

Quality Charter for French Government Foreign Scholars

France needs to have successful foreign scholar programmes for cultural, academic, economic and political reasons.

- Cultural, since France has a long tradition of cultural diversity that is important to uphold,*
- Academic, since having foreign scholar programmes is a way for French higher education and research institutions to acquire the international reputation they need for their development,*
- Economic, in that our country's future growth in international trade depends partly on good quality foreign scholar programmes today,*
- Political, since foreign scholars are an important vehicle for our influence worldwide.*

A government seminar held on 7 February 2005 on France's power of attraction accepted the proposal for a quality charter for foreign scholars who are awarded French government grants, scholarships and fellowships. The 2006 government seminar subsequently adopted this text, which echoes the European Quality Charter for Mobility currently being adopted. This text replaces the existing charters produced by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs for its excellence scholarship programmes (Eiffel and Eiffel-Doctorate programmes in particular) and concerns all training course grants, academic scholarships and high-level visiting scientist fellowships.

The quality charter hence initially concerns Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs scholars, i.e. students receiving an award from the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs pursuant to existing regulations. This charter could eventually be used as a model for a future quality charter for all inward student mobility.

The charter applies to the entire foreign scholar system: from student guidance and selection in the sending country, preparations for departure and assimilation into the chosen higher education institution right through to the return to their home country.

The charter is broken down into 74 performance and outcome indicators so that players can know where their responsibilities lie and self-assess their performance at each step, including via a cost-performance ratio, so as to gradually move towards excellence.

The charter hence lists in chronological order all the requirements that the players involved must fulfil if their joint efforts are to produce an internationally top-ranking foreign scholarsystem.

It therefore represents a cohesive set of goals, a target benchmark rather than a contract to be complied with right from the outset. Reaching these targets calls for the same close co-operation that was behind its creation, especially with the Ministry for Higher Education and Research, the conferences of higher education institutions, the French regions and towns, our network of embassies, and the agencies working under the supervision of the ministries.

On this particular point of France's attractiveness policy, everyone works with the Government in support of a quality approach for scholars: the Embassies' cultural sections, their university co-operation attachés and their CampusFrance offices, the French cultural institutions abroad, the higher education institutions, the public, parastatal and private agencies, and the local authorities. They constantly strive to meet the ultimate goal of compliance with all the procedures laid down in this charter.

This charter is entirely in keeping with the 'France's Cultural and Scientific Outreach' and 'Solidarity with Developing Countries' programmes for which the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs is responsible.



I - Before departure

I.1 - Presentation of French higher education opportunities

The Embassy shall:

I.1.1: Present French higher education opportunities on the Embassy's website in French, in the language of the country and, if possible, in English, with appropriate hyperlinks to relevant sites,

I.1.2: Ensure that CampusFrance offices are set up wherever possible in the cultural institutions (institutes and Alliances Françaises) and that these offices make information on French higher education opportunities available to students, either in hard copy form or on the Internet,

I.1.3: Promote French higher education opportunities in the sending country's higher education institutions by visiting them and meeting with their representatives on a regular basis,

I.1.4: Regularly hold a French higher education week or month, inviting representatives of French higher education institutions,

I.1.5: Present the international agreements between higher education institutions in France and the host country on the Embassy's website as comprehensively as possible,

I.1.6: Encourage cultural institutions to support the holding of promotional exhibitions and take part in events organised by the Embassy in this regard,

I.1.7: Include activities to promote French scientific expertise in its cultural programme so as to encourage foreign students to choose France,

I.1.8: Co-ordinate its own institutional meetings with CampusFrance's promotional activities,

I.1.9: Present the alumni association(s) (directory, activities, etc.) on the Embassy's website.



The CampusFrance Agency shall:

I.1.10: Organise events to promote French higher education at the request of the Embassy and in association with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs' central administration and the higher education institutions,

I.1.11: Train the university co-operation attachés and CampusFrance office managers to promote the French higher education opportunities,

I.1.12: Provide the CampusFrance offices, in association with the other agencies, with up-to-date documentation in French and the national language; and shall design and put on its CampusFrance.org website models of brochures on higher education in France, which can be tailored and published by the CampusFrance offices and the embassies.

