

FRANCE

Higher education grants based on social criteria (during study progress)

The social criteria-based grants are the main element of the French student support scheme. They are granted according to the social situation of the student.

To be allowed to get a socially-based student grant, as a higher education student, the following requirements must be met :

- being enrolled in initial education and attend full time courses in a programme provided by a higher education institution eligible to receive government-funded students by the Ministry for Higher Education and Research.
- being 28 years old or less on 1 September of the academic year for a first grant application. This age limit is not effective for disabled students whose handicap is recognized by the Commission for the rights and the autonomy of disabled persons. Furthermore, the age limit may be raised according to the duration of the student's non-military national service, army volunteering or non-military volunteering. For all students with children, the age limit can be raised by 1 year per child.
- being French or a foreign national (ie : European citizens under certain conditions, refugees recognized by the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons [OPFRA: *Office français pour la protection des réfugiés et apatrides*], students that are not citizens of a European Union Member State but who have been living in France for two years at least and who have received a temporary residence permit or a residence permit and whose tax revenue (father or mother, parental authority delegate) has been located in France for two years at least).

Grants based on social criteria are divided into seven categories with a corresponding amount of money, excluding the first category :

- Level 0: grant holders are exempted from paying the tuition fees required by their university and from paying contributions to the student social security scheme.
- Level 1: level 0 + 1 606 €
- Level 2: level 0 + 2 419 €
- Level 3: level 0 + 3 100 €
- Level 4: level 0 + 3 779 €
- Level 5: level 0 + 4 339 €
- Level 6: level 0 + 4 600 €

The level of grants depends on 3 criteria: the income of the family, the number of brothers and sisters of the student and the distance between the place where the student is enrolled and the place where he/she is from.

Besides, it is worth underlining that priority access to university residence halls is offered to social criteria-based grant holders.

Since 2008, an unprecedented effort has been made : 100 000 additional students (20%) have been benefiting from a grant, the amount of which has increased 3 times as much as the



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inflation (+13% in general; +20% for the most disadvantaged students). In 2011-2012, a 10th month of grant will also be allocated.

In 2010, more than 590 000 students had a grant based on social criteria, involving € 1.8 billion, an increase of 7% compared to 2009.