



FRANCE ATTRACTIVENESS SCOREBOARD

Education and human capital



EDUCATION AND HUMAN CAPITAL

France has a highly qualified workforce and continues to invest in education, tertiary education and lifelong learning to maintain its competitive advantage and consolidate its scientific skills base.

Training is a key driver of a country’s competitiveness and investment attractiveness. Tertiary education provision enables students to acquire a broad range of knowledge, skills and key strengths to build the society of the future. Vocational training is essential to facilitate retraining and professional mobility.

The French education system is recognized around the world. The highly internationalized French economy has had a positive impact on the higher education ecosystem. A large number of foreign students are enrolled on high-level training programs related to research, with them accounting for 38% of all doctoral students.

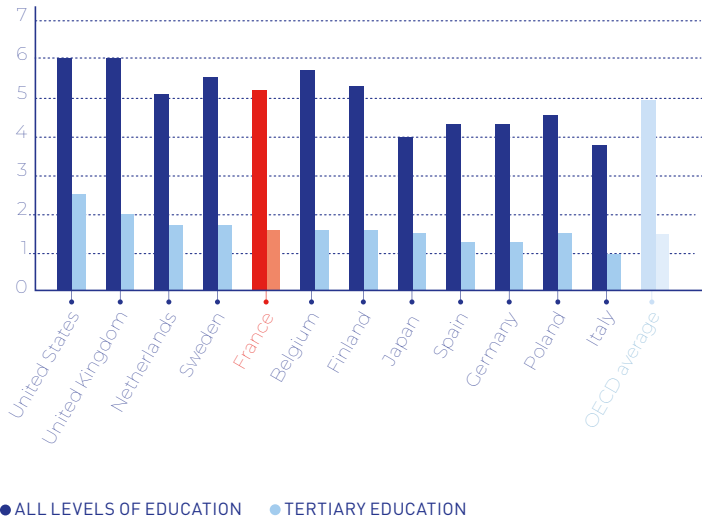
1. French students are increasingly highly qualified

Investment in education and training for the younger generation determines an economy’s future productivity.

Keen to consolidate its position as a global economic power, France invests heavily in education: **expenditure on education in France equated to 5.2% of GDP in 2019, with 1.5% of GDP invested in tertiary education.**

FIG. 1

TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION (2019)
% OF GDP



● ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION ● TERTIARY EDUCATION

Source: OECD, Education at a Glance, 2022

These important investments are reflected in statistics on schooling, participation in education, and educational achievement.

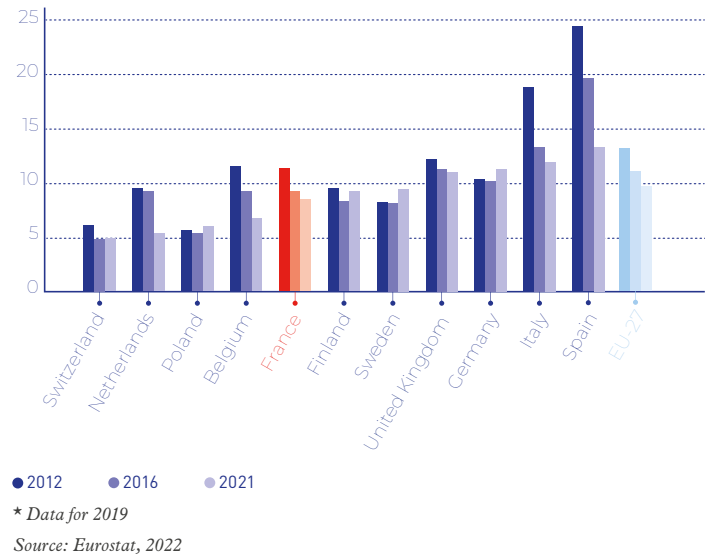
France has very high levels of schooling. The three- to four-year-old and five- to 14-year-old age groups achieved a 100% enrollment rate in 2020, while the 15- to 19-year-old category managed 88%.

These results are due to schooling being compulsory in France from the age of three to 16. The government recently introduced a minimum age for leaving education and training of 18, so that no pupils are left in a situation where they are not in education, training or employment. This system was introduced at the start of the 2020 school year.

The percentage of young people dropping out of education and training early is falling sharply in France. Having been in excess of 12% at the beginning of the 2010s, this percentage had fallen to 7.8% in 2021, lower than in Germany (11.8%) and level with the EU-27 average (9.7%).

