

BERRIDGE

SUMMER AND GAP YEAR ARTS PROGRAMS

Participant Handbook



ESSENTIAL FOR:
Students



RESOURCE TYPE:
Student Materials



REVIEW:
Pre-Program

This document contains confidential information intended for the use of authorized personnel within Berridge Programs. Unauthorized disclosure, copying, distribution, or use of this document or the information it contains is strictly prohibited.

For questions about this manual,
please contact Cage Pierre,
Director of Programs

CAGE@BERRIDGEPROGRAMS.COM

Learn more:

BERRIDGEPROGRAMS.COM

Table of Contents

1. Welcome to Berridge

- Welcome
- Mission, Vision, and Values
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Program Leadership

2. Eligibility and Program Fit

- Essential Eligibility Criteria

3. Community Expectations

- Living Well in Community
- Participant Code of Conduct

4. Discipline and Dismissal

- Behaviors That Lead to Immediate Dismissal
- Substance Use, Smoking, Vaping, and Romantic Relationships
- Reserved Rights of the Program
- Dismissal
- Leaving the Program Early
- Dismissal at the Discretion of the Program Director
- Acknowledgment

5. Preparing for Arrival

- Preparing for the Program
- Program Dates
- Flights and Passports
- Required Forms
- Prescription Medication Policy
- Lost or Stolen Medication
- Insurance Requirements
- Medical Care and Emergencies
- STEP Enrollment or Equivalent
- Money, Identification, and Spending
- Pre-Departure Checklist

6. Packing and Weather

- Packing Guidelines
- What to Bring
- What Not to Bring
- Weather in Normandy
- Concentration-Specific Supplies

7. Housing and Rooming

- Rooms and Rooming
- Gender-Inclusive Housing
- Meals

- Laundry
- Leaving the Grounds
- Wi-Fi and Device Use
- Shared Spaces and Residential Responsibilities
- Mail, Packages, and Guests
- Emergency Contact Information
- Paris Housing (if applicable)

8. How the Program Runs

- Orientation
- Supervision and Staff-to-Student Ratios
- Daily Schedule
- Attendance and Participation
- Communication During the Program
- Communication With Parents

9. Health, Safety, and Wellbeing

- Attendance & Lateness
- Insurance
- Immunization Recommendations
- Physical Health
- Mental Health and Neurodiversity

Section 1 | Welcome to Berridge

Welcome to Berridge Programs! This handbook explains the expectations, policies, and structures that support a safe, respectful, and rewarding experience for everyone.

Participants and parents/guardians should read this handbook carefully before arrival and refer back to it during the program. If anything is unclear, please contact the Program Director before the program begins.

Mission

At Berridge Programs, our mission is to cultivate connection through creativity. We use creative practice to help participants grow as artists, build meaningful cross-cultural relationships, and broaden their understanding of themselves and others.

Vision

The program is designed to support healthy relationships, creative risk-taking, and a strong sense of shared responsibility. Through artistic work, communal living, and cultural immersion, participants are encouraged to develop independence, curiosity, and respect for the people and world around them.

Values

At Berridge, we value:

- Creativity as a way of understanding and appreciating different cultures and perspectives.
- Art as a means of connection, dialogue, and discovery.
- Collaboration as a core part of creative practice and community life.
- Creative work that is meaningful in itself, not only for commercial outcomes.
- Sustainable habits that respect shared resources, including water, energy, and the natural environment.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Berridge Programs welcomes participants, faculty, and staff from a wide range of backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences. This includes, but is not limited to, differences in race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background.

We believe a strong creative community depends on inclusion, mutual respect, and openness to perspectives different from one's own. Every participant is expected to contribute to a learning environment where others are treated with dignity and care.

Program Leadership

Andrea Mardon

Executive Director

andrea@berridgeprograms.com

Cage Sebastian Pierre

Director of Programs

Section 2 | Eligibility and Program Fit

Essential Eligibility Criteria

All applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria in order to be considered for admission. These criteria are in place to help ensure that participants can engage safely, responsibly, and fully in the academic, creative, residential, and travel-based structure of the program.

To be eligible, participants must:

- Be between the ages of 18 and 22. In some cases, 17-year-old applicants may be considered.
- Be in good standing at any school they currently attend and disclose any significant disciplinary history, including suspension, dismissal, expulsion, or ongoing behavioral concerns.
- Be choosing to participate willingly and freely, and not be required or pressured to join by a parent, guardian, doctor, therapist, or court mandate.
- Have sufficient English proficiency to participate fully in a program conducted in English.
- Be open to living and learning with people whose backgrounds, identities, and viewpoints may differ from their own.
- Be willing to follow all program policies, procedures, and staff directions.
- Be interested in the cultural, educational, creative, and community-based nature of the program, and not approach the experience as an opportunity to prioritize partying, nightlife, alcohol, or drug use.
- Be able to travel independently from home to the designated arrival airport without assistance from program staff.
- Be able to work independently, collaborate with others, and participate constructively in a group environment.
- Be able to self-administer prescription medication without reminders or assistance from staff.
- Be prepared to participate fully in the program, including workshops, excursions, outings, and shared responsibilities.
- Be prepared for experiential learning in a range of weather conditions, including rain and cool temperatures.
- Be willing and able to spend time independently or in small groups during certain field trips without direct staff supervision.
- Be willing and able to contribute to the daily functioning of the community, including shared household responsibilities such as helping in the kitchen and maintaining common spaces.
- Fully disclose all physical health, mental health, and support-related information requested on registration and health forms.
- Be physically and emotionally able to participate in the program without requiring ongoing on-the-ground medical, mental health, or therapeutic treatment from a local provider during the program.
- Be willing and able to ask for help when needed, communicate clearly, and advocate for their own needs.
- Not have completed inpatient treatment within the past 12 months for substance abuse, suicide attempts or suicidal ideation, or other serious mental health conditions.

