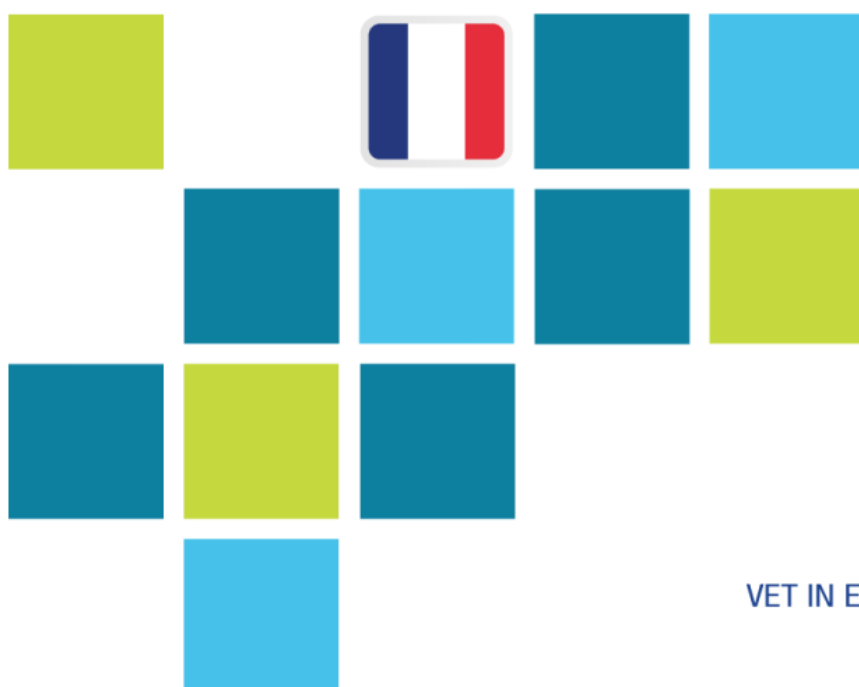

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

FRANCE

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION



VET IN EUROPE 2023

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 - Professional master leading to EQF level 7, ISCED 757 (Master).
 - Qualified engineer master degree leading to EQF level 7, ISCED 756 (titre d'ingénieur diplômé).
 - Degree or certificate in business and management (State-labelled) leading to EQF level 6, ISCED 655 (Diplôme ou certificat d'école de commerce bac+3). Degree or master in business and management (State-labelled) leading to EQF level 7, ISCED 756 (Diplôme ou certificat d'école de commerce bac+5)..
 - Professional qualification certificates (Certificats de qualification professionnelle - CQP). Professional qualification certificates may be acquired as part of an apprenticeship, in different continuing training programmes and through validation of prior learning. They are accessible through a variety of programmes designed for different learner group (the unemployed, employees, the self-employed, specific groups etc.)..

- Professional certificate/title (Titre professionnel). Professional certificates/titles are accessible through a variety of programmes designed for different groups of learners (the unemployed, employees) (see section learning form). They may be acquired as part of an apprenticeship, in continuing training and through validation of prior learning..
- References.

CHAPTER 1.

Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

Summary of main elements

France has a long tradition in vocational education and training (VET); the foundations of continuing VET were laid in the early 1970s. Initial VET is mainly regulated by the Ministries of Education, Youth and Sports and of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. Different ministries develop vocational qualifications valid nationally. Vocational training for adults and the apprenticeship system are under the remit of the Ministry of Labour. France compétences is a four-party national public institution in charge of the funding and regulation of vocational training and apprenticeship.

Initial VET (IVET)

VET at upper secondary level. On leaving lower secondary education, generally at age 15, young learners may opt among the following upper secondary paths (*lycée*):

- general or technological (ISCED 344) 3-year programmes leading to an EQF level 4 general or technological baccalaureate, providing access to tertiary education. The first year is common to both paths, the last two years of technological programmes are vocationally oriented;
- vocational programmes (ISCED 354): leading to a vocational baccalaureate (EQF level 4) in 3 years or a professional skills certificate (CAP, EQF level 3) in 2 years. Both qualifications provide direct access to employment, and the training always includes in-company internship. Graduates may continue in specialisation programmes. Access to tertiary-level VET programmes in related fields is also possible.

Upper secondary education is governed by the Ministry of Education and financed largely by the Ministry of Education and partly by other ministries like agriculture and industry, as well as regional authorities.

VET at tertiary level. The *lycée*-based higher technician curricula provide a 2-year programme leading to the higher technician certificate (BTS, EQF level 5). General and technological baccalaureate graduates can also decide, on completion, to go on to a 3-year professional bachelor programme (EQF level 6) and progress to master level (EQF level 7). Since 2022 they may also enter 3-year University Bachelor of Technology programmes (*Bachelor Universitaire de technologie, BUT*). Technical and vocational studies are offered by *lycées*, universities, technology institutes attached to universities (IUT) and other public or private higher colleges of excellence (*grandes écoles*).

Apprenticeship. Apprenticeship in France is open to young people aged between 16 and 29 and provide comprehensive theoretical (classroom) training in apprentices training centres (*centre de formation des apprentis*, CFA) and practical (on-the-job) training with an apprenticeship contract lasting between 6 months and 3 years. Apprentices can obtain any qualification listed in the National Register of Vocational Qualifications (RNCP), from EQF level 3 (e.g. CAP) to EQF level 7 (e.g. engineer). Apprentices receive a salary and are considered employees. The system is jointly managed by the State, France Compétences and the social partners, with funding coming from compulsory training and apprenticeship contributions from companies, supplemented by regional.

Continuing VET (CVET)

CVET targets those entering or already in the workforce, irrespective of age. Continuing training is mainly aimed at facilitating professional integration, sustaining employment, and fostering upskilling. Employers directly finance employee training, or intermediary expenditures are managed by joint professional bodies for smaller companies. State aid is also available for eligible employers. Regions fund training for jobseekers registered with the public employment service.

The training market is open and adaptive to changing needs of individuals and companies. CVET training linked to the individual training account (CPF) scheme accessible to the (un)employed is quality assured. Only certified providers awarded with the national quality label [Qualiopi](#) may deliver CPF-funded programmes.

Distinctive features

The State ensures the principles of equal opportunities and the right to education; public education is free of charge and secular. The social partners have an essential role in regulatory, political and financial aspects of lifelong learning programmes. They manage different bodies that fund apprenticeship and vocational training schemes for small companies, as well as the unemployment insurance system for jobseekers.

Regions have full authority over vocational training (except apprenticeship), career advice and coordinating job support policies. They develop training policies adapted to their needs, define and manage territorial public policies, and can elaborate their strategies on VET and economic developments.

Lifelong learning aims to facilitate access and secure employment for young people and adults. Companies have an obligation to contribute financially to continuing training of employees. The rate of applicable compulsory contributions is set by law, with some professional branches applying rates above the legal minimum. Any person engaged in working life is entitled to individual rights to training through the personal training account (CPF). The policy intention is to promote social progress and reduce inequalities in access to training. The system is unmediated; by activating the account online, individuals may use their credits to buy training sessions.

State-issued qualifications can be acquired in and outside the education system, in adult learning and through validation processes. Public and private providers, including social partners, may design and offer their own qualifications. However, only vocational qualifications and certificates included in the national registers (RNCP and RS) in line with the quality requirements of the national qualifications system are accessible through CPF-eligible training schemes financed by public or mutualised funds.

CHAPTER 2.

Main challenges and policy responses

National policies aim to better align initial VET with labour market needs, including digital and green skills, and increase VET [attractiveness](#). Training opportunities for skills are [guaranteed](#) for all 16-18-year-olds through schooling, apprenticeship, continuing education, civic service and support for social and professional integration programmes. Financial support for enterprises and low-skilled young people is complemented by targeted support under the [national Youth Plan](#).

In 2023-24, the ongoing [reform](#) of upper secondary paths (*lycées*) is focusing on preventing early school leaving, easing transition from school to work and supporting VET graduates following further education through targeted actions: financial allowance to each learner for internships undertaken during their studies, creation of a business relations office in each *lycée*, acceleration of the adaptation of the training offer and [support measures](#) for programme completion. Professional integration through apprenticeship programmes continues with 14.3% increase on apprenticeship contracts recorded in 2022.

In the field of CVET, upgrading the skills of the least qualified remain high in the policy agenda. In 2023, new programmes are launched through the Investment in Skills Plan ([PIC](#)). The National Agency to Combat Illiteracy is coordinating local support schemes (ESF-funded) aiming to address the high number (1 in 15) of people without basic skills. Moreover, targeted measures under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, which runs until 2026, allocate €15 billion for recruitment subsidies, sustainable professional integration support and 200 000 additional training opportunities in ecological and digital transition jobs. An ambitious national plan to reduce recruitment pressures is being implemented in 2021-23 (EUR 1.4 billion) by the public employment service.

An ambitious national plan to reduce recruitment pressures is being implemented in 2021-23 (EUR 1.4 billion) by the public employment service. At the same time, high level policy discussions were initiated in mid-2023 between the Head of State and social partners to agree on an ambitious social agenda, define career paths and retraining programmes for the (un)employed.

