouv.fr/images/docs/schengen/manuel_relatif_au_traitement_des_demandes_de_visa_et_a_la_modification_des_visas_delivres.pdf) sur le site de la Commission européenne

Short-stay visas (Schengen visas)

2.1 Features

The new community visa code provides common rules for the granting of short-stay visas within the Schengen area. There are two types of short-stay visa:

- *Airport transit visas* allow the holder to move through the international terminal of an airport but not to leave it. This visa does not apply to all nationalities.
- *Uniform visas* (valid throughout the Schengen area) authorize stays of up to 3 months within a given 6-month period. The number of days that the holder may spend in the Schengen area is specified on the visa sticker, along with the dates of validity of the visa, which may be up to 5 years provided the applicant's passport remains valid for that long (community visa code, article 24).

In exceptional cases, consulates may grant visas that are valid for just one Schengen country.

Depending on the application, the uniform visa may provide for one entry, two entries, or multiple entries into the Schengen area. The holder of a uniform visa may move freely within the entire Schengen area (community visa code, article 25).

It is not possible to renew this type of visa from within the Schengen area, except in cases of *force majeure* or for humanitarian or compelling personal reasons (community visa code, article 33).

The issuance of a short-stay visa is free for students and accompanying faculty traveling for academic or training purposes (community visa code, article 16).

Students wishing to enroll in a language training course or other short-term program are encouraged to apply for this type of visa.

2.2 The student examination visa (CESEDA R313-3)

The student examination visa allows the holder to enter France to sit for an entrance examination or other form of examination required as part of the process of applying for admission to a public or private institution of higher education in France. Students who pass the exam may apply directly (without first returning home) for a renewable 1-year residency permit at the prefecture for the area in which the student's new institution is located. Most applicants for the student examination visa must use the CEF procedure (see below) if that procedure is in effect in their country.

2.3 Obtaining a Schengen visa

France's consular authorities are responsible for examining visa applications. Applications must meet the following conditions:

- An application form must be completed, signed, and submitted together with a valid passport and a photograph.

- The visa fee must be paid.
- Where applicable, biometric identification data must be collected (community visa code, article 11 and following).

Applicants must present to the consular authorities proof of the purpose and circumstances of their visit, including evidence that they possess sufficient financial means and have a place to live. Applicants must also provide information that demonstrates their intention to leave the Schengen area on or before the expiration date of the visa (visa processing manual, article 6.2). Applicants must have medical insurance that is valid during travel with a minimum coverage of €30,000 (community visa code, article 15).

Nationals of the following countries need not obtain a visa for short stays in France:

- 1- Citizens of the European Union, the European Economic Area, and Switzerland.
- 2- Nationals of the following countries, regardless of the purpose of their visit: Albania,* Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Bosnia,* Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, Malaysia, Mauritius, Monaco, Nicaragua, New Zealand, Panama, Paraguay, San Marino, Vatican City, Seychelles, Taiwan (passport must include identity card number), Uruguay, Montenegro,* Macedonia,* and Serbia.*
- 3- Nationals of the following countries: Australia, Brazil, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Singapore, United States, and Venezuela. If the traveler will engage in paid employment while in France, the exemption applies only if he or she presents evidence of work authorization.
- 4- Holders of passports from the special administrative regions of Hong Kong (People's Republic of China) and Macao (People's Republic of China). **The exemption does not apply if the traveler will engage in paid employment in France.**
- 5- Holders of a valid French residency permit.
- 6- Holders of a residency permit issued by a state that has implemented the Schengen agreements; holders of certain travel documents issued by EU member states.
- 7- Holders of the "British Nationals Overseas" passport.

Special cases: Journalists on assignment, scientists, and artists intending to engage in paid employment in France must obtain a visa.

Source: French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (diplomatie.gouv.fr), September 1, 2011.

*exemption applies only to holders of biometric passports

Extended-stay visas

3.1 Combined extended-stay study visa and residency permit (VLS-TS)

Created in 2007, this visa is now offered to all international students (except Algerians, to whom special provisions apply) intending to enroll in a French institution of higher education. The visa is usually valid for 1 year, "except in circumstances that call for a visa of shorter duration, as in the case... of certain students (circular of March 29, 2009, from Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity, and Mutual Development).