I.2 - Information on foreign scholar programmes

The Embassy shall:

I.2.13: Inform the students of all foreign scholar programmes available: Embassy programmes (including shared-cost programmes), programmes paid from central appropriations, European programmes, the French-Speaking Universities Agency (AUF) programmes, and local and regional authority programmes (presenting them in a complementary and uncompetitive manner),

I.2.14: Make programme information available on its website, along with the appropriate hyperlinks. This information shall be passed on by CampusFrance.

The French higher education institutions shall:

I.2.15: Post on their websites information for students on all foreign scholar programmes, with hyperlinks to the relevant websites.



The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs central administration (Directorate-General for International Co-operation and Development - DGCID and Directorate for Scientific and University Co-operation - DCSU) shall:

I.2.16: Send the embassies the list of useful hyperlinks that they are required to put on their websites,

I.2.17: Regularly update the information on foreign scholar programmes paid from central appropriations (deadlines for applications, results, statistics, etc.) and send it to the embassies.

I.3 - Development of structured foreign scholar programmes

The Embassy shall:

I.3.18: Develop structured foreign scholar programmes with calls for tender to round out the bilateral higher education and research co-operation programmes,

I.3.19: Extensively promote these programmes in the country where it is located and provide information on the selection procedures for all foreign scholar programmes available,

I.3.20: Set up selection boards made up mainly of academics from the two countries, in collaboration with the conferences of higher education institutions and the Ministry for Higher Education and Research,

I.3.21: Select candidates in academic subjects jointly recognised as priorities with the partner country and with the higher education institutions, with the emphasis on Masters and Doctorate levels,



I.3.22: Make this selection as early as possible and at the latest by the end of the March before the start of the academic year, taking other agencies' selection timetables into account,

I.3.23: Check each candidate's actual level of knowledge of the French language in connection with the relevant structures – Alliances Françaises, French cultural centres and CampusFrance offices where such exist – so as to steer candidates to suitable training and, where necessary, to suitable language courses before and during their course of study in France. It is important to bear in mind that a command of French is not always a prerequisite, but a goal to be achieved by students by the end of their stay in France.

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs central administration shall:

I.3.24: Follow the same procedures as embassies do for carrying out foreign scholar programmes paid from central appropriations. They include providing information on selection procedures, setting up selection boards made up of academics in co-operation with the conferences of higher education institutions and the Ministry for Higher Education and Research, prioritising Masters and Doctorates and specially targeted academic courses, checking French language levels and organising supplementary training where required.

I.4 - Preparations for departure

The Embassy shall:

I.4.25: Provide information on living conditions in France, especially the student facilities organised by the student support network. It shall also provide information on social benefits available to scholars including social security coverage, housing benefits and any payment of registration fees using existing media or media to be developed such as a booklet given to the participant before departure or a website. It shall also mention the French government's commitment as a whole to foreign scholar programmes in France and include such details on the cost of living in France as apartment rental deposits, tuition fees and insurance with details and hyperlinks for mobility agencies,

I.4.26: Design and publish an FAQs section on the Embassy's website so that students and candidates can find the information they need right from the outset,



I.4.27: Promptly send the scholar's full dossier to the appointed agency, send students who are selected a confirmation letter in French and the local language and provide the details of the agency appointed to manage their case, and inform the agency of the dates and times of arrival in France,

I.4.28: Send a letter to candidates who have not been selected to inform them of such,

I.4.29: Hold a seminar for scholars on preparations for departure, during which they are provided with all the details they need, especially the addresses of the different websites – the Student section of the France Diplomatie website on www.diplomatie.gouv.fr, the Ministry for Higher Education and Research website on www.education.gouv.fr and www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr, www.egide.asso.fr designed and published by Egide, www.cnous.fr designed and published by the CNOUS – and the I'm going to France booklet designed and published by the CNOUS,

I.4.30: Set up a fast-track visa procedure for French government scholars and European Union programme participants (Erasmus Mundus in particular),

I.4.31: On departure, put the scholars in contact with the alumni networks.

