



It's Cultural ...

France and the UK are so close yet culturally there are some big differences that you might not realise until you live there.

Here are just a few you might experience in the work place.

these are very general observations and of course not true for every French / British worker or workplace



- Although the legal working week is 35 hours, many French professionals work well beyond this. In office environments, leaving between 6pm and 7pm is not uncommon
- Most people do **not** take 2 hour lunch breaks, but lunch is important and larger companies may have an on-site canteen
- RTT (Réduction du Temps de Travail) are days off granted to employees who work more than the legal 35-hour week.
- French employment law provides employees with strong legal protections and places significant obligations on employers regarding contracts, dismissals, working time, leave and employee representation.
- Tu or Vous ? - When in doubt, start with vous and follow the lead of your colleagues
- Employees are entitled to a minimum of 5 weeks of paid holiday per year. Depending on their company, collective agreement and RTT entitlement, many office workers enjoy between 6 and 9 weeks of total leave and rest days annually
- If you are ill, it is common to consult a doctor and obtain an arrêt de travail (sick leave certificate). Employees are generally expected to formalise sickness absence more quickly than in the UK.



- In many UK workplaces, finishing between 5pm and 5:30pm is common. Performance is often judged more on results than on visible attendance
- It's common for British employees to have a relatively quick lunch. The main family meal is often eaten in the evening
- Some employers offer additional pay for overtime, while others offer Time Off In Lieu (TOIL)
- UK employment law is generally considered more flexible. Resulting in faster recruitment processes, shorter notice periods and fewer administrative requirements for employers. Employees still benefit from important legal protections regarding pay, discrimination, working time and holiday entitlement.
- "You" works for everyone
- UK workers are entitled to at least 5.6 weeks of paid annual leave, which equals 28 days. Employers may include bank holidays within those 28 days, such as 25 days plus bank holidays.
- Employees can generally self-certify sickness for up to 7 consecutive calendar days without a doctor's note. A medical certificate ("fit note") is normally required only if the illness lasts more than 7 days.