Participants and parents/guardians should review these criteria carefully. Failure to disclose information during the application, interview, enrollment, or pre-departure process that would have affected a participant's eligibility may result in dismissal from the program with no refund of fees.

Support Needs & Program Fit

Berridge Programs is not a therapeutic, clinical, behavioral intervention or special education program and does not provide specialized support services. Participants must be able to live and learn safely and independently in a shared residential environment that includes communal living, travel, changing schedules and limited privacy.

Families are responsible for fully disclosing any diagnoses, support needs, behavioral concerns or relevant history that may affect participation. The program may not be appropriate for participants who require significant accommodations, one-to-one support or regular in-person intervention from mental health professionals.

Section 3 | Community Expectations

Living in Community

Living in a close-knit community requires consideration, flexibility and respect for others. Participants are expected to contribute positively to shared life and to be open to feedback when their behavior is affecting the group.

Staff may step in when issues arise around communication, exclusion, noise, cleanliness, interpersonal relationships, participation or other behavior that affects the wellbeing of the community. Participants are expected to address concerns respectfully and make reasonable adjustments when asked.

Weekly **Community Conversations** give the group time to check in, address issues and develop practical skills in communication, conflict resolution and living well with others.

Participant Code of Conduct

The Participant Code of Conduct sets clear expectations so that the program can run safely and fairly for everyone. It protects the community, supports individual wellbeing, and helps the program meet its educational and creative aims.

Participants are expected to:

- **Treat others with respect.**
Show courtesy and consideration to participants, staff, and all people you encounter during the program. Be patient with differences in backgrounds, opinions, identities, and needs.
- **Support an inclusive environment.**
Contribute to a community where people of all races, classes, genders, sexual orientations, and socio-economic backgrounds feel welcome and respected. Avoid language or behavior that excludes, stereotypes, or demeans others.

- **Uphold creative and academic integrity.**
Engage honestly with all creative and academic work. Do not cheat, plagiarize, supply false information, forge documents, or misrepresent your work or contributions.
- **Participate with commitment and cooperation.**
Approach workshops, rehearsals, classes, and group activities with a spirit of exploration, effort, and collaboration. Show up on time, stay engaged, and take shared responsibilities seriously.
- **Respect property and shared spaces.**
Take reasonable care of all residences, studios, equipment, and furnishings. Do not borrow, use, or disturb items belonging to other participants, staff, Berridge Programs, or community partners without clear permission. Do not enter or use spaces that are off-limits to participants.
- **Follow program policies and staff directions.**
Know and follow all policies and procedures in this Participant Handbook, as well as instructions given by Berridge Programs staff and others in positions of authority. Ask for clarification if you are unsure about a rule or expectation.

Violations of the Participant Code of Conduct may result in consequences up to and including dismissal from the program, as detailed in the Discipline and Dismissal section.

Section 4 | Discipline and Dismissal

Behaviors That Lead to Immediate Dismissal

Some behaviors are incompatible with the safety, well-being, and shared living structure of the program. When a participant engages in behavior that creates a serious safety risk, violates core program rules, or places an unreasonable burden on staff supervision, the participant will be immediately dismissed from the program with no refund of fees.

Immediate dismissal can result from any of the following:

Violence, Threats, and Dangerous Behavior

- Acts of violence, attempted violence, or threats of violence toward any person or property.
- Deliberate misuse of fire alarms, firefighting equipment, or other safety equipment.
- Possessing, purchasing, producing, or using weapons, explosives, fireworks, or incendiary devices.

Drugs

- Possessing, using, distributing, purchasing, or facilitating illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia.
- Possessing or using cannabis products of any kind, including products that are legally sold in France.

Harassment and Discrimination

- Harassment, bullying, discrimination, or hate speech of any kind, whether in person or online.

- Sexual harassment, including unwelcome sexual comments, advances, touching, messages, images, or other sexual behavior.

Self-Harm and Suicide Risk

Any participant who expresses, demonstrates, or is reported to be experiencing suicidal ideation, suicidal threats, self-harm concerns, or behavior that indicates a risk to their own safety will be immediately withdrawn from the program. These situations are treated with seriousness, care, and urgency. The participant will remain under staff supervision until safe departure from the program and transfer of care to a parent or guardian can be arranged.