CHAPTER 3.

External factors influencing VET

3.1 Demographics

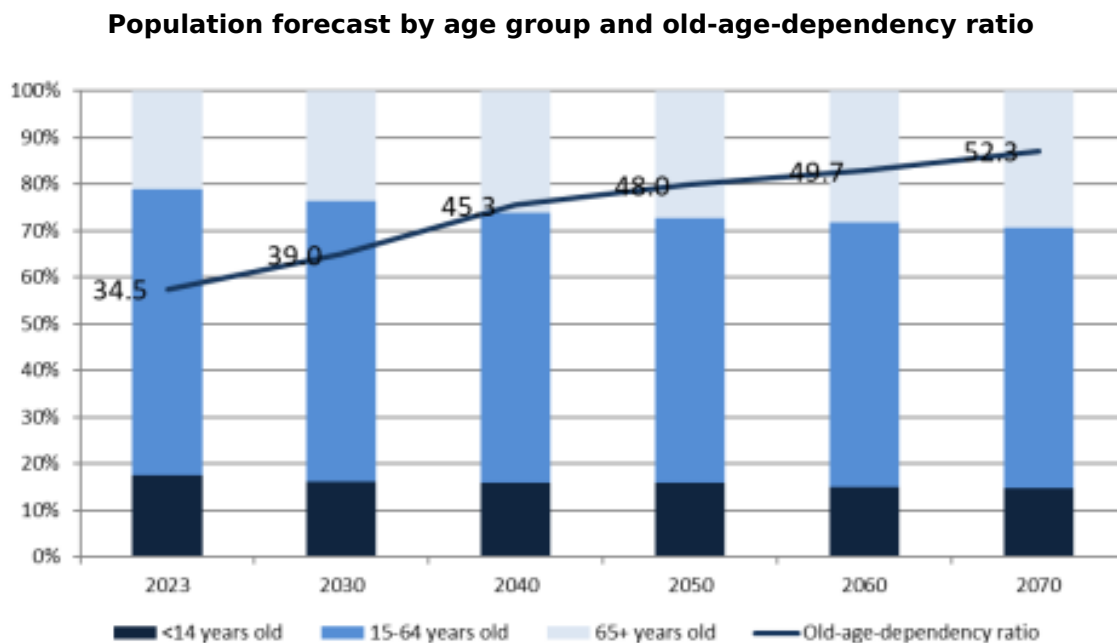
On 1 January 2022, France will have a population of 67.8 million: 65.6 million in mainland France and 2.2 million in the five overseas departments (1).

Population increased by 2% since 2017 (2). This is mainly due to natural growth (France has one of the highest fertility rates in the EU) as well as to positive net migration.

In 2022, almost one tenth (7 million) of the population in the country were immigrants, mainly from Africa (48.2%), Europe (32.3%) and Asia (13.5%).

Immigrants living in France in 2021 who have completed their initial education have, on the whole, lower qualification levels than the population as a whole. 38% of immigrants aged 30-64 have no qualifications, compared with 16% of non-immigrants of the same age. However, for those with higher education qualifications immigrants are just as likely as non-immigrants (25%) to have higher education qualifications (EQF 6 and above) (3).

As people live longer, France's population is ageing. The old-age-dependency ratio is expected to increase from 35 in 2023 to 51 in 2070 (4)(see Figure below).



Source: Eurostat, tps00001 and proj_19ndbi [extracted 12.6.2023].

France's population is ageing: 29.3% of the population is over 65 or over and 14.8% under 15.

3.2 Economics

Large and medium-sized enterprises employ 53.5% of the workforce, although they account for only 0.2% of the total number of registered enterprises. Small and medium-sized enterprises employ 29.1% of the workforce (5).

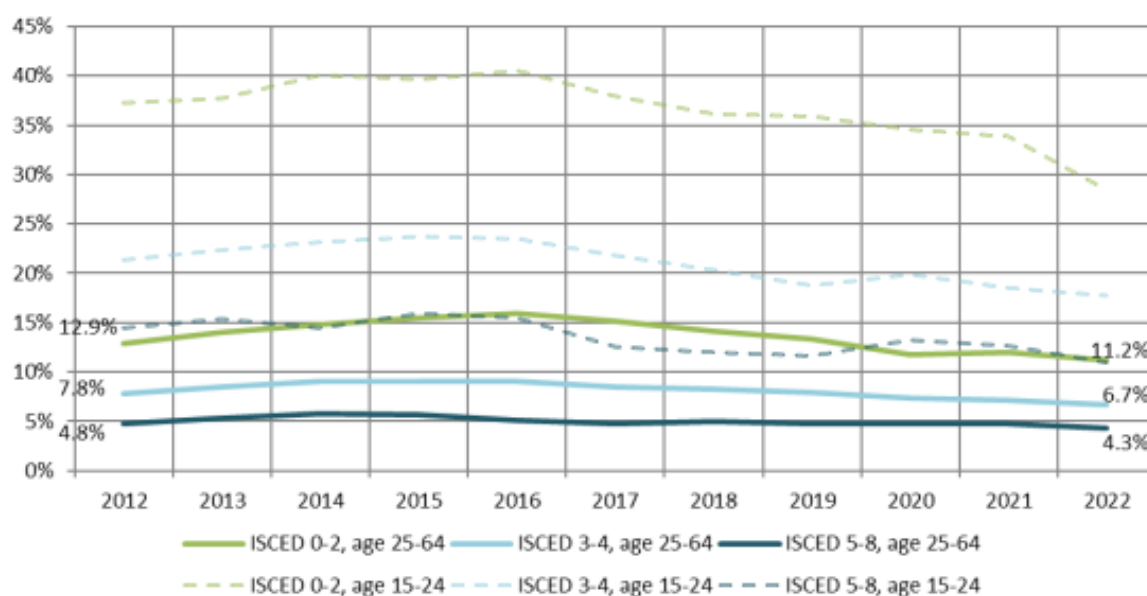
The economy depends primarily on the tertiary sector. The proportion of the different sectors in terms of gross added value generated in 2022 is (6):

- services (commercial and non-commercial) (79.1%), with main branches of activities:
 - mainly commercial services (56.9%);
 - non-market services (22.2%);
- industry (13.3%);
- construction (5.5%);
- agriculture (2.1%).

3.3 Labour market

In 2022, total unemployment rate among population in the labour force aged 25 to 74 (7) in France was 6.1% (compared with 5.4% in the EU-27), a fall of 1.5 percentage points since 2020 (8).

Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 and 25-64) by education attainment level in 2012-2022



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.

ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education. ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary. Education.

ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.

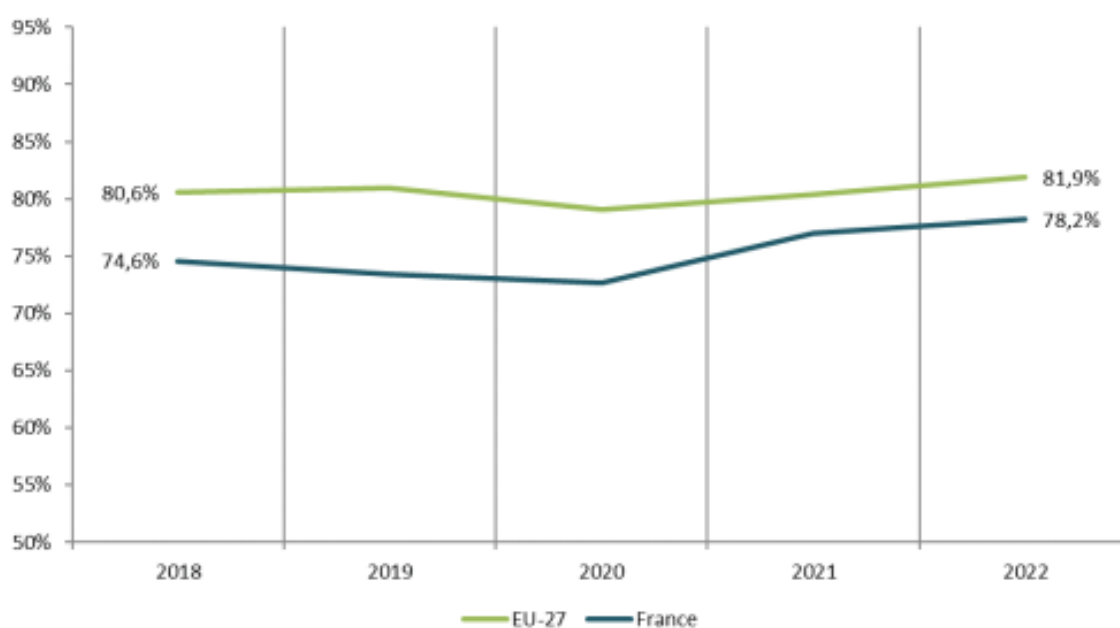
Source: Eurostat, Ifsa_urgaed [extracted 12.10.2023].

