

ASSOCIATION DES PROGRAMMES UNIVERSITAIRES AMERICAINS EN FRANCE

ASSOCIATION OF U.S. STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN FRANCE

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**2012 SURVEY OF ONSITE ADMINISTRATIVE
STAFF: STATUS, COMPENSATION, ROLES &
RESPONSIBILITIES**

Final Report

INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

The 2012 survey on the status, salary and working conditions of onsite administrators of U.S. programs in France was motivated by the lack of reliable data as well as several requests from study abroad organizations seeking to determine appropriate salaries and compensation packages. Two previous attempts by other parties to gather such information in France since 2000 had either met with little success or yielded insufficient or non-representative data. With the creation of the Association of American University Programs in France (APUAF) in 2008 and its growth to 60 institutional members by 2012, the time seemed ripe to conduct such a survey.

An initial questionnaire was developed and submitted to APUAF members at the March 2012 General Assembly for comments and suggestions. The stated goal was to obtain at least a 50% response rate (i.e., 30 member institutions) in order to ensure a representative sample. The final version was e-mailed in early June to the designated program representatives. The survey was conducted via Survey Monkey in order to ensure anonymity. An early July deadline was initially set but was subsequently extended until late August at the request of colleagues in France.

Part I of the survey – Program & Organization Profile - was completed by the primary program representative in France and yielded 33 responses which represented 55% of the APUAF membership. Part II – Administrative Staff & Salary Information – was completed by 45 respondents and included staff other than program directors. The decision to relay the questionnaire to other administrative staff members was left to each program.

Results and descriptive statistics were generated by Survey Monkey, and responses to open-ended questions were also presented in list form and cannot be traced to a particular individual. Preliminary results of Part II were distributed to APUAF members at the October 2012 assembly. This report presents the main findings for both parts of the survey.

Unlike a paper-based survey which enables respondents to add information or nuance their responses if they wish, Survey Monkey is best suited for fixed-choice responses and has limitations. For example, when a question on length of the orientation program was framed in terms of number of days or weeks (to be specified by the respondent), it was not possible to distinguish the time reference from the response. Consequently, ambiguous results have not been included, and this report focuses on the main findings.

The response rate for each main item is specified (N =). In some cases, respondents skipped a question, whether deliberately or not.

We wish to thank all of the colleagues in France who participated as well as Astrid Olive-Roussel who communicated the Survey Monkey link to APUAF members and ensured confidentiality and anonymity of findings. Any unintended errors are those of the two Executive Council members who interpreted the data and produced this report.

Monique Fecteau, Past President of APUAF (2008-2012)
Sylvie Toux, Member of Executive Council (2008-2012)

I. Findings on Program & Institutional Profile (Part 1)

All 33 respondents were active members of the APUAF. This figure represents 55% of APUAF membership during the 2011-12 academic year.

As seen below, over 63% of the respondents represented a college or university as opposed to a third-party provider or for-profit entity.

Program type (N = 30)		
Program sponsored or organized by:		
College or university (single institution)	46.7%	(n = 14)
Third-party provider (or consortium of over 5 members)	33.3%	(n = 10)
Mini-consortium of 2 to 5 colleges or universities	16.7%	(n = 5)
For-profit entity (e.g., internship org, language institute)	3.3%	(n = 1)

Nearly all responding programs continue to offer mainly semester-long or full-year options, as indicated below. Only slightly over half operate summer programs and fewer still offer customized or faculty-led-programs. This is somewhat surprising in light of recent statistics (IIE's Open Doors Report) showing a clear trend toward shorter stays (i.e., less than one semester) by U.S. students.

Program options or session types (N = 33)		
Fall semester	97.0%	(n = 32)
Spring semester	97.0%	(n = 32)
Full-year	90.9%	(n = 30)
Summer session (4 to 8 weeks)	54.5%	(n = 18)
Customized or faculty-led (1-3 weeks)	27.3%	(n = 9)
Periodic	3.0%	(n = 1)

The statistics below suggest that the majority of the programs represented in the survey remain "hybrid", that is, they offer a combination of or choice between in-house and French university courses. A caveat is in order, however, as the mere fact of providing an opportunity to enroll in French universities does not mean that all students in a given program are doing so; the actual percentage is likely lower. Extrapolating from the percentage of programs with in-house courses, it would appear that fewer than 15% are exclusively direct-enrollment programs.

Over 60% of responding programs collaborate with or represent French as a Second Language institutes which generally enroll more students at the beginning and intermediate levels than in advanced-level courses.