Alcohol

The legal drinking age in France is 18. We recognize that alcohol is part of social and cultural life in France, and participants who are 18 or older may have opportunities to consume alcohol responsibly during the program, including at meals, tastings, field trips or approved evenings out.

Alcohol may not be kept or consumed by students in program residences or on program grounds at any time. Participants may not purchase or provide alcohol for anyone under 18, use illegal drugs, or engage in alcohol- or drug-related behavior that puts themselves or others at risk.

When away from the residence, participants are expected to follow French law, respect program expectations and use good judgment. Public intoxication, excessive drinking, disruptive behavior, unsafe situations, or returning to the residence significantly intoxicated will be treated seriously.

Alcohol- or drug-related incidents will be addressed according to their circumstances and severity and may result in restrictions, disciplinary action, or dismissal from the program. Serious incidents, repeated violations, providing alcohol to minors, illegal drug use, or behavior that compromises the safety or well-being of the participant or others may result in immediate dismissal.

Any participant whose level of intoxication results in vomiting, significant loss of coordination, inability to care for themselves, aggressive or disruptive behavior, or the need for significant intervention from staff or other participants will be immediately dismissed from the program.

Smoking and Vaping

Berridge Programs is a strictly no-smoking, no-vaping program. Smoking and vaping are not compatible with the health and safety standards of the community.

Participants must not:

- Possess or use cigarettes, tobacco products, vaping devices, legalized cannabis products, or related items.
- Smoke or vape during program activities, in residences, on program grounds, or in the vicinity of participants or staff.

Violations of these expectations will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program.

Additional Expectations

A participant may still be dismissed even if they did not directly initiate, consume, or intend to participate in prohibited behavior. The program may act on reasonable suspicion based on staff observations, participant reports, behavior, physical evidence, messages, photographs, social media posts, or other available information.

Possession, use, or distribution of illegal substances may also violate French law and may result in the involvement of local authorities.

Leaving Campus

Participants may leave campus independently during designated free time. From **Thursday evening through Sunday evening**, participants may travel off campus by taxi or other approved transportation, provided they notify staff of their plans, destination, who they are travelling with, and expected return time. A list of taxi services will be provided.

Participants may also walk or cycle in the local area using the program's sign-in/sign-out system. Appropriate routes, distances and times of day will be discussed during orientation.

During the rest of the week, participants are expected to remain on campus unless participating in a program activity off-campus. Participants are responsible for keeping staff informed of changes to their plans, remaining contactable while away, and returning at the agreed time.

Failure to follow these procedures, repeated disregard for agreed return times, or travel that creates a safety concern may result in restrictions on independent travel or other disciplinary action.

Romantic & Sexual Relationships

Participants are expected to approach romantic and sexual relationships with maturity, respect and consideration for others. We ask that everyone respect the following boundaries:

- Romantic or sexual relationships between staff and participants are strictly prohibited.
- Outside guests may not enter program residences, on or off campus, at any time.
- Roommates, shared spaces and the privacy and boundaries of others must be respected.
- Relationships should not disrupt community life or negatively affect other participants.
- Consent must be clearly understood and respected at all times.
- Harassment, coercion, unwanted sexual contact or other behavior that compromises another person's safety may result in immediate dismissal.

Orientation includes information about consent, sexual health and personal safety.

Reserved Rights of the Program

To maintain a safe and functional residential environment, Berridge Programs reserves certain rights. These rights are exercised at the discretion of the Program Director when needed to protect participant safety, community wellbeing, or the security and maintenance of program facilities.

The program reserves the right to:

- Enter or inspect any participant room when it is deemed necessary for the security or maintenance of the residence or the safety of residents. This includes inspections for compliance with regulations regarding drugs, alcohol, smoking, weapons, and fire hazards.
- Inspect personal belongings, including suitcases, backpacks, purses, and similar items, when it is deemed necessary for the security or maintenance of the residence or the safety of residents, including for compliance with regulations regarding drugs, alcohol, smoking, weapons, and fire hazards.
- Take disciplinary action in response to behaviors that are considered antisocial, unacceptable, or dangerous to the participant or others. This may include placing conditions on continued participation or dismissing the participant from the program.
- Dismiss a participant whose physical or psychological health status requires, or comes to require, more care than the program can reasonably provide.

Dismissal

Dismissal from the program is a serious decision made when a participant's conduct violates the Code of Conduct, breaches program policies, or significantly compromises the safety, wellbeing, or functioning of the community. Dismissal is immediate, and participants will generally be required to leave campus within two hours of the decision. Written notice of dismissal and the reasons for dismissal will be provided to both the participant and their parent/guardian.

Program staff may assist with logistical planning, such as arranging transport to the train station and, if needed, advising on lodging options. However, all costs associated with dismissal are the responsibility of the participant and their family. This includes travel expenses, flight change fees, accommodation, and any staff accompaniment costs. No program fees are refunded in the event of dismissal.

The Program Director may share limited information about a participant's dismissal with faculty, staff, or other participants when necessary to support the safety and wellbeing of the community.

