

PLAN YOUR BUDGET FOR YOUR STUDY AT PSL

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• • • • • • • • **Planning your budget is the first step towards a successful student life at PSL. What are the expected expenses? How can you best manage your budget? What kinds of financial aid are available to international students? This practical guide can help you with all these questions.**

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I. THE BUDGET FOR YOUR FIRST MONTH IN FRANCE

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

In general, the expenses of this first month may include:

- your plane/train ticket
- your tuition and other fees
- your first month's rent and security deposit
- the validation of your student visa VLS-TS (if you are from outside the EU/EEA/Switzerland).
- the purchase of bed linen/dishes/furniture/appliances

Let's talk about these expenses in detail.

1. YOUR PLANE/TRAIN TICKET

Advice (if you are from outside EU/EEA/Switzerland): If you want to book your flight while your visa application is still pending, we advise you to take a flexible ticket.

It will be more expensive but it will prevent you from having to buy a new one in case your visa is not issued in time.

2. TUITION FEES, THE CVEC AND THE LIABILITY INSURANCE

Tuition fees may vary depending on the nature of the diploma (national diploma or institutional diploma) and the level of study (undergraduate/graduate). To determine the exact amount of your tuition fees (if this information is not given when you are admitted), don't hesitate to contact the secretariat of your program.

For the 2022/23 academic year, the tuition fee for programs which issue national diploma is 243€/year (for a Master's degree) and 170€/year (for a Bachelor's degree) for all students, regardless of national origin.



The CVEC, or Contribution Vie Etudiante et de Campus (Contribution of Student Life and Campus), is a mandatory contribution of 95€ that most students must pay each year. Payment confirmation is required to finalize your academic enrollment. The CVEC will be used to finance student association projects, improve student support services, including the PSL Welcome Desk and provide access to sports facilities.

Civil liability is an obligatory insurance that is needed for your university registration. It covers damages that you could caused unintentionally. 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 ("la mutuelle").

3. SECURITY DEPOSIT FOR YOUR ACCOMMODATION

The security deposit is a sum of money that the tenant must pay to the landlord right after signing the lease (rental agreement). This amount will be cashed immediately and kept by your landlord for the duration of the rental period. The amount of the deposit is limited to two months' rent (charges excluded) if your apartment is furnished; if your apartment is unfurnished, the amount should not exceed one month's rent (charges excluded).

In general, the security deposit is paid to the landlord at the same time as the first month's rent. To learn about different levels of rents 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").

4. FEES FOR THE VALIDATION OF YOUR RESIDENCE PERMIT (IF YOU ARE NOT CITIZEN OF EU/EEA/SWITZERLAND)

Upon your arrival in France, you must validate your student visa (VLS-TS – visa long séjour valant titre de séjour) within three months. Validation is carried out on [the online platform](#). You will be prompted to pay a 50-euro fee ("timbre fiscal") that can be purchased online or in-person at a "tabac."

5. FURNISH YOUR ACCOMMODATION

When you rent a furnished studio or student room, a bed, a desk, and sometimes an individual kitchenette (stove, microwave and refrigerator) will be provided. Sheets, comforter, pillow and dishes may not be provided. Before your arrival, please 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 with them if you have full access to kitchen utensils, appliances and cleaning products.



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II. YOUR "STANDARD" MONTHLY BUDGET

Once you have settled in, your standard monthly budget will normally include the following : accomodation, food, healthcare, insurances, banking fees, transportation, phone plan, and leisure.

1. ACCOMMODATION

Expenses related to accomodation may include:

- Rent
- charges: for example electricity, water, garbage collectio...

Rental price range in the Parisian region (Île-de-France):

Accommodation type	Monthly average rent	
	Paris	Parisian region (outside of Paris)
Room in a host's house	between 500€ and 700€	between 400€ and 600€
Room in a co-living house	between 500€ and 700€	between 450€ and 600€
Studio in a student residence (type CROUS)	between 400€ and 550€	between 400€ and 550€
Studio	at least 600€	between 500€ and 700€

* For a single room, we refer to a surface area of around 15 m²; for a studio, our reference area is around 18 m².

2. FOOD BUDGET

Please note that the cost of living is significantly higher in Paris than in other regions.

A. Restaurants

Here are some examples of "standard" prices that you will find in Parisian cafés and restaurants:

- a cup of coffee in a bar or restaurant: 2€ ;
- a meal at a fast-food restaurant: 7€ ;
- a meal in a classical restaurant: 10 to 20€ ;
- a sandwich in a bakery with a drink: : 5 to 8€.