Less than a third offer customized courses, a finding consistent with the previous one regarding program options.

Types of course offerings in last 5 years (N = 32)		
Program-organized classes ("in-house")	87.5%	(n = 28)
Enrollment in French universities	84.4%	(n = 27)
Enrollment in language institutes (FLE)	62.5%	(n = 20)
Short-term, customized courses	31.3%	(n = 10)

The question of whether in-house courses offered by these programs were in French or English was not asked although this information is generally available on program web sites and would be interesting to explore further.

Regarding other program elements, not surprisingly, the majority of programs include group social events and housing, and three-quarters offer internship or volunteer opportunities, as seen below. Such features no longer appear to be distinguishing characteristics that set programs apart from one another; increasingly, they are standard options that reflect student demand.

As for the inclusion (or not) of additional “perks” like cooking or studio arts classes, as well as meal and transportation allowances, these likely depend on the overall program cost, with more expensive programs offering more than less costly ones.

Similarly, programs that offer individual cultural stipends or additional reimbursements for activities chosen by participants and “extra services”, such as pre-arranged bank accounts, can usually do so because of high program fees paid by students. This survey did not include questions on program costs although this information is available on most web sites and costs vary depending upon what is included and whether full tuition fees are charged by universities and colleges.

Other program components included in cost (N = 32)

Organized group trips subsidized by program	96.9%	(n = 31)
Social-cultural group events (e.g., theatre, meals)	84.4%	(n = 27)
Housing arranged and paid for by program	81.3%	(n = 26)
Internships (credit or non-credit)	75.0%	(n = 24)
Volunteer or community service opportunities	75.0%	(n = 24)
Conversation exchanges with French students	65.6%	(n = 21)
Special non-credit classes/activities (e.g., cooking, art)	50.0%	(n = 16)
Meal allowance or stipend	50.0%	(n = 16)
Transportation pass or stipend	50.0%	(n = 16)
Individual cultural allowance for extra-curricular	37.5%	(n = 12)
Bank accounts arranged by program	34.4%	(n = 11)
Assistance in finding housing	34.4%	(n = 11)
Field trips outside of France (course-linked or optional)	21.9%	(n = 7)

Staff-related questions are a bit more difficult to interpret in light of the variation in size of programs, which ranges from 1,000 or so students per year (all types and lengths of programs included) to fewer than 20 students. Small programs may employ a single full-time director and one part-time staffer or student intern, for example, whereas a very large program that operates year-round and accommodates hundreds of students over a calendar year may employ up to 15 full-time staff members. The averages indicated below are likely not representative of either very large or very small programs.

Permanent administrative staff employed (N = 32)

Average number of permanent on-site staff	2.80
Average number of permanent <u>full-time</u> staff	2.31
Average number of permanent <u>part-time</u> staff	1.25
Average number of student workers/interns	1.36

As seen below, many programs continue to regularly integrate visiting faculty at various points during the academic year. In contrast, the “rotating Resident Director model” is clearly no longer the norm, at least among the 33 responding institutions.

It is difficult to estimate the exact number of U.S. programs in France. One of the criteria for voluntary membership in the APJAF is the existence of a permanent office and legal status in France. This excludes occasional short-term “study tours” or summer programs led by a faculty member, for example, of which there are still many.

Other staff information (N = 32)

Visiting faculty	68.7%	(n = 22)
Student workers or interns	59.4%	(n = 19)
Rotating director from U.S.	18.7%	(n = 6)

The overall low average of permanent staff can also be partially explained by the heavy reliance on outsourcing for many services, as seen in the percentages below.

It is interesting to note that while 75% of responding programs offer internships, fewer than 20% rely on an internship organization. Fewer still use travel agencies, a reflection of the Internet Age.

Use of service providers, consultants & non-contractual staff (N = 32)

Accounting & payroll services	90.6%	(n = 29)
Computer or IT specialists	78.1%	(n = 25)
Transportation companies	78.1%	(n = 25)
Cleaning & maintenance services	56.3%	(n = 18)
Legal counsel	53.1%	(n = 17)
Housing services (student)	25.0%	(n = 8)
Internship organization	18.8%	(n = 6)
Travel agencies	12.5%	(n = 4)
Security staff	6.3%	(n = 2)

II. INDIVIDUAL RESPONDENT PROFILE (Part 2)

This section is divided into several rubrics: demographics, professional experience, roles and responsibilities, salary information and overall satisfaction with compensation. This part of the questionnaire consisted of 25 questions, including fixed-choice and open-ended items.

