

Finding Housing in France

What to Expect

Finding living accommodations can be challenging and frustrating, but it's not impossible! Presented here are some helpful websites, general information and tips to get you started.

While this information offers a broad overview, your university would know the local area and market selection more specifically. **We therefore recommend that before doing anything else, you check with your French university to see what resources it offers.** Many universities often have a welcome office (*bureau d'accueil*) and housing assistance information for international students.

Useful Websites for Living and Renting as a Student in France

www.droitonline.com/matieres/logement

Portal linking to a variety of sites on housing laws and regulations.

www.etudiants.locataires.free.fr

Site of the French federation of student renters.

www.anil.org/guide/locatif/jeune.htm

Information from the French national agency for housing information.

Rental Stipend from French Government

- ◆ **Les aides au logement** (government housing stipend): like French students, foreign students have the right to receive financial assistance for their monthly rental fees. The CAF (la Caisse d'Allocations Familiales, www.caf.fr) oversees the management and distribution of this funding. Your university or international students welcome office can help you submit your application to receive the CAF stipend. The amount of money received is calculated based on several factors: how much rent you pay, the location of your accommodation, your personal income and financial situation, etc.

Important Rental Vocabulary and Requirements

- ◆ **Le bail** (the rental agreement contract; in French: *contrat de location*) A contract that must be signed with the owner regardless of the type of living accommodations. The standard contract time is one year. If you move out before the contract expires, you must give the owner at least three months' notice (known as a *préavis*). Otherwise, the owner reserves the right to keep part or all of your *dépôt de garantie* (security deposit).
- ◆ **Le dépôt de garantie** (the security deposit; in French: *la caution*) In most cases, the sum is equivalent to one month's rent. You must pay *le dépôt de garantie* to the owner when you sign the rental agreement contract. Your security deposit will be returned to you when you move out, provided that there has been no damage to the rental location and that you did not violate the three month notice period for early move out (*préavis*).
- ◆ **La garantie solidaire** (the rental agreement co-signer) in the majority of cases, the owner, whether he or she is a private individual or part of an institution, will ask you to have a *garant*, either a parent, friend, organization, or association that certifies by written agreement that they will pay your rental fees in case of non payment or failure on your part to pay rent. The *garant* must be a resident of France or, for CROUS residents, a resident of the European Union. The *garant* must be able to prove he or she has monthly revenue equal to three or four times the monthly rent. If you do not have a *garant*, you must personally demonstrate that you possess such revenue or you must pay in advance the total cost of a years' rent.
- ◆ **L'assurance** (rental insurance): as a tenant, you are obligated to purchase *Multirisques habitation*, an insurance policy that protects you and the owner. It covers cases of fire, water damage, theft etc. of your personal belongings and the property itself.

Choosing the Right Housing for You

- ◆ **CROUS University Residences:** CROUS (Centres Régionaux des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires) has a limited number of studios available which are primarily reserved for students receiving scholarships from the French government. Many universities have contracts with CROUS and a fixed number of rooms reserved for their international or exchange students. Check with your school to see if they have such an agreement, and you may contact CROUS to see if they have any availability.

Rent : €120 to 350 per month based on the type of accommodation (single room or studio)

Caution : one month's rent

Garant : must be a resident of the European Union

Temporary or short-term stay: not available. Mandatory contract duration of nine months for a single room and 12 months for a studio, except during the summer.

Reservation from abroad: not available

Housing assistance (ALS ou APL) : possible

- ◆ **The Grandes Écoles Housing and Private Residencies:**
Unlike public universities, the *grandes écoles* (elite French universities) and other private establishments often have residences that they oversee themselves on their campuses. The number of places is generally limited, but they make every effort to reserve lodgings for their admitted international students. The accommodations generally cost €250 to 350 per month. Contact or visit your school's website for further details and reserve your room once you accept your admissions offer.

- ◆ **Private Student Housing:**

This housing is more expensive than CROUS but offers a higher level of comfort as well as other services (reception desk, interphone, common space, a cafeteria, an automatic laundry room, cleaning services, and a parking garage). These residencies are often situated near the school campuses as well. Short and long-term stays are possible at these locations. Online reservation from abroad is also possible in most cases, but you typically will be required to pay three months rent in advance in order to secure your place.

