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COVID-19 Info Sheet France

Compiled by:
APUAF COVID-19 Committee
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INTRODUCTION

The COVID Info Committee continues to update this compilation of COVID-19 protocols and guidelines as established by the French authorities to keep APUAF members and their partners informed of openings and restrictions across the country. On November 24th, the French government announced that the country is now entering a three-phase re-opening period. We have thus re-organized our COVID-19 Info Sheet to address the gradual openings of services, institutions, and commerce.

The committee in charge of the research, translation and scope of this document seeks simply to provide a short-cut summary of information (relevant to the field of International Education in France) that is widely accessible, yet often only published in French, on various different official government websites and through communiqués provided by the French government and the ensemble of its Ministries, the French Consular offices, the *Préfectures*, local government resources & announcements, and protocols established by French Federations

We encourage readers to access the links to the original sources provided in each category of information in this report. **The APUAF COVID-19 Committee will update this compilation periodically, at least once a month, for the coming months.**

The situation evolves quickly and continually, and as such, APUAF recommends that all readers verify the information provided below before making definitive decisions. This Info Sheet does not intend to interpret information provided by the French authorities, nor does it seek to advise readers. Its purpose is to simply compile information from official sources to provide a convenient resource in English for APUAF members and their partners.

The French government has put in place a 24/7 hotline (in French only) to respond to any questions concerning COVID-19 (health, regulations, workplace, social services, legal, civil, childcare and education, travel and leisure activities, etc.). This committee tested the hotline several times, and a COVID-19 expert responds promptly each time.

Much of the information in this report concerns the general state of affairs in France. We have not provided detailed information for each city or region, though that detailed information is available on both national and local websites.



SECTION 1: INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

Entering France & Schengen from the United States

Below is a short summary of the communiqué published by French Embassies in the U.S. (Aug 12, 2020):

- Travelers aged 11 or older from the United States **must provide the results of a PCR test taken less than 72 hours before departure** indicating a negative result for COVID-19. In certain exceptional and documented cases where it is not possible to get a test within the required time frame, exceptions are possible.

- **If you are not able to provide evidence of this test or a certificate of exemption, boarding will be denied.**

It should also be noted that, in the context of the Covid-19 epidemic, **the external borders of the European Union and the Schengen Area have been closed to travelers from the United States** since March 17 and that, in this context, only those persons who fall within one of the categories mentioned in the [exempted international movement certificate for travel from abroad to mainland France](#) (document available in English and French) are authorized to enter France:

- French nationals, accompanied by their spouse and children
- European Union nationals and nationals from Andorra, United Kingdom, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, and the Holy See, having their primary residence in France or transiting through France to reach their country of origin or where they have their primary residence, accompanied by their spouse and children
- Third country nationals, who are holders of a French or European residence permit or valid long-stay visa, having their primary residence in France or transiting through France to reach their residence in a country of the European Union or assimilated
- Third country nationals, transiting less than 24 hours in an international area
- Diplomatic mission staff, or international organisations staff working in headquarters or offices located in France, accompanied by their spouse and children
- Foreign healthcare workers supporting the fight against Covid-19
- Flight and cargo personnel as part of a crew or travelling to their departure base as passengers
- Foreign nationals ensuring international carriage of goods
- Driver or crew members of a passenger train or bus
- Crew members or personnel working on a merchant or fishing vessel
- **Students with long-term visa (VLS), short-term visa (VCS) in order to study or to do an internship (“student-in-competition” short-stay visa not included), or coming for less than 90 days from a country exempted from VCS, with a proof of address in France**
- Teacher or researcher employed or invited by a French educational institution or research lab, travelling for teaching or research purposes
- Third country national with a « *Passeport Talent* » long-term visa (VLS)



Student Visas

France is accepting all international students at this time, for all students from all countries of origin, and for all types of programs including short and long term, study, internship, or research programs. All VFS Centers in the U.S. are open and accepting student visa appointments. [Campus France Student Visa FAQ](#)

- French Consulates continue their service of delivering visas to international students **for programs over 90 days**
- A communiqué has been published on the Campus France website: [Advice for Students Coming to France](#)
- A guide that summarizes the steps to follow has been published on the Campus France website: [France Welcomes You Guide](#)

The FAQ page on Campus France’s website states the following information for students travelling to France for **short term programs (under 90 days)**.