Leaving the Program Early

Participants may choose to leave the program early for any reason. Participants who elect to leave early should be prepared to travel to Paris Charles de Gaulle (CDG) airport independently without a staff chaperone. Program staff can assist with transport to the local train station and may offer suggestions for hotels or onward travel, but all travel arrangements and costs—including train tickets, hotels, flight changes, and taxis—are the responsibility of the participant or parent/guardian.

If a participant chooses to leave the program early, no tuition or program fees will be refunded.

Dismissal at the Discretion of the Program Director

Admission to the program does not guarantee that the program can meet all participant needs under all circumstances. If, before or during the program, a participant's needs exceed the scope of the program's staffing, supervision model, resources, or community environment, or if their participation presents a risk to themselves or others, the participant may be dismissed without refund of fees.

Reasons for discretionary dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Ongoing homesickness that significantly impairs participation.
- Non-participation or chronic lateness.
- Emotional or behavioral difficulties that disrupt the community.
- Ongoing conflict with other participants.
- Emotional dysregulation or related concerns requiring a level of support beyond what the program can reasonably provide.

These decisions are made at the discretion of the Program Director and may be made even if the participant or parent/guardian disagrees. In such cases, all standard dismissal procedures and financial policies apply.

Acknowledgment

All participants are asked to acknowledge that they have read and understood the Eligibility Criteria, Participant Code of Conduct, Discipline and Dismissal Policies, and Reserved Rights of the Program, and that they agree to abide by these policies and procedures for the duration of the program.

This acknowledgment includes an understanding that all costs associated with dismissal from the program are the responsibility of the parent/guardian and that there are no refunds of program fees in the event of dismissal or voluntary early departure. Questions or concerns about these policies should be discussed with the Program Director before the program start date.

Reporting Concerns

Participants are encouraged to speak with staff about any safety, wellbeing or community concerns. You can talk privately with the Program Director or another trusted staff member, raise something during your one-to-one check-in, or submit a concern through our anonymous reporting form.

Concerns will be handled as discreetly as possible, although staff may need to act or share information when someone's safety or wellbeing is at risk.

If you or another participant needs help, always ask for it. You will not get in trouble simply for seeking help in a situation involving alcohol, drugs, illness or safety.

Section 5 | Preparing for Arrival

Preparing for time abroad involves both practical planning and emotional readiness. Taking a bit of time before you leave will make culture shock more manageable and help you transition smoothly into program life.

Before arrival, participants and parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to:

- Read the program description on the Berridge website to ensure you understand the nature of the experience.
- Carefully review this Participant Handbook and discuss it together.
- Begin planning travel, phone service, and medical insurance as early as possible.
- Learn basic information about France and the Normandy region where the program is located.
- Learn a few simple French phrases.
- Talk with friends or mentors who have done gap year or study abroad programs about coping with homesickness, communal living, and other potential challenges.
- Reach out to Berridge staff with any questions.

We also encourage families to have open conversations in advance about homesickness, mental health, independent living, and any other areas that may feel challenging. If you have questions or concerns about how to prepare, please contact Berridge Programs staff to discuss strategies before the program begins.

Program Dates

Program start and end dates are listed in the Acceptance Letter sent with your acceptance email. The program officially begins at 10:00 a.m. on arrival day and ends at 12:00 p.m. (noon) on departure day. Staff supervision and responsibilities begin and end at these times. Any travel before or after these hours is the responsibility of the participant and their family.

Flights and Passports

Please book flights at least six weeks before the program start date to support program planning. After booking, participants must:

- Complete the online travel form with arrival and departure information.
- Email a copy of the actual flight itinerary to the Program Director.

Participants must also:

- Check their passport immediately to ensure it will be valid for **at least three months after** their planned departure from France. Immigration authorities may refuse entry if it is not.
- Confirm visa requirements. Citizens of the United States, Canada, and the European Union do not need a visa to enter France for the program. Participants from other countries must check requirements with their home country or consular services.

Prescription Medication Policy

The Medication Policy is designed to ensure that prescription medications are used safely, only by the person for whom they are prescribed, and in a way that allows staff to respond effectively in an emergency. Participants and families must read this policy carefully. You will be asked to acknowledge it when signing medical forms.

Participants are responsible for managing their own prescription medications. Please make sure that:

- All prescription medications are disclosed on the health form.
- Medications are brought in their original pharmacy-labelled containers.
- Participants bring enough medication for the entire program.
- Medication is taken as prescribed and is not stopped or changed without guidance from the prescribing physician.
- Participants manage and take their own medication without staff reminders or assistance.
- Medications are kept secure and are never shared with another participant.
- Any missed dose that could cause a health or safety concern is reported to the Program Director.

Failure to disclose medication, misuse of medication, or sharing prescription medication may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

Lost or Stolen Medication

If prescription medication is lost or stolen during travel or while on the program, the Program Director will make reasonable efforts to support the participant in obtaining an additional prescription or having medication sent from home, if possible. If replacement is not possible, and the Program Director, Medical Advisory Team, and/or the participant's physician determine that the participant cannot safely continue, the participant may be dismissed from the program for health reasons.