ADELE, the French Association for the Economic Development of Student Housing, has links to many private residential sites: www.adele.org

You may also review the following student residency sites:

Résidences Lamy : www.lamy-residences.fr/

Résidences Estudines : www.estudines.fr

Résidences Lauréades : www.icade-immobilier.com/residence-services-etudiant

Le Club Etudiant : www.leclubetudiant.com

Rent: between €600 to 700 per month in Paris

Caution: one month's rent

Garant: must be a resident of a French territory. If you do not have a *garant*, you must pay for the year in advance

Temporary/short term stay: possible, depending on availabilities. In general, it is difficult to secure between September and March

Reservation from abroad: if you are reserving from abroad, two months' rent will be asked of you up front

Housing financial benefits: possible

- ◆ **Apartments and Studios**

This type of living offers more independence and flexibility in the choice of lodging.

These may be found by directly contacting the owner, through a professional intermediary, or with the assistance of real-estate agencies. If you rent through an agency, you must pay their fees, which are usually the equivalent of one month's rent. Housing can be rented either furnished or non-furnished.

To find advertisements for private locations, you may find the following websites helpful:

For individual offers: www.entrepaticuliers.com and www.pap.fr (*De Particulier à Particulier*). This weekly publication, available at newsstands, appears on Thursday. Get up early that day to improve your chances of finding places that are still available!

For professionals offers: www.fnaim.fr; www.cnab.fr

For professional and private offers: www.paruvenu.fr; www.seloger.com; <http://www.hestia.fr/>; www.petites-annonces.fr; (Please note that some sites require you to create an account and pay a search fee in order to access their databases)

You may also find individual advertisements at the housing services of your university.

Rent: Rental costs vary greatly depending on the quality of the lodging, the location and the services offered.

Caution: one month's rent

Garant: the garant (contract co-signer) must be a resident of France

Reservation from abroad: according to the agreement with the owner and the payment of an agreed upon sum to guarantee the reservation. It is in general very difficult to reserve a place from abroad

Housing Stipend: possible

◆ **Shared Housing: *La colocation***

This type of accommodation, which is becoming more and more popular with students, consists of sharing an apartment or house with other students. It is often more economical than an individual residence and offers the advantage of easy socialization with French and other international students. The roommates can receive a housing stipend as long as their name appears on the rental contract.

You will find announcements for collocations on the following websites (all charge a fee):

www.colocationfrance.fr; www.easycoloc.com; www.kel-koloc.com; www.appartager.com; www.colocataires.com; www.ma-colocation.com; www.okroommate.com/

◆ **French Home Stays: *Le logement en famille d'accueil***

Better adapted for short-term stays, this type of living allows students to rent a furnished bedroom in the home of the owner. Students studying French language for a month or a semester often opt for this type of lodging because it gives them the opportunity to quickly integrate themselves in the French language and culture.

Generally, French language centers can reserve in advance this type of accommodation with a selected family. There are also specialized home stay agencies (such as www.sejoursfrancefamille.fr) that can put you in contact with a family willing to do a home stay. Cost per week in Paris varies from €200 (with breakfast) to €300 (with breakfast and dinner).

www.fac-paris.com/ (Room + breakfast from €195 per week)

www.atomeparis.com (Room + breakfast from €500 per month + agency services)

◆ **Short-term Stay**

You may find short-term housing by contacting foyers, hotels or youth hostels (*auberges de jeunesse*) for when you first arrive in France. Additionally, if you intend to take a French language course over the summer before the school year begins, note that almost all the language centers have a housing service.

Resources Specifically for Paris

◆ **Paris's Cité U, the *Cité internationale universitaire de Paris***

The Cité U in Paris offers very nice accommodations in their 39 buildings. Admission is by application only and limited to doctoral candidates and postdoctoral scholars. Residents from around the world enjoy cultural events and the usual student facilities. The average rental cost is €500 per month. Address: Services d'admission de la Cité internationale, 19, boulevard Jourdan Paris 75014 (www.ciup.fr)

<http://www.parisetudiant.com/etudes/seloger.php> -- useful website with apartment and studio listings