Good to know: As a student, you have access to the "university restaurants" which offer complete meals for 3.30 euros. There is a point system for each meal component. When you get your tray, be sure to check the sign explaining your choices. These restaurants offer 1 euro meals for students with scholarships and for students with financial challenges.

B. Food shopping

You can save by cooking at home. An average budget is 200 euros per month. For shopping, you can visit supermarkets and open-air markets. There is also a monthly food distribution organized by PSL Student Life to help supplement your supplies.

Common supermarket chains include :

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





3. HEALTH-RELATED EXPENSES

As an international student from outside the EU/EEA/Switzerland, you can benefit from the French social security system and be reimbursed up to 70% of your medical expenses.

If you are an EU/EEA or Swiss national, you can apply for a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) from the social security agency of your home country, and this card will allow you to be reimbursed for your health expenses by the social security system of your country.

Remember to declare a general practitioner ("médecin traitant") as soon as possible in order to optimize your reimbursement. In fact, the cost of a GP consultation varies according to the sector to which your doctor belongs. The following table shows you the standard cost of a GP consultation and its reimbursement:

Sector	Tariff	Reimbursement basis	Reimbursement rate	Amount of reimbursement
1	25 €	25 €	70 %	16,50 €
2	Fees with controlled overruns	25 €	70 %	16,50 €
2	Fees fixed freely by the practitioner	23 €	70 %	15,10 €

* The amounts indicated take into account the fixed contribution of 1 €.

If you would like more information on the sectors, do not hesitate to visit the [Health Insurance website](#).

It is also important to know that your general practitioner must provide a referral for you to see a specialist, except for ophthalmologic and dental consultations. It is what we called the care pathway, it guarantees you a better reimbursement of your health expenses.

To get better coverage, take into consideration the subscription to a complementary health insurance ("mutuelle").

Good to know: as a student, you have access to a psychological assistance services.

For more information: psl.eu/vie-de-campus/service-sante-etudiant



4. INSURANCE (HOME INSURANCE, HEALTH INSURANCE)

A. Home insurance

In France, home insurance is mandatory for tenants. The price of a home insurance depends on the characteristics of your accommodation: area, number of rooms, dependence, number of occupants, etc.

The following table gives you information about the range of prices of a home insurance:

Accommodation type	Monthly price	Annual price
Independent studio of 20 m ²	6 €	73 €
Shared apartment of 30 m ² - 2 rooms	9 €	112 €
Shared apartment of 40 m ² - 2 rooms	11 €	135 €



B. Supplementary health insurance ("mutuelle")

The social security coverage can reimburse you for most of the general health expenses; however, hospitalization, optical, dental and prevention expenses are reimbursed at a very low rate. In this case, health expenses can be very expensive. It is strongly recommended that you subscribe to a complementary health insurance.

We can give you a few examples of complementary health insurance for students:

- **Complementary health insurance for students and young workers:** [Heyme](#)
- **Complementary health insurance** [LMDE](#).
- **Complementary health insurance** [SMENO](#)

If you are unable to afford complementary health insurance ("une mutuelle"), then you may be eligible for "Complémentaire Santé Solidaire (CSS)," a government program that provides free or reduced cost care according to your financial situation. First, confirm your eligibility on the simulation page of the "[mes droits sociaux](#)" website. Then, if eligible, apply via either your Ameli account or by mailing form "Demande de Complémentaire santé solidaire" to your Caisse Primaire d'Assurance Maladie (CPAM).

Good to know: Since February 2023, the Ile-de-France region is offering a regional complementary health insurance with three partners. It is open to anyone living in the region, is more general but offers a very good coverage. For more information: <https://www.iledefrance.fr/mutuelle-sante>

5. 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 will be required to provide a French RIB (bank account identification number) before opening an account. As a result, you will have to open an account in a physical bank first when you arrive in France.

Student associations often establish partnerships with banks, allowing students to benefit from certain advantages. Ask your school and more particularly your BDE (student office) 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
- BNP Paribas
- Crédit Agricole
- Crédit Mutuel
- LCL
- Société Générale

Right to an account: Depending on the geopolitical situation, you may encounter additional difficulties to open a bank account. Nevertheless, there is [a right to a bank account](#) in France. It is possible, in case of persistent difficulties, to ask the Banque de France to open an account, although this process can be long.

If you need assistance, please contact us: welcomedesk@psl.eu.





