



# STUDENT LIFE IN FRANCE KEY FACTS 2016

# THE NATIONAL OBSERVATORY OF STUDENT LIFE

#### MISSION

The National Observatory of Student Life (OVE) is a public research body created in 1989 by the French Ministry in charge of Higher Education.

Its mission is to provide the most complete and objective information possible on student living conditions and how these impact their studies, in order to provide insight for political and social consideration.

#### ACTIVITIES Research

As a complement to the national survey Student Living Conditions, which remains one of its main activities, the OVE carries out or commissions studies providing deeper understanding of the various essential aspects of student life.

#### AWARDS

Each year, the OVE runs the "OVE Award", designed to encourage research on student life conducted by students themselves.

#### PUBLICATIONS

The work carried out by the OVE or external contributors (research teams, OVE award winners, etc.) is often featured in publications.

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### **PRESENTATION OF THE SURVEY**

#### THIS BOOKLET PRESENTS A SELECTION OF THE FINDINGS OF THE NATIONAL SURVEY ON STUDENT LIVING CONDITIONS (CDV) Conducted Between 14 March and 23 May 2016, by the National Observatory of Student Life (OVE).

The CdV survey has been conducted every three years since it began in 1994, and aims to collect and analyse pertinent information on the various aspects of student living conditions. For these purposes, the OVE asks students to fill out a survey (online since 2010). To ensure the scientific validity of the results, this survey is **conducted among a randomly chosen sample of the student population in France.** 

For this eighth edition, over 220,000 students were invited to fill out the OVE questionnaire. With the **participation of nearly 60,700 students,** the 2016 CdV survey had a gross response rate of 25.6%. The results presented here correspond to the exploitation of the 46,340 questionnaires which, out of the total number of responses, were fully completed by students.

In order to build a robust tool for understanding student life, the CdV survey takes into account both ongoing issues since the first edition and societal changes. This is why the 2016 questionnaire includes permanent questions as well as new, particularly with **the introduction** of questions on the migratory origins of students and their use of digital tools (MOOCs). The survey is also closely linked with the European comparison plan Eurostudent VI, conducted in 28 countries, providing a vision of the specificities of living conditions in France.

### THE SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

INSTITUTIONS SURVEYED IN SPRING 2016	STUDENT NUMBERS (reference year 2015-2016)
Universities and Grands Établissements > including students on Bachelor's, Master's and PhD programmes > including ESPE* students and those at a University Institute of Technology (IUT) > excluding university engineering students	1,649,328
Advanced Technician Programmes (STS) > public sector, French Ministry of National Education, Metropolitan France	146,961
Classes preparing for admission to Grandes Écoles (CPGE) > public sector, French Ministry of National Education, Metropolitan France	68,009
Engineering schools <ul> <li>university and non-university Engineering programmes</li> </ul>	134,523
Management schools (business, management, sales) > group I and II (recognised by the State)	123,027
Cultural schools (Arts schools and Architecture schools - 2014-2015 data) > Ministry of Culture and Communication	32,544
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN INSTITUTIONS SURVEYED	2,154,392
INSTITUTIONS NOT SURVEYED	STUDENT NUMBERS
INSTITUTIONS NOT SURVEYED Nursing training institutes (2014-2015 data)	STUDENT NUMBERS 87,892
Nursing training institutes (2014-2015 data) Other Advanced Technician Programmes (STS) (private sector and	87,892
Nursing training institutes (2014-2015 data) Other Advanced Technician Programmes (STS) (private sector and other public sector) Other classes preparing for admission to Grandes Écoles (private	87,892 109,105
Nursing training institutes (2014-2015 data)           Other Advanced Technician Programmes (STS) (private sector and other public sector)           Other classes preparing for admission to Grandes Écoles (private sector and other public sector)	87,892 109,105 17,929
Nursing training institutes (2014-2015 data)         Other Advanced Technician Programmes (STS) (private sector and other public sector)         Other classes preparing for admission to Grandes Écoles (private sector and other public sector)         Group III Management schools (not recognised by the State)	87,892 109,105 17,929 11,302

Sources: Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research, Ministry of Culture and Communication, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

The students questioned in the 2016 CdV survey represent the 2,154,392 students enrolled in the "institutions surveyed in spring 2016", that is, 84% of the student population in France. To improve the representativeness of the results, the raw data collected during this survey were weighted against the effective enrolment data in the institutions consolidated by the relevant ministries.