Please note: Psychotropic medications (for conditions such as anxiety, depression, or ADHD) are controlled substances in the countries where we operate. To bring more than a one-month supply into the country, participants may need a letter from their doctor confirming that the medication is prescribed to them, the condition it treats, and the required daily dosage.

Medical and Trip Insurance

It is strongly recommended that every participant have overseas medical insurance in place before traveling to France. Families should check with their current health insurance provider to determine whether coverage extends overseas and to confirm that coverage limits, deductibles, and benefits are appropriate.

Many U.S. insurance plans do not cover Emergency Medical Evacuation, which is essential for overseas travel. It is strongly recommended that participants have medical evacuation coverage of at least 250,000 USD. Participants should travel with:

- A summary of coverage limits and benefits.
- Contact phone numbers for their insurance provider that can be used from overseas.

If additional coverage is needed, there are many online providers that offer travel and medical insurance for international trips. Berridge Programs cannot provide advice on specific insurance products or providers. It is the responsibility of each family to secure appropriate coverage and to ensure they are comfortable with the limits, deductibles, and benefits of their policy.

Families are also strongly encouraged to consider insuring the full cost of the trip, including tuition and flights, in case of trip interruption or medical emergency.

Medical, Dietary, and Travel Forms

Participants must complete all required Medical, Dietary, and Travel Information forms at least six weeks before arrival. These forms are online and a link will be sent before the program start date.

It is essential that participants and parents/guardians answer all questions accurately and truthfully. These forms are used to plan for participant support, housing, and programming in France. Incomplete or inaccurate information may affect the program's ability to support a participant safely.

Medical Care and Emergencies

France has an excellent healthcare system. During the program, participants have access to telemedicine, urgent medical care, pharmacies, and hospitals. The residence is approximately 15 minutes from a major hospital and emergency department.

In the event of illness, injury, mental health concern, or medical emergency:

- Participants may be assessed or treated by local healthcare professionals at the discretion of program staff.
- A staff member will accompany participants to medical appointments or hospital visits when appropriate.
- Once a participant has been assessed by a healthcare professional, participants are expected to follow the treating professional's instructions, including taking prescribed medication, attending follow-up appointments, resting or remaining at the residence when advised, and following any restrictions on activities or travel.

Program staff will follow the guidance of the treating healthcare professional regarding the participant's care and ability to participate in program activities.

If a participant refuses necessary medical treatment, fails to follow medical advice, discontinues prescribed medication against medical advice, or otherwise places their health or safety at risk, the program may require the participant to temporarily stop participating in activities or, when necessary, withdraw from the program.

All medical costs—including appointments, prescriptions, hospital fees, transportation, and related expenses—are the responsibility of the participant and their family.

Smart Traveler Enrollment (STEP) and Similar Programs

Participants who are U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) offered by the U.S. Department of State. STEP is a free service that allows you to register your trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate, receive safety updates, and be contacted more easily in emergencies. It also helps family or friends reach you in the event of a crisis. Enrollment is available at www.step.state.gov.

Participants from other countries should research and, where appropriate, enroll in similar traveler registration programs offered by their home government or consular services.

Money and Cards in France

Participants should have at least two working cards in their own name that can be used for debit, credit, and ATM withdrawals. Many payment systems in France use “chip and PIN” technology rather than swiping or tap-only credit, so you may not be able to use certain cards everywhere. Learn your PIN codes and keep them separate from your cards.

Before traveling, participants must notify their bank(s) of their travel dates and that they will be using cards in France. Banks often block foreign transactions as a security measure if they are not informed in advance.

Do not bring:

- More cash than you are prepared to lose.
- American Express cards (they are rarely accepted in France).
- Traveler’s checks.

Contactless payment (such as Apple Pay) is available in some locations but should not be relied upon as your only payment method.

Identification

Participants must bring a second form of photo identification in addition to their passport, such as a driver’s license, national ID card, or student card. While in France, participants are expected to keep their passport secure and not carry it on their person during daily activities or field trips, as losing a passport abroad can be highly disruptive.

French law requires individuals to be able to present photo identification when requested, including when using credit cards. For this reason, participants should carry their secondary photo ID with them while keeping their passport safely stored.

What Tuition Includes

Program tuition includes:

- All program-related transportation within France, including travel to and from our location and scheduled field trips (except for metro tickets in Paris, which participants purchase via an app on their phone).
- All residential costs, including hostels and hotels during the program.
- All meals in residence (breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily).
- All scheduled activities, entrance fees, and tour guide fees listed on the program itinerary.
- Equipment needed for taught classes and workshops (excluding personal supplies required for the Studio Art concentration).

What Tuition Does Not Include

Program tuition does not include:

- Airfare to and from Paris, France.
- Meals on field trip days and dinners out in Cherbourg (typically one dinner and two lunches per week).
- Meals on extended city breaks.
- Materials for personal projects outside of taught classes and workshops.
- Entrance fees or transport for optional excursions not included on the program itinerary.
- Personal Art Supplies Kit for Visual Art.

Participants and families should budget accordingly for these additional costs.