The economic crisis had less impact on the evolution of unemployment rates of those with medium-level qualifications (including most VET graduates) and with high-level qualifications than for those with low qualifications. However, the unemployment rate of people with medium-level qualifications, including most VET graduates (ISCED levels 3 and 4) remains higher than in the pre-crisis years.

The unemployment rate of young people (15-24 years old) with low- and medium-level qualifications increased sharply at the beginning of the economic crisis and is still almost three times higher than the general working population. It should be noted that the unemployment rate is not very relevant for 15-24 year olds, as in France many 15-24 year olds are still in education at this age: in 2020-2021, 63.9% of 15-24 year olds were in education.

The employment rate of VET graduates aged 20 to 34 with medium level qualifications has increased from 74.6% in 2018 to 78.7% in 2022 (see figure below).

Employment rate of VET graduates (20 to 34 years old, ISCED levels 3 and 4)



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.

ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

Source: Eurostat, edat_lfse_24 [extracted 12.6.2023].

The increase in employment rate of VET graduates (ISCED 353, 354 and 454) aged 20 to 34 between 2018 and 2022 was +3.6pp; the increase in employment of all those aged 20 to 34 was higher (+4.4 pp) in the same period in France.

For more information about the external drivers influencing VET developments in France please see the case study from Cedefop's changing nature and role of VET in Europe project (9).

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- [1] NB: Data for population as of 1 January; break in series; provisional in 2022. *Source:* Eurostat, tps00001 [extracted 12.10.2023].
 - [2] NB: Data for population as of 1 January; break in series; provisional in 2022. *Source:* Eurostat, tps00001 [extracted 12.10.2023].
 - [3] INSEE (2023) [Immigrés et descendants d'immigrés](#) [Immigrants and descendants of immigrants].
 - [4] Old-age-dependency ratio is defined as the ratio between the number of persons aged 65 and more over the number of working-age persons (15-64). The value is expressed per 100 persons of working age (15-64).
 - [5] Insee. (2023) [Caractéristiques des entreprises selon leur taille en 2021](#) [Characteristics of companies by size in 2021].
 - [6] Insee. (2023). [Valeur ajoutée par branche](#) [Added value by sector]
 - [7] Percentage of active population, aged 25 to 74.
 - [8] Eurostat table une_rt_a [extracted 12.6.2023].

CHAPTER 4.

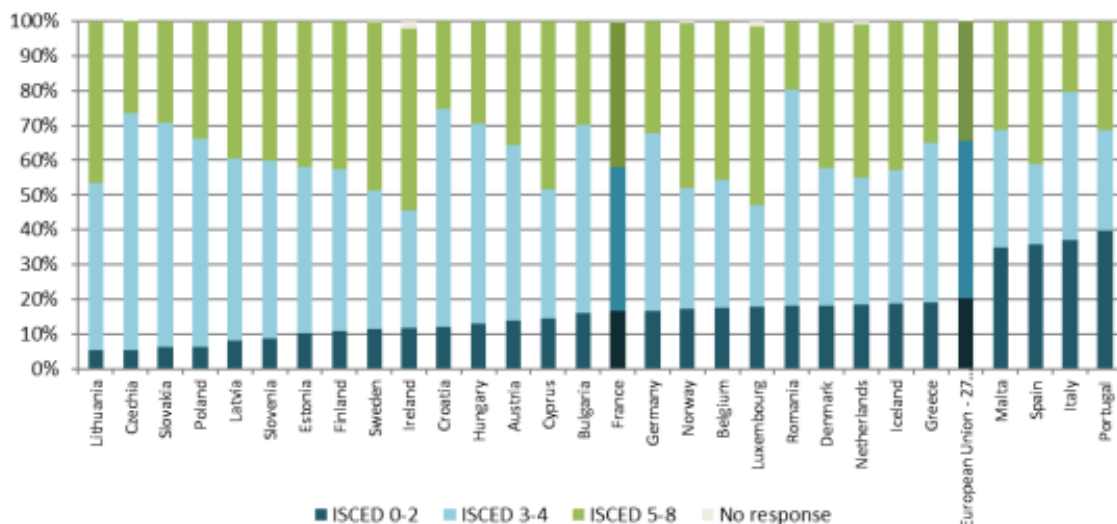
Education attainment

4.1 Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

Young people, particularly those aged 20-24, appear to be better educated than the EU-27 average and the proportion of young people with low qualifications is lower: in 2022, 10% of 20-24 year olds will have less than upper secondary diploma, compared with an EU-27 average of 16.4%, placing France among the 10 countries with the lowest proportion of 20-24 year olds with low qualifications.

In 2022, most people in the age group 25-64 in France have a medium-level qualification (41.5%, against 45.2% in the EU) while the share of those with high-level qualifications (41.5%) is higher than the EU average (34.2%). The share of people with no or low-level qualifications (16.6%) is below the EU-28 average (20.5%)

Population (aged 25 to 64) by highest education level attained in 2020



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; Low reliability for 'No response' in Czechia and Latvia

ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.

ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.

Source: Eurostat, Ifsa_pgaed [extracted 12.6.2023].

For more information about VET in higher education in France please see the case study from Cedefop's changing nature and role of VET in Europe project (10).

4.3 VET learners by level

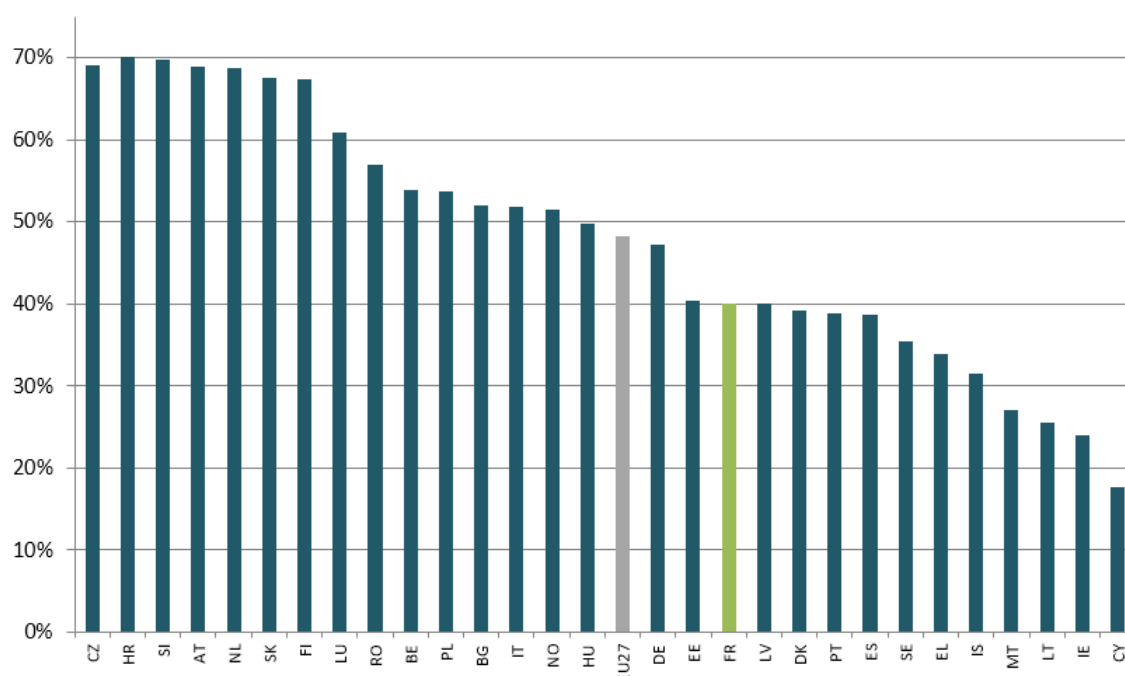
Pupils enrolled in VET programmes by level of education in 2020-21

Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Post-secondary non-tertiary	Short-cycle tertiary
Not applicable	40.1 %	43.4 %	100 %

Source : Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs01, educ_uoe_enrs04 and educ_uoe_enrs07, EDUC_UOE_ENRT02, data extracted 23.8.2023

The share of students enrolled in VET in upper secondary education rose by 0.2 pp between 2017 and 2021, whereas the share of VET students in post-secondary education decreased by 13.7 pp during the same period.

Share of initial VET learners from total learners at upper secondary level (ISCED level 3), 2021



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011.

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs04 [extracted 1.11.2023].

In 2021, 40.1% of all upper secondary students were enrolled in VET (48.3% in the EU27) (see figure above).

4.4 Female share

The rates of access to training for men and women are very close. In the academic years 2019, 2020 and 2021, there were more men than women among students who left initial education with a vocational qualification (such as CAP/EQF level 3, a vocational baccalaureate/EQF level 4

or BTS, DUT /EQF level 5) (see figure below).