\*National Schools for Teaching and Education.

## **?** THE STUDENT POPULATION

#### FEMALE/MALE DISTRIBUTION By Field of Study



<u>Readina</u>: 57% of students enrolled at university, in all fields of study, are women. <u>Scope</u>: all respondents (n = 46,340).

There are more women than men in higher education (53% compared with 47%). However, this feminisation does not occur equally across all fields of study: women are in the minority in Engineering, as well as scientific fields at university, but form a large majority in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (SHS). Feminisation also differs according to the level of studies: female students are in the minority at doctoral level (45%) while they represent 55% of enrolments at the Bachelor's degree level, all fields of study combined.



### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN OF EXECUTIVES AND INTELLECTUAL PROFESSIONALS BY FIELD OF STUDY



<u>Reading</u>: 17% of students enrolled in STS have at least one of their parents who is an executive or intellectual professional.

Scope: all respondents with parents in employment (n = 35,017).

The children of executives and intellectual professionals are overrepresented in higher education (36%), compared with the proportion of executives and intellectual professionals in the working population, where they represent 18% (Insee, Continuous Employment Survey 2015). This is especially the case in Grands Établissements, Business schools, Engineering schools, CPGE and Cultural schools, where nearly half of enrolled students come from the most privileged backgrounds. At university, the field of study with the highest proportion of students with parents who are executives or intellectual professionals is Health. Conversely, the children of labourers and employees are underrepresented throughout higher education and in all types of study, with the notable exception of STS, where they represent nearly half of the students.



### MIGRATORY ORIGINS OF Students

### MIGRATORY BACKGROUND OF STUDENTS BY FIELD OF STUDY



<u>Reading</u>: 16% of students descending from immigrant parents are enrolled in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (SHS).

<u>Scope</u>: students native to Metropolitan France with or without migratory ancestry (n = 36,982).  Students born in France whose parents are both of foreign nationality and born abroad.

**2.** Students born in France with one parent of foreign nationality who was born abroad.

**3.** Students born in France whose parents are both of French nationality and were born in France.

The field and type of studies differ according to the student's migratory status. When both parents are immigrants and, to a lesser extent, when one parent is an immigrant, students are more likely to be enrolled in the fields of Law-Economy at university (respectively 26% and 21% as opposed to 17% of students native to Metropolitan France without migratory background) or in STS (12% and 8% respectively, as opposed to 8%). They are also under-represented in Engineering schools.

Students descending from two immigrant parents can also be distinguished from other students by their social origin: 41% come from working-class backgrounds, compared with 18% when one parent is an immigrant and 16% when neither parent is an immigrant. **55%** of students descending from immigrant parents state that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their studies, compared with 64% of students without migratory background.

#### CHOICE OF STUDY PROGRAMME, PROJECTIONS ON THE LABOUR MARKET AND FUTURE OF STUDENTS BY MIGRATORY BACKGROUND



<u>Reading</u>: 50% of students with two immigrant parents assess their chances on the French labour market as good or very good.

<u>Scope</u>: students native to Metropolitan France with or without migratory ancestry (n = 36,982).

1, 2, 3: see notes on page 8.

The way in which students see the future of their studies and envisage their chances on the labour market and their future life differs according to their migratory ancestry: descendants of two immigrant parents are the least likely to consider studying for more than five years in higher education (28% against 34% overall) and are the most pessimistic regarding their chances on the French labour market.

In spite of this, two-thirds of students with two immigrant parents consider that they have a better future than the life their parents have lived, whose social positions are on average more modest than those of students without migratory ancestry.



