

Academic Bulletin for Aix-Marseille Université Aix-en-Provence, France 2025-26

Introduction

The Academic Bulletin serves as the official CSU International Programs (IP) academic reference for the program at Aix-Marseille Université in Aix-en-Provence, France. It outlines academic structure, course offerings, credit, grading, and program requirements. This bulletin supersedes any previous bulletin(s) published.¹

All participants must read this bulletin in conjunction with the Academic Guide for CSU IP Participants ("Academic Guide"), which governs registration, enrollment requirements, unit load, grading, withdrawals, attendance, and academic reporting. Students are responsible for understanding both documents prior to participation.

The Academic Program

CSU International Programs is affiliated with the Service Universitaire de Langues (SUL), a department of Aix-Marseille Université specializing in French language instruction for international students.

The program consists of:

- Core French language courses
- Elective courses taught in French (ateliers thématiques)
- A minimum enrollment of 14 CSU semester units per semester

Students are placed into CEFR levels (A1, A2, B1, B1+, B2, B2+, C1) based on mandatory SUL placement testing. Placement decisions are made by SUL faculty.

Progression to the next CEFR level after the first semester is expected for year-long students and is determined by SUL based on its standards for satisfactory progress. As a general guideline, students must earn a minimum grade of 10 in the Language Course and an overall average of 10 across all Ateliers. If these criteria are not met, a committee will determine whether the student progresses to the next level or remains at the current level. Continuation in the program is not guaranteed and is contingent upon progression to the next CEFR level, as determined by SUL based on its standards for satisfactory progress.

Diplôme Universitaire (DU)

SUL awards the Diplôme Universitaire de Langue et culture françaises (DU) to students who successfully complete the required coursework for their assigned level.

To receive the DU, students must:

- Earn a minimum grade of 10/20 in each course, and
- Achieve an overall average of at least 12/20.

Students earning 8/20 or 9/20 may advance to the next level but are not eligible to receive the DU. The DU is issued automatically; no separate application or fee is required.

For additional information on SUL and the DU program, go to: <https://www.univ-amu.fr/fr/public/sul-service-universitaire-des-langues>.

¹ This bulletin has been updated to clarify guidance regarding the assignment of the CSU grade of WU (Withdrawal Unauthorized). This clarification does not constitute a change in policy. This bulletin also reflects a change in course titles for courses offered at SUL at AMU.

Registration

All students are required to complete the SUL placement testing process prior to arrival in Aix-en-Provence.

During orientation week at SUL, students receive an official course schedule based on their assigned CEFR level. This schedule includes required core language courses and available elective options (ateliers thématiques).

Depending on their language level, students typically select two or three elective workshops. During orientation, instructors present their ateliers and provide information regarding course content and expectations. Students must enroll in electives during the designated registration period for their level. Enrollment is subject to availability, and courses may reach capacity.

Course changes are permitted only during the first week of classes and must be approved by CSU IP on-site staff. Changes after the first week are not permitted except in exceptional circumstances. Students are responsible for ensuring that their final schedule complies with CSU IP minimum unit requirements.

Syllabi

Syllabi may differ from U.S. formats or may not be provided. Many course instructors do not offer a syllabus; therefore, students must be responsible for documenting course descriptions, course requirements and retaining materials for potential academic review upon return.

Academic Culture

Students should be prepared for differences in instructional style, communication practices, and academic expectations at French universities. Additional information about academic culture is available on the program website.

Course Levels and Codes

Placement is determined by mandatory SUL testing prior to arrival. Language placement follows the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), an internationally recognized standard for language proficiency.

CEFR Level Overview

CEFR Level	Proficiency Descriptor	Summary of Academic Expectations
A1	Beginner	Foundational communicative skills in everyday contexts.
A2	Elementary	Basic communicative competence across listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
B1	Intermediate	Independent communication in familiar academic and social contexts.
B1+	Upper-Intermediate	Expanded argumentation and increased grammatical control.
B2	Advanced	Analytical reading, structured academic writing, and sustained argumentation.
B2+	Advanced High	Refined precision and stylistic control.
C1	Advanced	Near-autonomous academic and professional engagement.

Students are placed according to CEFR proficiency level as determined by SUL. Prior coursework does not guarantee placement.

Advisory Background on Prior Study

For advising purposes only, approximate semester equivalencies are:

- A1: 0–2 semesters
- A2: 2–3 semesters
- B1: 3–5 semesters
- B1+: Completion of B1 or strong intermediate proficiency
- B2: 5–6 or more semesters
- B2+: Advanced proficiency approaching C1
- C1: Advanced standing or equivalent demonstrated proficiency

Placement is based on demonstrated language ability rather than completed coursework.

CSU Division Credit Designation

For CSU credit purposes:

- A1 and A2 are reported as lower division credit.
- B1, B1+, B2, B2+, and C1 are reported as upper division credit.