Breakdown of young people at the end of initial education and training according to their highest diploma

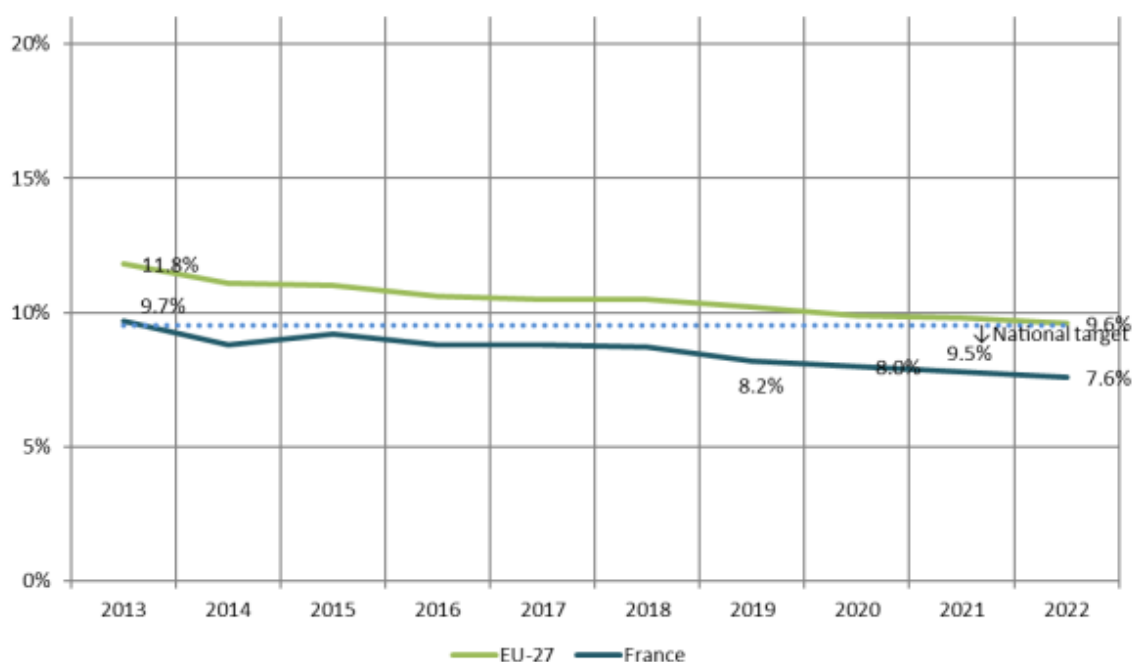
Diploma	Average in %		
	Total	Women	Men
Master, PhD	18	22	14
Advanced schools	8	8	8
Bachelors	15	17	12
BTS, DUT and equivalent	12	11	13
Total with higher education degrees	53	57	47
General baccalaureat	8	9	7
Technological Baccalaureat	5	5	6
Vocational baccalaureat and equivalent	16	14	19
CAP, BEP ou équivalent	9	7	10
Total with upper secondary qualifications (including delivered as apprenticeship)	38	35	41
National lower secondary diploma (Diplôme national du Brevet - DNB)	5	4	6
No qualification	5	3	6
Total DNB and no qualifications	10	8	12
Total leaving initial education	100	100	100

Source: DEPP (2023). Repères et références statistiques, fiche 7.36 [Benchmarks and statistical references, annex 7.36]

4.5 Early leavers from education and training

The share of early leavers from education and training has decreased by 2.1 percentage points, 9.7% to 7.6% between 2013 and 2022. The EU average rate has fallen from 11.8% to 9.6% over the same period. The common European target for 2030 is to achieve less than 9% of early leavers from education and training. France has therefore already gone beyond the European target. Another indicator complements the new European early leaving target and its monitoring indicator: the share of 20-24 year olds with at least upper secondary education. In 2022, the young people aged 20-24 with at least upper secondary educational attainment level were 90% in France against 83.9% in the EU (11).

Early leavers from education and training in 2013-22



NB: Share of the population aged 18 to 24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training; break in series.

Source: Eurostat, edat_ifse_14 [extracted 12.6.2023] and European Commission:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/2018-european-semester-national-reform-programmes-and-stability-convergence-programmes_en [extracted 14.11.2018].

National authorities have an obligation to support young people aged 16 to 18 without a diploma and unemployed. There is a training scheme, not leading to qualifications, to support reintegration of early leavers from education and training. The service includes for all beneficiaries:

- a personalised interview to assess needs, skills and level of education;
- a training offer and personalised support (a tutor from national education during the training course).

Teaching and administrative staff in upper secondary schools involved in the initiative to reduce dropouts from education and training (*Mission de lutte contre le décrochage*, [MLCD](#)) may follow relevant training to acquire the necessary skills (MLCD certificate).

Since 2020, the law provides for the right of every young person between the ages of 16 and 18 to be able to take part in a course adapted to his or her needs. This training obligation goes beyond the right to return to initial education and training or the right to continuing training; it includes training through employment, civic service and other support or social and professional integration schemes.

The national youth guarantee scheme (*garantie jeunes*) targets young people with low education and/or disadvantaged socio-economic background.

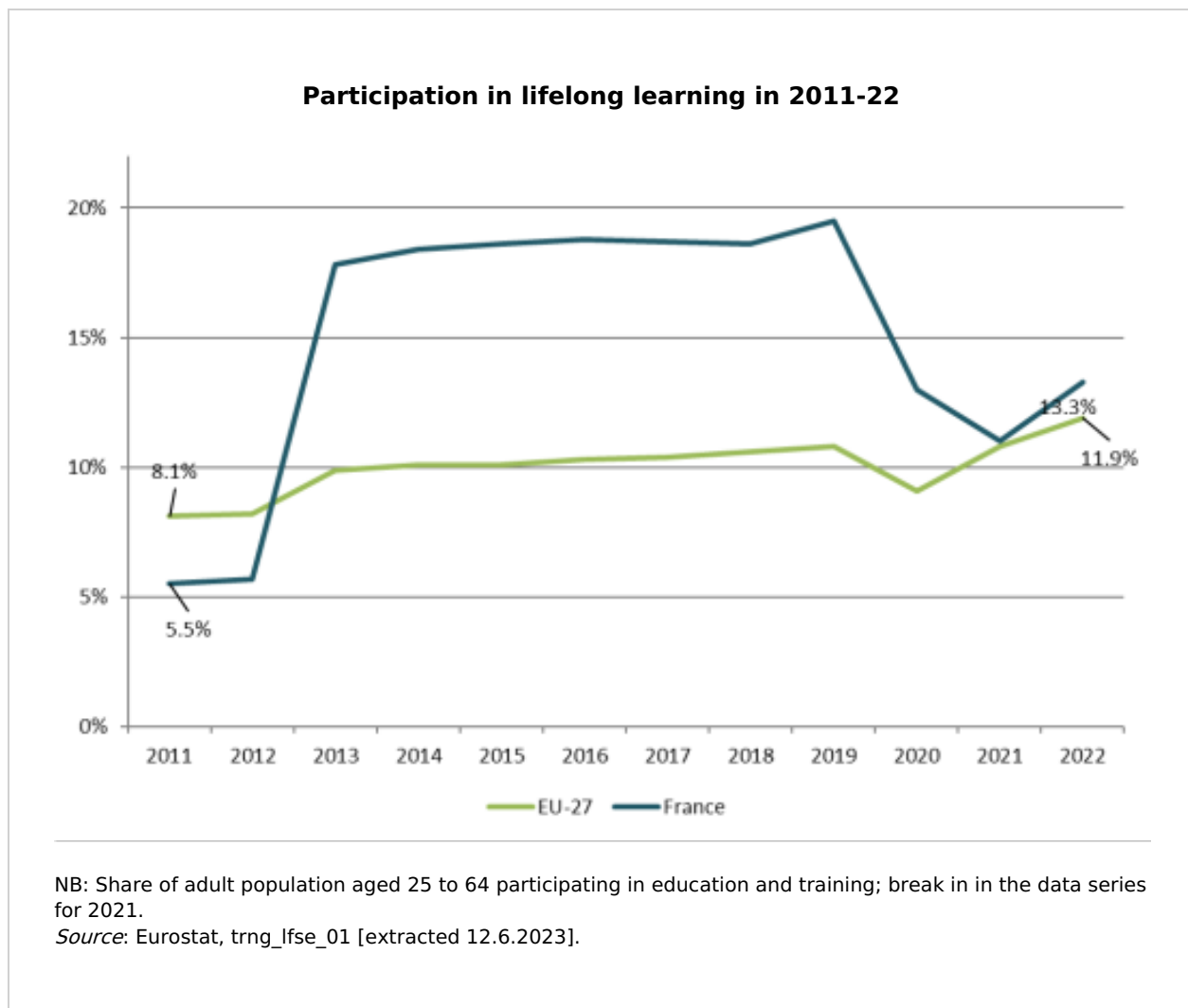
The Investment in skills plan ([PIC](#)), launched in 2017 to train 1 million young people and support their access to employment, was continued in 2023 with dedicated funding for projects targeting

early school leavers.

For more information visit [Cedefop project page on tackling early leaving](#) and our interactive toolkits: [Cedefop VET toolkit for tackling early leaving](#) and [Cedefop VET toolkit for empowering NEETs](#).

4.6 Participation in lifelong learning

Lifelong learning (*formation tout au long de la vie*) is a national obligation of the State. It covers both initial education and training (general, technological/professional and vocational streams, including apprenticeship) as well as continuing vocational training for adults and young people already engaged in working life (12).