### CHOICE OF STUDY BY DEFAULT UPON FIRST ENROLMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION



<u>Readina</u>: 38% of STS students report having applied to a different programme when they initially enrolled in higher education.

Scope: all respondents (n = 46,340).

Three in four students state having been accepted to their first choice of study programme when they initially enrolled in higher education. Study programmes therefore seem to be rarely chosen by default, both for students at university and those on more selective programmes. The field of Health shows the lowest proportion of students stating that their choice of study was "by default" (9%). On the contrary, 38% of STS students reported having initially wanted to take another study programme than the one they are enrolled in. Among the students who stated that they tried unsuccessfully to enrol in a different study programme, their choice was mainly in Advanced Technician Programmes (STS), IUT, and programmes accessible through competitive exams or application file.

13% of students declare having interrupted their studies for at least one year after entering higher education.

### REASONS FOR CHOICES UPON INITIAL ENROLMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION



<u>Reading</u>: 66% of students enrolled in cultural schools state that their interest in the subject was the main reason for their initial choice when enrolling in higher education.

Scope: all respondents (n = 46,340).

The main reason for the choice of initial study programme is interest in the subject (43%). However, the proportion of students giving this as their first reason varies greatly from one field to another: from 66% in Cultural schools to 27% in Business schools. The greatest proportion of students who report having made their choice primarily based on job prospects (27%) and reputation (11%) occurs in Business schools. At university, the choice is slightly more often made due to interest in the field or for a specific career project.



#### WEEKLY TIME BUDGET By Field of Study



<u>Readina</u>: students enrolled in university (Bachelor's and Master's degree level) and who have a paid activity spend on average 16 hours on taught classes per week.

Scope: students enrolled at the Bachelor's and Master's level (n = 43,235).

Generally speaking, the schedules of students who have paid employment are busier than those who do not have paid employment (6 hours more per week, on average). However, paid work seems to have a limited impact on the number of hours spent in class and personal study: when students work alongside their studies, they do two hours less of personal work and taught classes per week, on average.

In parallel, the number of hours of classes varies significantly depending on the field of study: students in CPGE have the highest number of class hours (34 hours weekly, on average). Finally, Health students spend the greatest amount of time on personal study (31 hours on average, compared with 15 hours for all students). **61%** of students consider the financial cost of a trip abroad to be one of the main obstacles to doing so.

#### TRIPS ABROAD IN RELATION TO STUDIES BY FIELD OF STUDY



<u>Readina</u>: 33% of French students enrolled in a university Master's programme have been abroad on at least one trip in relation with their studies.

Scope: French students enrolled at the Master's level (n = 12,725).

French Master's five students average, over two in abroad in relation state having made at least one trip with their studies higher since they began education. Generally speaking, students at higher education schools (especially in Business schools) are more mobile in their studies than university students.

Among the mobile students, 43% used an international programme (Erasmus, Lingua, etc.) and 42% did an internship abroad. Engineering students are the ones who travel the most for internships (59%), whereas students at management or cultural schools use study programmes the most (54% and 60%, respectively).



## THE USE OF FACILITIES OR SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE INSTITUTION



<u>Readina</u>: 78% of all students say they use a library at their institution ("yes, regularly" and "yes, sometimes").

Scope: all respondents (n = 46,340).

Libraries are by far the facility that students say they use the most (78% of students), followed by sports facilities (26%). Conversely, 76% of students say they have never used health services, making them the least-used among the services compared in this study. 18% of students say they use cultural facilities or activities. Students at cultural schools are the most likely to use these facilities (36%), but are also almost the most likely to say that there are no cultural facilities or activities at their institution (37% compared with 17% of students at university).

#### **13%** of students feel fully involved in the life of their institution.

#### OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT STUDIES BY FIELD of study



<u>Reading</u>: 67% of students enrolled in IUT state that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their current studies.

