PERIMETRY RESEARCH

Security barometer of French higher education

How well do the universities and higher education establishments of France protect their website and e-mail? Passive measurements of every establishment in the ministry's list, compared with the communes and the local authorities.

November 2026 edition

245
establishments studied

45.4%
enforce DMARC (quarantine or reject)

32.3%
get an A or a B

Perimetry Cloud
perimetry.cloud · Published 8 November 2026

About this report

Perimetry Research publishes studies of how well public bodies protect their websites and e-mail, measured with the same passive checks as Perimetry Cloud. This edition covers the 245 establishments in the ministry of Higher Education and Research's list of the main higher education establishments, public and private, and 229 domains, with the checks of the communes study. It names only the establishments that do well; every other figure is an aggregate, and serious issues are reported privately, never published.

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01

Executive summary

245
establishments studied

64
average score out of 100

45.4%
enforce DMARC (quarantine or reject)

32.3%
get an A or a B

Average score of the 229 graded establishments: 64 out of 100.

1. 86.9% of the graded establishments publish a DMARC policy, but only 45.4% enforce it (quarantine or reject). Without an enforced policy, a message forged in an establishment's name, to its students or staff, is generally delivered.
2. Websites: 100% have a valid certificate and 95.2% send visitors from HTTP to HTTPS; 46.1% use HSTS for six months or more.
3. 12.7% of their domains are signed with DNSSEC, and 41% publish a CAA record naming the authorities allowed to issue their certificates.
4. The public establishments average 65 out of 100, the private ones 63.
5. The universities average 67 out of 100 (on nine checks), the communes 47.

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Key findings

Where the establishments are on the internet

Website



own domain 93.5% domain shared, owned by none 2.9% another organisation's domain 3.7%
website platform 0% social network page 0% none listed 0%

DMARC: published, rarely enforced

86.9% of the graded establishments publish a DMARC policy, but only 45.4% enforce it (quarantine or reject). Without an enforced policy, a message forged in an establishment's name, to its students or staff, is generally delivered.

Websites

Websites: 100% have a valid certificate and 95.2% send visitors from HTTP to HTTPS; 46.1% use HSTS for six months or more.

DNS: signatures and certificate authorities

12.7% of their domains are signed with DNSSEC, and 41% publish a CAA record naming the authorities allowed to issue their certificates.

Public and private

The public establishments average 65 out of 100, the private ones 63.