6. PHONE AND INTERNET

A. Telephone subscription

Many mobile plans are offered by traditional operators (Orange, Bouygues Telecom, SFR, Free), and others by MVNOs (Mobile Virtual Network Operator). MVNOs may offer packages that cost less, but they usually don't 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. Thus, ordering a French mobile card can only be done after your bank account has been opened.

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, it costs 10 euros.

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.

B. 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 or 30 euros 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.



7. DAILY TRANSPORTATION

A. 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) will allow you to travel to the farther suburbs. Hundreds of bus lines complete this network.

It is good to know that young people under 26 years old can benefit from preferential rates for subscriptions.

- **The Imagine'R card:** reserved for students under 26 years in the Ile-de-France region, this special pass allows unlimited travel throughout the region for 350 euros per year. The subscription link: [imagine-r.com/souscription-en-ligne/](https://www.imagine-r.com/souscription-en-ligne/)
- **The Ticket jeune (youth ticket):** reserved for people under 26 years old and valid for 24 hours on a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday, it allows you to travel freely in a limited area for only 4.60 euros*.

**Public transportation pricing is based on the zones crossed. For more information, please consult the following map made by the RATP (Régie autonome des transports parisiens): [ratp.fr/en/plan-rer](https://www.ratp.fr/en/plan-rer).*

In addition, some options are available to everyone. If you only travel occasionally by public transportation, and you want to avoid waiting in line for tickets, you may be interested in the Navigo Liberté +. With this pass, you pay per trip, and the payment is made by direct debit the following month. [You can find the prices here.](#)

For more details, please consult the website of the RATP: [ratp.fr/titres-et-tarifs](https://www.ratp.fr/titres-et-tarifs).



10. BOOKS, PHOTOCOPYING AND PRINTING

A. Book purchase and access to libraries

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

Your PSL enrollment provides you access to some libraries! Outside of PSL, the municipal libraries of Paris are open to all, and you can register for free to borrow books. The Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF), the national library of France, is also accessible to you. It includes the "Bibliothèque tous publics" (François-Mitterrand) which is open to everyone from 16 years old; and the "Bibliothèque de recherche" (François-Mitterrand, Richelieu-Louvois, Arsenal and Opéra) which contains heritage collections and is accessible only with a research justification. To access the BNF, you can choose between the Pass BNF lecture/culture (€15 per year, for the Bibliothèque tous publics) and the Pass Recherche (€55 per year, for the Bibliothèque de recherche) depending on your needs.

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 Chartres can benefit from a fee waiver.

B. 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.

11. 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.

Examples of travel costs in France:

- 1 round trip Paris-Marseille on the classic TGV: **140 euros**.
- 1 round trip Paris-Strasbourg by Flixbus: **60 euros**.
- 1 one-way ticket Paris-Lille by OUIGO (low-cost TGV): **10 euros**.
- 1 one-way ticket Paris-Lyon by plane: **100 euros**.
- 1 one-way ticket Paris-Rouen by carpooling (Blablacar): **10 euros**.

Good to know : Students can benefit from many transportation discounts..

Here are some good deals for traveling by train:

- **Prem's** tickets (billets Prem's): the booking is available for three months before the departure date, with cheap prices.
- Ouigo trains: these low-cost trains mainly serve stations far from city centers, but accessible by public transport.
- The **carte Jeune** (youth card): reserved for people under 28 years old, it costs 50 euros per year and allows you to benefit from at least 25% discount on all trains.
- The **TGV Max** pass: also reserved for people under 28, this pass costs 79 euros per month and allows you to take the TGV at will under several conditions.
- The **Interrail Pass**: this pass allows you to travel freely (or almost freely, depending on the country) by train in over 30 European countries.





C. 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.

[You can find information here.](#)

D. Other types of food aid accessible to students:

- AGORAé : <https://ageparis.org/>
- Co'p1 – Solidarités Étudiantes : <https://cop1.fr/>

Les Restos du Coeur de Paris, in partnership with the CROUS de Paris a,d 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.

For more information, please consult this page: restosducoeur.org/nos-actions/aide-alimentaire/.restosducoeur.org/nos-actions/aide-alimentaire

4. IF YOU ARE A REFUGEE

If you are from Syria or neighboring countries, you are concerned by 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: campusfrance.org/fr/projet-hopes-etudiants-syriens.

If you are eligible for the "temporary protection" introduced since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, you have access to many resources that you will find in part here: <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/actualites/A15663>

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Any questions ?

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