

Language Assistants in France
2021-22 Programme

ELA in France: The Guide

Version 1, August 2021

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How to use this guide

[Section 1](#) provides an overview of France and key country information

[Section 2](#) indicates key contacts for your assistantship and their roles

[Section 3](#) provides detail regarding the assistantship role and what this involves

[Section 4](#) and [5](#) helps you to prepare the essentials before you arrive in France

[Section 5](#) to [9](#) covers all core aspects and documents you will need once you arrive in France

[Section 10](#) is for you to consider at the end of your placement.

Each section includes a recap at the end to highlight the key actions. These are not exhaustive but highlight the main takeaways.

You can consult this at any point in the year. Some assistants prefer to read it all in one go or you can focus on the specific section that applies to you. We encourage you to read the sections in full and do additional research on any aspects that are relevant to your assistantship.

Please ensure you have read through this document and carried out research yourself before contacting the language assistants team with any questions.

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in these notes. However the British Council cannot accept responsibility for any errors which may exist or for any subsequent changes.

Date checked: 13/08/2021

France Overview

1 Spotlight on France

Did you know that the British Council Language Assistants Programme first began back in 1905 with English masters heading over to France?

You are joining the next generation of this legacy strengthening educational and cultural links between the UK and France through the British Council and our partners France Éducation International.

By this point, you should have fair knowledge about France. Here are our key points to consider.

1.1 Emergency Contacts

1.1.1 Emergency services in France

In any emergency: call **112**

Medical assistance (SAMU): call **15**

Fire Brigade (pompiers): call **18**

Police (gendarmerie): call **17**

General enquiries to the British Embassy:

Tel: +33 1 44 51 31 00

Fax: +33 1 44 51 31 09

British Consular Emergency Service for any emergency queries at any time of any day. Leave a message and someone will normally get back to you within one hour of your call.

1.1.2 Your Embassy and Consulate

If you are not a British national, please contact your respective Embassy.

For up-to-date British Embassy and consulate contact details in France please refer to: www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/findan-embassy. Please take note of the address of the British Embassy in France below in case of emergency or loss of your passport. Assistants who do not hold British citizenship should check with their own Consulates/Embassies in France.

British Embassy

- 35, rue du Faubourg St Honore ,75383 Paris - Cedex 08
- Tel: +33 1 44 51 31 00

- Fax: +33 1 44 51 31 09

Office hours are between 9.30am and 6.00pm, Monday-Friday but will close for lunch between 1.00pm and 2.30pm each day.

British Consulates-General are also provided in Paris, Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, Marseille.

1.2 Life in France

If you're keen to do some more research of France or your region, check out these sites:

General	News
Complete France	www.lemonde.fr
Public Holidays Calendar	www.lefigaro.fr
Rough Guide to France	https://www.outremernews.fr/
France Travel Blog	https://www.gouvernement.fr/
Lonely Planet France.	BBC's France Profile

1.2.1 Personal safety and Travel

Your personal safety is of paramount importance while living overseas and we strongly advise that you spend some time looking at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office website and check it regularly as there is a lot of useful and up-to-date information provided.

As mentioned in section 3.1 of this document, ensure you regularly check the France [travel advice page](#): and are aware of these key sections:

- [Safety and Security Page](#)
- [Natural Disasters Page](#)
- [Sexual Assault Support](#)
- [FCDO advice for women travelling abroad.](#)
- Lost Passport recovery

You can find more details on travel in section 4.4

1.3 Local laws and customs

As well as the information on the [Gov site for French laws and customs](#), make sure you are aware of the following:

LGBTQ+

[Lonely Planet guide for LGBT travellers](#)

Secularism

Assistants who are allocated a placement must be aware of the laws around secularism in the French education system which they must adhere to. Please refer to the French Education Ministry's website to view the [La charte de laïcité](#), which all assistants should read carefully. Please note that all assistants are expected by the académies to respect La charte de laïcité. The British Council cannot be held responsible for issues surrounding La charte de laïcité.

Laws

Co-operating partners abroad have requested that the attention of British visitors be drawn to the severe penalties imposed for the following:

- drug offences which may result in heavy fines and prison sentences.
- for taking part in unlawful political demonstrations which may result in heavy fines and prison sentences.

You are therefore strongly advised not to become involved in these activities.

Internet and Phone

- The France code for France is +33. To phone abroad from France the code is 00 followed by the France code.
- If you set up a phone line or internet connection, past assistants have warned to check phone subscription charges with France Telecom first. You may be charged for a full year's subscription even if you end your phone contract earlier than this.
- For this reason assistants often recommend getting a pay as you go mobile rather than one on contract
- To avoid internet contracts you may want to explore other options of internet access such as dongles (clé internet).
- Be aware that calls to the UK from a mobile can be expensive. Previous assistants have recommended using Skype, WhatsApp and Facebook messenger as alternatives.

1.4 The British Council in France

Please note: The British Council in France is not responsible for the administration of the Language Assistant programme in France - this is the role of France Éducation Internationale.

The British Council develops and participates in many different projects themed around society, science, education and the arts. However, we encourage you to [sign up for their France newsletter](#) to keep up to date with activities which may interest you.

Section 1 Recap

- Sign up for email alerts for FCDO and read through guidance
- Save emergency contacts and information
- Read key information on life in France
- Sign up for British Council France Newsletter

Language Assistants Programme Overview

2 Key Contacts

2.1 UK British Council Language Assistants team

The Language Assistants programme has a dedicated team to provide support during the application and pre-departure process for each destination. Please note the British Council is **not** the employer of participants of the Language Assistants programme while abroad.