A. Demographics

Below is the group profile of the 45 respondents to the second part of the survey on salaries, benefits, and overall satisfaction.

Gender	Female	77.8%	(n = 35)
	Male	22.2%	(n = 10)
Age range	25-29 years	11.1 %	(n = 5)
	30-39 years	35.6 %	(n = 16)
	40-49 years	26.7 %	(n = 12)
	50-59 years	20.0 %	(n = 9)
	60-69 years	6.6 %	(n = 3)
Nationality	French	48.9%	(n = 22)
	American	44.4%	(n = 20)
	Other	6.7%	(n = 3)

Educational level (N = 44)

B.A. / <i>Licence</i>	9.0 %	(n = 4)
M.A. / <i>Maîtrise</i>	47.7%	(n = 21)
DESS / DEA / ABD	13.6%	(n = 6)
Ph.D.	25.0%	(n = 11)
BTS (= Associate's degree)	2.3%	(n = 1)
Unspecified FL degree	2.3%	(n = 1)

NB: 56% hold degrees in a French-related field (literature, civilization, French studies, etc.)

The dominant profile that emerges is that of a female, either French or American, between the ages of 30 and 50 who minimally holds a Master's degree but, in many cases, has gone beyond that level and taken Ph.D.-level courses and/or holds a doctorate.

B. Professional Background and Experience / Current Status and Contract

When asked in separate questions about previous positions (administrative or teaching) held in higher education in France and the U.S., the results are as follows:

Previous professional experience in study abroad and/or higher education (N = 41-42)		
Teaching position or faculty status in U.S	Yes = 39.5%	No = 55.8%
Admin staff in U.S. study abroad office or organization	Yes = 29.3%	No = 65.9%
Teaching or admin position in French higher education	Yes = 47.6%	No = 50%

While close to two-thirds have no prior experience in a study abroad office in the U.S., between 40 and 48% have held teaching or administrative positions in a university, whether in France or the U.S. (and sometimes both).

Nearly half have worked in a U.S. program in France for at least 10 years, as seen below.

Length of employment as on-site staff in a U.S. program in France (N = 42)		
0 to 2 years	14.3%	(n = 6)
3 to 9 years	38.1%	(n = 16)
10 to 19 years	35.7%	(n = 15)
20 or more years	11.9%	(n = 5)

The majority of respondents have upper-management status (*cadre*) in France and a corresponding title (i.e., Director). Fewer than 10 percent hold a faculty position.

Current position or job title (N = 44)		
Director (Resident Director, On-Site Director, Program Director, Admin Director)	56.8%	(n = 25)
Coordinator/Manager (Student Services, Registrar, Admin, Housing, Finances)	18.4%	(n = 8)
Assistant (Administrative Assistant, Assistant to the Director)	15.9%	(n = 7)
Faculty (Professor, Associate or Assistant Professor, Lecturer)	9.0%	(n = 4)

Level/category in France (N = 43)		
Upper management (<i>cadre ou cadre dirigeant</i>)	65.1%	(n = 28)
Employee/staff (<i>non-cadre</i>)	34.9%	(n = 15)

The percentages below indicate that regardless of their exact title or status in France, over 90% of respondents hold a permanent French contract which implies job security, at least in theory.

Type of French contract (N = 43)		
French CDI (indefinite-length)	90.7%	(n = 39)
U.S. contract (letter of appointment)	7.0%	(n = 3)
French CDD (set-length)	2.3%	(n = 1)

In contrast, a little over half reported having official status in a U.S. institution, as seen below. Of those who do, a minority hold faculty status whereas close to a third are considered administrative staff. These titles do not necessarily imply U.S. benefits or rights, however.

Status in U.S. institution (N = 39)		
None	56.4%	(n = 22)
Administrative staff	30.8%	(n = 12)
Faculty	12.8%	(n = 5)

Contrary to perceptions about the 35-hour work week in France, many respondents reported working longer hours than what is indicated below. This emerged more in the final question rather than the one about hours worked per contract. It is common knowledge that certain points in the program (e.g., arrival and orientation) require greater staff presence. In fact, directors with a *cadre dirigeant* status are not bound by the 35-hour rule, nor are they entitled to overtime compensation. This perhaps partly explains the rather high percentage of staff not eligible for overtime pay.