Division designation reflects the level of linguistic and academic rigor. Final determination of how coursework applies toward degree requirements, including lower- or upper-division designation, is made by the student’s home CSU campus and relevant academic department.

Grading

Below is the grade conversion that is used to convert grades earned to the CSU grading system.

SUL Grade	CSU Grade
16 and above	A
14-15	A-
13	B+
11-12	B
10	B-
9	C+
8	C
7	C-
6	D+
5	D
4 and below	F
ABI (<i>Absence injustifiée</i> or unjustified absence)	See below

French grades are not rounded. Students must earn the minimum numeric grade listed to receive the corresponding CSU grade. For example, 13.9 converts to B+, not A-.

The French grading scale is qualitative and not percentage-based. Numeric grades do not correspond to U.S. percentages.

Attendance and WU Policy

Class attendance is mandatory. Students are responsible for complying with attendance and academic participation requirements outlined in the CSJ IP Academic Guide.

In the French system, a designation of “ABI” (Absence injustifiée) may be assigned when a student has excessive unexcused absences and is not permitted to complete course requirements or assessments. This designation indicates that the student did not fulfill course participation requirements. In most cases, failure to meet participation requirements may result in a failing grade.

The CSU grade of WU (Withdrawal Unauthorized) may be given in some circumstances. Refer to the Academic Guide for additional grade information.

Required Courses

Program Structure

All students enroll in a combination of core language courses and elective workshops totaling **18–20 classroom hours per week** during the regular semester. Classroom hours and unit values vary by language level.

Students enroll in core language instruction and thematic workshops totaling 18–20 classroom hours per week and a minimum of 14 CSU semester units.

CEFR Level	Core Language Instruction	Phonetics	Workshops	Total CSU Units
A1	14.5 hours per week (11 units)	Included in core language course	Two 2-hour workshops (4 units)	15 units
A2, B1	12.5 hours per week (9 units)	Included in core language course	Three 2-hour workshops (6 units)	15 units
B1+	12 hours per week (8 units)	---	Workshops totaling 6 hours per week (6 units)	14 units
B2, B2+, C1	10 hours per week (6 units)	---	One 2-hour workshop (2 units) + Two 3-hour workshops (6 units)	14 units

Required Core French Language Courses

Students are placed into core language courses based on CEFR proficiency level as determined by SUL placement testing.

Unit values are indicated in parentheses next to each course title. All courses are subject to availability and may not be offered every semester. Unit values are subject to change.

Core language instruction consists of integrated components in:

- Written comprehension
- Oral comprehension
- Written expression
- Oral expression
- Language structures (A1 level only)
- Phonetics (A1, A2, and B1 level only)

These components are reported as a single course and receive one final average grade per semester.

A1 and A2 Levels

French Language [A1] (11 units)

Introductory course in French language and culture designed for beginning students. Develops foundational proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and phonetics through integrated instruction in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence structure. Emphasizes everyday communication skills and functional language use aligned with CEFR A1 standards.

French Language [A2] (9 units)

Elementary-level course for students with prior foundational study. Expands communicative competence across all skill areas through structured grammar development, increased vocabulary acquisition, guided oral and written practice and phonetics. Aligns with CEFR A2 standards and prepares students for independent language use in routine contexts.

B1 and B1+ Levels**French Language [B1] (9 units)**

Intermediate-level course emphasizing independent communication in academic and cultural contexts. Develops paragraph-length writing, sustained conversation, expanded grammatical control, and phonetics. Aligns with CEFR B1 standards.

French Language [B1+] (8 units)

Upper-intermediate course advancing beyond B1 proficiency. Emphasizes structured argumentation, analytical reading, and greater stylistic control in both written and oral expression. Prepares students for advanced-level study.

B2, B2+ and C1 Levels**French Language [B2] (6 units)**

Advanced-level course emphasizing analytical reading, structured academic writing, and sustained argumentation. Develops advanced grammatical accuracy and discourse competence aligned with CEFR B2 standards. Previously numbered FLL 351 A/B.

French Language [B2+] (6 units)

Advanced-high course for students approaching C1 proficiency. Focuses on precision, stylistic control, rhetorical strategy, and critical analysis of literary, cultural, and socio-political texts.

French Language [C1] (6 units)

Advanced course designed for students capable of near-autonomous academic engagement in French. Develops high-level analytical reasoning, nuanced written and oral expression, and critical engagement with complex texts aligned with CEFR C1 standards.

Elective Courses

SUL offers elective courses, known as *ateliers thématiques*, which complement the required core language curriculum. Electives are organized by CEFR proficiency level, and students enroll only in workshops corresponding to their assigned level.

Workshops are typically offered as:

- 2-hour courses (2 CSU units), or
- 3-hour courses (3 CSU units)

Electives provide focused study in thematic areas such as language development, literature, French culture and civilization, history, film, theatre, media, and other specialized topics. All workshops are conducted in French.

Offerings vary by semester based on instructor availability and enrollment.

To view a list of courses offered by SUL, click on this [link](#).