FRANCE GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Country: France (various) 
Dates of travel: July 2015 to August 2016 
Students affected: Study abroad students going to France 
Prepared by: Sussex Abroad office 
Date: Jan 2016 

Before you go -

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office provides travel advice by country. It covers safety and security, local laws and customs, entry requirements, health and natural disasters along with a host of other useful information. We strongly recommend that students read the section related to their destination prior to departure and before undertaking any trip to another part of the county/region.


VISA REGULATIONS
Your passport should be valid for the proposed duration of your stay; you don’t need any additional period of validity on your passport beyond this. The French authorities have confirmed they will accept British passports extended by 12 months by British Embassies and Consulates under additional measures put in place in mid-2014. If your passport describes you as a British Citizen you won’t need a visa to enter France. If you have another type of British nationality, you should check the current entry requirements on the website of the French Foreign Ministry's website.

HEALTH
The Emergency phone number in France is 112. You should apply for a free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) before you travel as your host university may require to show this upon arrival. If you already have an EHIC, make sure it hasn't expired. The EHIC won't cover medical repatriation, ongoing medical treatment or non-urgent treatment, so you should make sure you have adequate travel insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment and repatriation. If you require medication while in France, remember to bring a prescription with you.

TERRORISM
There is a high threat from terrorism. Due to ongoing threats to France by Islamist terrorist groups, and recent French military intervention against Daesh, the French government has warned the public to be especially vigilant and has reinforced its security measures. You should be vigilant in public places and follow the advice of the local authorities. 
On Friday 13 November 2015, a number of terrorist incidents took place in Paris resulting in widespread casualties. A national state of emergency has been declared for 3 months. See the French government’s advice about what to do if a terrorist attack occurs: http://www.gouvernement.fr/en/how-to-react-in-the-event-of-a-terrorist-attack
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Nature of the Hazards</th>
<th>Procedures to minimise risks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>Pickpockets can work in gangs: one to distract you while the other one goes into your bag. Keep your belongings close to you in restaurants and bars. Don’t be distracted around tourist attractions and cash points. Thieves and pickpockets operate on the Paris underground, RER lines and at mainline stations, for example Gare du Nord. There have been several victims of serious assault on the RER line B, which serves Paris Charles de Gaulle and Orly airports and Paris Gare du Nord Eurostar terminus. There have also been serious assaults on RER line D, which serves the Stade de France.</td>
<td>Take sensible precautions against street and car crime. Don’t keep your passport, credit cards and other valuables in the same place; use the inside compartments in bags where possible. Carry your bag across your body rather than on your shoulder.</td>
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<td>Sporting activities</td>
<td>Weather conditions in mountainous areas can change rapidly and mean that inexperienced skiers and walkers can become stranded.</td>
<td>For sports activities like skiing, potholing and mountaineering, and for sports classed as particularly dangerous (eg off-piste skiing, snowboarding, mountain biking, climbing, ice-climbing, paragliding), make sure you're covered by your insurance. This should include mountain rescue services and helicopter costs. You should ensure you have checked local weather conditions and always follow local guidance. Make sure you are part of a group and that you have left clear instructions as to which routes you plan to take. For travel to mountainous areas, make sure your insurance covers you for extra medical costs, repatriation to your country of residence and in the départements of Savoie and Haute-Savoie possible transfer to Switzerland for treatment.</td>
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**Please also note and be sensitive to the following:**

- Carry a copy of your passport, a photo driving license or other documentation for identification purposes and keep the original in a safe place.
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- Concealing the face in public places in France is illegal. This includes balaclavas, full veils or any other garment or mask that is used to conceal the face. Failure to comply with the ban is punishable by a maximum fine of €150. Under this law, forcing someone to hide their face is also a crime and is punishable by a year’s imprisonment and a fine of up to €30,000. If the person forced to hide their face is a minor, the sentence is doubled. The law does not provide any exemption for tourists.

- Forest fires can occur anywhere in southern France during the summer months but especially along the Mediterranean coast and on Corsica. Fires can be started by cigarettes thrown from cars, campfires or barbecues. Check local regulations as lighting fires in most forested areas is illegal and severe penalties exist for any infringement. Make sure you’re familiar with local emergency procedures in the event of fire.

- There can be risks of flooding in various areas of France, and avalanches in the mountainous areas.