When the visa is granted, the consulate stamps the certification request form from the French Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII) that accompanied the visa application. Holders of this type of visa are no longer required to visit the local prefecture of police to obtain a renewable residency permit. Formerly they had to apply for the permit within 2 months of arriving in France. On the other hand, they must report to the OFII and complete certain formalities.¹

In particular, upon their arrival in France, they must send to OFII by registered mail (with confirmation of receipt):

- the stamped OFII certification form that they received from the official who granted their visa.
- a copy of the pages of their passport bearing their identity data and the stamp signifying entry into France or another country of the Schengen Area.

Upon receipt of these documents, the OFII will send, by regular mail to the address provided by the visa holder, a letter acknowledging receipt of the form and summoning the applicant for a medical visit (if such a visit was not carried out in the applicant's home country) or an orientation session.

Pilot efforts are being made to use e-mail to facilitate exchanges between students and the OFII.

Special cases:

- 1- Students residing in Paris must bring the above documents to the OFII. During the months of September, October, and November, students may use the OFII office at the Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris (CIUP). At other times of the year, they must bring the documents to OFII's Paris headquarters.
- 2- Some institutions (including many of France's universities) have entered into agreements with OFII. Where such an agreement exists, the student must submit the above documents to the institution's international student office. Students are strongly advised to learn, before arriving in France, whether an agreement exists between their host institution and OFII.

In all cases, a fee of €58 is charged.

The fee is collected through the sale of a tax stamp bearing the initials "OMI." The stamp may be purchased:

- Online from www.timbresofii.fr
- In some tobacco shops
- At offices of the French tax authorities.

Obtaining a VLS-TS

- In countries using the mandatory online application system (CEF procedure)

In 31 countries CampusFrance has offices that use the so-called CEF procedure, which was established in 2007 under a framework agreement among the following partners:

- Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MAEE)
- Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR)
- Ministry of Culture and Communication (MCC)
- Conference of University Presidents (CPU)
- Conference of Directors of French Engineering Schools (CDEFI)
- Conference of the *Grandes Écoles* (CGE).

The procedure provides students intending to study in France with advice and counsel while preparing the visa application and, later, in tracking the prospective student's applications for admission.

Prospective students who open an account on the CampusFrance website in their home country gain access to a virtual procedure that enables them to submit online applications to approximately 230 French institutions and to chat with the staff of the CampusFrance office in their country and with participating institutions from which they may obtain a preliminary offer of admission (often under the preliminary admission process known as DAP).

Students interested in nonparticipating institutions must contact them directly.

CampusFrance offices in the 31 countries where the CEF procedure is used provide prospective students with information and guidance. The procedure includes a messaging system that allows students to chat with local CampusFrance staff.

CampusFrance local offices make arrangements for language-proficiency tests where these are required.

They also review students' applications for completeness, authenticate diplomas, and arrange interviews to explore the prospective student's study plans.

For purposes of the CEF procedure, CampusFrance's local offices act independently of the agency's headquarters in Paris. Their review of applications is conducted under the exclusive authority of the cultural offices of France's diplomatic posts.

Countries in which CampusFrance local offices use the CEF procedure (as of November 15, 2011)

Algeria	Gabon	Peru
Argentina	Guinea	Russia
Benin	India	Senegal
Brazil	Japan	Syria
Burkina Faso	Korea, Republic of	Taiwan
Cameroon	Lebanon	Tunisia
Chile	Madagascar	Turkey
China	Mali	United States
Colombia	Morocco	Vietnam
Congo, Republic of	Mauritius	
Ivory Coast	Mexico	

1- OFII offices: http://www.ofii.fr/qui_sommes-nous_46/ou_nous_trouver_23.html

The embassy's culture and cooperation office accesses the student's electronic file and the interview report. The office issues an opinion on the study plan that may be viewed by CEF participating institutions and by the consulate.