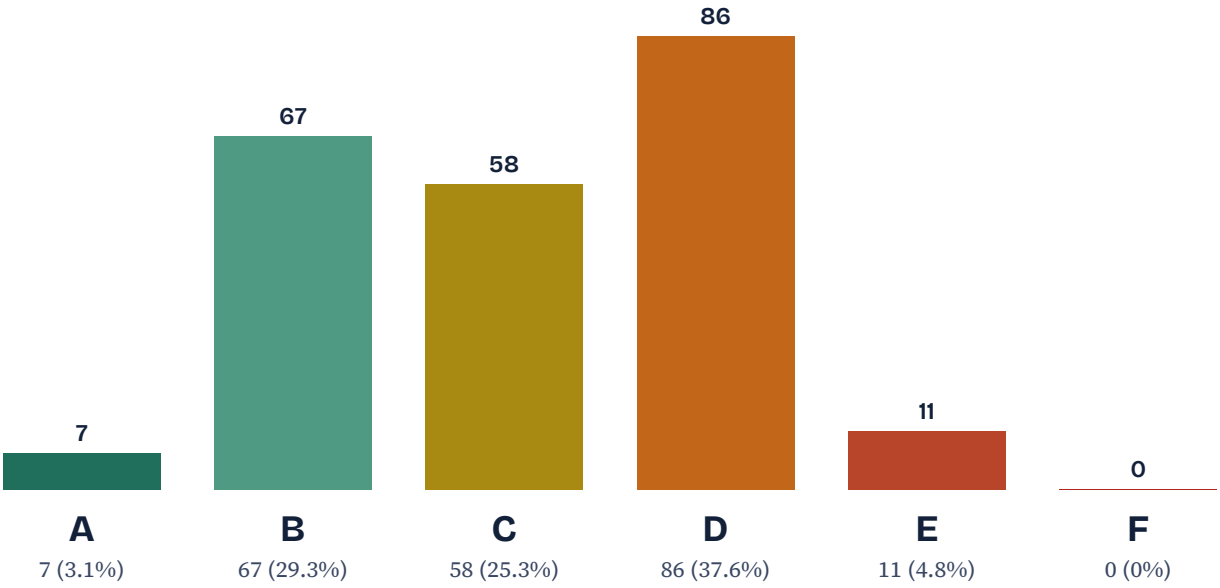
Compared with the communes

The universities average 67 out of 100 (on nine checks), the communes 47.

03

Grades

Each establishment whose website is on a domain of its own gets a score: the share of the nine checks that it passes, among those that apply to it (the score of the communes and local authorities studies, without the check on the contact address, which the ministry's list does not give). Grades: A from 90, B from 75, C from 60, D from 40, E from 20, F below.

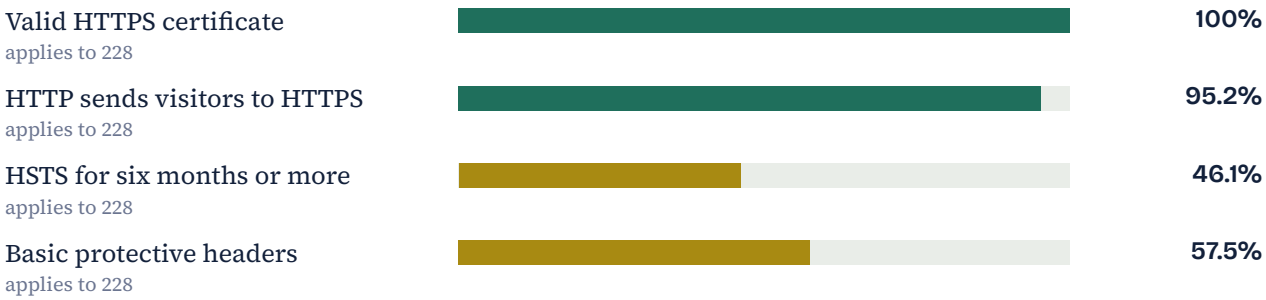


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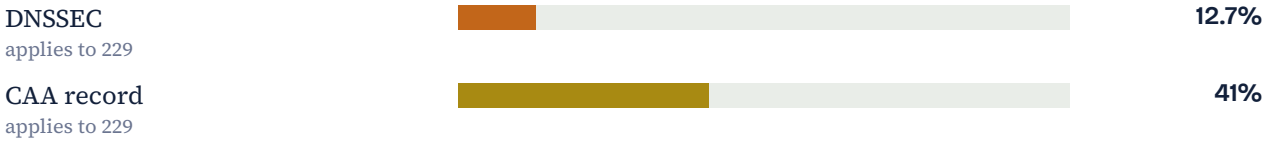
Check by check

Share of the graded establishments that pass each check, among those it applies to. The e-mail checks are made on the website's domain.

Website



DNS



E-mail



The nine checks	
Website · Valid HTTPS certificate	The site answers over HTTPS with a certificate that is in date, issued for its name, and trusted by browsers.
Website · HTTP sends visitors to HTTPS	Someone who types the address lands on the encrypted site, not on a page anyone on the network can read or alter.
Website · HSTS for six months or more	Browsers remember to use HTTPS only, so the first unencrypted request cannot be hijacked.
Website · Basic protective headers	X-Content-Type-Options: nosniff, and protection against being framed by another site (X-Frame-Options or CSP frame-ancestors).
DNS · DNSSEC	Answers about the domain are signed, so a resolver cannot be fed false addresses for the establishment's site or mail.
DNS · CAA record	The domain names the certificate authorities allowed to issue certificates for it.
E-mail · Strict SPF	The domain lists the servers allowed to send its mail and asks receivers to reject or flag the others (-all or ~all).

The nine checks	
E-mail · DMARC record	The domain publishes a DMARC policy, the standard that ties SPF and DKIM to the visible sender.
E-mail · DMARC enforced	The policy is quarantine or reject: messages forged in the establishment's name, to its students for example, go to spam or are refused, not delivered.