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs central administration shall:

I.4.32: Ensure compliance with the operating charter for foreign scholar programmes paid from central appropriations (Eiffel, Eiffel Doctorate, doctoral colleges, ARCUS university and research cooperation programme, etc.),

I.4.33: Organise the selection of scholars for programmes paid from central appropriations, publish the results and send them to the embassies.

The French higher education institutions shall:

I.4.34: Ensure, where applicable, that bi-nationally supervised doctoral thesis contracts and agreements, agreements on issuing diplomas resulting from international partnerships, Erasmus Mundus agreements and so forth are signed,

I.4.35: Provide candidates with accurate details of the proposed courses and their educational content,



I.4.36: Inform scholars of study course conditions including the academic year timetable, timetable of examinations and student's charter,

I.4.37: Appoint a contact person for scholars in the higher education institution and send his or her details to the Embassy, which shall contact the said contact person,

I.4.38: Provide scholars, before their departure, via the Embassy or online, with all useful information (accommodation possibilities, access to various university services, sports and cultural activities available, safety advice, town maps, university maps, etc.).

The agency in charge of managing the student's scholarship, fellowship or training course grant shall:

I.4.39: Set up the scholar's computer file in liaison with the diplomatic mission and prepare the initial formalities and inform the student of them. The agency shall answer any questions the future scholars may have, inform all the players involved in making any last-minute changes (new posting, change to arrival date, etc.) and act as an interface between the diplomatic missions and the host institutions.

II - On arrival in France

II.1 - Reception on arrival

The agency in charge of managing the student's scholarship, fellowship or training course grant shall:

II.1.40: Ensure that the foreign scholar is well received on arrival in France and, where the programme so provides or where the Embassy has so directed, organise a personal reception service (welcome at the airport, reservation of accommodation in Paris, transfer to the French host region, etc.),



II.1.41: Provide the student with an arrival pack (address of accommodation, insurance, contact names, etc.),

II.1.42: Similarly welcome the scholars taking a language course prior to their study period.

II.2 - Accommodation

The agency in charge of managing the student's scholarship, fellowship or training course grant shall:

II.2.43: Ensure that each student is brought to his accommodation previously checked for its quality.

The French higher education institutions shall:

II.2.44: Ensure that each scholar is assigned accommodation in the best possible conditions, in liaison with the specialised agencies and bodies.

II.3 - Reception at the place of study

The agency in charge of managing the student's scholarship, fellowship or training course grant shall:

II.3.45: Help set up, in association with the Ministry of the Interior, Overseas France and Local Authorities and the Ministry for Labour, Labour Relations and Solidarity, a one-stop office covering different public service agencies (police, family allowance fund, National Agency for the Reception of Foreigners and Migration (ANAEM), the CROUS - Regional Student Support Centre, etc.) to facilitate administrative formalities,



II.3.46: Collect the scholars' e-mail addresses and telephone numbers, with their consent, and send them to all those appointed by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs to be involved in the programme.

The French higher education institutions shall:

II.3.47: Welcome the foreign students on their arrival at the institution: promptly put them in contact with their contact person, organise a collective welcoming meeting, and present the scientific and educational features of the institution,

II.3.48: Provide useful information on life on the university campus with all the cultural, sporting and socio-cultural possibilities in addition to the information provided by the agency in charge of managing the student's scholarship, fellowship or grant,

II.3.49: Also help set up a one-stop office covering different public service agencies to facilitate administrative formalities. The local and regional authorities could thereby take part in welcoming and acclimating students, presenting life in France and the regions along with their economic, social and cultural aspects.

III - During the stay

III.1 - Teaching in foreign languages

The French higher education institutions shall:

III.1.50: Pay particular attention to non-French-speaking students likely to experience the greatest difficulties with settling in and the highest risk of academic failure by offering them linguistic



assistance and academic support suited to their situation from among the available training. It shall offer classes in a foreign language, especially in English, to ensure that the language barrier is not an impediment to learning.

