

BERRIDGE

SUMMER AND GAP YEAR ARTS PROGRAMS

Dear Creative Pathways Participant,

This letter is to confirm your official acceptance into Creative Explorer, our gap year program in Normandy, France. We are thrilled that you have decided to join us! This letter also confirms that you will be attending the Spring 2026 session. **The program dates are Feb 13th - April 12th, 2026.** Please read the following pages carefully as it contains information you will need to plan your trip to France.

This packet contains information about the program including tuition payment, arrival and departure dates and our Participant policies. Some dates for your forward planning:

Upon acceptance - Deposit of \$2500 is due.

Nov 13th, 2025 - Full tuition payment due. This is the last date to withdraw for a full refund minus a \$500 administrative fee. Please note there are no refunds after this date. If you enroll after this date, tuition will be due in full to secure your space.

Dec 13th, 2025 - Link to online forms packet to be sent out, due back on Jan 13th, 2026

Jan 13th, 2026 - Please purchase your flight on or before this date, particularly if you are using the staff meet and greet for arrival and need to share your flight information with us.

Feb 1st, 2026 - Group zoom pre-departure meet up.

There is a Participant Handbook to follow once it has been updated. In the meantime, should you have any questions at any time, please do not hesitate to get in touch. All the best and we look forward to meeting you in France!

Kind Regards,
Andrea Mardon

Andrea Mardon

Artistic Director
Berridge Programs
www.berridgeprograms.com

BERRIDGE PROGRAMS
TUITION PAYMENT INFORMATION

The full tuition for the program is \$17,700. There is a \$2500 deposit due when you are accepted into the program to hold your space. Please note that this deposit is refundable up to our final tuition payment deadline minus a \$500 administration fee.

The balance of tuition is due on or before Nov 13th, 2025. There is no refund of fees after this date. If you have any questions or concerns about tuition payments or refund policies, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Bank Transfer

Our preferred payment method is by bank transfer. You will receive a Quickbooks invoice for your deposit after you confirm your acceptance. You will receive a second invoice for the balance of your tuition 30 days before the due date. You may pay your deposit by bank transfer by clicking "PAY NOW" on this invoice.

Credit Card

Please get in touch with our office if you would like to pay by credit card. Please note that you will need to add 3% to your tuition fees if you would like to pay by credit card.

If you would like to make a wire transfer, please get in touch for our full bank details.

BERRIDGE PROGRAMS

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Program Location

Our program is in Normandy, France on the Cotentin Peninsula, about 20 minutes outside of Cherbourg. Our nearest airports are either Paris Charles de Gaulle or Paris Orly, about a 4-hour drive away. Our nearest train station is Valognes station which is 10 minutes from our chateau and is a 3-hour train ride from Paris Saint Lazare station.

Participant Travel on Arrival/Departure

Participants must get themselves to and from our location in Normandy on the designated program start dates and times. We have some staff assisted options listed below if you need extra support. Please note that participants assume all travel costs to and from the program including round trip flights, train tickets to and from Valognes station, any taxis to and from Paris train station and all hotel room costs before arrival day and after departure day.

Transport to and from Valognes train station on arrival and departure day is provided by our staff.

Staff Support for Arrival/Departure

We will have a staff accompanied train options for both arrival and departure days to help you navigate your way to and from Normandy. You will receive instructions on how/what time to book your arrival and departure trains about 3 weeks before your program start date.

ARRIVAL DAY

The program starts on Feb 13th, 2026 at 9AM. You will need to meet our staff at Paris Saint Lazare train station at 10AM to board an 11AM train to Normandy unless you are driving out to the chateau with your family.

FLYING INTO FRANCE

We recommend that you fly into France at least one day before arrival day and stay overnight in Paris or at an airport hotel before meeting the group to travel out to the program by train.

If you are flying from the US, most flights depart the day before and land early in the morning so it will not be possible to do the trip all in one day. Many of our students use arrival and departure as an opportunity to travel before and after the program, either in Paris or further afield in Europe, often with their families.

AIRPORTS IN PARIS

The two major airports are Paris Charles de Gaulle and Paris Orly. Paris Orly is the more manageable airport and the Paris Metro line 14 goes directly from Paris Orly to Saint Lazare station which is where the Normandy line trains depart.

BOOKING YOUR FLIGHTS

You are advised to book your flights at least 4 weeks in advance of arrival day. Please be advised that you will need to book a round-trip flight, you will not be permitted to board a plane to France with a one-way ticket as they will need to see proof of your departure within the 90-day tourist allowance window.

HOTEL BOOKING

If you need extra support on arrival, we recommend that you fly into Paris CDG and book overnight at the Citizen M Paris Charles de Gaulle. This is the hotel we use for our staff who will arrive at the Citizen M around 5PM the night before arrival day. There will be a Meet and Greet that evening with staff and students booked at the Citizen M and staff can help you get in a taxi to the Paris train station the following day to meet up with the group.

TRAIN TO NORMANDY

Our nearest train station is Valognes train station. A member of staff will meet all participants taking the train out to Normandy at Paris Saint Lazare station on arrival day at 10AM and accompany the group to Valognes station where our staff will pick the group up and take them to the chateau. The Normandy line trains run from Paris Saint Lazare station to Valognes station direct (stops but no need to change trains) and the train ride is about 3 hours. You will receive instructions by email on how to book your train ticket.

ARRIVING BY CAR

Many of our participants choose to travel with family members before the program start in which case, you may find driving out to Normandy easier. Once you are out of Paris, the drive out to Normandy is easy with relatively little traffic. It usually takes between 4-5 hours. You will find our exact address to plan your car journey in the Participant Handbook.

Please note that Berridge Programs assumes no responsibility for participants before the official start date and start time of the program.

DEPARTURE DAY

The program ends on April 12th, 2026 at 9AM. All participants will depart on a 9AM train to Paris with a member of staff. When you arrive in Paris, the staff member can help you find a taxi to your onward destination, including the airport if you are flying out that day or the next day.

FLYING HOME

A member of staff will accompany the group to Paris on a 9AM train which will arrive at 12 noon. If you are flying out on the same day as departure day, **PLEASE DO NOT BOOK YOUR FLIGHT BEFORE 4PM that day.** You will not have enough time to get to the airport to check in for your flight 3 hours before. If you cannot book a flight that departs after 4PM, you will need to plan to stay over at an airport hotel and depart the following day. Please note that our staff can help you get a taxi to your airport hotel but they will not be staying overnight in Paris.

DEPARTING BY CAR

Parents are very welcome to come and pick their child up in Normandy on departure day. Please arrive before 10AM. We often have a showing of work that you are welcome to attend. This usually takes place on the night before the final night. Please get in touch for details about attending our Final Showcase.

OTHER TRAVEL ADVICE

PASSPORT

For those of you who already own a passport, open it today and check that it will not expire for at least three months past your departure from France. The Immigration authorities at the airport can refuse you entry for that reason alone. United States and Canadian citizens do NOT need a visa in order to enter the country but students from other countries should check with their airline.

VISA/TOURIST STATUS

You will be coming to France as a tourist, not as a student. As a tourist, you have a maximum stay of 90 days in any 180 days in the EU or "Schengen Area" which is known as your "Schengen Allowance." United States and Canadian citizens do NOT need to apply for any formal visa to enter France. Their Schengen Allowance is activated once they have cleared customs and receive a stamp in their passport. Participants from other countries should check with their airline or consulate regarding necessary visas. If you have been on a gap year program in the Schengen Area prior to our program and you are concerned about your Schengen allowance, you can apply for a 3-6-month French tourist visa to attend our program. Please get in touch with us to learn about the application process.