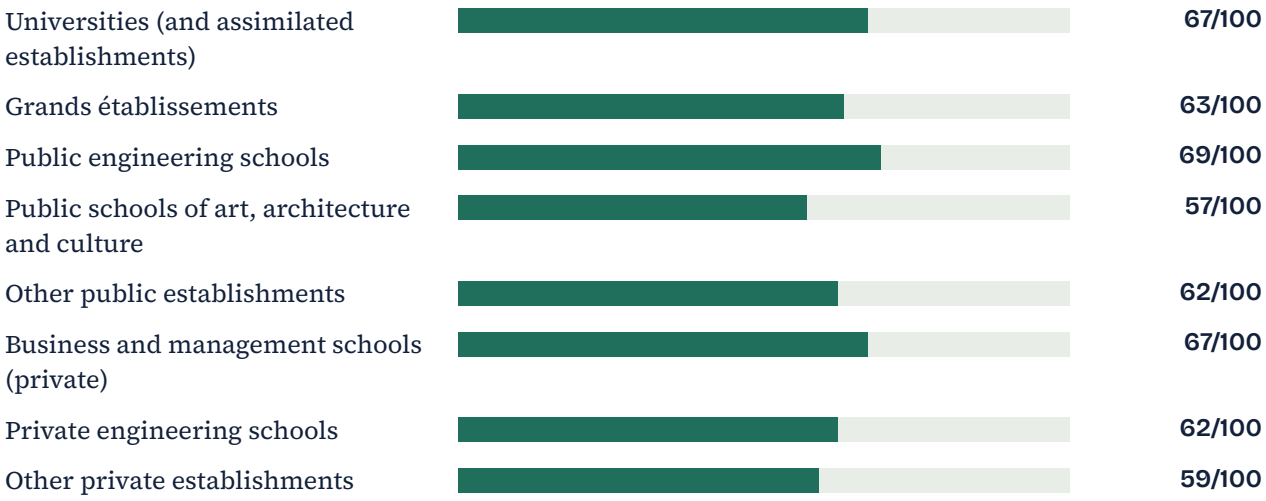
05

By category

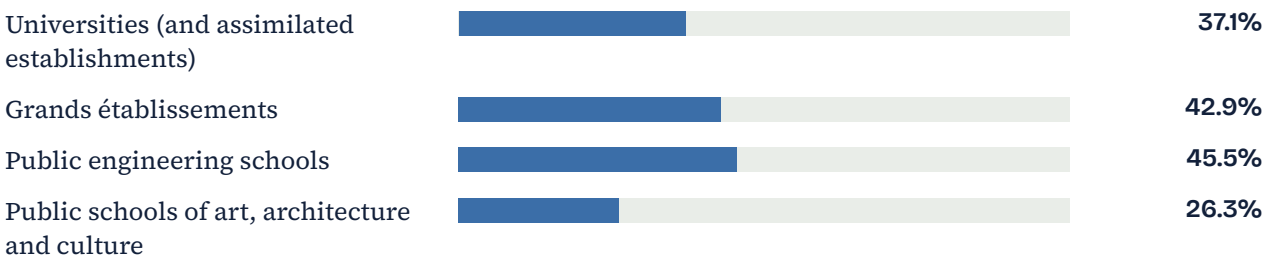
Categories with fewer than ten graded establishments show no figures, so that none of them can be singled out. The median is the score half of the graded establishments reach.

Category	Establishments	Graded	Average	A or B	Own domain	DMARC enforced	Median
Universities (and assimilated establishments)	70	70	67	37.1%	100%	37.1%	67
Grands établissements	21	21	63	23.8%	100%	42.9%	–
Public engineering schools	25	22	69	59.1%	88%	45.5%	–
Public schools of art, architecture and culture	26	19	57	21.1%	73.1%	26.3%	–
Other public establishments	18	15	62	40%	83.3%	40%	–
Business and management schools (private)	24	24	67	29.2%	100%	62.5%	–
Private engineering schools	46	43	62	25.6%	93.5%	58.1%	56
Other private establishments	15	15	59	13.3%	100%	53.3%	–