<u>Scope</u>: all respondents (n = 46,340).  "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied" together.

 which are, other than the aforementioned factors: "availability of teachers", "teachers' teaching capacity" and "the reputation of the institution or the programme".

Regardless of the field, the majority of students state that they are generally satisfied with their current studies (60%), but there are still significant variations between fields of study. This applies to 47% in the case of ESPE and teaching fields, for the lowest rate, and 72% at engineering schools, in CPGE and in art schools, for the highest rate.

All fields combined, the main reasons for dissatisfaction relate to the "possibility for choice among a wide range of courses" for 40% of students and "the organisation of studies and the schedule" for 30% of them<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, 65% of students say they are satisfied with the interest of their programme, placing this factor as the primary reason for satisfaction among those proposed<sup>2</sup>. More than one in two students say they are equally satisfied with the availability and teaching capacities of teachers (57% and 56% of students, respectively).



### AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT PER DAY ON THE INTERNET FOR STUDIES



<u>Readina</u>: Students enrolled at university state that they spend on average 119 minutes per day on the Internet for their studies.

Scope: all respondents (n = 46,340).

In average, students state that they spend two hours a day on the Internet for their studies (117 minutes), in addition to over two hours per day for leisure activities (142 minutes). This amount varies according to the programme. It is minimal for CPGE students (less than one hour per day for their studies) and maximal for students at Grands Établissements, who use the Internet for two and a half hours per day on average for their studies (151 minutes).

It also varies according to the level of studies: the further the students get in their studies, the more time they spend on the Internet for their studies (102 minutes on average at Bachelor's level, 133 minutes at Master's level, and 179 minutes for doctoral students), whereas the leisure time spent on the Internet per day decreases (148 minutes on average at Bachelor's level, 138 minutes at Master's level, and 114 minutes for doctoral students).

#### **11%** of students state that they regularly use virtual courses provided by the institution.

#### USE OF MOOCS\*



<u>Readina</u>: 3% of STS students say they have enrolled in a MOOC which was not offered as part of their studies.

Scope: all respondents (n = 46,340).

\* MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) are courses given online only, accessible to all via enrolment, and free.

Enrolment in a MOOC involves nearly one in ten students (9% of all students questioned) with significant variations according to the field of study: 16% of students at Engineering schools and 17% of those at Business schools have enrolled in a MOOC, as opposed to only 4% of CPGE students and 3% of STS students.

Among the students who have enrolled in a MOOC, eight out of ten did so for educational reasons, that is, to "acquire or supplement knowledge as part of their studies". Other reasons are also mentioned: 73% of students say they enrolled in a MOOC for their "personal knowledge, as a leisure activity" and 55% to "work towards their career project".

## • FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

#### HIGHEST LEVEL OF STUDIES ANTICIPATED



<u>Readina</u>: 56% of IUT students enrolled at the Bachelor's level intend to continue their studies to Master's degree level (5 years).

Scope: students enrolled at the Bachelor's level (n = 29,267).

Over half of the students enrolled in a Bachelor's programme (51%) intend to continue their studies to Master's degree level and 31% intend to continue beyond Master's degree level.

Future projections vary according to the field of study: while 22% of STS students, a short programme in higher education, intend to do fewer than three years of higher education, 38% intend to continue their studies to Bachelor's degree level and 35% to Master's degree level. On the other hand, 76% of Health students say they intend to continue studying beyond five years. Over 50% of students in Art and Architecture schools and those in CPGE also intend to continue their studies beyond Master's degree level.

# **74%** of students state that personal efforts are "very important" to succeed.

### ASSESSMENT OF CHANCES ON THE LABOUR MARKET IN FRANCE AND ABROAD BY FIELD OF STUDY



<u>Reading</u>: 76% of students in engineering schools enrolled at the Master's degree level assess their chances on the French labour market as "good" or "very good".

Scope: students enrolled at the Master's degree level (n = 13,968).