Participation in lifelong learning was stable from 2014 to 2018 and much higher than the EU average, it then increased until 2019, reaching 19.5%. It falls in the first two years of the pandemic and starts to rise again from 2021, reaching 13.3% in 2022, still higher than in the EU27 (11.9% in 2022).

4.7 VET learners by age

Breakdown of young people enrolled in vocational education and training by age, 2020-21

	Less than 15 years	15-20 years	20-24 years	25 years or over
Isced 35	0	90	9	5
Isced 45	0	56	26	27
Isced 5	0	78	33	5
Isced 65 and 75	0	30	64	21
Isced 8	0	0	13	87

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs05, educ_uoe_enrs08 and educ_uoe_enrt02 [extracted 23.8.2023]

Among young learners enrolled in upper secondary VET (e.g. vocational baccalaureate, CAP programmes) in 2020-21, 90% are aged between 15 and 20. Learners in this age range account for 56% of those enrolled in post-baccalaureate non-tertiary vocational education for the same school year. The 15-20 age group also predominates in short cycle higher education (e.g. BTS, DUT), accounting for 78% of enrolments at this level. In professional bachelor's and master's programs, students aged 20-24 outnumber others.

[11] Eurostat [yth_educ_030](#) [extracted 1.11.2023]

[12] French Ministry of National Education and Youth. (n.a). [La formation tout au long de la vie](#) [The Lifelong learning system in France]

CHAPTER 5.

VET within education and training system

The following levels are included in initial education and training:

- pre-primary (ISCED level 0);
- primary education for children aged 6-11, (ISCED level 1);
- lower secondary education for learners aged 12-16 in *collèges* (ISCED level 2);
- upper secondary education for learners aged 16-18 (ISCED level 3);
- short-cycle higher education (ISCED level 5) and higher education (ISCED levels 6, 7 and 8).

Education is compulsory for all children aged between 3 and 16 residing in French territory, regardless of their nationality. It concerns 3 years of pre-primary education, 5 years of primary education and 4 years of lower secondary education delivered in junior high schools (*collèges*).

During the 2022-23 school year, 5 653 843 pupils were in secondary public and government dependant private institutions in mainland France and in the overseas territories (13).

In initial education, each pathway prepares students for an exam to obtain a qualification. State-issued (vocational) qualifications, certificates and diplomas offered in initial education are listed in the national register of vocational and professional qualifications (RNCP) and may also be achieved in apprenticeship and in continuing training.

Lower secondary offers general education, but vocational courses preparing students to enter an apprenticeship are also offered. At the end of the cycle, learners pass an exam to obtain the end of lower secondary education certificate (*diplôme national du brevet*) which is not essential to access upper secondary.

In upper secondary (three years, learners aged 16-18) learners may choose between

- the general path leading to the end of secondary education general exam (and *Baccalauréat* degree), opening up access to higher education (university sector) and tertiary level studies provided by other institutions;
- the technological path leading to the technological baccalaureate which opens up the possibility to follow VET studies offered at EQF levels 5 or 6;
- the vocational path that includes different possibilities, such as a 2-year path to obtain a professional skills certificate at EQF level 3 (*certificate d'aptitude professionnelle*, CAP) and a 3-year path leading to a vocational baccalaureate at EQF level 4 (BAC-pro). Those with a CAP may also continue in a 2-year school-based programme to receive the applied arts certificate (*Brevet des métiers d'art* - EQF level 4) or enter the 3rd year of a vocational baccalaureate programme. Graduates with a CAP or a BAC-pro may enrol in 1-year specialisation programmes leading to certification (*Mention complémentaire*). Vocational baccalaureate graduates can enrol in short-cycle higher education, and there are places reserved for them in higher technician certificate programmes (*Brevet de technicien supérieur*; BTS, EQF level 5).

The vocational path offers reinforced career information and guidance, new teaching methodologies to ease their transition to further studies or the labour market (14) including:

- personalised support: assessment test in grade 10 to identify individual needs and teacher

support throughout programme completion (192.5 hours and 265 hours respectively in the 2-year and the 3-year programmes);

- gradual introduction to trades: vocational subjects are structured around a set of skills common in a professional area within 14 trades (*familles des métiers*); such grouping allows those entering vocational studies to acquire useful professional skills and sufficient knowledge of a range of related areas of expertise before choosing a speciality at the end of the year;
- a project-based individual or collective multidisciplinary assignment (*chef d'oeuvre*): this covers 165 hours and 108 hours respectively in the 2- and the 3-year programmes; its aim is to provide evidence of the skills and competences learners have acquired in the intended professional field. It is accessed as part of the final qualification exam;
- shared teaching by general and vocational subject teachers in vocational schools aims to familiarise learners with general education should they wish to continue at tertiary level studies (165 hours in the 2-year CAP programmes and 128 hours in the 3-year vocational baccalaureate programmes);
- a specific guidance programme delivered in grade 12 with two options, one for transition to the workplace and another to continue in higher education (via *parcoursup*, which is the centralised application procedure for admission to higher education);
- easing mobility experiences abroad for both IVET learners in school-based programmes and those enrolled in apprenticeship training centres (CFA);
- promote links with the regional Trades and Qualifications Campuses. Campuses are dedicated spaces for learning and innovation. They bring together VET institutions, CFAs and research centres, training organisations, technological platforms, business start-ups and hubs, companies and not for profit organisations working in a given economic sector to promote synergies and collaboration for job creation in local economies.

In tertiary non-academic education a 2-year programme is offered in an advanced technician section in vocational high schools leading to the higher technician certificate (*Brevet de technicien supérieur*, BTS, EQF level 5).

Professional bachelor (EQF level 6) and master (EQF level 7) programmes are also offered in parallel to higher education academic studies (EQF levels 6 to 8); the latter are delivered in universities and in public or private higher colleges of excellence (*grandes écoles*). University technological institutes (IUTs), attached to universities offer as of 2021/22a 3-year EQF level 6 programme delivering the university bachelor of technology (*Bachelor Universitaire de Technologie*; B.U.T); the programme integrates as intermediate degree the undergraduate 2-year EQF level 5 technology certificate (*diplôme universitaire de technologie*, DUT), previously offered as a stand-alone programme.

In **Initial VET** the following learning forms are available:

- full-time education in classrooms; work-based learning in school-based VET, length varies depending on the type and education level of the programme:
 - 50% in upper secondary VET programmes (BAC-pro, CAP)

(15)

- .
- 10% in professional bachelor programmes;
- up to 50% in professional master programmes.
- work-based learning delivered as apprenticeship. This type of learning is delivered partly in apprenticeship training centres (CFA) and partly in companies under an apprenticeship (employment) contract.
 - the share of work-based learning (in-company practical training) is 67%.

Types of learning in school-based programmes:

- classroom theoretical vocational learning;

- practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor;
- project work;
- internships in companies.

Learning forms in continuing VET:

Lifelong learning (*formation tout au long de la vie*) is a national obligation. It includes both initial education and training (general, technological and vocational streams, including apprenticeship) offered from upper secondary to higher education levels; and continuing vocational training for adults and young people already engaged in working life (16). Under this concept, vocational education and training is offered as:

- initial vocational training for young people, including apprenticeship; it is offered from upper secondary to tertiary education enabling young people to obtain qualifications for the labour market;
- continuing vocational training for young people who have left or completed initial education (17) and to adult employees, job seekers, civil servants, self-employed workers and business owners. It promotes and supports labour market (re)integration, encourages skills and career development through acquiring new qualifications and contributes to economic and cultural development and social advancement;
- a scheme that allows adults to gain vocational qualifications through lifelong learning and validation of non-formal and informal learning (*validation des acquis de l'expérience, VAE*).

Since the 2009 [act on lifelong guidance and vocational training](#), every working person has a right to a professional qualification. Under this right, the (self-) employed and job seekers may choose a training course that enables them to progress in a career by at least one level, by acquiring a qualification corresponding to the short- or medium-term needs of the economy. This qualification should either be

- included in the national register of vocational and professional qualifications (RNCP - *Répertoire National des Certifications Professionnelles*);
- recognised in the professional sector classifications;
- a certificate of professional qualifications (CQP) recognised by the branches.

The legal definition of training action was broadened ([Law 2018-771 of 5 September 2018](#)) to include position tests, distance learning and on-the-job training (*Action de formation en situation de travail, AFEST*).

The State is the only body that develops qualifications that can be accessed through initial education. All the qualifications developed by the State can also be accessed via lifelong learning and validation of non-formal and informal learning (VAE- *validation des acquis de l'expérience*).

Beside IVET programmes offered in initial education, leading to qualifications issued and recognised by the State, different bodies offer training programmes leading to sectoral qualifications and certificates issued by them.

It is possible to acquire a vocational qualification, certificate or diploma offered in initial education, through apprenticeship, continuing vocational training, and validation of non-formal and informal learning (18). A qualification acquired through continuing vocational training has exactly the same value as the same one obtained in initial education.

[14] The 2018 reform of the upper secondary VET path was initiated in 2028 as part of the national skill strategy, it was gradually developed and implemented in line with the regional development strategy, in place since 2021.