FIG. 2

EARLY LEAVERS FROM EDUCATION AND TRAINING
% OF 18- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS

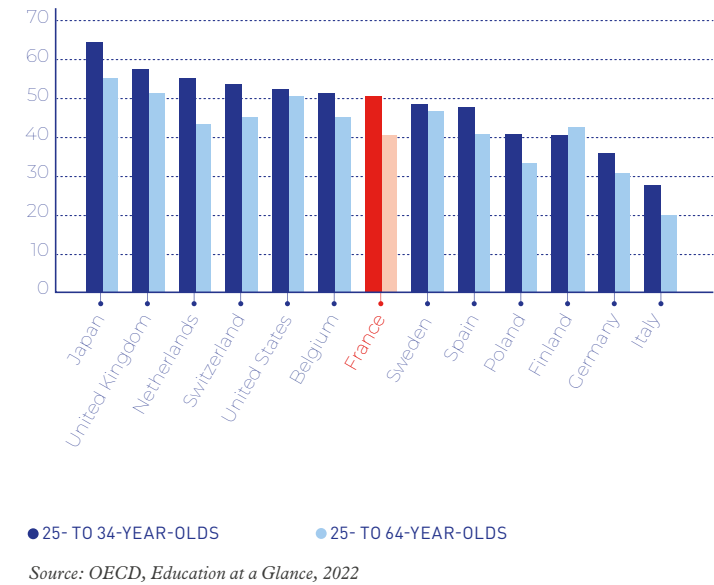


In 2021, some 40.7% of 25- to 64-year-olds in France had tertiary education qualifications, lower than in the United States (50.3%) and the United Kingdom (50.1%), but higher than in Germany (31.1%). This difference is due to access to tertiary education being democratized later in France, which has since largely caught up.

Consequently, **the population of 25- to 34-year-olds is particularly highly qualified in France: 50.3% of people in this age category held a tertiary education qualification in 2021,** similar to the level in Belgium (50.9%), Sweden (49.2%) and the United States (51.2%), but lower than in the United Kingdom (57.5%) and Japan (64.8%), and significantly higher than in Germany (35.9%), Italy (28.3%) and Finland (40.1%).

FIG. 3

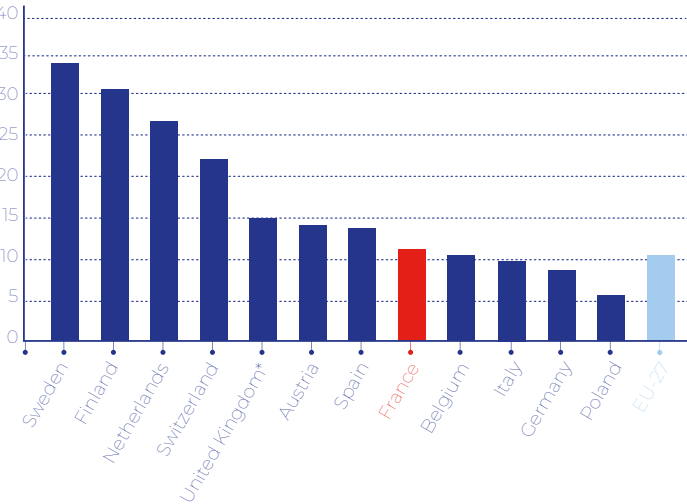
TERTIARY EDUCATION GRADUATES (2021)
% OF AGE CATEGORY



In 2021, France (11%) was at the level of the European Union average (10.8%) with regard to adult participation (25- to 64-years-old) to education and vocational training, according to Eurostat data.¹ This participation rate is higher in France than that observed in Germany (7.7%), but much lower than that of Sweden (34.7%), Finland (30.5%) and the Netherlands (26.6%).

FIG. 4

PARTICIPATION RATE IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY 25- TO 64-YEAR-OLDS (2021)
%



* Data for 2019
Source: Eurostat, 2022

Thanks to its highly qualified workforce, France has one of the world’s highest levels of productivity, with the 13th highest hourly productivity per employee (US\$66.70, constant prices, 2015 PPP) among OECD countries in 2021 (seventh in our sample), ahead of the United Kingdom (US\$60.60) and close to Germany (US\$68.30) and the Netherlands (US\$67.70) (see theme “Cost of labor and taxation”). Thanks to the capacity to adapt of a well-educated active population, businesses can invest more in new technologies, which are an essential requirement for productivity growth.

