

Module 3: Immigration and Visa Checklist

Moving to France Masterclass

Phase 1: Pre-Application Research

Understanding Your Visa Type

- ☐ Determine your primary reason for moving (work, study, retirement, family reunification, etc.)
- ☐ Research which visa category applies to your situation
- ☐ Verify if you need a long-stay visa (visa de long séjour) or can enter visa-free
- ☐ Check if your nationality requires a visa for France
- ☐ Review processing times for your visa type (typically 2-8 weeks)

Initial Documentation Review

- ☐ Verify your passport is valid for at least 3 months beyond your intended stay
 - ☐ Ensure you have blank pages in your passport for visa stamps
 - ☐ Gather birth certificates (with apostille if applicable)
 - ☐ Obtain marriage certificate or civil partnership documents (if applicable)
 - ☐ Collect any divorce or death certificates (if applicable)
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Phase 2: Gathering Required Documents

Core Documents (Required for Most Visa Types)

- ☐ Completed long-stay visa application form (signed and dated)

- ☐ Recent passport-sized photos (35mm x 45mm, less than 6 months old, meeting French specifications)
- ☐ Valid passport and photocopies of all pages
- ☐ Proof of accommodation in France (lease, property deed, or hotel reservation)
- ☐ Proof of financial means (bank statements for past 3-6 months)
- ☐ Travel insurance covering minimum €30,000 for medical expenses
- ☐ Cover letter explaining purpose of stay and plans in France

Additional Documents by Visa Type

Work Visa / Talent Passport

- ☐ Employment contract or promise of employment from French employer
- ☐ Proof of qualifications (diplomas, certifications)
- ☐ Professional references and CV
- ☐ Proof of employer's authorization to hire foreign workers (if applicable)
- ☐ Proof of salary meeting minimum threshold requirements

Student Visa

- ☐ Acceptance letter from French educational institution
- ☐ Proof of enrollment and payment of tuition fees
- ☐ Academic transcripts and diplomas
- ☐ Campus France approval (if applicable to your country)
- ☐ Proof of accommodation near campus
- ☐ Proof of financial resources (minimum €615/month)

Visitor / Long-Stay Visa

- ☐ Proof of sufficient funds for entire stay
- ☐ Detailed itinerary or explanation of purpose

- ☐ Health insurance for duration of stay
- ☐ Proof of ties to home country (employment, property, family)

Family Reunification / Spouse Visa

- ☐ Marriage certificate (translated and apostilled)
 - ☐ Proof of spouse's legal residence in France
 - ☐ Proof of adequate housing (minimum space requirements)
 - ☐ Proof of spouse's financial resources
 - ☐ Proof of relationship (photos, correspondence, joint documents)
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Phase 3: Document Translation and Certification

Translation Requirements

- ☐ Identify which documents need official French translation
- ☐ Find certified translators (traducteur assermenté) for required documents
- ☐ Have birth certificates translated
- ☐ Have marriage/divorce certificates translated
- ☐ Have academic diplomas and transcripts translated
- ☐ Keep original documents with translations

Apostille and Authentication

- ☐ Determine which documents require apostille based on your country
- ☐ Obtain apostille stamps from competent authority in your home country
- ☐ Verify France recognizes your country's apostille (Hague Convention member)
- ☐ For non-Hague Convention countries, obtain embassy legalization
- ☐ Make certified copies of all apostilled documents

Phase 4: Application Submission

Before Submission

- ☐ Make complete copies of entire application package
- ☐ Organize documents in order specified by consulate
- ☐ Schedule appointment at French consulate or visa application center
- ☐ Pay visa application fee (approximately €99-250 depending on type)
- ☐ Prepare payment method accepted by your consulate

At the Appointment

- ☐ Arrive 15 minutes early with all documents
- ☐ Bring original documents plus copies
- ☐ Submit biometric data (fingerprints and photo)
- ☐ Answer questions honestly and clearly
- ☐ Obtain receipt with application tracking number
- ☐ Confirm estimated processing time
- ☐ Ask about collection procedures for passport and visa

Phase 5: While Waiting for Approval

Preparation Activities

- ☐ Continue building your French language skills
- ☐ Research French social security system (Sécurité Sociale)
- ☐ Understand your future healthcare coverage options

