

STUDY  
IN  
FRANCE

# TESTS AND DEGREES IN FRENCH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

**Five countries host more than half of the world's international students: the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, France and Germany. France hosts 343,400 international students, putting it in fourth place after the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia but before Germany. International students account for 12% of enrollments in French Higher Education.**

FRENCH

AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

Spoken by 274 million people around the world, French is an official language of 32 states on 5 continents. With English and German, it is one of the working languages of the European Union, the third-most-common business language, and the second-most-common language of news. With 125 million learners of French and 900,000 teachers, it is, after English, the most widely taught language on the planet. Since 2001, the Council of Europe's CEFR has set reference levels for foreign-language proficiency. The CEFR has become Europe's standard for language learning, with 6 levels of proficiency for purposes of admission to French postsecondary institutions.



## TESTS AND DIPLOMAS IN FRENCH LANGUAGE REQUIRED FOR ADMISSION TO POSTSECONDARY PROGRAMS

The levels of academic achievement required to obtain an extended-stay visa for study in France were set forth in an interministerial circular (from the ministries of the Interior, Foreign affairs, and Higher education and research) dated January 27, 2006. The criteria included the candidate's educational level, the quality of the candidate's prior academic

program, and the institutional framework of the proposed program of study in France. Criterion 4 deals with the importance of *"language proficiency, with assessment of applicants' proficiency in French, including applicants who show exceptional academic potential."*

**Several tests of French proficiency and diplomas in French language are accepted for purposes of admission into a French institution of Higher Education**

> To enroll in the first year of a program in a university (Licence 1) or school of architecture, international students (from outside the European Union) must follow the so-called preliminary admission procedure, known as DAP. Applicants must demonstrate their language proficiency, normally by taking the TCF-DAP or earning a DELF B2 diploma (or higher). The TEF may be accepted in lieu of the TCF-DAP if the applicant scored at least 14/20 on the written portion of the TEF. Some universities accept the DUEF (*Diplôme universitaire d'études françaises*) for admission into the first year of university study (Licence 1).

> For enrollments in the third year of university study (Licence 2 or 3), in a Master's program, (Master 1 and 2), in a Doctoral program, or in one of France's *Grandes Écoles*, no uniform requirement applies.

Each institution is free to set its own criteria for French proficiency. Prospective students should inquire about the language requirements of the institutions of interest to them.

## TCF (*Test de connaissance du français* - Test of knowledge of French)



The TCF, administered by the French Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher education, Research and Innovation, is a standardized test of general French designed by CIEP (*Centre international d'études pédagogiques*, International center for pedagogical studies), a certifying organization that is a member of ALTE (the Association of Language Testers in Europe). The TCF satisfies the quality requirements of ISO 9001, version 2008, in all of its processes.

The TCF test of comprehension and the computer-based test of written expression may be taken on computer in some countries.

**Test results are valid for 2 years. Candidates wishing to repeat the TCF or TCF-DAP must wait 30 days from the date of their prior sitting.** [www.ciep.fr/en/tcf-dap](http://www.ciep.fr/en/tcf-dap)

> **Study in France: levels required for applications for preliminary admission (the DAP procedure).** A specific version of the TCF (TCF-DAP) is required for applications for preliminary admission (DAP). The TCF-DAP includes a mandatory test of written French. [www.ciep.fr/en/tcf-dap](http://www.ciep.fr/en/tcf-dap)

> **Description of the TCF and TCF-DAP:** [www.ciep.fr/en/tcf](http://www.ciep.fr/en/tcf)

> **Registration fees and locations:** Candidates can take the TCF in 712 centers approved by CIEP. Centers are located in 126 countries, including France. To register, candidates should contact an approved center for information on testing dates and for the costs of the required and elective components of the test.

> **Approved TCF centers:** [www.ciep.fr/en/tcf-tout-public/approved-tcf-test-centres](http://www.ciep.fr/en/tcf-tout-public/approved-tcf-test-centres)



## CENTERS, SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS SPECIALIZING IN FRENCH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

A large number of schools and centers (some private, some nonprofit, some university-affiliated) offer courses in French as a foreign language and often other specialized courses, along with language-related tourism and travel, language testing, and preparation for language tests and diplomas. Such centers may or may not be members of a network (*Alliances Française*, ADCUEFE, the FLE group, Catholic Institutes and institutes, Souffle, Unosel). They may or may not have earned national certification for quality in French as a foreign language (the “Qualité FLE” label). And they may or may not have partnerships with universities in France and abroad.

