



THE AMERICAN SECTION – LYCÉE INTERNATIONAL OF ST. GERMAIN-EN-LAYE

Rue du Fer à Cheval – B.P. 70107 – 78101 St. Germain-en-Laye Cedex – France

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BACKGROUND

Founded in 1952 to educate the children of NATO officers, the Lycée International has become a unique French public school in which all students are enrolled in one of 13 international sections ranging from Danish to Japanese. They study literature and history in that language, at native level, for 6-8 hours per week. Sections also offer extracurricular programs and cultural activities such as holiday festivals. Located half an hour west of Paris, the school enrolls 3,000 students from age 5 to 18, representing 50 nationalities. About 1,200 are in grades 9 – 12, similar to a large public American high school. Students graduate with fluency in two languages and a high level of proficiency in a third.

THE CURRICULUM

Like all French high schools, a typical day runs from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Unlike in the US, students are enrolled in 10 to 12 courses, with a class size of 30. The school offers immersion classes for those who arrive without a thorough knowledge of French. At the end of 10th grade, students choose a specialty to prepare for the baccalaureate exam. About half our students enroll in the math/sciences track, while another 40% opt for economics/social sciences, and the remaining 10% concentrate on literature and philosophy. A further specialty is chosen within that concentration. Students also study one or two foreign languages and can take optional classes in studio art/art theory, theatre, or political science. At the end of 11th grade, our students are encouraged to take the AP English exam, on which most score a 4 or 5.

There is NO tracking or honors classes in France as all students prepare the similar national exams; however the intensity and difficulty are comparable to, if not greater than, those of US honors or AP coursework. In addition, only one in three French students is even accepted to an academic baccalaureate preparation program; the majority attend vocational schools. All courses are for students of that grade only and are for the full academic year. *French law prohibits us from ranking students and average GPA is not calculated.*

GRADES

Courses are graded from 0 – 20, with 10 the minimum passing grade. The average grade on the French side is 12, while 14 is typical in American Section classes and in foreign languages. Grades above 16 are rare, as elsewhere in France. Our American grade conversion table recognizes these differences. The grade distribution is about 40% A or A-, 40% B+ or B, and 20% B- or below, which is similar to many

competitive American high schools and international schools. However, our students tend to excel compared to their peers at other schools, as evidenced by their grades on their final examination, the *Baccalaureate with International Option*, and their frequent awards in the national subject examinations known as ‘Concours Généraux.’ Three honors citations are voted by the faculty each trimester to commend notable student accomplishment. *Encouragements* lauds a student’s progress, effort, and attitude, while *compliments* recognizes high academic achievement. *Felicitations* is reserved for outstanding academic performance and character. It must be voted unanimously. These are noted in our school reports.

THE ‘OIB’

Students complete their secondary education in France when they pass the baccalaureate. All our students take the Baccalaureate with International Option, or **OIB**, which includes 4-5 principal subjects in French, 1-2 two foreign languages, a extended team research project, and oral and written exams in English (30 – 40% of the final grade). A few exams are taken after 11th grade but most take place at the end of 12th grade. This challenging, broad-based, multilingual program prepares our students well for university studies here or abroad. Each year 20 – 25% of our students earn *mention très bien*, a 16/20 or higher, on their baccalaureate, though the national average is just 7%. Another 20% of our students earn 14 - 15, or *mention bien*, compared with 14% nationwide. Students with a 12-13 receive *mention assez bien*, which goes to the top 40% of test-takers overall. The American Section also issues a diploma.

THE AMERICAN SECTION

With 700 students on three campuses, the American Section is the second-largest at the Lycée. Classes, taught by native speakers, have 20 – 25 students. The program includes US history, American and British literature, and cultural understanding. Admission is selective. Though the French program is free, our section is funded by tuition fees. Our students are highly active in Model United Nations and in theater. We also host a student council, an *a cappella* choir, a yearbook, human rights and community service teams, and soccer and basketball clubs. During vacations, students often join our annual service learning trip to India. The school also sponsors home-stay exchanges in Russia, Spain, Germany, and China. However, the long school day and the large amount of homework on the French side (20 hours a week junior and senior year) mean that students simply do not have as much time to devote to extracurricular pursuits or work experience as their counterparts in the US.

Collège Marcel Roby Campus : 3, rue de la Rochejacquelein – 78100 St. Germain-en-Laye

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Association régie par la Loi 1901



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Each year the Section graduates about 60 students, about a third of whom go on to higher education in North America. Another third enroll in universities in Great Britain and Ireland, or English-language programs in Italy, Germany, or the Netherlands. The remainder stay in France, either to enroll in prépas (intensive 2-year programs designed to prepare students for the entrance exams to the elite Grandes Ecoles), the Institutes of Political Studies (SciencesPo), business school, or university.

ANGLOPHONE UNIVERSITIES ATTENDED BY OUR GRADUATES, 2009 – 2011

North America:

Bard College
Barnard College
Berklee College of Music
Boston University
Brown University
Bryn Mawr College
Carleton College
Columbia University
Cornell University (2)
Duke University (5)
Emerson College
Johns Hopkins University
Harvard University (2)
Haverford College
Macalaster College
McGill University (12)
Middlebury College (2)
New York University (2)
Pace University
Parsons The New School for Design
Pomona College
Pratt Institute
Princeton University
Rhode Island School of Design
Stanford University (2)
Tufts University
University of Chicago
University of Miami (2)
University of Oregon Honors College
University of Pennsylvania (5)
University of Southern California
University of Toronto
University of Virginia
University of Wisconsin
Vassar College
Wake Forest University
Wellesley College
Williams College
Yale University

The UK, Continental Europe, and Asia:

Bournemouth College of Art
Courtauld Institute of Art
Erasmus University Rotterdam School of Management
Imperial College London (3)
King's College London
King's College London-Sorbonne Joint Law
London School of Economics
Trinity College Dublin, Ireland
University College London (2)
University of Birmingham
University of Bristol
University of Cambridge (2)
University of East Anglia
University of Exeter (2)
University of Glasgow
University of Kent
University of Leeds
University of Loughborough
University of Maastricht, Netherlands
University of Reading
University of Surrey
University of Southampton
University of Sussex
Sydney University, Australia
University of Warwick (4)
University of York (2)