2.2 Overseas Partners: France Éducation International

France Éducation International administers the Language Assistants Programme in France. They liaise with the *Académie* in France on the British Council's behalf. They will contact you throughout the year regarding your placement and other opportunities. The programme team are active on socials and you can find them on [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

2.3 Académies

Once the British Council have allocated you to an *Académie*, the *Académie* will then allocate you to the schools and are responsible for your contract. Each region differs as to when they organise appointments and send out information. The *Académie* are your employers during your assistantship and any changes to your contract should be liaised with them.

2.4 Mentor Teacher

Your host school should identify a mentor teacher for you, usually in the English department. This mentor should provide pastoral care and support during your time in France. Your mentor

teacher can become an integral part of your support network in France and you should invest time in building this relationship.

If a mentor teacher is not identified at the start of your placement, you should try asking for one and then contact the France Éducation International for support as soon as you can.

- Application	Sending organisation: British Council ·SIMON GRAHAM Consultant ·FINOLA SOUTHGATE Assistant Consultant languageassistants.uk@britishcouncil.org Responsible for: application and pre-departure processes
- Allocation	
- Pre-Departure	
- Arrival	Partner organisation: France Éducation International BRIGITTE SÉNÉCAL-LEVASSEUR Chargée de programmes RU assistant@france-education-international.fr Responsible for: corresponding with academies, and overseeing programme in country
- Assistantship	
- In School	Employer: Académie Responsible for: allocating to school, organising induction, your employer. Support: Mentor Teacher Responsible for: in school support and first contact

Section 2 Recap



Understand role of the British Council, France Éducation International and the *Académie*



Establish and connect with your mentor teacher

3 The English Language Assistant role

The role of a language assistant is a very important one and one that we hope you will enjoy. Please remember that you are a paid member of staff with the responsibilities and required professionalism that this entails. Please refer to our website for more information on your role as an English Language Assistant: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/study-workabroad/outside-uk/english-languageassistants> .

As a language assistant you are also an ambassador for the UK and its culture, influencing how those around you view the UK. You should endeavour to set a positive example and avoid any potential damage to the reputation of the programme and adversely affect the experience of future assistants.

Your first-hand experience of life in the UK is a key part of the cultural exchange and an excellent resource you should draw during your lessons.

3.1 Posting information

Each region differs as to when they organise appointments and send out information. The British Council is involved in allocating assistants to a region and sometimes age group, but has no control over choice of town, size of town, school environment or when information is sent out. We encourage each region to send information out as early as possible.

You should also write immediately to your school(s) confirming acceptance of the post. If you do not receive a reply by mid-September it is a good idea to ring the school(s) to ask about accommodation and give them an idea of your anticipated arrival date. You should also ask them for some information about the school(s) that you will be working in. For example, it may be useful to know the age range of pupils, the average class size, the general level of ability, the social background of pupils, the facilities available and if you should bring any specific materials from home. It is also important to enquire about the dress code for teachers and any other general school information.

3.2 Period of Appointment

The period of appointment for UK assistants in France will be **1st October 2021 – 30th April 2022**.

Assistants are expected to work 12 hours a week. Those who have been appointed to more than one school will be asked to divide their time between the schools concerned. You can request information regarding how your timetable will be arranged from the head of the host school, which is usually the first one mentioned when you are sent details of your posting in the arrêté de nomination, however this information will most likely not be available until you arrive in France.

3.3 Holidays and Sick Leave

Assistants are entitled to the usual school holidays; however these can vary according to the Académie zone. The [French Government's Education website](#) has further details regarding the school calendar. You should not be absent on other occasions without prior permission. Attending the induction course does not give assistants the right to take leave at a later date.

Please note that if you take sick leave before having completed 4 months and 4 days' service you will not be entitled to sickness benefit (indemnité journalière) which usually amounts to 50% of your gross allowance and is calculated on a daily basis. As of mid-2012, for all French workers, the first day of sick leave is unpaid.

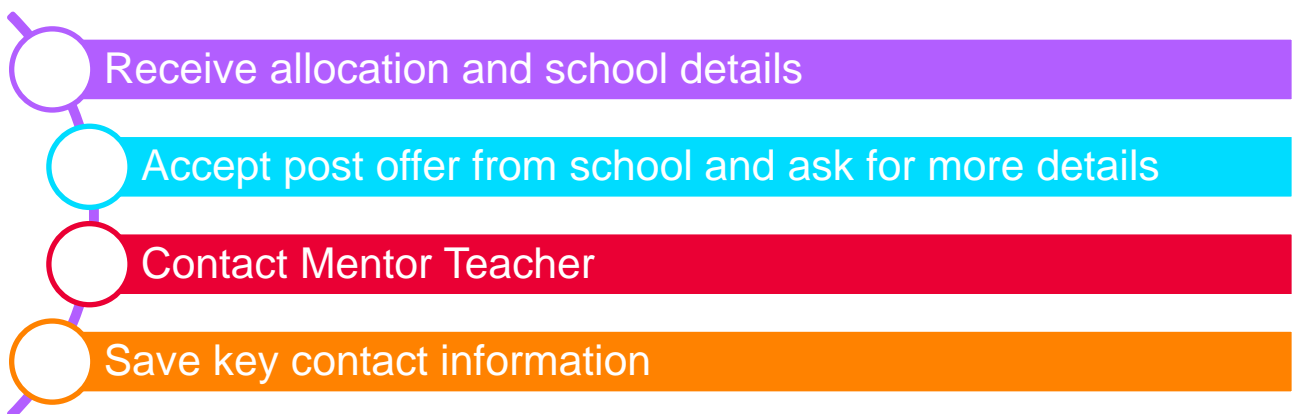
An important point to note is that the official date of the beginning of the working period is the date inscribed on the procès verbal d'installation by the Head of the School. If you are an assistant serving in one of the départements d'outre-mer you should check the procedure with the rectorat as this might be different to that of mainland France. You must obtain a medical certificate with dates if you are off work for illness at any time.