“Students traveling to France for programs of study of under 90 days (who may not have a visa) will need to travel with a **proof of housing** in France for the entirety of their program period. They should also travel with documents that **prove enrollment in a higher education program in France**. *Campus France USA is not responsible for verifying if students are eligible for this exemption, and is not responsible for any student who is not allowed entry into France for studies of under 90 days.*“ [Campus France Student Visa FAQ](#)

Here is a summary of the steps students travelling from the U.S. must take. Information concerning all other countries is available through the above links.

All students and faculty coming to France from the United States must carry :

- **The exceptional international travel certificate** for Metropolitan France which can be downloaded (in English or in French) on the [Ministry of the Interior's website](#). You must present this certificate to travel companies before using your travel ticket, as well as to border control authorities (for travel by air, sea and land, including by rail).
- **A sworn statement that you do not have COVID-19 symptoms** (included in the same document)
- **A "contact" sheet** providing your residence address in France
- Students and researchers must show a **negative COVID test** from under 72 hours before boarding. **Quarantine is not currently necessary** for anyone showing a negative test.
- **Student visa** (for programs more than 90 days) or **proof of housing and enrollment** (for programs less than 90 days)

SECTION 2: HEALTH SERVICE ACCESS & CAPACITY

Access to protective equipment (masks, gloves, gel)

All pharmacies and most grocery chains in France currently have low priced equipment available.

- **Disposable surgical masks** are available at approximately 20 to 30 cents each.
- Certified 'Grand Public' **re-usable masks** cost about 2 euros each and come in 2 different categories: Category 1 masks filter approximately 90% of particles and Category 2 masks filter 70%. Annex 3 of the National Protocol for Staying Healthy & Safe at Work describes each kind of mask available in France. [How to Stay Healthy and Safe at Work](#)
- **Disinfectant gel** costs about 10-12 euros per liter. There are also public gel dispensers (free) in some cities in France, and almost all places of business have gel dispensers available for customer use.
- France currently has sufficient **protective gloves** available for the general public.



7 Day Quarantine

There is no obligatory quarantine upon entry to France from the U.S. since students will come with a negative PCR test. Students could find themselves at some point in their stay in a situation that would require a 7 day Quarantine (if they test positive, are waiting for results, or are in close contact with someone who has tested positive).

Campus France describes the conditions of the 7-day quarantine that an international student may be asked to do during their stay in France [Campus France Recommendations including description of Quarantine](#) :

- Stay at home as much as possible
- Limit your time outside to essential needs
- Avoid contact and always wear a mask in the presence of another person
- Inform your school that you are quarantining
- Avoid contact with other people in your residence/at home
- If your accommodation is a university residence, inform the administration that you are quarantining so that cleaning and disinfection measures can be implemented
- In case of symptoms, contact a doctor immediately

Access to health care & hospitalization

- Web-based platforms and apps such as "Doctolib" allow students to book medical appointments across the country with ease. <https://www.doctolib.fr/>
- Virtual consultations and in-person appointments with general practitioners are readily available with little wait time.
- Same day house-calls are also available in most French cities (through services such as *SOS Médecins* or UMP). <https://www.sosmedecins.fr/> and <https://www.ump.fr/>
- Students have access to all French public hospitals where there is a dedicated space for COVID patients.
- French Hospitals are currently at 71.1% capacity for intensive care/*reanimation* beds. Statistics can be tracked here: [France COVID Dashboard](#). The Health Minister announced Aug 27, 2020 that France can swell the capacity to 12 000 resuscitation beds when needed. The above capacity percentage takes into account only the regular number of ICU beds, not the swelled number.

Access to testing

Two kinds of diagnostic COVID tests (nasal) are currently available in France to test patients for COVID. Only the PCR test should be used to test "contact cases". Anyone who is established as a contact case should opt for a PCR test rather than an Antigen test. Also, as mentioned in the section on visas, only the PCR test is accepted for boarding to travel from the U.S. to France.

