

Administrative Registration, Visa and Contract

A guide from those who know little for those who know little

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1. Introduction

Have you spent months preparing for your PhD proposal submission and now you finally received your acceptance letter and know that your project is funded? Great, now that the real process begins: Sign all the paperwork and come to France to sign the contract.

If you're looking at this pdf, you've probably joined the discord group, if not, I'd advise you to join now, because you'll need help: <https://discord.gg/JGAQN9tUwY>

I really advise you also to look for a whatsapp group in your country focused only on acquiring visas (spoiler alert: focus on the keyword "Visa Talent").

The process basically follows 3 main steps: **Registration at the University/INSA, visa and contract** (it has the title of sejour too, but that's talk for another day). And 3 people will be involved in each one, other than your thesis director. Some things are possible to do in parallel, but that's the order you may have to finish.

Also, I'm Brazilian, your process can change completely, so always double-check with doctoral students from your country, preferably from **NOW**. And read everything here before starting.

Another thing, everything in **green** is something you have to pay for, and it's usually expensive.

2. Lexique

Here's a lexicon to help you out:

- **CVEC:** Contribution vie étudiante et de campus
- **Convention d'Accueil:** Hosting Agreement signed by you, your thesis directors and the university
- **Carte de Séjour:** A residence permit is an authorization issued by the French administration to stay in France. Subsequently, it authorizes to stay in France for a longer period

3. First step: Registration and Convention d'Accueil!

Time is your worst enemy! The university has a deadline for when you should arrive in France to sign the contract, but there is something even worse than that: THEY GO ON VACATION!

And I think they should! And I encourage them to do so, but for anyone who needs to turn in visa paperwork to their embassy, this can be a thriller.

So if there's something you **MUST HAVE** before they go on holiday it's the **Convention d'Accueil**. It means a lot of things, but to your embassy (which wants it **COMPLETELY**

SIGNED), this convention only means one thing: you're being paid more than minimum wage to work.

For those foreigners who have taken a Master's or lower in France, having this means that you don't have to go through sending a dossier to Campus France and wasting 999 months waiting for an answer only to know that you have to correct it and send your dossier again. Or maybe you must go through this, everything is relative, **so always double-check what I've written.**

Now, I don't know which university/INSA you are writing for, so ask your thesis director and the person who is following up on your **administrative application**, but you may get the convention **before** registration, or not. Also, ask about the documents you have to submit, and which platforms you have to submit. There is usually a third person who will help you get the signatures you need, but always ask your thesis director for help first.

The entire process is simple, pay the **CVEC** (ask if it is actually necessary), make an account, sign papers, ask others to sign papers, send the dossier, receive an answer (which is basically impossible to be negative), make another account in other site, sign up on it, write some stuff about your life and pay some money.

Do it fast, and you'll get rid of the biggest headache.

4. Visa

Ah, the most expensive process! You have several visas that you can get, depending on your country, but always look for the **TALENT VISA (CHERCHEUR)**! It's what gives you the most perks, like not having to renew every year, not having to hand over certain irritating documents for the contract and it makes the process of acquiring nationality at the end of the doctorate a lot easier, so friend, take this one.

Depending when you are coming, you may need to be fully vaccinated in order to demand your visa file. Usually your country should have a government agency that you can contact to get vaccinated earlier with one of the few vaccines allowed in France.

Time to get your hands dirty. Once you have the convention in hand (or digital if you sent an email to your country's French embassy and they said you could bring a print version), go to <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F16922> and start seeing the main documents and the current visa price.

There you will probably give a link that will take you to a page where you choose your country and have even more information about your documents. Be careful not to confuse visa with "carte de séjour". The first is to let you in and stay for a while, the second is to allow you to stay for good.

Do you think that's it? There are still soooo many documents missing, enter: <https://france-visas.gouv.fr/> and simulate your situation, and they will provide you with even more documents. There it is also possible to make/fill an online file of one of the documents that you need to present at the embassy, and it's much easier than printing and trying to unravel what each line is (it's probably on the same site under "demande de visa").