Further information about the sécurité sociale and procedure to follow in case of absence is contained in the France Education International's publication *Le Guide de l'assistant de langue* under the section 'Votre Installation en France'.

3.4 School allocation

The maximum number of schools to which you can be appointed is three. Please contact us if you have been appointed to more than three schools. If the different schools are several miles apart and you have to travel between two on the same day, you are entitled to ask for help towards travel expenses. Under no circumstances should an assistant be required to buy a car just to get to their schools. After contacting your school, if you establish that there is no regular public transport which serves your school(s), and there are no lifts available to your school(s) please inform us of the situation. Please do not contact us without contacting your school first.

Section 3 Recap



Preparation before you go

4 Read before you go

4.1 Costs to prepare

You should prepare for the following costs:

- £75 ICPC
- Administrative costs: visa (if applicable).
- Travel costs including additional requirements due to the coronavirus
- Accommodation costs
- Insurance costs
- €1000 - €1500 up to €1700 - €2200 if appointed to Outre-Mer, Corsica or the Paris area for Initial costs. Read more in Money Matters.

4.2 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) advice

During a crisis, official advice for British nationals will be published on the [travel advice website](#) and regularly updated. For your safety and to stay well-informed, we **strongly recommend** you [subscribe to receive FCDO email updates](#) for France so that you are immediately notified of any important changes to the FCDO's advice.

As international issues and subsequent advice can change often and rapidly, you must take responsibility for your own health and safety by staying informed of any changes to such advice. When responding to an immediate in-France danger or threat to your health and safety, you should always prioritise your own health and safety and make decisions in the best interest for your personal circumstances – do not wait for advice from the British Council.

The FCDO have published a comprehensive guide for [entry requirements](#) and [Living in France](#). The guide sets out essential information for British nationals residing in France, including advice on health, education, residence requirements and more. We recommend you read this guide thoroughly.

You can also contact the British embassy for advice in event of an emergency. If you are not a British national, please contact your respective Embassy.

4.3 Entry Requirement, Passports and visas

Before leaving the UK, you must ensure you meet the French government requirements for [entering the country](#), [surrounding Covid-19](#) and [documentation](#). This may include passport validity, testing, quarantine, declarations and visas for Non-EU assistants. These may vary depending on the type of passport you will be travelling on.

Those who are not in possession of a passport, or need a new one, should complete the application procedure as soon as possible either through a regional Passport Office or online: www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports. You should [check your passport eligibility for Europe](#).

If you have a Non-EU passport, to work in France, you will be applying for a **VLS-TS** (visa de long séjour valant titre de séjour). You must ensure your passport is valid **until October 2022**. This process requires your own investment of time and money. The British Council UK team will provide step-by-step guidance on this process when the time comes to apply.

Assistants are expected to cover the costs of this, which can include sourcing documentation, attending visa appointments and paying service fees to the TLS contact centre.

4.4 Travel to and around France

You are responsible for the upfront cost of your own travel and any travel to and from your place of appointment during the year.

The British Council strongly advises against booking your travel until you have received your visa and are certain that you will be able to travel on your chosen date. In some instances, you may be able to pay the airline a small fee for flexible dates if you wish to book further in advance. The British Council is not responsible for arranging your travel.

Past teachers have advised that you check the baggage allowance for both outbound and return journeys when travelling by plane.

The most widely used travel site in France are:

Flights	Train and Ferry
www.skyscanner.net	www.eurostar.com
www.britishairways.com	www.raileurope.co.uk
www.easyjet.co.uk	www.eurolines.co.uk
www.tui.co.uk	www.interrailnet.com
www.opodo.co.uk	www.directferries.co.uk
www.expedia.co.uk	In France:
www.ryanair.co.uk	www.sncf.com
www.airFrance.co.uk	www.voyages-sncf.com for information on cheap train fares.
www.aircaraibes.com (for outre-mer)	

Other Travel Pointers:

- Car-share: website for sharing arrangements www.blablacar.fr
- Bus & Metro: <https://www.ratp.fr/titres-et-tarifs/forfait-navigo-annuel>

Former Assistant recommendations:

- Look into buying an [SNCF railcard](#) if you think you will be travelling a lot, or if not just the youth railcard
- Once in France you will find it cheaper for local travel to buy a carnet of 10 tickets for buses and the métro than to buy one ticket at a time.
- Be careful on the RER train which goes to the suburbs of Paris. Don't sit alone in a carriage especially late at night.
- In Outre-Mer, buy a car if possible, or a bike if you don't have a licence.
- [International Student Identity Cards](#) or for non-students [International Youth Travel Card](#) can be used to obtain cheap entry into certain museums, theatres, cinemas and art galleries throughout Europe.

4.4.1 Taking a car abroad

You will need to research the laws on driving in France, including adapting your head lights for driving on the right and driving licenses. The website www.gov.uk/driving-abroad provides useful information about motoring abroad. It's also worth considering insurance and additional documentation you may require.

4.4.2 Taking pets abroad

You need to consider insurance, pet passports and health certificates. The [government advice page on taking your pet to an EU France](#) details more.