**56**% of students enrolled at Master's degree level consider that consider that they will be able to find a job abroad easily. Estimations of employment opportunities vary according to the programme. Students in Health and Engineering schools are the most optimistic about their chances of finding a job in France. As for employment opportunities abroad, students in Business schools and Engineering schools appear to be the most optimistic. Students enrolled in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences are overall the least positive about their professional future in France and abroad.



#### TYPE OF PAID ACTIVITY DURING THE STUDY YEAR



<u>Reading</u>: Among the students who have a paid activity during the study period, 13% have a very time-consuming one.

Scope: all respondents (n = 46,340).

**1.** Paid activity whose content is related to the study programme followed (hospital interns or externs, tutors, etc.).

2. Paid activity unrelated to studies, less than 50% of full time.

**3.** Paid activity unrelated to studies, at least 50% of full time and for less than 6 months in the year.

4. Paid activity unrelated to studies, at least 50% of full time and for more than 6 months in the year.

Nearly half of all students work during the study year (46%). When considering the intensity of paid activity and its relation to studies, we can identify: internships and work-study programmes (30% of working students), paid activity related to studies (15%), student jobs (from time-to-time) (36%), time-consuming paid activity (6%) and very time-consuming paid activity (13%). 42% of students with a very timeconsuming activity consider that it has a negative impact on their results. Students in university Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences programmes are the most likely to have an activity which is very timeconsuming (25%). **18%** of students who have a paid activity believe that it has a negative impact on the results of their studies.

#### PAID ACTIVITY AS SEEN BY STUDENTS



<u>Reading</u>: Among working students, 54% consider that the paid activity they do is essential to living.

Scope: students having a paid activity during the study year (n = 20,548).

Note: These percentages correspond to the combination of the responses "totally" or "partially" to the question "In terms of your paid activity, to what extent do the following propositions correspond to your situation?"

Paid activity during studies is perceived in different ways by different students: while nearly three quarters of students (75%) consider that their paid work improves their standard of living, over half of students (54%) consider that their paid activity is essential to living.

University Health students are the most likely to link paid activity with professional experience (84%). University students in Law and Economics are the most likely to link paid activity with an increase in standard of living (79%). Finally, STS students are the ones who most often report that they work due to spare time (35%).



#### TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION DURING THE STUDY PERIOD



<u>Reading</u>: 23% of students live alone in rented accommodation in a normal week of classes (Monday to Friday).

Living with one's parents or not is an essential factor of diversity in the way students live: just under one third of students live at their parents' home (or one of their parents) and one third live in rented accommodation, either alone or with their partner. 12% of students live in university residence halls, 68% of whom live in CROUS university halls of residence or rooms. Finally, 11% of students live in shared accommodation or sublet accommodation.

As students get older, more of them leave the family home. While 49% of students aged 18 or under still live with their parent(s), as of the age of 21, this percentage drops to 30%. Leaving the family home leads to a drop in the overall satisfaction with accommodation (50% of students living in the family home are very satisfied as opposed to only 30% of those living away from the family home), even though, in parallel, their satisfaction with being close to their place of study improves.

Scope: all respondents (n = 46,340).

**76%** of students state that they are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their accommodation.

### RENT AND COMMUTE DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF THE TOWN OF RESIDENCE.



1. AVERAGE SPENDING

2. AVERAGE COMMUTE

\*Outside Ile-de-France (the Paris region)

<u>Reading</u>: 1. Students living away from home, in Paris, spend an average of €637 per month on rent; 2. Students living in Paris spend an average of 34 minutes commuting to or from their home and place of study.

<u>Scope</u>: 1. Students living away from home and paying rent (n = 24,686); 2. All respondents (n = 46,340).