Pre-Departure Checklist

Before leaving for the program, participants and parents/guardians should ensure that:

- All required online forms (medical, dietary, and travel) are completed.
- A copy of the actual flight itinerary has been sent to the Program Director.
- Airline luggage weight allowances have been checked.
- There is enough prescription medication to last the entire length of the program.
- A photocopy of the participant's passport has been made and left with a parent/guardian.
- The participant's phone will have functional service in France (not Wi-Fi only).
- Cards providing access to cash or credit overseas are in place and tested.
- A secondary form of photo ID (other than the passport) has been packed.

In carry-on luggage or on your person, you should have:

- Printed contact numbers for Berridge staff.
- A phone that works in France, including data service.
- Phone charger.
- Plug adapters suitable for French outlets.
- Printed copy of your flight confirmation or ticket.
- Wallet and some spending money (euros or other currency you plan to exchange).
- Passport.
- Secondary photo ID.
- Laptop, if bringing one (do not place laptops in checked luggage).

Section 6 | Packing and Weather

Packing Guidelines

Participants are asked to limit luggage to:

- One personal item (such as a laptop bag or backpack).
- One carry-on suitcase.
- One checked bag weighing no more than 50 lbs / 22 kg.

Participants are responsible for moving their own luggage at every stage of travel and must be able to lift all bags on and off trains and buses without assistance from staff.

Weather in Normandy

September–November (Fall):

Temperatures typically range from the high 60s to the low 40s (Fahrenheit). It rarely snows, but rain is common, and you can expect roughly an even mix of sunny and rainy days. As autumn progresses, days get shorter, with sunset around 5:00 p.m. after daylight saving time ends.

January–April (Winter–Spring):

Expect temperatures from around freezing up to the mid-60s. Snow is rare and winters are milder than in many places, but frequent rain and dampness can make it feel colder than the temperature suggests.

What to Bring: Essentials

Plan for a cool, damp climate and layered clothing. Essential items include:

- Warm sweaters and sweatshirts.
- Comfortable, loose, and warm clothing for indoors.
- Indoor house shoes or slippers.
- Waterproof winter coat.
- Hat, gloves, and scarf.
- Waterproof rain jacket.
- Waterproof boots or shoes (e.g., hiking boots or duck boots).
- Warm socks.
- Sneakers/trainers (ideally not white, as paths can be muddy).

What to Bring: Personal Items

Please also bring:

- A reusable water bottle labeled with your name.
- Toiletries (full sizes can be purchased during the first week if needed).
- Plug adapters for French outlets (US–France plug converters for chargers/laptops).
- Headphones.
- A supply of basic over-the-counter medications (for example, pain relievers or cold medicine) appropriate to your needs.
- Any prescription medications needed for the full duration of the program.

All prescription medications must be in original, pharmacy-issued bottles with the patient's name, medication name, and usage directions clearly labeled in English. Please review the Prescription Medication Policy in this handbook and in the online forms packet.

Optional but Recommended

Depending on your preferences and the time of year, you may find the following helpful:

- Thermal layers, especially for the spring program if you enjoy spending time outdoors.
- Waterproof rain pants for walking or hiking.
- A shower caddy or carry kit (most bathrooms are down the hall).

Program transportation will be provided to a large store (Auchan, similar to a Walmart) within the first week, where you can purchase additional toiletries or bulkier items such as a bathrobe, extra towel, or slippers.

What the Program Provides

Berridge Programs provides:

- All bedding, sheets, and pillows.
- One towel.
- Hairdryers compatible with French sockets.
- Flat irons or curling irons as needed.
- Iron and ironing board.

What Not to Bring

To avoid damage, safety issues, or unnecessary complications, participants must not bring:

- U.S. hair dryers, curling irons, or straightening irons.
- U.S. clothes irons, including travel irons.
- Vaping devices, alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal or controlled substances.
- Large amounts of cash (as a guideline, no more than 500 euros).

Discipline-Specific Supplies

Some disciplines require or benefit from specific personal equipment. Where possible, shared equipment is provided otherwise, participants are responsible for bringing or purchasing their own materials.

Visual Art

Participants focusing on Studio Art will need to purchase or bring their own art supplies. A recommended list of paints, brushes, and other materials will be emailed before the program start date. Participants may bring existing supplies or purchase them after arrival. Basic materials will be available for introductory sessions before participants commit to buying their own kit. Ceramics materials will be supplied.

Film

The program provides film equipment for student use, including a Blackmagic digital film camera, basic lighting, and a boom microphone. Participants must bring:

- A laptop capable of running editing software (such as Adobe Premiere or Final Cut).
- A solid state external hard drive (SSD), at least 1 TB.

Photography

Participants focusing on photography must bring their own digital camera. The program has a limited number of film cameras available for use. While there is no on-site darkroom, the program is able to develop film and scan negatives.

Writing

Writers should bring a laptop, several notebooks, and pens. Printers are available on site.

Acting

Actors should bring comfortable clothing and shoes suitable for movement and physical work, including items that can get dirty if needed.

