

Understanding the French tertiary education system

French universities are in the process of adopting the Licence-Master-Doctorat (LMD) system to facilitate academic recognition between European and international degrees as well as to promote student exchange and course flexibility through validation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits.

1 ECTS credit : 20-30 hours of studies (lectures, practical work, assignments, etc)

The grandes écoles are specialized graduate schools that are recognized internationally, combining selectivity with academic excellence.

Bachelor		Master		PhD
3-year course at university level		5-year course at university level		8-year course at university level
UNIVERSITY	GRANDE ECOLE	UNIVERSITY	UNIVERSITY	UNIVERSITY
<p>Licence</p> <p>divided into 6 semesters (3 years), validated by 180 ECTS credits</p>	<p>Diplôme d'Ingénieur (engineering)</p> <p>Diplôme d'école de commerce (business management)</p> <p>Admission requirement: GCE 'A' levels + 2 years preparatory courses + highly selective entrance exam</p> <p>Candidates for engineering courses should have a strong background in mathematics and physics. Upon completion of the 3-year course, the student is awarded the equivalent of a Master - diplôme d'ingénieur or diplôme d'école de commerce.</p>	<p>Master</p> <p>divided into 4 semesters (2 years), validated by another 120 ECTS credits after the Licence</p> <p>There are 2 types of Master :</p> <p>Master (Recherche) formerly known as "DEA"</p> <p>This is a research-based degree leading to a PhD.</p>	<p>Master (Professionnel) formerly known as "DESS"</p> <p>This degree has a predominantly professional orientation including industrial attachment.</p>	<p>Doctorat</p> <p>divided into 6 semesters (3 years), validated by an additional 180 ECTS credits after the Master</p>

Intermediate degrees

<p>Maîtrise</p> <p>(honours or Year 1 of Master program)</p>	<p>GRANDE ECOLE</p> <p>Mastère spécialisé</p> <p>A postgraduate professional degree in a specialized field.</p>
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Information on these programmes and studying in France are available on the French Embassy and Edufrance websites.