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FRANCE'S STRATEGY FOR TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION: THE EXAMPLE OF FRANCO-X CAMPUSES

What is a “Franco-X” campus?

- ❖ Franco-foreign campuses are partnerships involving one or more higher education institutions from the two countries concerned. Their aim is to establish **degree-granting higher education programs** leading to a **joint degree, dual degrees** (one French and one from the partner country), or a **specific, dedicated degree**. French side provides academic expertise and resources—both financial and logistical—in the form of **direct funding, the financing or provision of expert services, or even the deployment of international technical experts and/or academics**.
- ❖ These campuses most often originate from a **political initiative** between states. In France, this initiative is primarily driven by the **Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs**, increasingly in conjunction with the ministry responsible for higher education.

Behind this name lie varied structures

- ❖ Behind this definition lie highly varied structures, whether in terms of size, the number of French partner institutions, or the disciplines covered.



42 Franco-X campuses worldwide

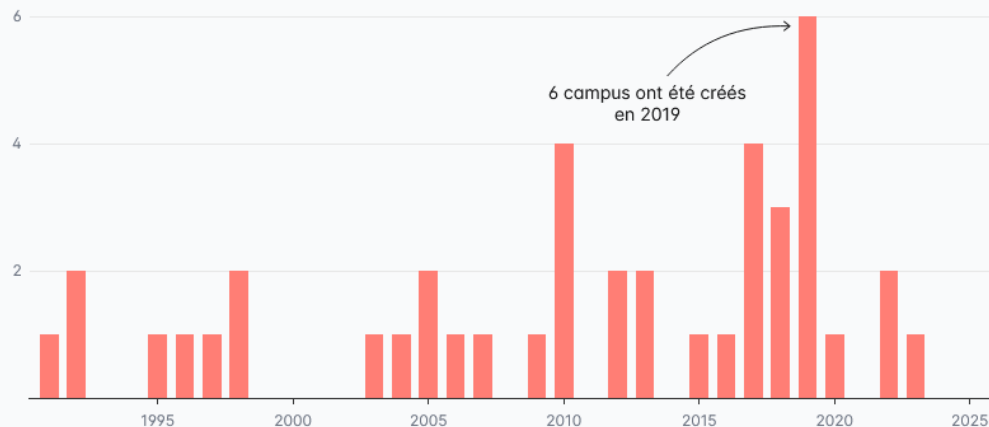
- ❖ The first Franco-foreign campus—the University College in **Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia**—was founded in **1991**:
- ❖ Thirty-four years later, there are 42 such campuses; the most recent, the Franco-Australian program on the energy transition in the Indo-Pacific, was established in 2023.
- ❖ Some examples: the **Franco-German University, Galatasaray University (Turkey)**, the French University in **Armenia**, the **Sino-European University of Technology** at Shanghai University, the **Franco-Senegalese** campus, etc.



A varied pace of creation

42 campus franco-étrangers ont été créés depuis 1991

Campus franco-étrangers par année de création.



Graphique: Amandine Miallier - AEF info - 24/03/2025 • Source: [Cour des comptes - Une évaluation de l'attractivité de l'enseignement supérieur](#)

Following the establishment of the **first institution in 1991**, the pace at which Franco-foreign campuses opened remained modest—**one or two per year until 2010**, with some lulls; notably, no campuses opened between 1998 and 2003. Four new Franco-foreign campuses were established in 2010. Subsequently, a **rapid rate of opening was observed during the 2017–2019 period**: four campuses in 2017, three in 2018, and six in 2019.

Of the 42 joint French-foreign campuses, 17 are located in China

Sur 42 campus franco-étrangers, 17 se trouvent en Chine

Plus d'informations sur les campus au survol. Utilisez les boutons en haut à gauche pour zoomer sur la carte.



Carte: Amandine Miallier - AEF info - 24/03/2025 • Source: [Cour des comptes - Une évaluation de l'attractivité de l'enseignement supérieur français pour les étudiants internationaux](#) • [Récupérer les données](#)

These campuses are not evenly distributed across the continents: one in the Americas (Mexico); two in Oceania and the Indo-Pacific region; **six in Africa; six in Europe; and 27 in Asia (including 17 in China).**

Widely varying campus sizes

- ❖ Data is not available for all campuses, but for those reporting their student numbers, the enrollment ranges from 80 at Chimie Shanghai to 6,000 at the Franco-German University:
 - Seven campuses report having more than 1,000 students,
 - And seven campuses report fewer than 200 students.

Highly varied scope of disciplinary fields covered

- ❖ Franco-foreign campuses offer a widely varying range of disciplines.
- ❖ Some specialize in **just one or two fields (which correspondingly limits their appeal)—for example, the Franco-Vietnamese Management Center.**
- ❖ Other campuses are multidisciplinary, though they remain the exception; for instance, Galatasaray University in Turkey offers courses in the **humanities, law, economics, and engineering.**
- ❖ Each Franco-X institution has developed in response to **specific demands from the host partner, focusing on a defined area of study.**

173 French partner institutions

- ❖ The number of French partner institutions **ranges from 1 to 88** per Franco-foreign campus; this record is held by the Franco-Italian campus.
- ❖ Among the French partners : **61 French universities are represented, 53 engineering schools and 15 business schools**. The "other institutions" category primarily comprises public institutions such as EHESS (École des hautes études en sciences sociales), the ENS (Ecole Normale Supérieure), Sciences Po, and Inalco (Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales).
- ❖ There are **5 research organizations**: CEA (Commissariat à l'énergie atomique et aux énergies alternatives), CNES (Centre national d'études spatiales), CNRS (Centre national de la recherche scientifique-), INSTN (Institut national des sciences et techniques nucléaire), and IRD (Institut de recherche pour le développement)
- ❖ While nearly the majority of French institutions (83 out of 173) have only one partnership within a Franco-foreign campus, the number of partnerships for the others ranges from 2 to 9. Two universities—**Paris-I Panthéon-Sorbonne and Sorbonne University**—share the top spot for the highest number of partnerships, with nine each.

A degree-granting partnership

- ❖ For each campus, the cooperation aims to engage and involve higher education institutions and/or higher education faculty from both countries within the framework of a partnership (potentially through a **call for proposals addressed to university institutions in both countries**).
- ❖ The aim of the initiative is to establish **degree-granting higher education programs that meet the needs of the local ecosystem**—and, consequently, address **a specific request initially made by the host party** at the time the intergovernmental agreement was signed.
- ❖ This framework can span from the **bachelor's level through the master's to the doctorate, potentially extending to scientific research cooperation**. The 3-5-8 system is indeed becoming universal, even though some partners still operate according to slightly different standards.
- ❖ The agreement may also propose various approaches to degree conferral – awarding French degrees, dual degrees (French and national), or even **"ad hoc" degrees (i.e., degrees created specifically by the awarding institution)**. Less frequently, the program leads exclusively to the awarding of local degrees, as is the case with the UTBFM in Monterrey, Mexico.

Two reports on the Franco-X campuses

❖ A 2024 report by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research on this subject
(<https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/fr/franco-x>)

❖ A 2025 report by the Court of Auditors addresses this subject. (<https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/fr/franco-x&ved=2ahUKEwjvuPPYjaWXAxx8LPsDHW08HrAQFnoECCYQAQ&usq=AOvVaw3YJXhYVhJC4wE7NtirWvXP>)

❖ While both reports highlight the **potential of these campuses**, they also point out that they are **falling short of their enrollment targets** and emphasize the need to **harmonize their governance, legal frameworks** to achieve greater efficiency.

Thank you for your attention!

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