Do you think it's over? Nope! Send an email to the embassy and ask the whatsapp groups for more documents, there may be even more! If they ask for confirmation of accommodation in France for 3 months from your entry, then you are %\$%\$. Finding accommodation can be a tedious task, so start submitting applications now, and if you've paid CVEC (which you should have done for the administrative application), you're entitled to a French guarantor, but ask for one as soon as possible, why? They may be slow to respond. Some residences don't ask you for many documents, usually the best ones are from the University/INSA you are applying to.

If you haven't talked to the embassy and your whatsapp friends yet, do it now!

Travel insurance? Swisscare! Quick and easy to get (this document is not sponsored by them, but if they want, just send me an email). Perhaps the embassy can ask for a **translated birth certificate**, this may also take time.

Do you think it's over? kidding, it's over, now all you have to do is mark a rendez-vous request on the embassy's website, wait for the day, take all the documents plus copies and lots of money, give it all to them and done!

The visa takes up to 15 working days to arrive, but it normally arrives earlier, in less than 10. Now that you've got everything, it's better to plan to go to France a little earlier than the deadline, to ensure that everything will work out and to buy your plane ticket earlier (which is cheaper, and the university/INSA does not reimburse you)

Go for me, it's better to arrive earlier and make sure you sign your contract than the other way around, and go for me, I've seen 2 friends lose a master and the other a phd because they didn't follow all the steps in time.

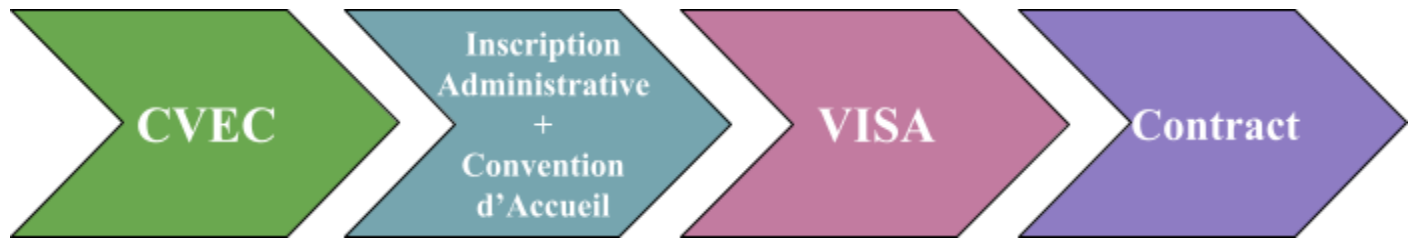
5. Contract

Time to sell your soul, but it's worth it! Send all your documents to the person responsible for your contract. Don't know who it is? ask the thesis director. You must have a visa for sure, a passport, a Convention d'accueil and some other things.

Once it's OK, come to France, sign the contract and eat a baguette, because for now it will be all you can buy, because you just spent it on the whole process, the tickets to the airplane, your monthly fee and deposit of your residence and many other side expenses. Just kidding (or not), but don't be shy about borrowing money, because after 3 months you'll be doing so well that you'll be able to buy a nintendo switch and an electronic guitar in the same month! But don't do this, study!

6. Overview

So much has been said that it seems like a complicated process. Well, it is indeed a complicated process, but if you follow the steps as early as possible, you will definitely have enough time to sign the contract before the start of your Phd. To help you out, here is a flow chart of the main steps:



Need a little extra hand? here are some contacts that can help you in this process:

- Brigitte DIARRA (Executive Assistant at INSA Rouen): brigitte.diarra@insa-rouen.fr
- Sandra HAGUE (LITIS Secretary at INSA Rouen Normandie): sandra.hague@insa-rouen.fr
- Fabienne Bocquet (LITIS Management Secretary at the University of Rouen Normandie): fabienne.bocquet@univ-rouen.fr
- Lucie LIOT (LITIS Secretary at Le Havre Normandie University): lucie.liot@univ-lehavre.fr

7. Is it over?

Yes! But no! The “**carte de séjour**” must also be purchased, and the sooner you start the better. I hope there is still some site (like this one: <https://administration-etrangers-en-france.interieur.gouv.fr/particuliers/#/>) that helps you to submit the application file online, because having to go to the city hall to sort it out every time and discover the documents that you should have brought is no fun task.

Anyway, a lot of other information that would be good to know can be acquired on discord, so don't hesitate to talk to us! And remember, this is just another service provided by your friendly neighborhood! So yeah... better talk with as many other people as you can.