- The (RT-PCR) test** to determine if the patient has COVID at the time of the test.
 - Results are available within 24 – 36 hours.
 - France currently is performing 1.3-1.4 million tests per week.
 - 100% covered by Social Security and do not require prescription. Otherwise, out of pocket costs are approximately 30 euros per test.
 - They are administered in testing centers, medical facilities and labs but also by nurses, medical students, paramedics, firemen, etc. There are currently 3700 testing centers across France. [COVID Testing Sites in France](#)
 - **Who can be tested (RT-PCR)?**
 - ✓ Anyone can benefit from a test. There is no need to even show symptoms.
 - ✓ The test is covered by French Social Security and these conditions apply even for people who are not covered by French Social Security.
 - ✓ The health authorities could contact individuals to request mandatory testing if they have been established as having been in contact with someone who has tested positive.
 - ✓ The health authorities could request testing of certain groups in the context of testing campaigns (fragile groups, residents of a certain zone or in a certain group accommodation, works in a certain area, etc.)
- The Antigen Test** to determine if the patient has COVID at the time of the test. <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/actualites/A14435>
 - Results within 15-30 minutes
 - Available especially in some pharmacies (for patients with French Social Security) and at airports.
 - 100% covered by Social Security and do not require a prescription.
 - **Who can be tested (Antigen)?**

Patients with symptoms can opt for this test if they fulfill the following criteria:

 - ✓ Within 4 days of first symptoms
 - ✓ 65 years old or less
 - ✓ No underlying conditions, meaning not susceptible to developing a serious form of Covid.

Patients without symptoms who have been asked to be tested as part of an institutional testing program such as:

 - ✓ At universities
 - ✓ In airports, especially for people coming from places with high Covid numbers
 - ✓ At retirement homes (for staff) & in prisons, etc.

An Immunity Test (blood test) is also available in France to determine if the patient has developed immunity to COVID. These tests are administered mostly in labs and sometimes might require a prescription. They are 100% covered by Social Security and otherwise out of pocket costs are approximately 20 euros per test.

Steps to take for testing

Precise procedures have been put in place for different case scenarios. Details can be found and downloaded here for anyone in these groups: [Steps to Take to be Tested](#)

- I don't present any symptoms and I would like to be tested: Free test, no prescription needed, PCR results within approximately 24h, or Antigen test results in 15-30 min.
- I have symptoms: specific protocol for testing to avoid contact with others during testing and until results are in. Free test, no prescription needed, PCR results within approximately 24h, Antigen results in 15-30 min
- I have been in contact with a person who has tested positive: PCR test only

The screenshot shows a website interface for booking a consultation or video appointment. The main heading is "Réservez une consultation physique ou vidéo chez un professionnel de santé". Below this is a search bar with the text "Médicins, établissement, spécialité" and a "Rechercher" button. A secondary heading reads "COVID-19 : Bon à savoir". Underneath, there are two main sections: "Consultation vidéo" and "Dépistage COVID-19". The "Consultation vidéo" section explains that the Ministry of Solidarity and Health encourages video consultations and provides a link to "Prendre rendez-vous en vidéo". The "Dépistage COVID-19" section lists "Test PCR (prélèvement naso-pharyngé)" and "Test sérologique (prise de sang)" with arrows pointing to more information.

- A specific function is available through the website & application **Doctolib** to locate the testing center or lab closest to you with the earliest available appointments for a test.

Tracking

All COVID patients must provide a local doctor with the list of people with whom they have been in touch within 48 hours of the first symptoms. Medical authorities will contact every person on that list and require testing (see above).