**Note:** Average monthly rent is calculated excluding university residence halls and excluding public aid.

The average amount a student spends on rent (excluding collective accommodation), whether paid with the help of parents or not, is  $\notin$ 430 per month. This amount is higher in Paris ( $\notin$ 637 per month) and in the Paris region ( $\notin$ 554). Generally speaking, the amount decreases along with the size of the town of residence. The commuting time between the home and the place of study also depends on the size of the town of residence. It is greater in Ile-de-France (the Paris region), especially in the inner and outer suburbs (47 and 52 minutes, respectively) compared with the rest of France. Outside Ile-de-France, the average commuting time decreases along with the size of the town of residence.



#### STUDENTS' AVERAGE MONTHLY FINANCIAL RESOURCES



<u>Reading</u>: Family assistance represents 25% of students' average monthly financial resources. For students who have this resource, the average monthly amount of this assistance is €308.

Scope: all respondents (n = 46,340).

Note: The proportion of each resource in overall resources is calculated on the basis of all students, whether or not they receive the resources in question. The amount of each resource is calculated on the basis of students receiving that resource, the sum of resources therefore does not constitute an average monthly budget.

Analysing students' financial resources is made difficult by the problem of taking account of direct transfers which individuals may not notice, as well as indirect transfers and in-kind support, which may affect the resources actually available.

Overall, student budgets show three main sources of income, which together make up 90% of students' financial resources: income from paid activity, representing 33% of financial resources on average, public financial aid (32%) and assistance from family (25%). In financial terms, income from paid activity represents the highest source of income, at an average of €740 per month, compared with €348 for public financial aid and €308 for family assistance.

**45%** of students consider that they have enough money to cover their needs each month.

#### AVERAGE MONTHLY SPENDING BREAKDOWN



\* Percentage of students concerned by the expense.

<u>Reading</u>: Students report spending €401 on average per month on rent. 54% of students say they pay rent.

Scope: All respondents (n = 46,340).

The main expense for students is accommodation, which represents a monthly average of €486 (€401 in rent and €85 in accommodation costs). These expenses concern around half of all students. Among the other expenses, day-to-day living and transport costs concern the largest number of students (82% and 70%, respectively). In financial terms, day-to-day living costs are the second highest expense, at €161 per month. For the students concerned (2%), childcare costs are fairly significant, at €266 per month on average. Generally speaking, part of these costs is covered directly by the student's family: for all students, on average, a quarter of these costs is directly covered by parents.

## HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

#### SFI F-ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH



male students consider their state of health to be "satisfactory" or "very satisfactory".

Intermediate occupations

Executives and intellectual professionals

Scope: all respondents (n = 46,340).

tudents have a generally positive view of their health: nearly twothirds consider themselves to be in good or very good health. However, this assessment is not uniform across the student population. Certain characteristics, such as gender or nationality affect this perception: women and foreign students report themselves proportionally slightly less often in good or very good health. Similarly, the positive assessment of one's own health decreases with age and the transition to residential independence

Some of these differences can also be seen in the number of students choosing not to seek healthcare, especially for those living away from the family home: 32% say they have chosen not to get healthcare, while this is the case for only 26% of students living in the family home.

**13%** of students say they have not gone to the doctor's for financial reasons.

#### **PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAGILITY OF STUDENTS**



<u>Reading</u>: 69% of female students and 49% of male students say they have felt stressed during the week preceding their response to the survey.

Scope: all respondents (n = 46,340).

Students face psychological difficulties, and these vary according to the moment of the study period. Just under two thirds of students report having felt exhausted and stressed during the seven days preceding their response to the survey. Conversely, only 16% of students report having had no symptoms during this period.

These judgements vary greatly depending on gender or the field of study. There is a systematically higher number of female students reporting psychological difficulties than male students: only 10% report having had no symptoms, as opposed to 22% of male students. This difference is particularly marked for symptoms of stress (69% of female students as opposed to 49% of male students) and, to a lesser extent, for symptoms of exhaustion. The field of study also has an impact on psychological fragility: CPGE students are the most likely to report symptoms of exhaustion (74% as opposed to 61% for all students) and only 10% report having had no symptoms.

This booklet presents the key findings of the national survey on Student Living Conditions conducted by the National Observatory of Student Life in spring 2016.

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