4.5 Travel insurance

The British Council is unable to advise on insurance packages; you are recommended to consult professional advice, or to check whether you are covered by any existing family policy. Booking insurance should be carried out before any travel.

Undergraduate assistants should consult with their university to check what cover is provided for it is important to check the small print of your policy.

Personal Accident Travel insurance is recommended to cover medical expenses, air ambulance, repatriation, personal accident & civil liability, luggage & valuable items, and cancellation in extreme cases.

Personal Accident Travel policies are readily available on price comparison websites, or by using a search engine to search for 'travel insurance'. The UK Foreign & Commonwealth website offers additional advice on taking out Travel Insurance: www.gov.uk/foreign-travelinsurance.

4.6 Graduates with student loans

If you have a student loan, you will need to let student finance know that you are going to France. Complete an Overseas Income Assessment Form to enable the Student Loans Company to calculate how much you need to repay.

You will be required to provide evidence of income or means of support. They will then send you a repayment schedule showing how much you need to pay each month. Your monthly payments will be based upon the earnings threshold for your destination France. The British Council UK team are not able to advise on student loans matters. For all questions relating to student loans please contact Student Finance directly.

4.7 Benefits and Universal Credit

If you are in receipt of government support in the UK, you must inform the authorities that you are moving to work abroad. Tell your local Jobcentre Plus or the office that pays your benefit if you're going abroad. If it's a temporary move, tell them when you're coming back. You must also tell HMRC if you're leaving the UK.

Section 4 Recap

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- Sign up to FCDO updates
 - Ensure you have a valid passport
 - Obtain a visa if required
 - Sort travel to France once visa and ICPC are sorted
 - Get comprehensive insurance
 - Inform UK authorities you are leaving (loans, credit)
 - Contact former assistants and request details from host school

5 Health and wellbeing

Before you go

Planning

At least 8 weeks before your trip, check the latest France-specific health advice from the [National Travel Health Network and Centre \(NaTHNaC\)](#) on the TravelHealthPro website. Each France-specific page has information on vaccine recommendations, any current health risks or outbreaks, and factsheets with information on staying healthy abroad. Guidance is also available from NHS (Scotland) on the [FitForTravel](#) website.

General information on travel vaccinations and a travel health checklist is available on the NHS website. You may then wish to contact your health adviser or pharmacy for advice on other preventive measures and managing any pre-existing medical conditions while you're abroad.

Make sure you have comprehensive travel and medical insurance covering healthcare and medical evacuation and repatriation for the duration of your stay.

Medication

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in the UK can be different in France. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the French embassy

If you're on prescription medication, make sure you either bring enough with you or have access to a supply once in France. Certain medicines may not be available in France (including major brands readily available in the UK), and you may be prohibited from bringing some medicines into France. For more information and advice, check with your GP and the French Embassy before travelling.

5.1 EHIC/GHIC

UK-issued European Health Insurance Cards (EHICs) are still valid and offer the same cover as GHICs in the EU. Once your EHIC has expired, you'll be able to replace it with a GHIC.

The Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) gives you the right to access state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in the European Union (EU). The GHIC is not an alternative to travel insurance but gives you access to healthcare which becomes medically necessary during your stay, and you cannot reasonably wait until you're back in the UK to get it.

You can find out more online about the free [UK Global Health Insurance Card from the NHS](#).

If you are a student, you may wish to contact your university for advice surrounding the Student GHIC.

In France

Once in France

Please see the Foreign Commonwealth Office website for more information regarding healthcare in France: [gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/France/health](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/France/health). The FCDO details more on the [Healthcare for UK nationals in France page](#).

If you require urgent medical attention in France dial **120**.

It is important to find out where your nearest doctor, dentist and hospital are as soon as you arrive. You should ask your school for information about the facilities in your area and advise staff and your landlord of any medical conditions.

5.2 France medical services

Assistants serving on the official scheme contribute automatically to the sécurité sociale (la sécu). Sécurité sociale decrees that on average 70% of the cost of medical treatment will be reimbursed as well as 35-65% of the cost of prescriptions (NB: some are not reimbursed) and 80% of hospital fees. Please note that this can vary depending on circumstance. Registration with the sécurité sociale should be arranged through the school intendant (bursar) or staff at the inspection académique who will be familiar with the procedure. You no longer require a certified translation of your full birth certificate if it is in one of the following languages: English, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, Polish, Romanian or Swedish.

You will subsequently receive an attestation d'affiliation à la sécurité sociale and a numéro d'affiliation pending issue of your Carte Vitale (social security card), which may take several months to come through. It is very important that you keep the attestation carefully and note this number as it will have to be quoted on any claim for reimbursement that you make before the card is issued.

If you have already worked in France before your assistantship and were enrolled in the French social security system at that time, you should use this number again and not go through the process of obtaining a new one. Give the numéro d'immatriculation to your school intendant.

Contributions paid to the French social security scheme may be taken into account in assessing certain benefits under the UK social security scheme on return to this country.

5.3 Visiting a Doctor

All residents in France have been asked to choose un médecin traitant as their general practitioner. This doctor must also be consulted for referral for any specialist treatment. For a certain time you can go to a specialist without having seen your médecin traitant before but the fee for the specialist will be higher so do enquire about the cost in advance. It is worth looking

on <http://annuaire.sante.ameli.fr/> for “médecins conventionnés and their sector; sector 1 doctors have their fees set whereas sector 2 have more freedom about how much to charge.

It is worth knowing that for minor medical issues pharmacists provide excellent advice free of charge, and in emergencies they are licensed to prescribe medicine as well.