Average



DMARC enforced



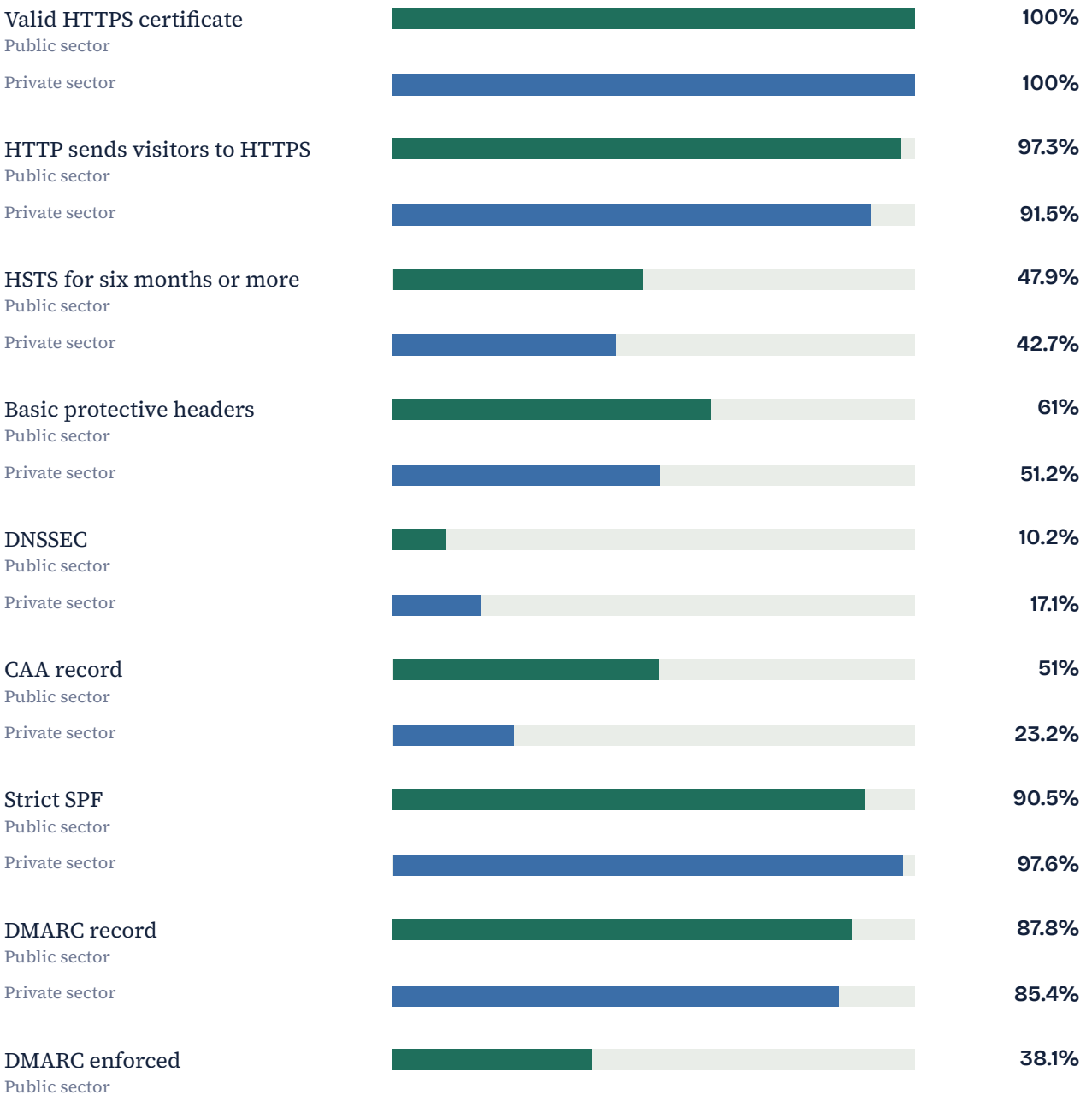

Other public establishments
40%
Business and management schools (private)
62.5%
Private engineering schools
58.1%
Other private establishments
53.3%

06

Public and private

The two sectors of the ministry's list. A sector leaves out its categories without figures when, together, they count fewer than ten graded establishments.