### > A ministerial mark of quality: “Qualité FLE” (quality in French as a foreign language)

The “Qualité français langue étrangère” label, often seen as “Q-FLE,” recognizes quality instruction in French as a foreign language. The label emerged from a quality-assurance program undertaken by the French ministries of education, foreign affairs, and culture. It identifies language centers that stand behind the quality of their courses and services. To date, about a hundred centers have earned the label. Reflecting the diversity of field, the recipients include centers at universities and grandes écoles, private language centers, and nonprofit centers. The label program is managed by CIEP (*Centre International d’Études Pédagogiques*), a public institution that is described further on. [www.qualitefle.fr/en](http://www.qualitefle.fr/en)

### > Professional groups and networks

■ **ADCUEFE’s CAMPUS FLE network:** the Association of directors of university centers for the study of French as a foreign language, brings together 38 university-based centers for French as a foreign language that offer courses, certificates, and diplomas in French. Experts representing the ADCUEFE network conduct annual missions to audit curricula and consult on techniques for teaching and learning languages for the benefit of the French cultural network abroad, French studies departments in foreign universities, schools, educational systems, and teachers’ associations. <http://campus-fle.fr/en>

■ **Alliance Française:** Founded in 1883, the Alliance Française is a network of 834 *Alliances* in 132 countries that endeavor to make French language and culture accessible to all audiences. The Alliance Française de Paris, as well as branches in several regions of France, welcome students from every country in the world. [www.fondation-alliancefr.org](http://www.fondation-alliancefr.org)

■ **Le français des affaires:** For 60 years, the Paris Île-de-France chamber of commerce and industry has promoted competence in business French through tests and diplomas at all levels and in various sectors of activity. [www.lefrancaisdesaffaires.fr/en](http://www.lefrancaisdesaffaires.fr/en)

■ **CIEP, Centre International d’Études Pédagogiques (CIEP):** Established in 1945, France’s International Center for Pedagogical Studies is a public entity operating under the authority of the Ministry of Education. Its activities fall into two broad categories: education (recognition of degrees and diplomas; educational consulting at all levels, including professional education) and languages (French; languages and mobility; and certifications in French, including the TCF, DELF, and DALF). It is a member of ALTE. [www.ciep.fr/en](http://www.ciep.fr/en)

■ **FIFP, Fédération internationale des professeurs de français:** FIFP brings together more than 70,000 teachers of French in 165 associations, including several national federations. With various partners -including government ministries in France, Canada, and Belgium- FIFP contributes to the international diffusion of French language and culture. Every 4 years, FIFP organizes a world congress for teachers of French and their institutional partners. [www.fipf.info](http://www.fipf.info)

■ **Groupement FLE:** Founded in 1994, Groupement FLE brings together specialists in French as a foreign language from 33 different schools. It has created its own quality-assurance system based on the quality of the information and services offered to students, the availability of instruction consistent with the CEFR, and compliance with legal requirements related to safety, security and labor law. [www.groupement-fle.com/en/learn-french-france](http://www.groupement-fle.com/en/learn-french-france)

■ **SOUFFLE, Groupement professionnel des organismes de français langue étrangère:** SOUFFLE is made up of 16 French-language centers, all of which have earned the “Qualité FLE” label. [www.souffle.asso.fr](http://www.souffle.asso.fr)

■ **UNOSEL, Union nationale des organisations de séjours éducatifs, linguistiques et des écoles de langues:** Founded in 1978, UNOSEL is a national federation of 69 language schools and organizations active in educational and language-related travel. Its membership includes 22 schools that offer courses in French language, culture, civilization and French economy. [www.unosel.com](http://www.unosel.com)

GOOD

TO KNOW



- **Tests of and diplomas in French as a foreign language** enable applicants for Licence and Master’s programs to demonstrate their level of French proficiency.
- **Many language schools, branches of the Alliance Française,** and cultural institutes in France and abroad provide rapid preparation for tests of French as a foreign language such as the TCF and TEF. Preparing for the DELF and DALF examinations requires more structure and greater planning but guarantees a good command of French. Plus the diplomas are valid for life!
- **Students who prepare in France** for a test of or diploma in French as a foreign language earn higher scores and have a greater likelihood of success because they have the benefit of cultural and linguistic immersion.
- **Achieving a level B1 or B2 on the CEFR** is desirable for postsecondary study in France.



tef

TEST D'ÉVALUATION  
DE FRANÇAIS

## LE TEF

(TEST D'ÉVALUATION DE FRANÇAIS -  
FRENCH ASSESSMENT TEST)

**TEF (Test d'évaluation de français, Test of French Proficiency).** Designed and distributed by *Le français des affaires de la CCI Paris Ile-de-France*, the **TEF** is an internationally recognized instrument for the assessment of knowledge and skill in the French language. It offers candidates a "linguistic snapshot" of their proficiency in French on a 7-level scale keyed to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Multiple-choice modules test written comprehension, oral comprehension, vocabulary, and structure. Two open-ended modules test written and oral expression. The written tests are taken on the computer.