A few things to consider:

- Ensure that the doctor or dentist you choose is conventionné(e)
- A visit (consultation) with a médecin traitant for sector 1 costs €20 - €30 and you must pay this on the spot. The doctor will give you a feuille de soins or feuille de maladie, a form which states how much you were charged and is to be forwarded to the sécurité sociale in order to be reimbursed by bank transfer. You may be given a prescription (ordonnance) too.
- When you buy what the doctor has prescribed, the pharmacist will enter the details into the computer. You will normally pay the sum which is not reimbursed by social security only (i.e. 35% of the cost of the prescription).
- In order to join some sports clubs it is sometimes necessary to obtain a certificate to prove that you have a good level of health

5.3. Additional Cover

Since the sécurité sociale generally reimburses no more than approx. 70% of medical expenses incurred (0-65% for prescribed drugs, 80% for hospital costs), assistants are strongly advised to take out additional medical insurance. As employees of the Ministère de l'Education Nationale you are entitled to subscribe to the MGEN (Mutuelle Générale de l'Education Nationale).

This cover will only commence 3 months after you join and start paying your subscription. Every school in France has an MGEN representative, usually a teacher, whom you should contact early in the year if interested in joining the scheme. Assistants who register as 'regular' students at a French university can obtain additional medical cover at a reasonable price by joining the LMDE (La Mutuelle Des Etudiants). Both the premium and the cover with the LMDE are slightly less than with the MGEN.

5.4 Mental health

Although working abroad can be enjoyable, it can also be challenging. Lack of familiar support systems, disrupted daily routines, language barriers, culture shock and unexpected situations can intensify stress levels rather than alleviate them.

It is important to remember that culture shock affects everyone. There is no shame in admitting that you are having a difficult time. If you do feel homesick or frustrated, please talk to your fellow teachers on the programme as they will understand how you are feeling better than anyone else. Also, be sure to keep up to date with your family and friends back home.

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. It is advised to read this information even if you are not currently suffering from mental health problems.

Do not hesitate to contact our partners at France Education International or your academie if you are in need of someone to talk to; they can provide specific numbers to call depending on your situation. In addition, the French Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport have a free psychological support service you can reach at 0 805 500 005.

The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office provides information about mental health and travel via the following links.

- www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health
- www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-advice-for-people-with-mental-health-issues

The leaflets hyperlinked below contain guidance on travelling abroad and mental health, and information about how the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) can assist British nationals with mental health needs abroad.

- [Mental Health Travelling Abroad](#)
- [Mental Health Travelling Abroad Checklist](#)
- [The NHS website](#) lists a couple of helplines that can offer expert advice to people with different mental health needs.
- Another useful resource is [Better Help](#), but be aware that they charge \$35 / week for their services, with a possibility to apply for financial aid.
- International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers provide [useful resources](#) for mental health.

Section 5 Recap



6 Outside of school: Arrival and settling in

6.1 Registering your Long-Stay Visa

Long Stay Visa Holders: Ensure you get your passport stamped by the border authorities upon entering France.

Visas must be validated within the first three months of arrival into France and you can do this online. This process requires you to provide a permanent address in France, so you should only begin the [online visa validation process](#) **AFTER** you have secured housing.

Once the window has opened on your computer, you will click on the icon that says "Je valide mon VLS-TS". Enter your visa number on the following page. Afterwards, click the button that says "Confirmer mon numéro de visa" and follow the instructions that are shown afterwards. Make sure to save the confirmation of your visa's validation provided by the site. Once complete, this online validation will allow you to exit and re-enter the Schengen zone for the duration of your visa's validity.

After you complete the online portion of your visa validation, you should receive a convocation from the OFII (Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration) scheduling you for a brief medical visit (FREE for assistants) required of all foreigners living in France on long-stay visas. You must complete this routine medical exam.

You will receive a letter in the mail at the address you provide during the online validation process informing you of the time and place of your medical visit. You must go to the appointment scheduled for you by the OFII.

After your medical exam, the OFII will provide you with an attestation of completion. You do not need to do anything further with this form, but make sure to keep it for your records as obtaining a copy can be quite difficult.

6.2 Accommodation

ACCOMODATION TYPE	USEFUL LINKS		
Temporary accommodation:	www.hihostels.com www.hostelbookers.com		www.hostelworld.com www.airbnb.com
Permanent accommodation	www.pap.fr www.leboncoin.fr	www.unhaj.org www.cidj.com	www.appartager.com www.avendrealouer.fr www.vivastreet.com

When you go out looking for accommodation, take a dossier of papers with you including as many of the following as possible: your arrêté d'affectation, bulletin de paie, lettre d'un garant, relevé d'identité bancaire (or RIB), pièce d'identité.

Who to contact?

- family/friends
- locals
- student/youth/religious organisations
- twinned hometowns

Where to look?

- Foyers Living
- Newspapers (early morning!)
- Noticeboards
CROUS, staffboards, mairie, citizens advice, tourist office
- Online

What to bring?

- bulletin de paie,
- lettre d'un garant
- arrêté d'affectation,
- pièce d'identité.
- relevé d'identité bancaire (or RIB),

Watch out!

- Private Letting Insurance
- Needing a Guarantor
- Agency Fees
- Notice period

- 1. Do not advertise in local papers**
- 2. Take a dossier of key papers with you**
- 3. Only sign if you are happy with the agreement**
- 4. Take photos when you move in**

Before Signing an Agreement

- Always ask about additional fees such as agency charges
- Landlords may ask for 1 month's rent as a deposit (une caution) and 1 month's rent paid in advance.
- Get any agreements in writing, and obtain receipts for any transaction, keeping them secure.
- Confirm your period of notice you must give to move out – in France a minimum of three months' notice is usually the legal requirement. You may also have to give this notice in writing by registered mail.
- Enquire about the possibility of including a 'diplomatic clause' in the rental agreement to allow for a shorter notice period in case of early termination of your placement.

