

PRACTICAL GUIDE TO RENTING IN FRANCE

We realise that it is not at all easy, especially with the distance involved, to finalise a rental accommodation agreement, but rest assured, we are here to help you and guide you in your search.

This guide has been created to provide some additional practical information on the renting process in France. Please read it carefully.



What types of accommodation are available for students?

A **room (chambre)** consists of **one room** with private or shared bathroom.
Average surface area: 12 m².

A **studio** is accommodation that consists of a **main room with kitchenette**, which serves both as bedroom and living room + bathroom, toilet.

You will often sleep on a sofa-bed that you fold out every evening.

Average surface area: 18 m².

An **apartment** is identified according to the number of rooms:

- **T1 or F1:** the **kitchen is separate** from the main room + bathroom, WC.
There is not really any difference between a T1 and an F1.
Average surface area: 25 m².
- **T1 bis or F1 bis:** the kitchen is separate from the main room. This room is big enough to be split into two, often with a **living area and a sleeping area** + bathroom, WC.
Average surface area: 30 m².
- **T2 or F2:** consists of 1 bedroom, a kitchen, a living room + bathroom, WC.
Average surface area: 50 m².
- **T3 or F3:** consists of 2 bedrooms, a kitchen, a living room + bathroom, WC.
Average surface area: 65 m².



How do you go about renting in France?

1/ Acceptance of rental application

When you first contact the landlord or the agency, you should:

- introduce yourself briefly and describe your project to study at ESC PAU BS
- provide a copy of your passport/ID and letter of acceptance from the School
- provide proof of the financial resources of your accommodation guarantor (surety).
As a student, you have no income. The guarantor therefore agrees to pay the rent should you fail to do so (he completes a guarantor's agreement form).

Concerning the guarantor, you will be asked to provide the following documents:

- Copy of his identity document and proof of address
- Proof of income:
 - ❖ If he is an employee, the last 3 pay slips and a copy of his employment contract or certificate of employment.
 - ❖ If he is retired, a copy of monthly or annual pension statements.
 - ❖ If he is a freelance worker, tradesman, craftsman or self-employed, the last 2 certified balance sheets or certificate of financial resources for the current tax year issued by an accountant.
- If he lives in France, you can also send his last income tax and property tax notifications.

Prepare these documents in advance and scan them in PDF format (in a definition that is legible without making the file too large) so that you act quickly if necessary as you search.

It is on the basis of these documents that the landlord will decide whether or not to rent you the accommodation.

The International Office is also here to support you, inform you, advise you and sometimes put you in direct relation with the landlords.

You will be sent a questionnaire by e-mail, in which you can tell us about your project so that we can improve our follow-up.

2/ Signing the contract

Once you have found your accommodation and your administrative application has been accepted by the landlord or the estate agency, you must sign the **TENANCY AGREEMENT** to reserve the accommodation.

The tenancy agreement is a binding document establishing the responsibilities of the landlord and the tenant. Most importantly, it must mention the terms of the rental agreement: duration, date it takes effect, rent and arrangements for paying charges, payment method, payment of a deposit, etc. It must provide a description of the accommodation and say how the rent is to be paid, frequency of payment and payment date.

The agreement must be in writing and signed by both parties (electronic signature in your case).

Be aware that the tenancy agreement is a binding contract with the landlord and that you must respect the cancellation procedure if you want to withdraw from the agreement (e.g. visa refused) and pay what you owe.

3/ Costs involved in renting accommodation

RENT: Rent is the amount paid by the tenant in return for living in the accommodation. You must pay every month, on a fixed date, which is stipulated in the contract.

CHARGES: The rent does not include rental charges, which are intended to cover certain expenses associated with water consumption, use of the lift, collective heating where applicable, a contribution to cleaning costs, maintenance or repair of communal areas, sometimes the refuse collection tax, etc.

If you see an advert that says €300 CC, this means €300, including charges.

Warning, in 95% of cases, **charges do not include electricity**.

You must take out a contract with a supplier of your choice a few days before you arrive in the accommodation in order to have hot water and light.

SECURITY DEPOSIT (*caution*): this covers any failure on the part of the tenant: rent or charges not paid, repairs needed, cleaning necessary, etc.

It cannot be more than 2 months' rent excluding charges for furnished accommodation or 1 month's rent for unfurnished.

At the end of the contractual period, the landlord must return the deposit within one month if the accommodation is in good order. If it is not and costs are incurred, then the deposit can be returned up to 2 months after the end of the lease agreement.

AGENCY FEES: If you reserve accommodation through an agency, the estate agent will ask you to pay a fee when reserving.

This is calculated according to the floor area and location of the accommodation (between €8 and €12 per habitable m²). Ask for details before you reserve.

4/ Notice of departure

In the case of a furnished rental, you must tell your landlord you are leaving at least 1 month beforehand by **registered letter with acknowledgement of receipt** (sent by post).

For an unfurnished rental, the notice period is 3 months.

5/ Sharing accommodation

Warning, for anyone who wants to share an apartment with one or more friends, read the following paragraph carefully. Know what you are getting yourself into!

In shared housing, if you sign a single joint tenancy agreement, each housemate is jointly responsible for paying all of the rent, charges and any amount due to the landlord; the departure of one of the joint tenants does not terminate the agreement: it continues for the benefit of the remaining tenants.

The joint tenant who leaves continues to be responsible for payment of the rent after leaving, but for a limited period: **a maximum of six months after sending notice of departure**. During this time, the deposit also remains in place for payment of the rent for the tenants who remain. However, if the tenant who has given notice is replaced in the joint tenancy, his joint involvement and that of his guarantor come to an end as soon as the new tenant has signed the rental agreement.

Similarly, in the event of a visa being refused, you remain responsible under the terms of the contract unless you find someone to replace you.

6/ Inventory

This is a detailed description of the state of the accommodation and all equipment room by room, from floor to ceiling. When you leave, it is used to check that the accommodation is in the same state as when you arrived.

Two inventory checks are therefore carried out: one when the tenant enters the premises, the other when he leaves, when he hands in the keys. Be as precise and meticulous as possible: ensure that the smallest things are noted in order to avoid any problems when you leave.

WARNING: if you damage your apartment or any of the furniture or leave it dirty, or if you break something without replacing it, then the landlord can withhold some or all of your security deposit. Hand over an apartment that is super-clean (**clean thoroughly** and in all the rooms) to be sure of recovering your deposit in full.

7/ Compulsory home insurance

This is to guarantee your public responsibility and protect your home when you are responsible for damage or victim of a disaster (e.g. fire, water damage, theft).

As a tenant, you must take out insurance in advance and take proof of this insurance cover on the day the keys are handed over.

We work with a partner bank who can provide this insurance, if you wish.

Good luck with your search!