[15] For students preparing for a CAP or Bac-pro under school-based status, the periods of training in the workplace (*Périodes de formation en milieu professionnel, PFMP*) are defined as follows: CAP from 12 to 14 weeks, representing between 16.7% and 19.4% of

the teaching programme; Bac-pro: from 18 to 22 weeks, representing between 16.7% and 20.3% of the teaching programme "([Order of 21 November 2018, article 3](#)). 30% in tertiary VET programmes (BTS).

- [16] French Ministry of National Education and Youth. (n.a). [La formation tout au long de la vie](#) [The Lifelong learning system in France]
- [17] Initial education includes pre-elementary to higher education levels.
- [18] [Art L335-5 du Code de l'éducation](#) [Article L335-5 of the Code of Education]

CHAPTER 6.

Apprenticeship

The aim of apprenticeships is to provide young people aged 16 to 29 with general, theoretical and practical training, between 6 months and 3 years, to acquire one VET qualification ranging from the CAP (EQF level 3) to the title of engineer (EQF level 7).

All VET qualifications offered in school-based and classroom VET programmes may be obtained in apprenticeship; in the latter case, the duration of training in an apprenticeship training center (CFA) cannot be less than 25% of the total duration of the contract.

Apprentices receive a salary and are considered employees. Their education and training combine on-the-job training in the business that employs them with classroom training in CFAs.

Since the [2018 reform](#) of the continuing training system, apprenticeship training centres (CFAs) have the same obligations and quality standards as those for CVET training centres and a new funding model for is in place for the delivery of apprenticeship contracts.

The apprenticeship system is managed by the State (legislation & financial aid), companies (financing), France Compétences (market regulation) and social partners (definition of training costs per branch and prepared qualification).

At the end of November 2022, there were 979,700 apprentices, up 14.0% year-on-year. The number of apprentices at level 3 and level 4 is growing strongly (+15.8 and +8.6% respectively), but the growth is even more marked in higher education (+58.6%) compared to 2019-2020: +41.4% for level EQF level 5 and +73.9% for training at level EQF level 6, 7 and 8.

The development of the mobility of apprentices abroad is a priority, with a legal framework aimed at facilitating their European and international mobility.

For the cross-border mobility of apprentices with neighbouring countries, a decree of December 2022 defines the procedures for organising, implementing and financing mobilities. In this context, a bilateral agreement was signed with Germany in July 2023.

Learn more about apprenticeships in the national context from the European database on apprenticeship schemes by Cedefop: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/scheme-fiches>

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- [22] Copanef (National Inter-professional Committee for Employment and Training - *Comité paritaire interprofessionnel national pour l'emploi et la formation*), Cnefop (National Council for Employment, Vocational training and Guidance - *Conseil national de l'emploi, de la formation et de l'orientation professionnelle*), FPSPP (Joint Fund for professional career security - *Fonds paritaire de sécurisation des parcours professionnels*) and CNCV (National Committee on Vocational Qualification - *Commission nationale de certification professionnelle*).
- [23] French employers can organise collective training for their employees. All these training sessions are presented in a specific document, the skill development or training plans.

CHAPTER 7.

VET governance

Governance of the French VET system

Vocational training in France is a matter of shared competences between the State, the regions and representatives of the business world.

At State-level, initial VET is mainly regulated by the Ministries of Education and Higher Education. Different ministries develop and award VET qualifications, certificates and diplomas valid nationally. Vocational training for adults is under the remit of the Ministry of Labour.

Initial vocational education and continuing vocational training are managed by different ministries, have different funding sources and even different objectives. There are qualifying requirements for VET teachers and trainers, and various funding IVET schemes.

IVET

Governance of initial VET

Initial education covers all levels of education from pre-primary to higher education. Initial VET is offered from upper secondary to higher education.

The Ministry of Education and other ministries that develop VET qualifications in their remit:

- develop standards for IVET qualifications, certificates and diplomas in consultation with business representatives;
- define examination regulations;
- issue/award VET qualifications and diplomas;
- offer various types of training in their institutions for school learners and apprentices;
- recruit, train and pay teachers;
- monitor quality of training and training delivery (results and resources used).

The Regions are responsible for the planning and coherence of vocational training in their territories, except for apprenticeship provision. They define their policies according to their economic and social priorities, in consultation with the State and the social partners.

Social partners are the main stakeholders systematically involved in VET implementation. They:

- contribute to the elaboration of VET qualifications;
- participate in examination boards;
- offer in-company training;
- contribute financially to VET provision (technological and vocational training paths) by paying the apprenticeship tax.
- Manage the skills operators (*opérateurs de compétences*, OPCOs) joint bodies organised by professional sectors (see below, CVET governance);
- manage a training scheme linked to the personal training account mechanism (*CPF de transition professionnelle*) that enables employees to access long-duration retraining actions for career change or transition;
- roll out the vocational certificate Cléa, an inter-professional vocational certificate attesting to proficiency in key competences. In practice, ministerial advisory professional committees are formed with the participation of social partners to plan the revision of VET qualifications in line with labour market needs.

The **national commission for collective bargaining** (CNNC) issues opinions on draft legislation (laws, decrees, ordinances) for employment policies, guidance, IVET and CVET policies and training actions financed through calls (training plans) organised by the State (art. [L2227-1](#) of the Labour Code).

IVET providers

IVET is offered from upper secondary to tertiary/higher education in public and private establishments. In upper secondary three paths are offered: general, technological and vocational (respectively, teaching staff specialise as upper secondary teacher, technological path teacher and VET teacher).

In 2022, among all public and government dependant private upper secondary schools (3 634 in total, excluding regional establishments of adapted education (*établissements régionaux d'enseignement adapté*, EREA), more than half (2 082) deliver VET programmes in vocational and multi-purpose upper secondary schools (*lycées professionnels*, *lycées polyvalents*). In 2020-21, 40 % of all upper-secondary learners follow VET (19).

Upper secondary VET prepares learners for VET qualifications at EQF level 3 and 4; in an advanced technician section learners may also prepare an advanced technician certificate (BTS) (EQF level 5).

Higher education comprises:

- universities, public establishments which do not have selection processes;
- university technology institutes (IUTs) attached to universities offering studies leading to a university bachelor of technology (BUT, EQF level 6);
- a non-university sector made up of higher education elite establishments (*Grandes Ecoles*), which are only accessible via competitive entrance competitions, and preparatory classes for those establishments (20).

CVET

Governance of continuing VET

The vocational training system is managed within the framework of a 'four-party system': the State, the Regions and the social partners (employer representatives and trade unions) contribute to the development and implementation of continuing vocational training and national apprenticeship policy.

The State develops the standards and strategies for vocational training. It guides CVET/apprenticeship policies in order to secure professional careers and access to employment. Three ministries are particularly concerned with continuing vocational training and apprenticeship:

- the Ministry of Labour prepares and implements the Government's policy on [labour, employment and vocational training](#);
- the Ministry of National Education is involved in CVET through public schools, which can pool their resources to provide a diversified offer for CVET (21);
- the Ministry of higher education, research and innovation. Lifelong learning is well established in Universities. As an example, the network Lifelong training in universities (*Formation continue à l'université*, FCU), gathers 100 higher education training providers, which train around 480 000 trainees per year.

The [2018](#) Law for the freedom to choose one's professional future established France Compétences, a new governance and monitoring body on VET implementation and financing. France Compétences is a single, four-party public institution operating under the supervision of the Minister in charge of vocational training that replaced and absorbed several national organisations (22). France Compétences distributes the mutual fund envelopes and ensures the

equalisation of apprenticeship funds (collected by social security bodies ([URSSAF](#)) to skills operators (*Opérateurs de compétences* (former OPCA), [OPCO](#)) and the regions. Skills operators manage two envelopes, the financing of alternance training programmes (apprenticeship contracts and professionalisation contracts) and the financing of the training plan for companies (23) with less than 50 employees.

The Regions are in charge of

- training specific audiences previously under the responsibility of the State (people with illiteracy, people with disabilities, prisoners, French people living outside France);
- appointing operators to provide professional development advice, as part of the regional public guidance services;
- organising and financing the regional public service for vocational training (Art. L214-12 à L214-16-2 of the Code of Education).

Social partners have an essential role in regulatory, policy and financial aspects of lifelong learning programmes (IVET and CVET). They:

- sign inter-professional agreements which are used in shaping reforms and are reflected in legislative and regulatory documents;
- manage 11 bodies called 'skills operators' (OPCOs - *Opérateurs de compétences*) organised by professional sector. Among their tasks, skills operators can help benefit from mutual funds the SMEs employing fewer than 50 persons, to develop training programmes for their employees (*plans de développement des compétences*). OPCOs are also responsible for developing apprenticeship and funding the training costs of apprenticeship pathways leading to a qualification;
- manage the personal training account for career transition (*CPF de transition professionnelle*) scheme through the regional associations Transition pro, and the national association Certif'Pro, that also rolls out the vocational certificate Cléa (attesting key competences).
- contribute to the development of diplomas by taking part in boards of examiners.