¹ People aged 25- to 64-years-old who indicated that they had participated in formal or non-formal education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. (Eurostat, 2022)

2. The French higher education system is recognized internationally

Welcoming foreign-born talent enhances as much as it determines a country’s international reputation and attractiveness.

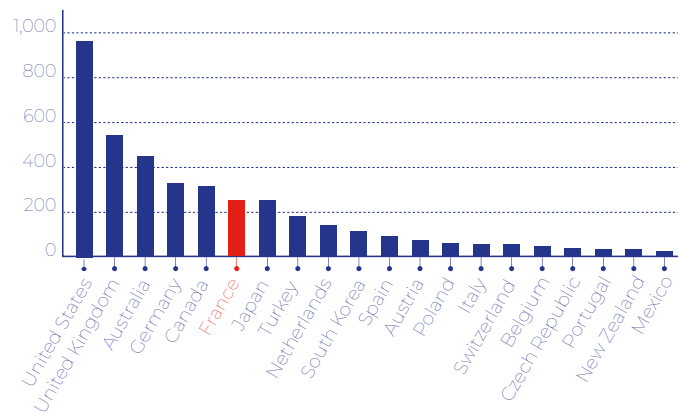
Despite the Covid-19 crisis, which restricted the movement of individuals, the number of foreign internationally mobile students increased by 4% between 2019 and 2020. According to UNESCO, more than 6.3 million students have travelled abroad for their tertiary studies. OECD countries host 69% of foreign or internationally mobile students.

In 2020, European Union member states attracted a significant proportion of foreign internationally mobile students, with the 22 OECD countries that are also EU members welcoming 1.3 million.

With approximately 250,000 internationally mobile students enrolled in higher education, France was ranked sixth in the world in 2020, after the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany and Canada. France was the second leading non-English-speaking host country.

FIG. 5

TOP 20 OECD HOST COUNTRIES FOR INTERNATIONALLY MOBILE STUDENTS (2020)
'000 STUDENTS



Source: OECD, Education at a Glance, 2022

“WELCOME TO FRANCE” PLAN

In November 2018, the Prime Minister presented the national strategy to attract international students to France. The objective was to increase the number of new international students in France through a simplification of the visa policy, an increase in French as a Foreign Language (FFL) courses and the introduction of programs taught in English.

There were also plans to increase and differentiate tuition fees according to the degree level and income of students and their families. Lastly, the plan sought to improve and standardize the living conditions for international students, by creating a quality accreditation, and to triple the number of scholarships available. The aim is to welcome half a million foreign students by 2027.

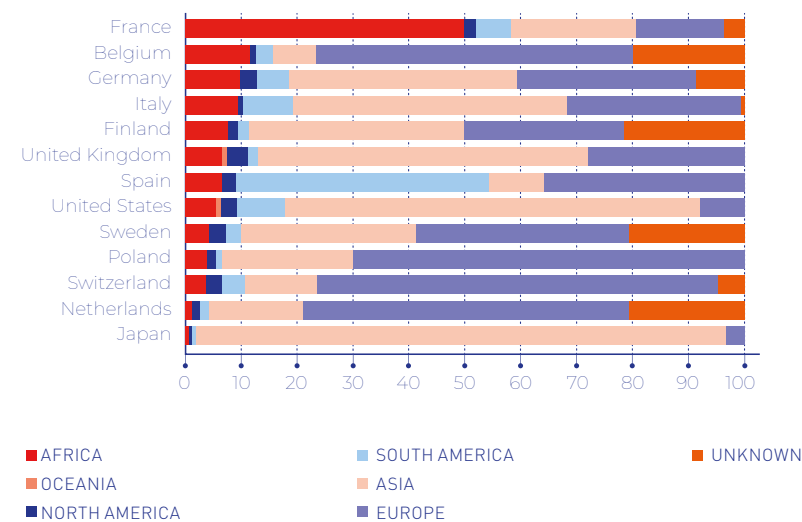
France welcomes students from every region of the world, standing out for the large proportion of students it welcomes from Africa. Similarities between countries, including shared languages, historic ties, geographic proximity, and political agreements (such as the European Higher Education Area) all have a significant influence on the destination choices made by international students.

As such, **half of all internationally mobile students studying in France are originally from Africa (50%)**, whereas the share of African students is less than or equal to 12% in all the other countries in our sample. Asia is the second leading region of origin of internationally mobile students studying in France (23%), then Europe with 16% of students. In Germany, foreign students are above all from Asian (41%) and European (33%) countries.