Number of hours worked per contract (N = 45)		
35 hours/week	62.2%	(n = 28)
Part-time: 18 – 28 hours/week	15.5%	(n = 7)
Unspecified or no limit	13.3%	(n = 6)
39 – 40 hours/week	11.1%	(n = 5)

Additional compensation (N = 42)		
Eligible	54.8%	(n = 23)
Non-eligible	45.2%	(n = 19)

The follow-up question asked respondents who were eligible for additional compensation what forms this took, i.e., overtime pay or time off. Of the 25 who responded, 40% (n = 10) reported receiving days off to compensate for extra hours worked and 28% (n = 7) received both days off and additional pay. Eight or 32% reported receiving neither.

C. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Respondents were presented with a list of responsibilities and asked to check all of the duties performed in their position. These are listed below in descending order, with over 90% of respondents reporting involvement in orientation as well as safety and security issues.

The statistics attest to the myriad roles and responsibilities that upper-level administrators have on site, often simultaneously, and the complexity of the director's position which requires multiple skill sets. When one takes into account that many small programs are operating with, at most, a director and one other full- or part-time staff member, the list is daunting.

Primary responsibilities (N = 45)

On-site orientation	93.3%
Safety & security	91.1%
Office & personnel management	84.4%
Personal counseling/health referrals	80.0%
Field trips, excursions (planning & accomp.)	77.8%
Extra-curricular activities & event planning	75.6%
Communication w/ U.S. sending institutions	75.6%
Managing exchanges & relations with host instit.	73.3%
Financial reporting & budget management	73.3%
Pre-departure info & communication	66.7%
Curriculum & program development	66.7%
Enrollment & academic records	66.7%
Student life activities	64.4%
Academic advising	64.4%
Strategic planning	60.0%
Residency & immigration issues (OFII)	57.8%
Logistics for short-term or custom programs	57.8%
Hiring & human resources	53.3%
Student housing (all types)	53.3%
Legal representative of program in France	51.1%
Faculty supervision & development	48.9%
Buildings & facilities maintenance	48.9%
Renting space & signing leases	46.7%
Marketing & promotion	42.2%
Recruiting/selecting French exchange students	40.0%
IT development or support	35.6%
Teaching program course or seminar	35.6%
Supervising undergrad research & indep studies	33.3%
Selecting program participants	20.0%
Supervising graduate students	2.2%

D. SALARY & BENEFITS

Rather than ask respondents to indicate their exact salary, a list of ranges was presented, as shown below. Not surprisingly, salaries vary considerably and no clear pattern emerges. Keeping in mind that over 56% of the respondents are program directors, it is evident there is a fair amount of disparity across programs.

That said, when one combines certain ranges, the results show that around 62% of respondents earn less than 45,000 euros per year (gross annual salary) while close to 18% earn between 45,000 and 55,000 euros and the remaining 20% earn over 63,000 euros.

Reported gross annual salary ranges (N = 45)

18 001 – 24 000 euros	13.3%	(n = 6)
24 001 – 33 000 euros	15.5%	(n = 7)
33 001 – 39 000 euros	15.5%	(n = 7)
39 001 – 45 000 euros	17.8%	(n = 8)
45 001 – 51 000 euros	13.3%	(n = 6)
51 001 – 54 000 euros	4.4%	(n = 2)
63 001 – 69 000 euros	11.1%	(n = 5)
69 001 – 72 000 euros	2.2%	(n = 1)
80 000 – 100 000 euros	6.7%	(n = 3)

The follow-up question asked respondents whether they received an annual salary increase. Of the 43 who responded, 51.2% checked No and 48.8% Yes. Two-thirds reported an annual increase of 2.5% on average.

When asked to specify reasons for the lack of yearly increases, responses were less numerous (N = 37), but the two most frequently cited were the economic situation and/or budgetary restrictions and fact that salaries had been frozen in the U.S.

With respect to additional benefits or perks outside of mandatory ones in France (e.g., five weeks of paid vacation per year, unemployment and health benefits), the results are presented below. While over half of respondents reported being compensated or reimbursed for transportation and communication costs, far fewer receive other perks. Meal allowances and conference funds are not a given, even among directors.

It is unlikely that many part-time staff receive the kinds of benefits listed with the possible exception of a transportation allowance. Also, given that nearly 60% have no official status within a U.S. institution, it is not surprising that U.S. benefits and paid sabbaticals which are generally reserved for tenured faculty.

As for program housing and vehicles, such perks were undoubtedly more common when the norm was rotating faculty directors as opposed to permanent onsite directors.