CVET training - main characteristics

Continuing vocational training comprises lifelong learning programmes and training schemes for vulnerable groups. It targets the unemployed and people already engaged in working life (private sector employees, civil servants, self-employed). The aim of CVET is to support workers to adapt more quickly to the changing labour market needs and acquire a (new) VET qualification. There are various routes and progression opportunities while training is offered from a range of VET providers. The type of training programme depends on the status of the beneficiary. A list of available lifelong learning programmes is presented in the table below.

Lifelong learning programmes by target groups, objectives

Programme name	Target group	Target qualification
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Programme name	Target group	Target qualification
Professionalisation contract* (<i>contrat de professionnalisation</i>)	Young people Jobseekers People on basic welfare benefits	- State-issued diplomas and vocational certificates registered in the RNCP; - Certificates of professional qualifications (CPQs), created by the social partners; - Vocational qualifications recognised in the classification of registered collective agreement (non-RNCP registered)
skill development training plans (<i>plan de développement des compétences</i>)	Employees	These training initiatives mainly aim to adapt, develop, acquire, maintain or enhance skills
Promotion or career transition through apprenticeship (<i>Reconversion ou promotion par alternance, Pro-A</i>)	Mainly employees	This programme lead to a recognised diploma, title or qualification
Retraining scheme for career transition (<i>Transitions collectives, TransCo</i>)	Employees in threatened jobs	- All training leading to qualifications enabling to apply for jobs in demand for the future (<i>métiers porteurs</i>); a list of such jobs is established (offered) at regional level - the CléA certificate attesting to proficiency in basic knowledge and vocational skills
CPF (personal training account)- eligible schemes (<i>Compte personnel de formation, CPF</i>)	Employees, jobseekers, unqualified young people	-all qualifications registered in the RNCP, as well as units/blocks of RNCP qualifications; -qualifications complementary to a profession or attesting basic knowledge and skills registered in the RS; - the driving licence

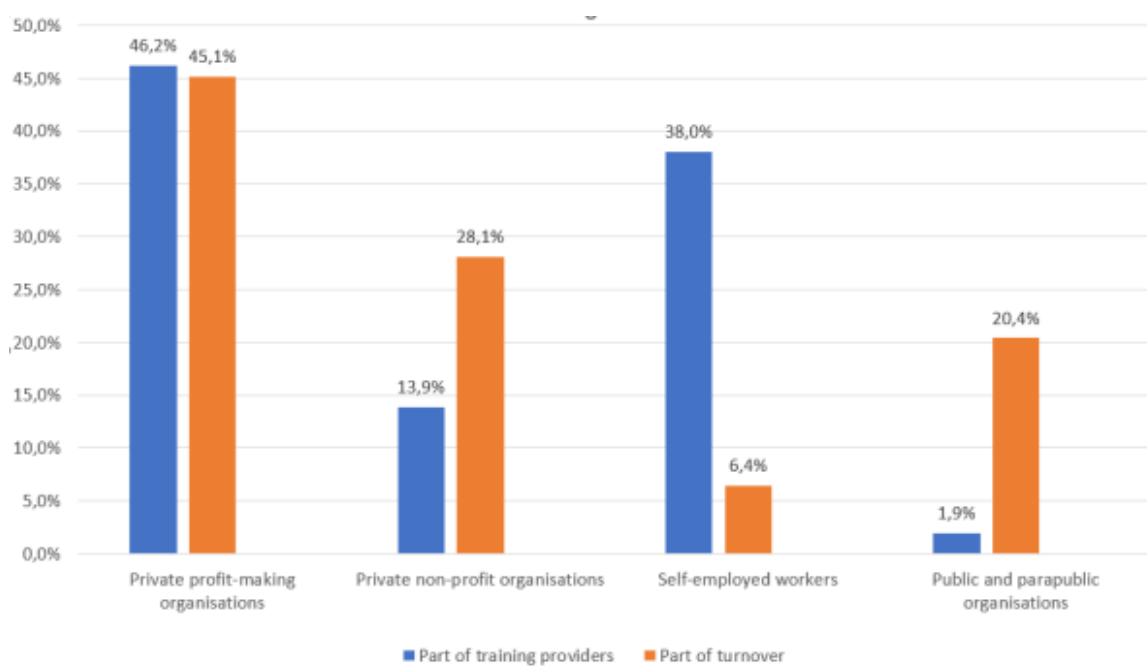
Programme name	Target group	Target qualification
CPF-career transition (CPF- <i>projet de transition professionnelle</i>)	Employees, jobseekers who have previously held a temporary contract	All nationally recognised certifications included in the national registers: - RNCP qualifications, as well as units/blocks of RNCP qualifications; - qualifications complementary to a profession or attesting basic knowledge and skills listed in the specific register (RS)
Courses funded by the Region	Mainly jobseekers, sometimes employees	Courses leading to and preparing for qualifications, professional development courses Social and professional integration courses
Courses funded by local job centres		Jobseeker courses for qualifications, Professional development, Job adaptation

Source: [Appendix to the finance white paper 2022 - Vocational training](#)

CVET providers

The training market in France is free. In 2022, around 87 800 CVET providers had a turnover of EUR 27.6 billion (+11% compared to 2021).

Breakdown of the number of training providers, learners and annual turnover by status of training providers (%), 2020



Source : [Appendix of the draft budget bill - October 2023](#).

Employment policies relevant to VET

A major investment plan for a skills society 2018-23 (*Le Grand plan d'investissement 2018-2022*) aims to train 1 million low-skilled jobseekers. This plan is implemented in the form of national calls for projects and regional skills investment pacts (24).

There are several training schemes targeting the low qualified. They aim to facilitate (re)integration into the labour market, leading or not to a qualification; the most representative are:

- support scheme for NEET's (people not in employment, education or training) aged 16-18 to reengage in education and training;
- the youth plan '1 young person, 1 solution, part of the recovery plan ([Plan Relance](#)), which includes measures in place for the training and professional integration of young people aged 16-25. In the [online](#) dedicated platform, young people may find information on employment opportunities, internships, apprenticeships, as well as housing and support solutions.
- supporting measures through the national youth guarantee scheme, which is integrated into the investment plan for a skills society 2018-22 and received increased funding;
- a training scheme for teachers and school staff on strategies/tools to prevent dropouts, leading to a certificate (award);
- the [CléA](#), an inter-professional certificate attesting to proficiency in basic knowledge and vocational skills. The scheme is leading funded certification in CPF training (see [incentives for learners](#));
- key competences schemes to acquire basic skills (written comprehension and expression, introduction to a foreign language, mathematics and basic scientific and technological skills,

numeracy, learning to learn skills); the schemes are implemented by the regions and target job seekers and young people aged 16-25.

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- [20] *Grance ecoles* are tertiary education institutions of excellence operating in limited fields (public administration, science and engineering, humanities and business administration). Access to *Grandes Ecoles* programmes is possible through a competitive and selective admission procedure (upper secondary - *Baccalaureate* - graduates, pre-selected based on their school profile and grades, must undertake preparatory classes in a 2-year programme with eliminatory examinations at the end of each year). Higher education in French is free, but only the State may issue university degrees and diplomas. Private HE institutions must be accredited or State-labelled (for a validity of 6 years), through the Commission d'évaluation des formations et diplômes de gestion (CEFDG). The State-approved label is a recognition procedure conducted by the Ministry of National Education which gives the diploma the value of a national qualification. The label is granted for a maximum renewable period of 6 years. *Grandes écoles* offering programmes leading to business and management qualifications are mainly private institutions managed by professional organisations. A State-approved qualification provides access to the LMD cycle (*Licence-Master-Doctorat*), whether in France or abroad.
- [21] The GRETA (Groupements d'Établissements), public educational establishment groups created by the Ministry of National Education, are among the main public providers involved in lifelong learning programmes.
- [26] *Le Grand plan d'investissement 2018-2022*, <https://www.gouvernement.fr/action/le-grand-plan-d-investissement-2018-2022>
- [24] Ministry of Labour. (2017). *Plan d'investissement 2018-2022 : former 2 millions de demandeurs d'emploi* [The Investment in skills plan 2018 -22 : training 2 million job seekers]

CHAPTER 8.

VET financing mechanisms

IVET funding

According to national data, education funding includes:

- teaching and training (including in apprenticeships);
- administration of the education system;
- education research;
- catering and lodging, counselling and medical service;
- transportation, purchase of books and other educational materials;
- transfers (scholarships and other);
- research and development (limited to pedagogical and university research).

All funding sources combined, expenses for initial general, technological and vocational education (from pre-primary to tertiary level) were estimated, in 2021, at EUR 168.8 billion.

Funding of initial education and training, 2021

Funding category	Share of total funding
Teaching and training	85.9%
Catering and lodging	7.0%
Administration, guidance, transports and other expenses	7.1%

Source: DEPP (2023). [Repères et références statistiques](#) [Benchmarks and statistical references]

CVET funding

In 2022, EUR 31.8 billion was spent on continuing vocational training and apprenticeship, excluding direct expenditure by companies and expenditure by the three branches of the public sector for their own employees.