- take photos capturing the condition of your room and the flat before moving in to prevent unfairly losing any of your security deposit
- check health and safety issues (temporary and long term) such as fire alarms and exits, gas leaks, electrics, water etc.

When you have found somewhere to live, even if it has been arranged for you, do not sign any agreement you are not comfortable with and make sure that there is a period of notice written in the contract to avoid problems, should you decide to change your accommodation during the year.

6.2.1 Assurance D’habitation et Assurance de responsabilité civile

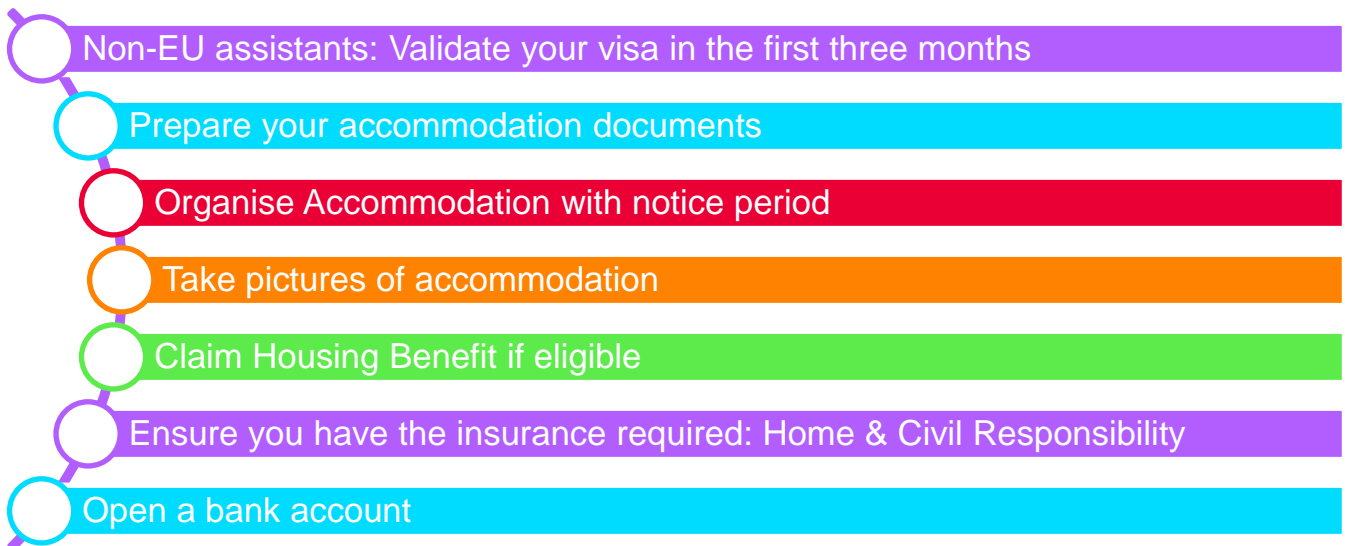
If you rent private accommodation, you must have home insurance which covers risk of fire, theft, water damage as well as a civil liability guarantee. Look for a ‘multirisques habitation’ contract.

You must ensure you have civil liability insurance regardless if it is not covered in your home insurance. Here is our partner’s [suggested site for more on insurance](#).

6.3 Bank accounts

It is advisable to open a bank account once you arrive in France, and your mentor teacher can help you do this. More information can be found below in Section 8: Money Matters.

Section 6 Recap



7 In school: arrival, settling in and support

7.1 Induction

The academies will organise a 1 or 2- day ‘induction course’ or information meeting (un stage) for all foreign language assistants which may be held in a virtual format this year. Please note, the British Council has no involvement whatsoever in the organisation of these meetings. You

will receive details about your stage from your local education authority so this is just for your information. The format of the stage varies but it provides you with useful information about your placement directly from the local education authorities and is a great chance for you to meet other assistants in your region. **Attendance is expected.**

7.2 Observation Period

When you first arrive at your school(s) you should ask for a period of observation of 1-2 weeks. It may not be offered to you automatically. Observation will allow you to familiarise yourself with the school environment, to experience classroom management techniques as well as to get to know the names, faces and personalities of your pupils and gauge their level of English. Try to note the following:

- How the teacher starts and ends the lesson;
- How the teacher speaks to pupils;
- How the teacher involves all pupils, including shy ones, in the class activity;
- What the teacher's attitude is to pupil errors and error correction; and
- How the teacher controls disruptive behaviour, lateness and lack of effort

This can also be a valuable opportunity to discuss with your mentor teacher about the following:

- How you are finding your experience and settling in
- If you have any additional requirements which may facilitate your placement.

7.2.1 Settling into school life

You can hear tips from former assistants in our [settling in podcast](#).

Starting any new job can be a daunting experience, no matter how confident a person you are. It's completely normal to be unsure of where to go, what to do or who to talk to at the beginning.

Remember – it is not good practice to correct another teacher in front of students.

Apart from your work in the classroom you may be able to attend other classes in subjects which interest you. You will find that you become much more integrated into school life and gain considerably more from your stay if you become involved in activities organised by the school, such as sports days, theatre or music productions or modern language societies. Go to school 'open days' or parent evenings as these are also a good way of meeting people.

Teachers who are proactive and take the initiative often settle into school life much faster. Being a self-starter is a great way to make a strong first impression. Teachers are often very busy and will certainly appreciate your efforts to help and try to make an impact.