Other benefits received (N = 40)

Transportation costs	70.0%	(n = 28)
Telephone & Internet expenses	67.5%	(n = 27)
Conference funds (in France or elsewhere)	42.5%	(n = 17)
Meal stipend (e.g. vouchers)	37.5%	(n = 15)
Additional health insurance in France	17.5%	(n = 7)
U.S. retirement benefits	15.0%	(n = 6)
U.S. life insurance	10.0%	(n = 4)
U.S. health insurance	7.5%	(n = 3)
Paid sabbatical	7.5%	(n = 3)
Program vehicle	5.0%	(n = 2)
Housing provided by employer	5.0%	(n = 2)
Housing subsidy or stipend	5.0%	(n = 2)

Perceptions of compensation

The two final questions aimed at gauging respondents' degree of satisfaction or self-perception of compensation. All 45 responded to the first fixed-choice item which was framed as follows:

"Please complete the sentence below by checking ONE response and taking into account factors such as your educational background, previous work experience, your current workload and responsibilities (e.g., number of programs, students and staff managed), salary levels in France, cost of living in your current city, benefits and perks."

Overall, I feel I am...

very well compensated	6.7%	(n = 3)
well-compensated	24.4%	(n = 11)
neither well nor poorly compensated (neutral)	53.3%	(n = 24)
poorly compensated	13.3%	(n = 6)
very poorly compensated	2.2%	(n = 1)

The degree of satisfaction is quite high if one considers the neutral response (*neither well nor poorly*) to be an indicator of appropriate compensation and relative satisfaction. The combined total of positive and neutral responses is 84.4%. This was perhaps the most unexpected finding. Because fixed-choice, Likert-scale questions may lead respondents to favor the "middle ground", however, a follow-up open-ended question asked respondents to explain their response.

Of the 45 respondents, 28 cited the following positive and negative factors, listed in order from most to least frequent, ranging from one to five responses in the positive category.

Sources of satisfaction or positive points cited:

Other perks and social benefits in France (transportation costs, phone, office...)	(n = 5)
Amount of paid vacation time in France (i.e., 5 weeks/year)	(n = 4)
Favorable comparison with French salaries	
Gratitude for having a job that pays more than minimum wage	
Academic freedom	

Sources of dissatisfaction or negative points cited:

Increasingly high cost of living not taken into account, especially in Paris	(n = 9)
Salary not commensurate with level of responsibility and overtime hours	(n = 7)
Inadequate amount of staff	
Lack of benefits	
Hours worked exceed contract and/or involve being on call 24/7	
Salary not commensurate with academic degree and professional experience	
Risk of burnout	

Note: Three respondents indicated that they had no basis for comparison where their salaries were concerned.

The qualitative responses tentatively suggest that the level of satisfaction is not quite as high as the responses to the sentence-completion item would lead one to believe. Specifically, the neutral response with respect to salary should be interpreted with caution.

Combined with the fact that over 50% of respondents expressed appreciation for the survey and the opportunity to obtain concrete data in the final *Other Comments* item, one might hypothesize that if respondents had had access to the main findings prior to answering the question on degree of satisfaction, they might have responded somewhat differently.

Two other comments that surfaced in the final section were a concern about retirement status and benefits in two different countries (France and the U.S.) and a suggestion that directors be entitled to a paid sabbatical every eight to ten years.

Conclusion

Insofar as the main purpose of this survey was to provide baseline descriptive data on salaries and roles of administrative staff in U.S. programs in France, the findings are revealing.

At the same time, it is difficult to make certain comparisons without taking into account factors such as program costs and budget, enrollments or program location, to name a few. Given the make-up of the APUAF membership (approximately 1/3 of programs are located outside of Paris), we can probably conclude that most of the respondents were permanent directors who work in Paris.

Because of the multiple roles and responsibilities of on-site staff, notably program directors, it is also difficult to compare their salaries and work conditions with those of, say, a director of international or off-campus programs in the U.S. In fact, there is no equivalent position on U.S. campuses where duties are usually handled by separate divisions and individuals (e.g., Registrar, Human Resources, Student Life, Residential Life) and few U.S. campus staff are "on call" 24/7.

While recognizing that national laws and labor practices differ across Europe, it would nevertheless be interesting to compare these findings with those of other countries in the euro zone where U.S. institutions operate programs, particularly Spain and Italy. Surveys such as this one are important for the study abroad profession as a whole and put the spotlight on the role of onsite staff who tend to be neglected in U.S.-based surveys in which few participate.