Candidates may take the TEF as many times as they wish, but two months must pass between successive attempts.

> **Study in France: Application for preliminary admission, or DAP (*demande d'admission préalable*), required students enrolling in the first year of a Licence program.**

For purposes of the DAP, the TEF is accepted in lieu of the TCF-DAP (ministerial decree of 25 April 2014), provided the applicant passes all required parts of the test and earns a score of 325 / 450 on the test of written expression, corresponding to level B2 of the CEFR and to a grade of 14/20. The required score may vary by institution or program. Exemption from the TCF-DAP is valid for a period of 5 years.

> **About the TEF modules:**

[www.lefrancaisdesaffaires.fr/en/tests-diplomas/test-for-evaluating-french-tef/](http://www.lefrancaisdesaffaires.fr/en/tests-diplomas/test-for-evaluating-french-tef/)

> **Registration and fees:**

The TEF is administered at more than 400 approved centers in a hundred countries. Each center sets its own testing schedule and fees.

**Approved TEF centers:**

[www.lefrancaisdesaffaires.fr/en/find-a-center/](http://www.lefrancaisdesaffaires.fr/en/find-a-center/)





## THE DELF (DIPLÔME D'ÉTUDES EN LANGUE FRANÇAISE - DIPLOMA OF FRENCH LANGUAGE STUDIES)

## AND DALF (DIPLÔME APPROFONDI DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE - ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN FRENCH LANGUAGE)

**The DELF and DALF diplomas**, conferred by the French Ministry of Education attest to the holder's level of proficiency in the French language. Six different diplomas are offered, corresponding to the six levels of the CEFR: DELF A1, A2, B1, and B2, and DALF C1 and C2. To earn any of the diplomas, candidates must pass tests in four competency areas: oral comprehension, oral expression, written comprehension, and written expression. **Unlike the results of language tests, which expire after a certain period, the DELF and DALF diplomas are valid for life.**

### > Study in France: levels required for applications for preliminary admission (the DAP procedure)

To meet DAP requirements required for admission to year 1 at a university or school of architecture, applicants must obtain a DELF B2 diploma (including DELF General, DELF Student, DELF Junior, and DELF Professional) or a DALF diploma (C1 or C2). Holders of these diplomas are exempted from any language test that might otherwise be required for admission to a French university. [www.ciep.fr/delfdalf/](http://www.ciep.fr/delfdalf/)

**Note:** The level of the diploma required may vary from institution to institution and from program to program.

### > Description of DELF tests:

[www.ciep.fr/en/delf-tout-public/detailed-information-the-examinations](http://www.ciep.fr/en/delf-tout-public/detailed-information-the-examinations)

### > Description of DALF tests: [www.ciep.fr/en/dalf/detailed-information-on-the-examinations](http://www.ciep.fr/en/dalf/detailed-information-on-the-examinations)

• Candidates must score at least 5/25 on each of the four tests. • The total score required to obtain a DELF or DALF diploma is 50/100.

### > Registration fees and location

Nearly 1,200 DELF examination centers (secondary schools, language schools, universities, and cultural institutes, including the *Alliance Française*) operate in 172 active countries. Candidates enroll

for the diploma directly with a center. Course costs are set by regional educational authorities ("academies") in France and, outside France, by the cultural service of the French embassy. Costs therefore vary by country. Prospective students in France or abroad should contact a DELF center for more information. France's National Center for Distance Learning (CNED, *Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance*) offers online courses leading to the DELF B1 through the DALF C2. These online preparatory courses combine self-teaching activities with individual and group support services:

[www.cned.fr/inscription/8FLESDIX](http://www.cned.fr/inscription/8FLESDIX)

### > DELF/DALF exam centers:

• Outside France, directory of Centers:

[www.ciep.fr/en/delf-tout-public/approved-examination-centres-outside-france](http://www.ciep.fr/en/delf-tout-public/approved-examination-centres-outside-france)

• In France, list of Centers:

[www.ciep.fr/sites/default/files/liste-centres-fr.pdf](http://www.ciep.fr/sites/default/files/liste-centres-fr.pdf)

> **Registration and fees.** Tests are given in 712 approved centers in 126 countries, including France. Contact a center directly for information on test dates and fees.