Sector	Establishments	Graded	Average	A or B	Own domain	DMARC enforced	Median
Public sector	160	147	65	36.7%	91.9%	38.1%	67
Private sector	85	82	63	24.4%	96.5%	58.5%	67




Private sector
58.5%

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Compared with the communes and the local authorities

The same checks as the studies of the French communes and local authorities (latest editions): share of the graded bodies that pass each one.

	Communes	Local authorities	Universities (on nine checks)	Public sector (on nine checks)	Private sector (on nine checks)
Average score	47	60	67	65	63
Valid HTTPS certificate	93.4%	98.7%	100%	100%	100%
HTTP sends visitors to HTTPS	86.4%	90.9%	98.6%	97.3%	91.5%
HSTS for six months or more	28.3%	38.8%	49.3%	47.9%	42.7%
Basic protective headers	26.1%	40.7%	62.3%	61%	51.2%
DNSSEC	22.1%	25.9%	10%	10.2%	17.1%
CAA record	2.8%	2.6%	62.9%	51%	23.2%
Strict SPF	85.9%	97.1%	91.4%	90.5%	97.6%
DMARC record	45.2%	77.8%	90%	87.8%	85.4%
DMARC enforced	19.2%	32.8%	37.1%	38.1%	58.5%

08

The establishments that get it right

7 establishments pass every one of the nine checks.

Establishment	Category
Université de Montpellier	University
Université Le Havre Normandie	University
Université Lumière - Lyon 2	University
Centrale Méditerranée	Public engineering school
Université de technologie de Compiègne	Public engineering school
École nationale vétérinaire d'Alfort	Other public
École supérieure angevine en informatique et productique	Private engineering school

Best in each category

The highest scores among the graded establishments (at least eight checks applying, 75 or more), in the categories of thirty graded establishments or more only (in a smaller one, only the honour roll is named).

Universities (and assimilated establishments)

Establishment	Score
Université de Montpellier	100
Université Lumière - Lyon 2	100
Université Le Havre Normandie	100
Université Toulouse - Jean Jaurès	89
Université Paris 8	89
Université de Lille	78
Aix-Marseille Université	78
Lyon-I université	78
Université Paris 1 - Panthéon Sorbonne	78
Université de Caen Normandie	78

Private engineering schools

Establishment	Score
École supérieure angevine en informatique et productique	100
École supérieure d'informatique électronique automatique	89
École de biologie industrielle	89
École supérieure d'ingénieurs des travaux de la construction de Paris	89
École catholique des arts et métiers	89
Institut polytechnique UniLaSalle	78
École supérieure de chimie physique électronique de Lyon	78

Establishment	Score
Institut supérieur d'électronique de Paris	78
École supérieure des technologies industrielles avancées	78
École supérieure d’agriculture d'Angers	78

09

By region

Aggregates only. Regions with fewer than ten graded establishments (10) show no figures.

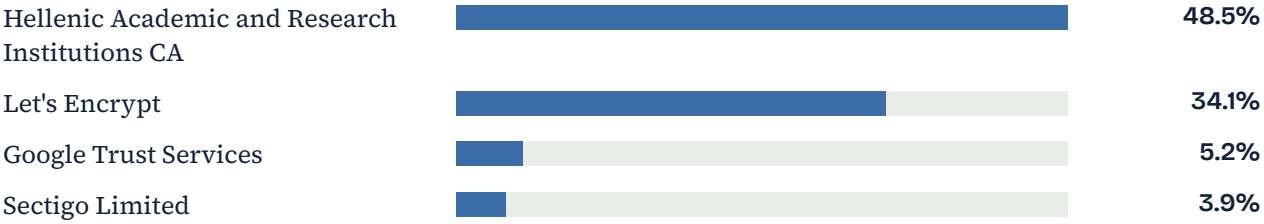
Region	Establishments	Graded	Average	A or B	Own domain	DMARC enforced
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes	21	20	69	50%	95.2%	25%
Bourgogne-Franche-Comté	4	4	·	·	·	·
Bretagne	11	10	58	0%	90.9%	20%
Centre-Val de Loire	3	3	·	·	·	·
Collectivités d'outre-mer	2	2	·	·	·	·
Corse	1	1	·	·	·	·
Grand Est	17	15	54	13.3%	88.2%	6.7%
Guadeloupe	1	1	·	·	·	·
Guyane	1	1	·	·	·	·
Hauts-de-France	17	15	70	46.7%	88.2%	66.7%
Île-de-France	85	80	63	28.8%	94.1%	46.3%
La Réunion	1	1	·	·	·	·
Mayotte	1	1	·	·	·	·
Normandie	13	13	69	46.2%	100%	61.5%
Nouvelle-Aquitaine	16	16	68	43.8%	100%	50%
Occitanie	23	20	67	40%	87%	60%
Pays de la Loire	15	14	71	42.9%	93.3%	71.4%
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	9	9	·	·	·	·
Abroad	4	3	·	·	·	·