The reputation of the French language, French culture and the excellent reputation of the French tertiary education system are key advantages to attract foreign students to France. Countries where teaching establishments achieve high positions in international league tables are among the most sought-after destinations by international students.

FIG. 6

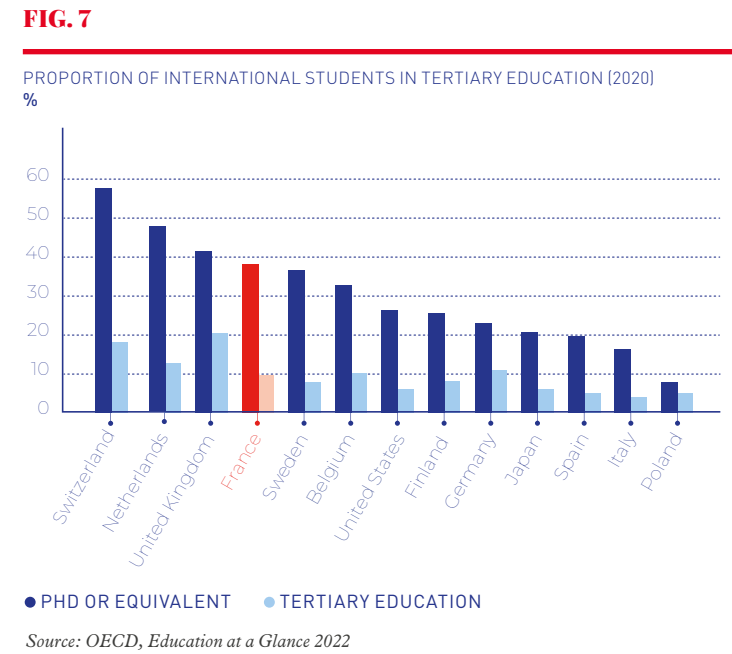
GEOGRAPHIC ORIGIN OF FOREIGN STUDENTS (2020)



Source: OECD, *Education at a Glance 2022*

In France, internationally mobile students accounted for 9% of all students enrolled in tertiary education in 2020, compared with 20% in Switzerland, 20% in the United Kingdom and 11% in Germany.

France stands out for its very high proportion of foreign students following advanced research programs:² 38% of its PhD students are from foreign countries, compared with only 23% in Germany. A sign of the vitality of research in France, French research centers recruit a large number of foreign researchers and doctoral students and invite teachers from all over the world.



² Degree equivalent to a doctorate.



“WELCOME TO FRANCE” QUALITY ACCREDITATION

The quality of care offered to international students is key to the international development and attractiveness of our higher education system. With this in mind, Campus France has created the “Welcome to France” quality accreditation, approved by an independent commission, which will be awarded to higher education establishments wishing to make visible their efforts to improve the quality of the welcome shown to international students.

The “Welcome to France” accreditation is part of an overall quality approach for institutions, serving as a tool for measuring, describing and promoting their systems and services dedicated to international students. It is used for the communication and promotion of institutions, to target an audience of international students, who are becoming increasingly demanding when it comes to the welcome they receive.



WELCOME TO FRANCE, ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL TALENT

Faced with the transformation of working methods and the tensions weighing on the job market, detecting, attracting and retaining talent has never been so strategic for businesses. Strengthening the attractiveness of France to international talent is essential to enable businesses located in France to recruit the skills they need.

To do this, Business France set up dedicated and formalized support within a Welcome Office in 2017. Relying on a team of specialists in international mobility and a website www.welcometofrance.com, Business France supports firms in their efforts to recruit international talent and informs talent on all aspects of mobility in France. The www.welcometofrance.com website has had more than four million visitors since its creation and more than 150,000 personalized routes generated on the site.

In addition, in collaboration with French Tech, Business France has set up a single gateway to facilitate the installation of international talent in France with a view to integrating one of the nuggets of French Tech, with creation of a “Welcome to the French Tech Desk”. The team strives to inform international Tech talents, whether they are investors, startups or employees, as well as French startups looking for key skills for the French economy, in particular businesses in French Tech programs (NEXT40/ FT120, GREEN20, AGRI20, DEEPNUM20).

Source: welcometofrance.com

METHODOLOGY

Economic attractiveness can be defined as the ability to attract new business and mobile factors of production (capital, skilled labor, etc.) to a specific destination. This ability is related to a wide range of macroeconomic criteria.

This booklet takes its place in a set of themes that address different determinants of attractiveness in the form of a comparison of the main European economies competing with France: Belgium, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, as well as Japan and the United States.

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