III.2 - Mentoring and assimilation

The French higher education institutions in liaison with the agencies shall:

III.2.51: Organise mentoring by a French teacher and/or a French student, calling first and foremost on those who themselves have been on mobility programmes in foreign higher education institutions,

III.2.52: Introduce a range of initiatives to encourage the foreign students to settle in and mix with their fellow French students in the higher education institution and, where appropriate, ask the foreign students to take part in promotional actions (“Europe Days”, “National Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus Days”, etc.) and mentoring actions,

III.2.53: Assist the foreign students with their search for a work placement,

III.2.54: Ask mentors to inform the agency of any problems that may arise when supervising the students they are in charge of.

The agencies shall:

III.2.55: Collect the educational reports from institutions so that they can monitor the scholar’s academic progress and make an overall assessment of the programmes. They shall send the results of their overall programme assessment to the central administration of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Ministry for Higher Education and Research.



III.3 - Statistical and quality monitoring

The French higher education institutions shall:

III.3.56 : Provide the agency in charge of the dossier with the necessary information to be able to statistically track the scholars (by nationality, level and academic subject) with reference to the national measures set up,

III.3.57: Also provide the agency with the necessary data to monitor the quality of the scholars' academic progress (qualifications pursued, participation in exams and results obtained),

III.3.58: Integrate the students into the current or future alumni networks,

III.3.59 Make an event of awarding diplomas to students by creating, where appropriate, a ceremony to this end,

III.3.60: Foster contacts with business and other organisations in connection with any work placements they may offer.

The scholars shall:

III.3.61: Register themselves on arrival on the France Contact website – www.francecontact.net – to fuel the forum for dialogue and information exchanges between students,

III.3.62: Inform their host institution and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs agency paying their scholarship, fellowship or grant of any changes to their administrative situation,

III.3.63: Answer the satisfaction surveys sent to them by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs or any of its agencies.

The Embassy shall:

III.3.64: Develop, in liaison with the agencies, a communications mechanism with scholars in the form of an e-newsletter to maintain contact with them,

III.3.65: Respond, in liaison with the agency, to requests from the scholar's mentor and/or contact person appointed by the institution to solve any problems that may arise.



IV - On returning home

IV.1 - Alumni networks

The Embassy shall:

IV.1.66: Practise a policy of alumni networks made up of former foreign scholars to build on the French investment and form active outreach networks,

IV.1.67: Build pools of resource persons who could be associated with the mission's actions, especially with the promotion of French education abroad and through dialogue with the different players involved in representing the French presence abroad.

The French higher education institutions shall:

IV.1.68 : Keep in contact with former scholars and, where appropriate, involve them in actions to promote higher education in their home countries.

The former scholars shall:

IV.1.69 : Take part, wherever possible, in promotional and think-tank activities proposed to them by the diplomatic missions.



IV.2 - Foreign scholar follow-up

The French higher education institutions shall:

IV.2.70: Provide agencies with the information to be forwarded to the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs on the qualifications obtained by the participants at the end of their scholarship, fellowship or training course and, where appropriate, at the end of their stay in France,

IV.2.71: Issue students with the documents required for their study period in France to be recognised in their home country and shall use the tools designed to make European higher education qualifications clearer and easier to understand (the diploma supplement and the European Credit Transfer System).

IV.3 - Assessment of the entire foreign scholar system

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs shall:

IV.3.72: Steer, in co-operation with the Ministry for Higher Education and Research, CampusFrance agency, and the agencies who manage the French government scholarships, fellowships and grants, and sign a targets agreement with them,

IV.3.73: Make an annual assessment of participant selection, reception, training and education conditions using satisfaction surveys and polls, and send the findings of this assessment to the National Council for the Development of International Student Mobility and to the Ministry for Higher Education and Research,

IV.3.74: Supervise, in co-operation with the Ministry for Higher Education and Research, the effective implementation of this charter by the different players involved.

Before departure

- Presentation of the higher education opportunities
- Information on foreign scholar programmes
- Selection and award
- Preparations for departure

39
indicators

During the stay

- French language learning
- Mentoring and assimilation
- Monitoring statistics and quality

16
indicators



74 performance indicators

Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs: 36
(incl. **28** for the embassies)

Higher education institutions: 23

Agencies: 11

Participants: 4

On arrival

- Reception on arrival
- Accommodation
- Reception at the place of study

10
indicators

On returning home

- Networks
- Follow-up
- Assessment

9
indicators

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