Section 7 | Housing and Rooming

Rooms and Bathrooms

Participants are housed in double or triple rooms. Most rooms share a hallway bathroom between 4–6 participants. Bathrooms are single-occupancy. Bed sizes vary and include both single and double beds. Single rooms are generally not available.

Sheets, blankets, pillows, and towels are provided.

Kitchens and Studio Spaces

All houses have fully equipped kitchens that participants may use. Breakfast and lunch are self-catered in these residence kitchens.

The residence includes rooms that are converted into studio spaces for creative work. Participants are expected to:

- Respect posted schedules for shared studio spaces.
- Keep studios tidy and free of clutter.
- Leave studios by 11:00PM and be in their own rooms.

Rooming Assignments and Options

Room assignments are made carefully based on information provided in pre-departure forms and the needs of the overall community. Room assignments are considered fixed for the duration of the program and are not changed for general preference—for example, wanting a different roommate, bed, or room location.

In rare cases, the Program Director may approve a room change when there is a significant concern affecting safety, wellbeing, or the functioning of the community. Participants who believe they are

experiencing a serious issue related to their rooming situation should speak directly with the Program Director, who will assess the situation and determine whether a change is appropriate.

The Program Forms Packet includes a section where participants indicate living habits and rooming preferences. Rooming options are:

- Female
- Male
- Gender Inclusive

Gender Inclusive Housing is when two or more participants share a bedroom regardless of gender identity, gender expression, or gender assigned at birth. This option may be appealing to:

- Participants who are exploring or questioning their gender identity.
- Participants who do not wish to be assigned housing by gender.
- Allies of LGBTQIA+ and gender-diverse communities.
- Participants who feel more comfortable with a roommate of a different gender.

Gender-inclusive housing is not appropriate for:

- Couples or participants who are in a romantic relationship with each other.
- Participants who are not committed to gender equity and inclusion, or who are unsure about these values.

Berridge Programs offers gender-inclusive rooms in each house, and participants may select this option on their forms.

Meals

- Breakfast and lunch are self-catered in residence kitchens, which are stocked with basic breakfast and lunch foods.
- Dinner is prepared by an in-house chef five nights per week and served communally.
- Once a week, participants cook one group dinner together.
- Once a week, participants have a dinner out in town at their own expense.
- Meals on extended city breaks are not provided for.

Dietary accommodations:

- Vegetarian, dairy-free, and gluten-free diets can be accommodated.
- The program cannot accommodate vegan or kosher diets.
- Participants with severe allergies should contact Berridge before the program to discuss possible accommodations.

Additional snacks or specialty foods can be purchased during the weekly grocery store shuttle.

Laundry

Each residence has washing machines but no dryers. Participants hang laundry to dry on indoor drying racks or outdoor clotheslines.

Leaving the Grounds

Participants may leave the grounds during daylight hours to walk, cycle or exercise in the local area, using the program's **Check-In/Check-Out WhatsApp group** to let staff know when they leave and return.

From **Thursday evening through Sunday evening**, participants may also make independent trips by taxi or other approved transportation. Participants must let staff know their destination, who they are travelling with and their expected return time, and remain contactable while away.

Throughout the week, the program regularly leaves the property for meals, shopping, trips into town, excursions and other activities.

Participants are expected to return to the residence overnight unless an overnight stay has been specifically approved in advance by the Program Director.

Wi-Fi and Device Use

All residences have high speed Wi-Fi. Participants can text, make Wi-Fi calls, and video chat, but streaming media may be slow depending on how many users are present. We ask participants not to have their phones at the dinner table, during group classes where attention is needed and occasionally on guided tours.

Housekeeping and Residential Duties

Participants share responsibility for keeping residences and studios clean and functional. Expectations include:

- Helping with meal preparation, restocking breakfast items, and assisting with dinner service and dishes.
- Performing light household duties such as vacuuming studio spaces and emptying trash and recycling.

Participants are expected to maintain clean, safe bedrooms and common areas. The Program Director may inspect rooms periodically to ensure they are free of excessive clutter, trash, or fire hazards. Rooms do not lock. Participants are responsible for the safety and security of their own belongings.

Mail and Packages

Letters generally arrive without difficulty. Packages are less predictable and may involve delays or additional costs.

Berridge Programs does not accept packages sent by courier services such as FedEx, UPS, or DHL except in true emergencies (for example, essential medication). These packages often generate customs and duty fees that can exceed the value of the contents and are prone to loss or delay.

For similar reasons, participants are asked not to order items from Amazon unless absolutely necessary.

Guests

For safety and security reasons, no unauthorized outside guests are allowed on program grounds at any time. Overnight guests, including family members and friends, are not permitted.

A list of nearby accommodations can be provided for visiting family or friends.

Emergency Contacts

Emergency contact information for fire, police, and ambulance services is posted on the back of each bedroom door and on laminated cards throughout the residences. Staff cell phone numbers are distributed by email to participants and parents approximately three weeks before arrival.

Section 8 | How the Program Runs

Orientation

Orientation takes place during the first two days of the program. During this time, participants will review the key contents of this handbook, including emergency procedures, important contacts, schedules, residential expectations, life in France, and field trip procedures, including the Paris trip.