### > Approved TCF centers around the world:

[www.ciep.fr/en/tcf-tout-public/approved-tcf-test-centres](http://www.ciep.fr/en/tcf-tout-public/approved-tcf-test-centres)

## OTHER EVIDENCE OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Various other credentials (such as the certificate of the *Alliance Française* and diplomas offered by CCIP and various universities) are recognized and accepted by institutions. International students must verify that a particular credential is recognized by the institutions to which they intend to apply.

**The credentials conferred by the *Alliance Française***, which operates in France and abroad, are recognized in Europe by ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe). The DHEF (*Diplôme de hautes études françaises*, diploma of advanced study in French) corresponds to level C2 of the CEFR. [www.alliancefr.org/en](http://www.alliancefr.org/en)

**Diploma courses in professional French** are designed to enhance your ability to work in French from level A1 to level C1.

Developed by Europe's leading chamber of commerce and industry, these diplomas in professional French allow you to stand out in the employment market and get the job you want.

**Advantages:**

- > A permanent credential recognized by employers,
- > Computer-based tests based on real situations encountered in the real world,
- > Fast access to test results: 3 weeks,
- > A virtual course: accessible 24/7 in your secure digital space!

For more information: [www.lefrancaisdesaffaires.fr/en/tests-diplomas/business-french-diplomas-dfp/](http://www.lefrancaisdesaffaires.fr/en/tests-diplomas/business-french-diplomas-dfp/)

**University programs:** International students who have chosen a language program in a university-based center for French as a foreign language may establish their level of proficiency with a DUEF B2, C1, or C2 for admission into L1. Postsecondary diploma programs (*DUEF, diplôme d'université d'études françaises*) offered by individual universities recognize various levels of French proficiency consistent with Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2). These diploma programs, developed and harmonized by

ADCUEFE's Campus FLE network of university centers for French as a foreign language, specify the level reached by the end of the program. They include instruction explicitly designed for students intending to begin a program of academic study in France.

The DUEF B2, DUEF C1, and DUEF C2 credentials signify attainment of the level of proficiency required to enter a licence or master's program.

**Note:** *DUs are institution-specific credentials. They are not national diplomas, which are regulated by the French government and recognized throughout France. International students should inquire about the cost of DU programs of interest and ensure that the institution in which they wish to enroll upon completion of their DUEF program will recognize the credential.*

ASSESSMENT OF FRENCH PROFICIENCY FOR NON-FRENCH-SPEAKERS REFERENCE LEVELS FOR REQUIRED TESTS							
CECRL Council of Europe		DELTA - DALF Valid for life	TCF Results valid for 2 years		TEF Recommended validity of results: 1 year		Required hours of study (approximate)
Proficient user	C2	DELTA C2	Advanced proficient	Level 6 600 - 699	Complete command	Level 6 834 - 900	Varies
	C1	DELTA C1		Level 5 500 - 599		Level 5 699 - 833	
Independent user	B2	DELTA B2	Advanced Intermediate	Level 4 400 - 499	Fair command	Level 4 541 - 698	500 h - 690 h
	B1	DELTA B1		Level 3 300 - 399		Level 3 361 - 540	
Basic user	A2	DELTA A2	Advanced Beginner	Level 2 200 - 299	Command of basic structures	Level 2 204 - 360	180 h - 300 h
	A1	DELTA A1		Level 1 100 - 199		Level 1 69 - 203 0 + 0 - 68	

Source: MEAE-DGM, CIEP, CCIP



**> Exemptions from requirements to demonstrate proficiency in french**

**Applicants who meet one of the following criteria may be exempted from the requirement that they demonstrate their proficiency in French:**

- > Holders of the French *baccalauréat* (conferred by the Ministry of Education); the European baccalaureate; and three binational baccalaureates (Abibac-Abitur, France-Germany; Bachibac, France-Spain; and Esabac, France-Italy) may be exempted from the TCF-DAP requirement ;
- > Nationals of states where French is the official language: Benin, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Monaco, Niger, Republic of Congo, Senegal, and Togo;
- > Nationals of multilingual states where French is one of the official languages: Belgique, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Guinée équatoriale, Haiti, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Seychelles, Switzerland, and Vanuatu. In order to be excused from taking the TCF-DAP, applicants must have completed their secondary education in a French-language institution;
- > Students graduating from bilingual programs in which French was one of the languages;
- > Nationals of states in which final examinations for graduation from secondary school are conducted primarily in French;
- > Applicants participating in a program governed by an intergovernmental accord or interuniversity agreement;
- > International recipients of scholarships from the French government, international organizations, or foreign governments whose grants are administered by an approved French entity;
- > Stateless, refugees, children of diplomats serving in France;
- > In some cases, students enrolling in programs taught entirely in English:

<http://taughtie.campusfrance.org>

# USEFUL LINKS

- ADCUEFE, the association of directors of university centers for the study of French as a foreign language for foreigners – *CAMPUS FLE network*: <http://campus-fle.fr>
- Agence de promotion du FLE: [www.groupement-fle.com/en/learn-french-france](http://www.groupement-fle.com/en/learn-french-france)
- ALTE, The Association of Language Testers in Europe: [www.alte.org](http://www.alte.org)
- Arrêté du 3 mai 2007 (test d'évaluation du français (TEF): [www.fda.cciip.fr/documents/pdf/tef/arrete\\_men\\_2007.pdf](http://www.fda.cciip.fr/documents/pdf/tef/arrete_men_2007.pdf)
- Asdifle, Association de Didactique du Français Langue Étrangère (Association for the teaching of French as a foreign language): [www.asdifle.org](http://www.asdifle.org)
- AUF, Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (Francophone universities agency): [www.auf.org](http://www.auf.org)
- CCIP, Paris Île de France Chamber of Commerce and Industry: [www.cci-paris-idf.fr](http://www.cci-paris-idf.fr)
- CEFR, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of the Council of Europe: [www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy/home](http://www.coe.int/en/web/language-policy/home)
- CIEP, Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques (International center for pedagogical research): [www.ciep.fr/en](http://www.ciep.fr/en)
- CNED, Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance (National center for distance learning): [www.cned.fr/vie-active/formation-professionnelle/fle/](http://www.cned.fr/vie-active/formation-professionnelle/fle/)
- Europass (Niveaux européens de langues de la Commission Européenne - Grille d'autoévaluation): <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/fr/resources/european-language-levels-cefr>
- FIPF, Fédération internationale des professeurs de français (international federation of teachers of French): [www.fipf.info](http://www.fipf.info)
- Fondation Alliance française, the network of Alliance Française branches around the world: [www.fondation-alliancefr.org](http://www.fondation-alliancefr.org)
- Franc-Parler, web portal of the global community of teachers of French: [www.franparler-oif.org](http://www.franparler-oif.org)
- GERFLINT, Groupe d'études et de recherches pour le français langue internationale (research group for French as an international language): [www.gerflint.fr](http://www.gerflint.fr)
- HERACLES (Hautes études et recherches pour les centres de langues de l'enseignement supérieur, advanced study and research to support postsecondary language centers) world forum: [www.forummondialheracles.wix.com/heracles](http://www.forummondialheracles.wix.com/heracles)
- Learn French in France: <http://ecolesdete.campusfrance.org>
- Le Français dans le monde, review published by FIPF: [www.fdlm.org](http://www.fdlm.org)
- OIF, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (International francophone organization): [www.francophonie.org](http://www.francophonie.org)
- Organization for the promotion of French as a foreign language: [www.fle.fr](http://www.fle.fr)
- RFI, Radio France internationale: <http://en.rfi.fr>
- Training centers in France that have earned the FLE quality label: [www.qualitefle.fr/en](http://www.qualitefle.fr/en)
- TV5 Monde, Apprendre le français: <http://apprendre.tv5monde.com>  
<http://parlons-francais.tv5monde.com>  
Enseigner le français (Teach French with TV5 monde) <http://enseigner.tv5monde.com>



## ONLINE CATALOG AND MOBILE APP

IMMERSION  
FRANCE

Catalog of short academic programs and programs in French language and culture

<http://ecolesdete.campusfrance.org>

Presented in French and English, the catalog provides information on programs in French as a foreign language and on summer and winter academic courses in France.

Features include:

- > An interactive map of France's regions;
- > Searches by French-proficiency requirements and field of study;
- > More than 300 recreational, cultural, and food-related activities.

**Immersion France**, is a mobile app developed by Campus France in partnership with France's Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs for students exploring options for tourism and language learning in France. Features include:

- > Detailed program descriptions;
- > Presentations of France's regions;
- > Contact information.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT FRENCH DEGREES IN THE RESOURCES CENTER.



[www.campusfrance.org](http://www.campusfrance.org)

- >Resources center
- >Educational and research programs
- >Degree descriptions

CAMPUS  
FRANCE  
[campusfrance.org](http://campusfrance.org)