Anyone who has been in contact with someone who has tested positive must follow a specific protocol [Steps to Take to be Tested](#):

- Wear a certified mask at all times when in contact with others
- Contact a testing center to make an appointment. Immediate testing if one lives with the COVID patient, 7 days after last contact with the person if one doesn't live with the COVID patient.
- Visit the testing center with a form of ID and proof of insurance
- Return home and stay in quarantine for until the test results (usually 24h)

SECTION 3: CONFINEMENT & RE-OPENING

General

France has been under a national confinement period across France since October 30, 2020. [National Decree concerning confinement 29 Oct 2020](#) . On November 24th, the government announced a 3-phase re-opening period starting November 28th, 2020. <https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus>

Phase 1: November 28

- Authorization Forms to leave the house are still required, and employees are asked to continue to work remotely when possible.
- All retail businesses across the country can open and can extend their opening hours as well as open on Sundays.
- Shopping for non-essential items is allowed.
- The leisure outings have been extended to 3 hours per day, within a 20km radius of residence.
- Outside extra-curricular activities for school children are authorized.
- Outdoor individual sports are authorized, and sports complexes can open.



Phase 2: December 15 (if certain sanitary conditions are met)

- No more Authorization Forms needed and travel throughout France is authorized.
- A daily curfew is in place from 9pm-7am, except for December 24 and 31.
- Cinemas, theaters and museums can open.
- Inside extra-curricular activities for school children are authorized.

Phase 3: January 20 (if certain sanitary conditions are met)

- Gyms & restaurants can open.
- High schools can return to all classes onsite. Universities can return to all classes onsite/on campus starting February 3.
- Ski resorts can possibly open sometime in January.

Tools

In addition to consulting the general government websites that communicate all essential information concerning the virus, the confinement and the re-opening period, everyone is asked to download the app **TousAntiCovid**, which serves several functions:

- **Tracking:** the app alerts users if they are in close contact with a Covid patient



- **Information:** the app publishes the daily stats concerning the virus
- **Testing:** the app can be used to locate the nearest testing center
- **Documentation:** the app can generate a digital authorization form needed to be outside during confinement

This app which uses Bluetooth technology for tracking and does not share personal identification information. Use of the app for everyone, including COVID patients, is voluntary. [TOUS ANTI COVID Tracking App](#)

Going out in public

At this time, it is forbidden to leave your residence **except** for the following reasons:

- Going to and from work or school
- Shopping at any establishment authorized to be open
- Medical care and medical appointments that cannot be done remotely
- Essential family duties including helping a vulnerable family member or caring for children
- All outings necessary for disabled people and those who accompany them
- Leisure outings, limited to 3 hours maximum per day, for physical activity, individual sports (no team sports), and pet care, limited to 20 km radius of one's residence. Those of the same residence can go out together.
- For administrative or judicial appointments
- To participate in social work, volunteering, or other community service

For every outing, it is mandatory to have an authorization form found here:

- [Online Authorization Form](#),
- [Printable Forms in French & English](#)



Wearing Masks

It is required to wear a mask at all times when outside of one's residence. [How to Wear a Mask](#). Only those jogging/running or riding a mechanical bicycle are exempt from wearing masks. [Information concerning different masks](#)

Phase 1 situation starting November 28th

Schools

Starting November 2, 2020, all Day Care facilities, Primary Schools, Junior-High and High Schools are open but with reinforced safety protocols [School Protocols under Confinement](#). The protocols include notably:

- More detailed guidelines to keep students in certain groups separated from others by staggering class times, movements, recess periods, lunch periods, etc.
- Children must wear masks all day starting at 6 years old (previously set at 11 years old)

The initial requirements are still valid:

- **Maintaining whenever possible a physical distance of 1 meter (or 3 feet) between individuals'** side by side, face to face, or with an empty seat between individuals in enclosed spaces, especially in physical learning spaces (this distance is not applicable when individuals are behind each other) and in libraries
- **Mandatory mask wearing** (while sitting or circulating)
- **Systematic use of hydroalcoholic gel by everyone** (over the age of 11 and all adults)
- **Mechanical or manual ventilation of the premises** with 10 to 15 minutes of ventilation at least twice a day
- **Routine cleaning** at least once a day, in the absence of students and in accordance with the specific sanitary instructions applicable
- **Management of the flow of people** to avoid excessive crowding and crossing of individuals

Higher Education

Several official government websites give detail concerning academic and campus life during confinement.