Institutions of higher education that are parties to the CEF agreement ("participating institutions")¹ may view the student's file and the interview report online. They may also ask the CampusFrance local office for additional information using the site's messaging system. If they wish to admit the student, they send an offer of admission directly to the student and to the CampusFrance local office.

Nonparticipating institutions—those that have not signed the CEF agreement—are unable to use this mechanism. It is up to the student to apply directly to the institution for admission by submitting an application. Once the student has received a letter of admission, he or she uses the CEF electronic procedure to apply for a visa.

Finally, the consular service reviews the applicant's electronic file and examines the visa-related documentation submitted by the applicant. A consular officer then decides whether or not to grant the VLS-TS visa. The consulate's decision is placed in the applicant's electronic file.

CampusFrance local offices

CampusFrance maintains 130 offices, known as *Espaces*, and 37 satellite offices in 101 countries. The main mission of CampusFrance's local offices is to coordinate responses to inquiries from international students interested in French higher education. Those responses range from fulfilling requests for information to guiding students through the university admissions process.

The *Espaces* greet prospective students, advise them in their search for information, help them choose a program, and support them as they complete the various administrative procedures required in advance of their arrival in France.

The local offices of CampusFrance employ some 300 people around the world.

Locations and contact information for CampusFrance local offices:
<http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/b-agence/map/map.htm>

- In other countries

International students applying for admission to the first or second years of university study must follow the so-called DAP (*demande d'admission préalable*) process. The first step is to obtain a registration form from the embassy's office of culture and cooperation. The process of applying for a visa begins after the student has received an offer of admission.

In other cases, the prospective student applies directly to institutions of interest. Once offered admission, he or she submits an application for an extended-stay visa, accompanied by supporting documentation as required by the consulate.

- Criteria applied in adjudicating applications for extended-stay student visas

The formal criteria used in deciding whether or not to grant an extended-stay visa for study purposes are spelled out in an interministerial circular dated January 27, 2006 (ministries of interior, foreign affairs, and higher education and research). Among the criteria are several general items such as the likelihood that the proposed program of study in France will enable the student to succeed in a given occupation, the possibility that the program will contribute to the economic and social development of the student's country of origin, and the alignment of the program with France's national interest and aid objectives in the student's country.

The circular discusses several more specific criteria as well:

Criterion 1: Academic level of applicant, with priority for students prepared to enroll in a master's or doctoral program, holders of a French *baccalauréat*, applicants admitted to a program of preparation for the *grandes écoles*, and those admitted to short, selective postsecondary programs (IUT, STS).

Criterion 2: The quality of the applicant's academic background, as evidenced by the applicant's submission to French institutions of "information that might aid them in reaching an admission decision, such as information on the quality of the institutions and programs completed by the applicant," on the reliability of the grades and assessments received, and on the logic of the connection between the proposed study in France and the applicant's earlier preparation.

Criterion 3: The institutional framework of the proposed period of study in France, with priority to applicants enrolling under a cooperative agreement between a French institution and one in the applicant's home country, to recipients of a scholarship from the French government, and to applicants who have successfully completed, in their home country, a degree program offered by or in cooperation with a French institution.

Criterion 4: Proficiency in French, as measured by a test of the applicant's command of the language, without prejudice to applicants of high academic potential.

Three other criteria that are not specific to the student visa are mentioned:

- Absence of any threat to national security or public safety.
- Authenticity of the documents provided (including diplomas and grade reports, if applicable).
- Evidence that the applicant possesses sufficient resources for the stay. The minimum amount to which the applicant must have access has been raised to 100% of the stipend paid to recipients of French government scholarships, namely €615 per month.

The consulates have sole discretion in the interpretation and application of these provisions.

The "skills and talents" card

The purpose of this special residency permit is to facilitate the presence in France of foreigners capable of making a significant and lasting contribution to the economic development or the intellectual, scientific, cultural, humanitarian, or athletic influence of France and of the applicant's country of origin.

It is granted for a renewable 3-year period based on the content, nature, and interest of the applicant's proposal. Holders are free to exercise any form of professional activity that is related to the proposal for which they were granted the permit.