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Behind the numbers

98.3% of the graded domains receive mail themselves (an MX record): the domain whose SPF and DMARC are read is then the one the establishment writes from.

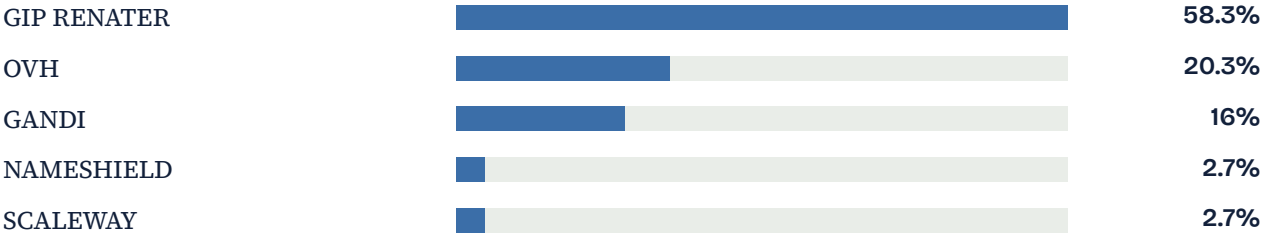
Who issues the certificates of their sites



What their sites run on



Registrars of their domains



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Serious issues

No establishment has a serious issue in this edition.

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Recommendations

1 Enforce DMARC

Most establishments publish a DMARC policy and stop there. Read the reports for a few weeks, list every service that sends in your name (learning platforms, mailing tools, admissions), then move to quarantine and reject: that is what stops messages forged in your name to your students and staff.

2 Redirect to HTTPS and turn on HSTS

Every visit should land on the encrypted site; HSTS makes browsers remember it. Most hosts offer both in a single setting.

3 Sign your domains with DNSSEC and add a CAA record

Most registrars, RENATER included, offer DNSSEC. A CAA record lists the authorities allowed to issue your certificates.

4 Keep the ministry's list up to date

The website listed for your establishment is what students, partners and other administrations find. A domain listed there and left to expire can be registered by anyone.

5 Watch it over time

Certificates expire, providers change, records get lost in a migration. A regular check catches it before your users do.

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Methodology

Passive checks only

We read what any visitor or mail server can see: public DNS records, the domain registration (RDAP), the TLS certificate, one request for the home page over HTTP (its redirect is read, not followed), and the home page over HTTPS (following its redirects, as a browser would). Nothing else on the site is requested. When a domain publishes an MTA-STS policy, its policy file is read too, as mail servers do.

No port scanning, no subdomain discovery, no login attempts, no forms, no testing for vulnerabilities. The robot is slow on purpose and spreads its requests over several hours.

The robot

It identifies itself as PerimetryResearch/1.0 (+https://perimetry.cloud/research/methodology/). If you run a site it visited and would rather it did not, write to hello@perimetry.cloud and we will leave the domain out of the next editions.

The study of universities and higher education establishments

Population: every establishment in the list of the main higher education establishments published by the ministry of Higher Education and Research (“Principaux établissements d’enseignement supérieur”, data.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr, Licence Ouverte 2.0; the licence is checked on every run, and a different one stops it). The list gives each establishment’s type, sector (public or private) and official website; when it gives no website, the official website in Wikidata (P856, CC0) is used, found by the Wikidata identifier the list gives.