- [Ministry of Higher Education general Covid info](#)
- [Official Student Life website confinement info](#)
- [Ministry of Higher Education campus confinement details](#)

International Students: International students continue to be welcomed into France. The French government has announced that international students currently in France can apply for and/or renew residency permits, online, thus avoiding the previously obligatory in person appointment at the *prefecture*. ([Campus France Stay Permit Renewal info](#)).

Classes: The government has ordered all institutions to move all lectures and discussion sections to online learning platforms as of October 30th (*cours magistraux* and *travaux dirigés*). In-person instruction at universities could resume in early February, if certain sanitary conditions are met. In an [October 30th circular](#), Frédérique Vidal, Minister of Higher Education and Research, reiterates that French institutions of higher education are not “closed”; they are just switching from an in person and/or hybrid instructional model to 100% remote instruction for the duration of the physical lockdown.

Studio courses & Labs: Courses in fields such as science (biology, chemistry, physics, etc.), medical/health sciences, sports sciences, fine arts (graphic arts and design, studio art, etc.) that cannot be delivered virtually are authorized to continue in-person instruction (at 50% the total occupancy of the classroom space).

Exams and entry exams: Upcoming exams can be maintained in an in-person setting with social distancing, though online alternatives and take-home assignments are encouraged.

Internships: Students currently enrolled in for-credit internships can continue their work remotely or in-person depending on the host company/organization’s protocol.

Libraries, computer labs and cafeterias: university libraries and computer labs can open, but cafeterias are only open for take away meals (no in-person dining).

Administrative, Health & Social Services: university health & social services remain fully accessible (including mental health support services), with some non-essential administrative services accessible by appointment only.

Residence Halls: University housing is open but students who can easily move home are encouraged to do so. International students or those far away from home are authorized to remain in student housing.

A distance :	En présentiel :
- Cours magistraux	- Travaux pratiques
- Travaux dirigés	- Enseignement pro (matériel spécialisé)
	- RU (ventes à emporter)
	- BU sur rendez-vous
	- Activités de recherche non réalisables en télétravail

Workplaces

The government has asked that all employees work from home 100% if possible. Offices can stay open if necessary but must continue to apply the guidelines applicable to the specific work environment.

These guidelines include, among others:

- **Working remotely** is required unless it is not possible
- **Physical distancing** (at least 1 meter between individuals and/or workstations)
- **Obligatory mask wearing** and the responsibility of the employer to provide masks
- The promotion of regular, thorough **handwashing**
- **Regular mechanical or manual ventilation** of the premises
- **Routine disinfecting** at least once a day of all surfaces and objects
- **Management of the flow of people** to avoid excessive crowding and crossing of individuals

Employees are instructed to stay at home should they develop Coronavirus symptoms or if they have recently been in contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus. **Obligatory temperature checks or PCR tests at the workplace are not authorized.**

Info in English on how to stay healthy and safe at work can be found on the Ministry of Labor’s website. [Covid-19 Measures Employers Must Take](#)

Gatherings

The government has forbidden all gatherings across the country and urges everyone to avoid all family and private gatherings in homes.

What is open

Below is a list of selected venues, services and businesses that are open during Phase 1 of the re-opening period. A full listing can be found at <https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus/confinement> but as of December 2, this list has not been updated to include lightened restrictions during Phase 1 of re-opening.

- Public services and administrations, and all social services
- All retail businesses are open with a limit on the number of customers at one time in a shop to maintain social distancing protocol of 8 m² per person. Shops can stay open until 9 pm, and are allowed to be open on Sundays (authorizations to open on Sundays are normally limited in France)
- Restaurants for take-out and delivery only
- Medical professionals & veterinarians
- Libraries, documentation centers, media libraries
- Places of worship (can hold services at limited capacity)
- Outdoor sports places including stadiums, fields, courts, tracks for individual sports only
- Hotels except for vacation resorts and hostels with communal living
- Short term vacation rentals, car rentals
- Exam centers

What is closed

Below is a list of venues, services and businesses that must remain closed during Phase 1 of re-opening. <https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus/confinement>