1- List of institutions adhering to the CEF agreement as of April 18, 2011:

<http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/ressource/procedure-cef-les-etablissements-connectes-au-18-avril-2011>

• Working in France while enrolled

All international students have the right to work part-time while studying in France. Students from outside the European Union must have a residency permit to work.

French law now allows international students to work 964 hours in a given year, corresponding to 60% of the official working year.

Under the provisions of decree 2007-1915 of December 26, 2007, international students may hold student jobs at public institutions of higher education. Students are contracted to perform the following functions: Welcoming new students, supporting disabled students, tutoring, providing computer support and help in using new technologies, staffing events (cultural, scientific, and athletic), staffing career guidance and placement offices, and promoting the institution.

Employment contracts span a period of no more than 12 months between September 1 and August 31. The amount of work performed must not exceed 670 hours between September 1 and June 30 and 300 hours between July 1 and August 31.

Students working under employment contracts are expected to maintain an appropriate balance between their education and the activities specified under the contract. Work requirements and working hours are determined as a function of the requirements of students' academic programs so as to permit them to work and study simultaneously.

• Working in France after graduation

International students holding a master's degree or the equivalent

Students who have earned at least a master's degree or the equivalent may apply for a one-time (nonrenewable) temporary residency authorization (APS, *autorisation provisoire de séjour*) valid for 6 months beyond the date of expiration of the student's residency permit. The authorization enables the student to work at any job up to the limit of 60% of the official work week (that is, just over half-time employment).

Students who obtain a job related to their academic program at a rate of compensation equal to at least 1.5 times the national minimum wage may enter full-time employment by filing a request for change of status (from student to employee) at their prefecture.

Other students

Other students may also accept employment under certain circumstances. They must obtain a change of status (from student to employee) and follow a special procedure.

In response to the high rate of unemployment in France, employment is limited to the following 14 occupations (decree of August 11, 2011):

- Audit and financial control manager
- Furniture and wood products manufacturing equipment operator
- Mechanical product planner / designer
- Quality conformity inspector
- Building and public works draftsman
- Merchandiser
- Information systems production and operation engineer

- Glass manufacturing equipment operator
- Remote service and sales agent
- Operator of basic mechanical production unit
- Electrical and electronic products designer
- Manufacturing processes intervention technician
- Chemical and pharmaceutical manufacturing equipment operator
- Furniture and wood product processes intervention technician

Applicants for employment authorization must submit an employment contract or offer of employment from a French firm. In adjudicating the application, the authorities will take several criteria into account, including the firm's motives, the applicant's background, and the amount of time the applicant has spent in French higher education.

"Admission Post-Bac"

www.admission-postbac.fr

Admission Post-Bac is a mandatory online system for applying to the first year of postsecondary education in France. Applicable to domestic and international students alike, the system was established by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research to simplify the admission process by gathering together nearly all undergraduate programs (*licence*, DUT, BTS-BTSA, CPGE, schools) on a single site.

International students, whether or not they hold a French *baccalauréat*, must use the system to apply for admission to the first year of postsecondary education at French institutions that are not subject to the so-called DAP (*demande d'admission préalable*) system, such as the STSs, CPGEs, and some schools. Students who apply to non-DAP institutions are not required to use the CEF procedure.

Special case: In countries using the CEF procedure, applications to IUTs must be made using the online application system managed by the CampusFrance local office.

A guide for international applicants is available at the Admission Post-Bac Web site:
<http://www.admission-postbac.fr>

3.2 Extended-stay research scholar visa (VLS-TS)

Beginning in late 2011, France's consulates will grant a VLS-TS visa to holders of a master's degree or higher who wish to enter France to engage in scholarship or research or to teach at the university level. Public and private institutions of higher education and research organizations may use this visa category to bring doctoral candidates,¹ research scholars, and research faculty to France to perform research or to teach at the university level.

Holders of the research scholar VLS-TS are no longer required to apply upon arrival for a special temporary residency permit corresponding to their visa category. On the other hand, like students, they must report to the OFII. The residency permit will be issued at the end of the period of validity of the visa.