- ☐ Research bank account opening procedures
- ☐ Plan temporary accommodation for first weeks
- ☐ Book flight tickets (only after visa approval if possible)
- ☐ Notify current employer, landlord, and service providers of move date
- ☐ Begin organizing belongings and planning move logistics

Tracking Your Application

- ☐ Note your application reference number
 - ☐ Check application status online if available
 - ☐ Respond promptly to any requests for additional information
 - ☐ Keep consulate contact information readily available
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Phase 6: After Visa Approval

Immediate Steps

- ☐ Carefully review visa validity dates and conditions
- ☐ Verify all personal information on visa is correct
- ☐ Note the type of visa granted (VLS-TS, VLS, etc.)
- ☐ Understand work authorization limitations (if any)
- ☐ Plan to arrive in France before visa expiration date
- ☐ Keep visa approval documents in safe, accessible place

Entry into France

- ☐ Carry all original supporting documents used in application
- ☐ Keep proof of accommodation address ready
- ☐ Have proof of travel insurance coverage

- ☐ Carry proof of financial means
 - ☐ Be prepared to explain your plans to border control
 - ☐ Keep receipt of visa fee payment
 - ☐ Know address where you'll be staying initially
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Phase 7: First Steps After Arrival in France

Within First 3 Months (Critical)

- ☐ Validate your VLS-TS visa online (within 3 months of arrival) at administration-etrangers-en-france.gouv.fr
- ☐ Pay OFII validation fee (approximately €200-300)
- ☐ Attend mandatory OFII medical examination (if required)
- ☐ Attend civic integration interview (if required)
- ☐ Register with local town hall (mairie) if required by your commune

Residence Permit (Titre de Séjour) Application

- ☐ Determine if you need to apply for residence permit after arrival
 - ☐ Schedule appointment at local prefecture within 2 months of arrival
 - ☐ Prepare required documents for titre de séjour application
 - ☐ Obtain proof of address in France (attestation d'hébergement or lease)
 - ☐ Take additional passport photos if needed
 - ☐ Pay residence permit fee (approximately €225)
 - ☐ Attend prefecture appointment with all documents
 - ☐ Receive récépissé (temporary residence receipt)
 - ☐ Collect residence permit card when ready (notification by SMS/mail)
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Phase 8: Long-Term Status Management

Annual Renewals and Updates

- ☐ Note renewal date on calendar (typically 2 months before expiration)
- ☐ Track document validity periods (passport, insurance, etc.)
- ☐ Keep records of continuous residence in France
- ☐ Maintain proof of ongoing purpose (employment, studies, etc.)
- ☐ Update prefecture of any address changes within 3 months
- ☐ Notify authorities of major life changes (marriage, birth, etc.)

Path to Permanent Residence / Citizenship

- ☐ Understand eligibility for carte de résident (after 5 years)
 - ☐ Track French language proficiency requirements
 - ☐ Document integration into French society
 - ☐ Consider citizenship eligibility (after 5 years residence typically)
 - ☐ Keep all tax records and proof of continuous residence
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Important Contacts and Resources

Key Information

- ☐ Save local prefecture address and phone number
- ☐ Bookmark online visa validation portal
- ☐ Save French consulate contact information
- ☐ Note OFII regional office details
- ☐ Keep emergency contact for visa/immigration questions

Emergency Scenarios

- ☐ Know procedure if passport is lost/stolen in France
 - ☐ Understand process if visa is lost
 - ☐ Know how to extend visa in emergency situations
 - ☐ Keep digital and physical copies of all immigration documents
 - ☐ Have contact information for immigration lawyer (optional)
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Notes and Reminders

Processing Times: Standard visa processing is 2-8 weeks, but can take longer during peak seasons or for complex cases.

Language Requirements: Some visa types require French language proficiency. Check specific requirements for your category.

Financial Proof: Keep at least 3-6 months of bank statements showing stable income and adequate funds.

Stay Organized: Immigration paperwork can be extensive. Use folders or binders to keep documents organized by category.

Seek Help: Consider consulting an immigration lawyer for complex situations or if you have specific concerns about your application.

This checklist is for educational purposes. Visa requirements can change. Always verify current requirements with official French government sources and your local French consulate.

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