- Cinemas, museums and monuments
- All group meeting rooms, auditoriums, theatres, concert halls, and multi-use rooms, except court rooms and funeral homes
- All indoor sports facilities except for professional sports (no fans in attendance)
- Dance clubs, night clubs, casinos, bowling alleys, billiards rooms, etc.
- Restaurants, cafés, bars except for managing delivery service and take-out service until 10pm in most cases.
- Trade fairs and exhibits
- Thermal care facilities and spas
- Camp sites, vacation resorts, tourist housing

Associated fines for not adhering to protocols

A **fine of 135 euros** may be applied in the event of non-compliance with COVID protocols, including wearing masks and respecting confinement. Repeat offenders can be fined up to **3,750 euros** and could risk 6 months of prison, community service, drivers' license suspension of up to 3 years maximum. [Fines for not complying with confinement](#)

Local travel restrictions under confinement

Students **residing in France** during confinement must adhere to French regulations concerning mobility. The current situation allows and requires the following:

- Leisure outings of no more than 20km from residence
- Non-leisure outings within one's county or region (medical & administrative appointments, school, work, etc.)
- International travel to return to home country or place of residence.

Details concerning mobility in and out of France can be found at this French government site: [International Mobility Information](#) as well as on the European Union website: <https://reopen.europa.eu/en/map/FRA>

COVID Case Management in schools

Primary & Secondary Education:

A [COVID protocol](#) in place as of Sept 20 in primary/secondary schools: classes will no longer be systematically closed if fewer than 3 students in the same class test positive for COVID-19. With only 1 or 2 positive students, class can continue, and classmates are no longer considered to be « *cas contacts* » or close contacts.

If 3 positive cases, individuals established as close contacts will self-isolate for 7 days and return to school if they have no symptoms (without having taken a PCR test). In junior high and high school, students have to provide a negative PCR test or a sworn statement confirming negative results after 7 days of isolation.

Higher Education:

This committee contacted both the *Académie de Paris* and the BEESP (*tutelle des établissements d'enseignement supérieur privé*) of the Paris *rectorat* and received this feedback in writing:

For study abroad programs in France that are registered as *Etablissements d'enseignement supérieur privé hors contrat*, it is advised that you reach out to your *rectorat* or *académie* to learn what the process is for declaring positive cases of COVID within your program participants, faculty and staff. The *Académie de Paris* has indicated that we should declare confirmed cases by emailing the ARS at ARS-DD75-alerte@ars.sante.fr. Further information concerning the COVID crisis can be obtained by contacting the educational officials at covid19.esri@region-academique-idf.fr (for Ile de France).

Sports and exercise

Sports and exercise are authorized, but according to the following requirements:

- Once a day for 3 hours within a 20-kilometer radius of home, with an authorization form and the appropriate box checked. Beaches, parks, and forests are open.
- Individual sport (walking, running, biking, hiking, etc.) is permitted but team sport is not allowed.
- Outdoor sports equipment and sites are open and accessible: stadiums, golf, tennis, outdoor fields, equestrian centers, etc. <https://www.sports.gouv.fr/accueil-du-site/article/application-des-decisions-sanitaires-pour-le-sport>
- Participants are not required to wear a mask during sports.
- Excluded from these limitations are several groups (school and after school sports, Sports Science students, professional and pre-professional athletes, those with a medical prescription for a certain activity, etc.) <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/actualites/A14436>

Student Support

The Ministry of Higher Education & Research has established a student mental health support website (with an English Language version) that compiles all the contacts and services related to mental health support for students during the COVID-19 crisis. The website covers all regions of France, and in addition to mental health support also serves as a resource for information about financial support, student housing, and health care. <https://www.soutien-etudiant.info/>



ADDITIONAL LINKS & GENERAL RESOURCES

For information concerning every country in the European Union, and for details on all aspects of the Covid-19 crisis in Europe, see the following website: <https://reopen.europa.eu/en/>. And for information specifically for France: <https://reopen.europa.eu/en/map/FRA>

For current information, including health recommendations and measures, from the French government on the COVID-19 situation in France, see the following website: [Main COVID-19 Government Website](#)

Access to daily communiqués with daily statistics and key messages: [Daily Communiqués by French Government](#)

Official website dedicated to Student Life in the French universities: www.etudiant.gouv.fr

Timeline of government actions [French Government Actions](#)