Orientation is designed to make sure everyone starts with the same map of how the program works. It is the first round of learning the rules of the game so that participants can settle in quickly and safely.

Supervision and Staff-to-Student Ratios

Berridge Programs maintains a staff-to-student ratio of approximately 4:1 at the main residence. This includes the Program Director, Associate Director, teaching staff, and household staff.

During field trips, including the Paris trip, the minimum staff-to-student ratio is 6:1. All field trips are staffed, and participants are given clear expectations about supervision, free time, communication, and safety before departure.

Daily Schedule

The exact schedule may shift depending on the day, weather, and programming, but a typical day includes:

- 8:30 a.m. Breakfast
- 9:30 a.m. Community Hour (twice per week)
- 10:30 a.m. Morning Session
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. Afternoon Session
- 7:00 p.m. Dinner

- 8:00 p.m. Optional evening activity

Participants should expect a structured day with a balance of creative work, communal responsibilities, and downtime.

Field Trips

The program also includes daylong field trips and extended city breaks. These trips often include a combination of group activities and independent free time.

Parents and participants should understand that some field trips include periods when participants are not under direct staff supervision and are free to make their own decisions about meals and how they spend their time. Staff remain nearby and available in case of emergency.

Participants may not enter the water during program activities, field trips, or independent exploration. Although swimming ability may be collected as part of accreditation and safety procedures, the program does not supervise recreational swimming.

Attendance, Quiet Hours, and Cleanliness

Full participation is required in all classes, workshops, field trips, group activities, household duties, and information sessions unless illness prevents attendance. Any illness lasting two days or more requires a doctor's visit. Repeated absences, chronic lateness, or disengagement may lead to a meeting with the Program Director and discussion of conditions for continued participation.

Quiet hours begin at 11:00 p.m., and participants must be in their own rooms by that time. Participants are expected to be mindful of noise, music, phone calls, guests in rooms, and other late-night activity that may disrupt roommates or the shared residential environment. Staff check the residence each evening, and repeated disruption may lead to consequences or conditions for continued participation.

Participants are also expected to help maintain clean, respectful, and comfortable shared living spaces, including bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchens, and studio areas. The Program Director and Household Manager may inspect rooms to ensure reasonable standards of cleanliness, safety, and care.

Technology and Communication

Participants are encouraged to bring a laptop, especially writers and filmmakers, and will need a U.S.–France plug adapter. A printer and photocopier are available. Wi-Fi is provided, although streaming and large downloads may be limited.

Each participant must arrive with a **working cell phone with service and data in France** and carry it charged, particularly on field trips. Service should be arranged before departure rather than relying on purchasing a SIM card after arrival. Phones should not be used during classes or activities requiring attention.

Program communication takes place primarily through **WhatsApp** for schedules, logistics, and updates. Program-related WhatsApp groups must include the Program Director, Associate Director, or appropriate teacher/mentor.

Participants are encouraged to stay in touch with family. Parents may contact the Program Director by email at any time for an update.

Photography and Social Media

Photography, filming, and social documentation are a natural part of life in a creative program. Berridge Programs may photograph or film aspects of the program for promotional or archival use in accordance with signed media release forms.

Participants are expected to be respectful when photographing, filming, or posting content involving others. This includes being mindful of privacy, shared living spaces, and requests not to be photographed or posted online. Photos, videos, messages, or recordings may not be used to embarrass, target, exclude, or harass another participant.

Section 9 | Health, Safety, and Wellbeing

Attendance and Lateness

Full participation is required in all classes, workshops, group sessions, field trips, and group projects unless illness prevents attendance. If a participant is too unwell to attend, the Program Director must be notified that morning. Illness lasting two days or more will trigger a call to parents/guardians and may require a doctor's visit.

Participants are expected to arrive on time to all program activities, meals, departures, workshops, and meetings. Repeated lateness affects the experience of the group and may lead to communication with parents/guardians and conditions for continued participation.

Immunization Recommendations

All participants are strongly encouraged, though not required, to be up to date with routine vaccinations as indicated on the medical forms, including:

- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)
- Meningitis
- Tetanus

Participants are also strongly encouraged to have a Covid-19 vaccination and a Covid-19 booster within the past 8–12 months, in accordance with current medical guidance and family decisions.

Physical Health

Participants should alert the Program Director if they are experiencing illness that may affect their ability to attend or fully participate in program activities. The program has access to nearby clinics and hospitals, and a staff member will accompany participants to medical appointments or hospital visits when appropriate.

Participants are encouraged to practice basic healthy habits during the program, including getting adequate rest, eating well, staying hydrated, and engaging in appropriate physical activity. All medical costs, prescriptions, hospital fees, transportation, and related expenses are the responsibility of the participant and their family.

Questions About This Handbook

This handbook is designed to explain how the program works and what is expected so that everyone can participate safely and fully. If any part of this document is unclear, or if you have questions about how a policy applies to your situation, please contact the Program Director before the program begins or as questions arise.

When in doubt, ask. It is always better to clarify a rule or expectation early than to make assumptions that could affect your experience or standing in the program.