Categories: the universities and the establishments the ministry classes with them (by its typology of universities), the other grands établissements (by their type), and the schools, by sector and by what their name says: public engineering schools; public schools of art, architecture and culture; other public establishments (the French schools abroad, the institutes of political studies, the veterinary schools…); private business and management schools; private engineering schools; other private establishments.

The domain graded is the website’s. A site on another organisation’s domain (a school on a subdomain of its university, a programme page of a group of schools, a page of its parent body’s site) is counted, not graded; when several establishments use one domain, the one whose home page is at its root owns it; schools on subdomains of a domain none of them owns (the architecture schools on archi.fr) share it and are graded on none.

The ministry’s list gives no contact address, and none is made up: the check on the contact address does not apply, so the score counts nine checks, and the honour roll asks for all nine. The e-mail checks (SPF, DMARC) are made on the website’s domain, the one whose mail servers (MX) the edition also counts.

The same checks, score and grades as the studies of the communes and of the local authorities, so the three compare. When the home page could not be read over HTTPS (a timeout, a connection cut, often a site refusing robots), HSTS and the protective headers are unknown and left out of the score; an establishment whose home page could not be read is never named.

Small groups: a category, a sector or a region shows no figures below ten graded establishments, and the groups without figures taken together must count ten graded establishments or more (otherwise the smallest groups shown are hidden too, or, for the categories, the hidden ones are left out of the totals and of their sector), so that no figure can be worked out by subtraction. Below thirty graded establishments, a category names its honour roll only, never its best performers, and publishes no score histogram and no quartiles.

The best of a category are named in the categories of thirty graded establishments or more only (in November 2026, the universities and the private engineering schools); ties between equal scores are broken by the number of checks that apply, then by the number of enrolled students the ministry's list gives. The seven architecture schools on archi.fr, which none of them owns, are not graded.

A website the ministry's list gives wrongly (a former domain after a merger, for example) is corrected in a public file of the study (research/universites/site-overrides.json), each correction with its source and its date; the November 2026 edition corrects one: the Université de Toulouse, listed with the former domain of the Université Toulouse III – Paul Sabatier (univ-tlse3.fr), is graded on the domain of its own site (utoulouse.fr), to which the former one redirects.

Good performers only

We name the communes that do well (the honour roll and the best of each size band), never the ones that do badly, and never a commune with a serious issue, whatever its score. Everything else is published as aggregates: by size of commune and by département, where a département with fewer than ten graded communes shows no figures, so that none of them can be singled out.

Website platforms are graded on a sample of up to five communes' sites there: a check counts as passed when most of the sample passes it.

Serious issues are reported privately

Some findings could be used against a commune right away: a domain listed in the official directory that no longer exists (anyone could register it), a registration the registry is deleting, an expired certificate, an SPF record that lets anyone send mail in its name. These are never published. We tell the commune first, quietly, and count them in the study without naming anyone.

Limits

Each edition is a snapshot taken over a few hours. The directory can be out of date or wrong; we use it as published. DKIM keys are looked for on common selectors only, so they are not graded. A site behind a protection service may answer differently to a robot than to a visitor. Mail servers are not tested (STARTTLS needs port 25, which the study's infrastructure cannot reach).

Reuse

The figures of each edition can be downloaded as JSON from the study page. You may reuse them with a link to the study. The underlying directory remains under the Licence Ouverte 2.0 (source: Service-Public.fr, DILA).

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About Perimetry

Perimetry is an open source tool that audits the outside of a domain the way anyone on the internet sees it: e-mail authentication, DNS, certificates, mail servers, websites. Perimetry Cloud is its hosted version, with continuous monitoring, alerts and reports, for organisations and the agencies that look after them.

Cite as: Perimetry Research, Security barometer of French higher education, November 2026. https://perimetry.cloud/research/french-higher-education/

You may reuse the figures of this report with a link to the study. The ministry's list remains under the Licence Ouverte 2.0 (source: ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche, data.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr); Wikidata is under CC0.

Next edition: March 2027, then every quarter.

Contact: hello@perimetry.cloud

`https://perimetry.cloud/research/french-higher-education/`