7.3 Absence from school

Please remember that you are a member of staff and must therefore adhere to the holiday dates set by the school. If you cannot work because of illness you should inform your school(s)

and local education authority (if applicable) immediately and within 48 hours by telephone. Any sick leave must be justified by a medical certificate from your French doctor (médecin traitant). It should contain exact dates and cover the entire duration of the absence. This must be sent to the school or to the Inspection académique as soon as it is issued. You must also send your arrêt de travail to the sécurité sociale.

Any prolonged absence on account of illness should be reported as soon as possible to France Education International and to the British Council. Requests for leave of absence for any other reason should be made in advance to the head of the school(s) who is within his/her right to refuse it. You are reminded that if you are absent from school without prior authorisation, your allowance will be discontinued from the first day of your absence.

If it becomes necessary to resign from your post, you must give sufficient prior notice in writing of your intended departure to the school, France Education International and the British Council, setting out your reasons in full. If you are an undergraduate you must also inform your university/college in the UK

7.4 Social media

You should be very careful about how you use social networking sites while you are a teacher in France. Keep your profile private so that it can only be seen by people you intend to see it. If you invite other teachers to be 'friends', remember to remain professional in what you post and be careful what you say about your employer.

You should not exchange personal contact details with students, invite them to be 'friends' or accept similar invitations from them. Check with teachers about the school's internet policy, particularly regarding any online communication involving students either in or outside school. It is exceptionally important that you understand issues around child protection, both to protect the students and to protect you from any damaging and potentially serious accusations.

7.5 Support networks

Give yourself some time to adjust –in the beginning, you will have a lot of administrative matters to deal with. Former assistants have recommended that you don't spend all your free time with other programme participants, as you will not be able to integrate into your community and life in France. On the other hand, don't feel that you must cut yourself off from them – your programme peers can provide a very good support network for each other, as you understand each other's experiences.

Here are some other ways to meet people within the area:

- Enrol for an evening class, join a sports club, music group, choir etc.;
- Join or set up a language exchange or
- Join the local Erasmus society through the ESN network

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- Enquire about joining the local university and attending lectures;
 - Get involved in the local culture and join clubs that you couldn't join in the UK; and
 - Volunteer for a charity, society, festival, etc.

Start at school

- Showing that you are enthusiastic and keen to get to know staff will go a long way. Start with a simple hello or ask how their weekend went. Remember, though, that you will be working in a school environment therefore staff may not have a lot of free time.
- Try introducing yourself to staff you may not directly work with, for example teachers in other departments, lunch time staff, receptionists, caretakers etc. If there are social occasions or team meetings try to make an effort to attend
- If you hear about something happening which interests you, ask if you can become involved. Don't wait to be invited as people may assume that you're not interested.

Rural Posts

It should be noted that a lot of the posts in France are in rural areas. Past assistants to rural areas have had very positive experiences as they have been able to see "real France". Sometimes assistants posted to rural locations find it can be more challenging to adapt to, especially at the start, however it can be a very enriching experience on a personal development level and a real immersion in culture and language. Often assistants in rural postings comment that they receive much more support from their school which can help with setting into life in France.

7.6 Concerns and Queries: Who to contact?

Conditions in schools in France differ from those in the UK. We have come up with a **who to contact guide** (please see your summer information pack) to assist you with who to ask if you have a query or concern regarding your placement. Please consult this guide for help on who to contact if you have a query or an issue.

A lot of past assistants may tell you that their assistantship in France was the best year of their life. This can raise expectations and often leads to people feeling low, especially during the first few weeks until they settle in.

Meeting regularly with your mentor gives the opportunity for them to feedback about your performance and for you to raise any concerns or issues. Do tell people if you have problems or if you need information as otherwise, they may assume everything is fine.

The assistantship year is a wonderful opportunity to absorb French language and culture and gain much in life experience and transferable skills. However, it is perfectly understandable that

when abroad in a completely different environment there may be times when you feel homesick, have trouble with pupils or colleagues, or with your living situation and so on.

In these instances, it can be useful to know that you have access to an anonymous, non-judgemental English-language phone service. “SOS Help” is a telephone listening service for the English-speaking community in France, similar to the Samaritans. It is administratively attached to the French service “SOS Amitiés”. The telephone number is: 09 72 39 40 50 Although it is based in Paris it serves the entire country. All calls are confidential and trained listeners are available every day from 3pm to 11pm, 365 days a year. In addition to compassionate, non-directive listening they provide information on community services and resources available for English-speaking callers.

Section 7 Recap



8 Money Matters

8.1 Bank Account

It is essential that you open a bank account soon after arriving in France in order to receive your payments.

We recommend waiting until you arrive in your town of appointment allowing you to research all the local options, seek recommendations and receive help from your school.

Things to consider:

- Assistants are usually entitled to open a compte courant which provides a cheque book and cash card; some banks also offer a ‘student account’

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- Do not open a savings account as your school will not be able to pay your allowance into this.
 - You may find glossary of France banking terms useful:
https://www.expatica.com/fr/finance/Banking-inFrance-Opening-a-bank-account-inFrance_101158.html
 - Check with local banks in advance to find out what kind of documents will be required

8.2 Tax

Our team cannot assist you in this area because we are not trained in tax, cannot give advice on how your personal circumstances will affect your tax, and for data protection reasons.

Enquiries regarding UK income tax should be addressed to a local Inspector of Taxes, Please check www.hmrc.gov.uk for information about who to contact.