The hosting agreement is an administrative document that spells out the nature and duration of the work to be performed by the applicant. Intended to support the application for the extended-stay scientific visa, the hosting agreement is stamped by the prefecture and sent by the host institution

1- Doctoral candidates coming to France without a hosting agreement should generally seek a student visa.

to the research scholar, who then submits the agreement to consulate with his or her visa application.

The hosting agreement is the sole document attesting to the purpose of the stay and the resources to be made available to the research scholar (including housing and medical insurance). The same procedure is applied to doctoral candidates who will be paid to perform their research, regardless of the nature of their employment contract, which may be a doctoral contract, an industrial agreement for training through research (CIFRE), or other arrangement.

A residency permit marked "research scholar" allows the holder to perform research and teaching activities in France under the terms of the hosting agreement. **The residency permit must be applied for two months before the expiration of the research scholar visa. A fee of €340 is collected upon issuance.**

Foreign researchers may obtain residency permits for periods longer than 1 year but no longer than 4 years. The permit's duration reflects the time required or expected to be required for the work described in the hosting agreement. The prefecture for the applicant's place of residence has jurisdiction (CESEDA, article L313-4).

Family members of the holder of the research scholar visa or residency permit are automatically eligible for a residency permit marked "*vie privée et familiale*" (covering spouse and children who entered France as minors, article L. 313-8 of CESEDA as amended by law 2011-672 of June 16, 2011).

The European Blue Card

The European Blue Card, implemented in France by law 2011-672 of June 16, 2011 (new article L. 313-10, 6° of CESEDA), allows individuals to reside in France while occupying highly qualified positions without regard to the rate of unemployment in France. The card is issued for a maximum period of 3 years and is renewable.

The Blue Card is granted to citizens of states outside the European Union who obtain an extended-stay visa and who present an employment contract or offer of employment for a highly qualified job for a period of at least 1 year. The annual salary offered must be at least 1.5 times the mean gross annual salary (about €4,000 per month).

Family members (spouse and minor children) of holders of the new residency permit are automatically eligible for a residency permit marked "*vie privée et familiale*." They need not go through the family reunification process.

The increasing use of biometric visas

The principle of the biometric visa (digital photo and fingerprints of applicants) is established in article L611-6 of CESEDA. For Schengen visas, the principle was established by the Council of Europe on June 8, 2004. The new community visa code reaffirms that decision:

"Article 13 - Member states collect biometric identifiers from applicants, including a photograph and 10 fingerprints."

The biometric visa is gradually becoming the norm. France's diplomatic posts have been phasing it in since 2005.

part 4

Appeals of visa denials

4.1 Short-stay visas

(community visa code, article 32)

Effective April 5, 2011, consular officials are required to provide grounds for decisions to deny applications for short-stay visas.

Notices of visa denial must be made using a standard form annexed to the European visa code. European consular officials are required to cite provisions of the code dealing with appeals of decisions to deny a visa and to inform unsuccessful applicants of the appeal procedure.

4.2 Extended-stay visas

France's immigration code (CESEDA, article L.211-2) specifies that "France's diplomatic and consular authorities are not required to explain their decisions to deny a visa for entry into France." That provision applies to extended-stay student and research scholar visas.

Nevertheless, unsuccessful applicants may ask the official who denied the visa, or his or her superior, to reconsider the decision to deny the visa. In practice, requests for reconsideration by the consular officer's superior are immediately referred to the visa department of the French Ministry of Immigration.

There is a special procedure for contesting adverse decisions in visa matters. Unsuccessful applicants may ask the CRV, a national commission of recourse against refusals of visas for entry into France, to issue an opinion in the appeal process.¹ This is a mandatory first step in the appeal process. The case cannot be referred to an administrative judge until the commission has had 2 months to issue an opinion. (Failure to issue an opinion within 2 months is deemed an implicit rejection of the appeal.)

Applicants must request the CRV's opinion within 2 months of the notice of denial. The request and all supporting documentation must be in French.

The CRV deals with about 4,000 recourse requests every year. In most cases its opinion upholds the consular official's decision to deny the visa.