We recommend looking into the Double Taxation Agreement between the UK and France, which normally exempts an ELA from French income tax for a period of up to 2 years. However, it is normally the case that 100% of the remuneration received abroad will be liable for UK tax.

It is important to note that the agreement only covers teaching jobs.

8.3 Monthly Salary

The language assistant allowance is usually updated every year in September so the following key info is liable to change.

Gross allowance is around €976,49 per month; and approximately €800 after deductions

Assistants appointed to one of the départements d'outre-mer are likely to receive an allowance approximately 40% higher than the rate for mainland France: €1351 (€1119 net) for Guadeloupe, Martinique and Guyane; and €1482 (€1223 net) for La Réunion.

If you have opened a bank account by 10th October you will receive 70-80% of your payment at the end of the month. The remaining 20-30% of October's payment will be added to your November payment.

You should therefore ensure that you take around €1000 - €1500, and about €1700 - €2200 if appointed to Outre-Mer, Corsica or the Paris area.

Consider taking a Credit Card to cover initial costs, and be aware that you are often charged for using your British debit card to withdraw money abroad.

8.4 Additional Income

Non-EU assistants who have a visa: This particular visa status in France does not allow language assistants to pursue official secondary employment in France. This restriction is

intended to make sure that your job as a teaching assistant is your primary means of living in France at any given time (since you will be in France on a special-status visa for assistants).

For EU Assistants: If you wish to supplement your income by giving private tuition in English, you are strongly advised not to advertise in local papers or public places. In general pupils are easily found through school or private connections, i.e. by word-of-mouth. However, it is essential to check that the other English teachers in your school(s) do not mind, so that you are not perceived to be 'stealing' their private pupils.

The going rate for private one-to-one tuition seems to be €10 - €25 per hour depending on how much preparation for the lesson you plan to do and how much your pupils can afford. Please ensure that any additional work does not conflict with your school timetable. Should you wish to obtain paid work in any other educational institution e.g. teaching work in the public or private sector, you must clear this with the *Académies* to which you are appointed beforehand.

Each *Académie* has slightly different rules on what type of extra work you are permitted to take on so it is imperative that you check with them before you accept any other work. If they do not allow it, you must abide by this ruling.

- 1 Gather documents to open your bank account once in France
- 2 Consider your salary post social security and budget for this
- 3 Check your tax situation
- 4 Check with *Académie* if wanting additional paid work

Document Recap

Prepare copies and documents:

Prior to leaving	When in France
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of appointment / arrêté de nomination • Passport • Passport sized photos • Visa (if applicable) • Another valid form of photographic ID • Bank statements from your UK bank • Insurance cover • Birth Certificate • Certificates of schools exams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procès-verbal d'installation – issued upon arrival at the school • Attestation de logement, obtainable from school or landlord as appropriate • Payslips • Rental agreement

9 Language learning and studies

9.1 For language learning

- [BBC- Learn French](#). Offers a wealth of resources for learning France, including short guides, videos and the BBC World News service in France.
- Memrise www.memrise.com. A sophisticated platform for language learning, with a large online community. App also available.
- Duolingo <https://www.duolingo.com/welcome>. A simplistic platform for language learning which is very easy to access. Bite-size lessons allow the user to practice for anywhere from 5 minutes a day. App also available.
- Anki www.apps.ankiweb.net. An online platform for learning, focusing on memory-recall. Packs for specific levels of France available.
- [Lawless French](#) A blog with useful tips for French language learners.

10 End of your placement

10.1 Administrative matters

Bank: Make sure you do not close your France bank account until you have received any final payments you are due. You are advised to keep your account open for a month or so after the contract with your school has ended to ensure that all outstanding payments have been received. Please do check on the conditions for transactions relating to your account. For example, it might be that you can only close your account in the same branch in which you opened it.

Accommodation: Please make sure that you leave a good impression with your landlord – a future assistant may be depending on this:

- Leave a forwarding address with your landlord so that they can forward any mail on to you.
- When you leave your accommodation, remember to cancel any personal contracts, e.g. internet or utilities.
- Discuss with your landlord what you need to do for them to return your deposit and terminate your rental agreement, as well as arranging the return of your belongings if you have already left.
- If you rent your flat through a property agency, they may want to carry out an inspection before returning your deposit; if possible, you should make sure that you are present during the inspection to avoid any potential disagreements at a later date.

Alternatively you may wish to take photos of your accommodation before leaving to document how it was left.

Reference: If you haven't already done so, please liaise with your host school to ask for a reference.

- This will be invaluable when it comes to an official record of your assistantship and for any future applications to be an ELA. This should ideally be on headed paper, stamped and comment on your performance as an assistant.
- Please note that as the British Council is not the employer, we are unable to provide references for language assistants, only a certificate certifying participation upon request.

10.2 Staying a consecutive year

To stay for a consecutive year as a British Council language assistant in France, you must apply through [FRANCE ÉDUCATION INTERNATIONALE](#) before February 2022. More information about this will be posted on France Education International's website later in the year.

10.3 Ambassador

Ambassadors play an essential active part in promoting this opportunity. By representing a British Council programme, former assistants will be able to develop their creative, organisational and professional skills and network with the future generation of assistants. To have an opportunity to be involved with this, you must have filled out our end of year survey.

10.4 Getting into Teaching

If you want to take your assistantship to the next level, find out more from the links below of how to get into teaching and inspire future linguists:

- England: <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/>
- Wales: <https://www.discoverteaching.wales/routes-into-teaching/>
- Scotland: <https://teachinscotland.scot/>
- Northern Ireland: <https://gtcni.org.uk/professional-space/professional-competence/getting-into-teaching>