Since April 1, 2010, legal proceedings in visa matters have been the responsibility of the administrative tribunal of Nantes. (Previously they fell within the purview of the Council of State.)

1- CRV = Commission des Recours contre les décisions de Refus de Visa d'entrée en France, BP 83.609, 44036 Nantes CEDEX 1 – FRANCE

Obtaining and renewing a residency permit

Upon the expiration of the initial residency permit (the one built into the VLS-TS visa), students and research scholars alike must renew their residency permit at the prefecture for the area in which they reside (in Paris, the prefecture of police). The new residency permit is **a laminated card that is separate from the passport. The cost of renewal is €30.**

Students and scholars are not required to return to their home country and apply for a new visa (CESEDA – Art L 313-7 and following).

5.1 Where to apply

Applications for a residency permit are generally made at the prefecture or subprefecture for the area in which the student resides. In some departments of France, the prefectures have established satellite offices for the convenience of international students.

Students residing in Paris must visit the website of the prefecture of police to schedule an appointment 2–3 months prior to the expiration of their residency permit.

5.2 When to apply

Applications must be submitted to the prefecture within 2 months of the date of expiration of the current residency permit. It is a good idea for prospective applicants to contact the prefecture before the beginning of this 2-month period in order to learn what will be expected of them.

Upon submission of a complete application, the student is issued a receipt that serves as an interim residency permit until a final decision is made on the student's application.

Receipts are issued for complete applications only!

Although the prefecture will process applications that do not meet the stated deadlines, it is strongly recommended that students adhere to the dates and deadlines set by the prefecture.

5.3 Documents required

The student will be asked to provide evidence that he or she is indeed pursuing the course of study for which the original visa was issued. That evidence may take the form of a certificate of enrollment, grade reports, or other documents attesting to the student's attendance and achievement.

The student must also furnish evidence, in a form satisfactory to the prefecture, that he or she possesses sufficient financial resources—at least €615 per month (CESEDA, new article R313-7). If the student has been working while in France, the income from employment is counted toward this requirement.

5.4 The role of the prefecture

The prefecture will not issue the residency permit on the spot. It must first verify that the applicant is indeed working toward a degree. Frequent repetition of courses, abrupt changes in the student's field or level of study, and frequent absences not justified by serious personal or family circumstances may be grounds for refusal.

The prefecture is also responsible for verifying the applicant's means of support in France.

Multiyear renewal

Students enrolled at the master's level or higher at a nationally recognized institution may apply for a residency permit covering their entire academic program up to a maximum of 4 years.

The list of programs and degrees eligible for multiyear renewals is set by ministerial decree. At the time of publication, the applicable decree was that of May 12, 2011 (*Journal Officiel*, May 15, 2011).

Students holding a multiyear renewal must send to the competent authority each year evidence that they have passed their final examinations for the year or that they have been admitted into the next year of study. That evidence must be sent by registered letter with confirmation of receipt.

Directeur de la publication :

Gérard Binder, Président du Conseil d'administration

Comité éditorial :

Béatrice Khaïat, Directrice déléguée, Claude Torrecilla, Responsable de la communication, Frédéric Goux, Editeur des sites internet de l'Agence

Toutes les informations concernant les différents types de visas nécessaires pour venir étudier en France ont été collectées par Frédéric Goux qui a rédigé cette Note.

Les services du ministère chargé de l'immigration ont complété et validé les informations contenues dans cette publication. L'Agence CampusFrance les en remercie vivement.

Edition : Claude Torrecilla - claudetorrecilla@campusfrance.org

Réalisation : Agence Signature Graphique - Paris • Impression, diffusion : Imprimerie Graphoprint - Paris

Agence CampusFrance

Groupement d'intérêt public

79 avenue Denfert-Rochereau - 75014 Paris

Tél. : 01 53 63 35 00 - www.campusfrance.org

Les Notes CampusFrance sont imprimées sur papier PEFC-FSC issu de forêts gérées durablement.

Décembre 2011

ISSN 2117-8348



lesnotes
n° 35 - décembre 2011 de CampusFrance

CAMPUS
FRANCE
campusfrance.org