Companies are the main CVET funding source (34.4 % of total expenditure, see table below), through their contributions to skills operators (*Opérateur de compétences*, OPCO) and the apprenticeship tax.

The Regions are the fourth largest funder (12.7 %). The appropriations allocated to training (excluding public officials) by local and regional authorities other than the Regions (departments, municipalities, etc.) account for less than 1%.

State expenditure on continuing vocational training/apprenticeship (25.5%) increased by 18.8%, while expenditure by other government agencies or bodies with a public service mission, notably Agefiph (association managing the fund for the professional integration of disabled persons), Unédic and Pôle emploi, decreased.

Individual spending, consisting of individual training purchases (6.2 %) was stable (25).

Overall CVET and apprenticeship expenditure by main financers

	2022 (EUR billions)	2022 (%)
Skills operators (OPCOs).	10.9	34.4
<i>This does not include the direct expenditure of the enterprises</i>		
State	8.1	25.5
Public employment services and other bodies with a public mission	6.6	20.8
Regions	4.0	12.7
Private individuals	2.0	6.2
Other local authorities	0.1	0.4
TOTAL	31.8	100.0

Source: [Annex of the draft finance law on vocational training 2024](#)

France Compétences, as the national governance and monitoring body on VET regulation and financing, distributes the mutual fund envelopes and ensures the equalisation of apprenticeship funds to skills operators (*Opérateurs de compétences*, OPCO) and the regions. OPCO manage two envelopes, the financing of alternance training programmes (apprenticeship contracts and professionalisation contracts) and the financing of collective training programme for employee skills development (called nationally *plan de développement des compétences*; *ex-plan de formation*) for companies with less than 50 employees.

The major Investments in Skills Plan (PIC) continued in 2023. The plan funds are allocated to innovative programmes and training actions targeting mostly long-term jobseekers and young people without qualifications. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a major EUR 100 billion recovery plan (*France Relance*) to anticipate and remediate economic problems is running since 2020. It activates EUR 15 billion targeted funding for IVET and CVET training programmes and apprenticeships to support employment.

[25] [Annexe au projet de loi de finances pour 2024](#) [Annex to the Finance Bill for 2024 - Vocational training].

CHAPTER 9.

Teachers and trainers

9.1 VET teacher types

The following categories of VET teachers and trainers are in place:

- VET school teachers;
- apprenticeship general courses teachers;
- apprenticeship technical, theoretical and practical courses teachers;
- in-company apprenticeship mentors (in-company trainers) (26).

Requirements for VET school teachers

A national entrance examination has been set up for teachers wishing to work as vocational teachers in upper secondary vocational programmes (*lycée professionnel*). To participate, candidates must demonstrate either a level of qualification in the subject to be taught or a number of years of professional practice in the relevant profession.

Requirements for teachers in apprenticeship training centres (CFA) and in-company trainers

For apprenticeship, there is no national examination to become a teacher; each apprenticeship training centre (CFA - *centre de formation des apprentis*) does its own recruitment, and candidates should apply directly to it. Formal requirements for CFA teaching staff:

- VET teachers (general teaching roles) must demonstrate a qualification equivalent to that required for a similar post in a public establishment;
- in-company trainers, called apprenticeship mentors (*maîtres d'apprentissage*) (performing technical, theoretical and practical teaching roles) must have a relevant qualification that is at least at the same level as the qualification that the apprentices are working towards and have several years of working experience in the relevant speciality/skills.

9.2 Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers

In IVET

Teachers may benefit from continuing training schemes.

A [3-year ministerial master plan](#) sets the general framework for the continuing education of national education staff. It establishes a set of specifications from which annual training plans at the national, academic and local levels must be drawn up. The training plans cover technical, pedagogical and transversal skills. The training courses are available in person, e-learning or hybrid formats.

Every year the Ministry of Education prepares a National training plan ([Plan national de formation](#), PNF), which sets out guidelines for continuing training of State education staff.

In CVET

CVET trainers may benefit from dedicated training programmes for their continuing professional development.

A range of CVET programmes exist, such as pedagogy adapted to adult education, to the conception and management of training actions and other skills development paths. These are accessible throughout the main CVET training schemes (the skills development plan at the initiative of the employer and the personal training account (CPF) scheme at the initiative of the employee). Participation of their staff in continuous training actions is a criterion required for the quality accreditation of the training providers. Professional skills and continuing professional development of VET instructors are among quality criteria required for training providers, so that their programmes can be funded by the main CVET funding bodies.

For more information visit Cedefop project page on [Teachers' and Trainers' professional development](#) and our interactive toolkits for VET practitioners: [Cedefop VET toolkit for tackling early leaving](#) and [Cedefop VET toolkit for empowering NEETs](#). You may also read [Cedefop/ReferNet country reports on Teachers and Trainers in a Changing World](#) and [Cedefop comparative analysis](#).

CHAPTER 10.

Shaping VET qualifications

10.1 Anticipating skill needs

The role of skills operators in skills anticipation

Following the [2018 reform](#) of the governance and financing of continuing training and apprenticeships, Skills operators (OPCO) (27) is a new body which is managed by social partners. The state (Ministry of Labour) sits on their boards and signs agreements with them on objectives and resources. As part of their mandate, OPCO support skills anticipation in the labour market by:

- supporting companies and professional sectors to build forward-looking management of jobs and skills;
- providing technical support to professional branches and a local service to small and medium-sized businesses;
- helping companies and industries to anticipate technological changes and needs in their businesses;
- supporting companies involved in apprenticeships to plan and implement their training provision (for instance, joint construction of vocational qualifications that may be acquired in IVET or in apprenticeship, definition of the cost of the contract for diplomas and professional titles, payment of apprenticeship training centres (CFAs), etc.)

Regional employment and training observatories (*Observatoire régional de l'emploi et de la formation*, [Oref](#)) provide regionally based systems for analysis and research on the relationship between employment, training and qualification requirements. Using data provided by their national and regional VET stakeholders, they conduct research and provide expertise to anticipate economic changes and skills for the future. They focus on:

- training needs;
- job trends;
- links between employment and training;
- sectoral approaches;
- professional mobility and economic development.

Financial support to SMEs

Public subsidies are in place to support very small and small companies anticipate their human resources management skills.

Information on skills anticipation in France is also available in [Cedefop skills panorama, 2017](#) . See also Cedefop's [skills forecast](#) and [European skills index](#).

10.2 Designing qualifications

Designing VET qualifications

The framework for establishing professional qualifications based on certification has been in place since 2002. The framework was reviewed and integrated in the [2018 Act](#). The certification process refers to a description of professional activities, skills, abilities and knowledge associated with a qualification that is necessary to exercise a profession, function or professional activities. The process leads to a document, obtained by an individual following a set procedure, which

confirms these professional skills according to given criteria. These, in turn, lead to a variety of vocational and professional qualifications, diplomas and certificates issued by different bodies:

- certificates and qualifications/diplomas, which are awarded on behalf of the State by ministries;
- sectoral qualifications recognised by the social partners and issued by other bodies;
- certificates of professional qualifications (*certificat de qualification professionnelle*, CQP) created by the social partners of a branch;
- the title of 'qualified engineer' (*titre d'ingénieur diplômé*) created and controlled by the CTI (*Commission des titres d'ingénieur* - engineering qualification committee);
- the vocational certificate (*certificat professionnel*) created by public or private training providers (28).

Since 2019, inclusion of certifications in the national register of vocational and professional qualifications (RNCP) and the specific register (RS) are managed by France competences and its certification commission. All RNCP certifications are linked to a level of qualification (EQF levels 3-8) and are structured in units/blocks of competences. In 2023, more than 4 500 certifications are listed in the RNCP and considered as 'active, i.e. complying with the registration process and assessed.

Design of State-issued vocational qualifications/diplomas

Ministries design and create VET qualifications on the basis of opinions from consultative bodies, that is:

- 11 inter-ministerial advisory committees (CPC - *commissions professionnelles consultatives*) (29) for State-issued vocational qualifications in the education sector (see below) and
- national bodies responsible for assessing training courses on behalf of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The 11 inter-ministerial advisory committees (CPCs) are a place of consultation between VET stakeholders for State-issued VET qualifications. The main ministries involved are those in charge of education, employment, social affairs, agriculture, and culture. Members include representatives of employers (large companies, business federations), trade union organisations in the sectors concerned, teachers, the government and other qualified professionals. CPCs are divided into major spheres of economic activity and decide on needs for qualifications based on skill needs in the labour market.

- CPC agriculture, agri-food and space planning
- CPC arts, entertainment and media
- CPC social cohesion and health
- CPC commerce
- CPC construction
- CPC industry
- CPC sea and inland navigation
- CPC mobility and logistics
- CPC business services
- CPC services and consumer goods
- CPC sport and entertainment

To design a new or update a VET qualification the following steps are necessary:

- a study (30) analyses economic data and sectoral trends to define (future) needs in jobs and skills;
- a directory listing professional activities relevant to the qualification is drawn up; certification processes are detailed in a certification directory (expected skills outcomes, associated knowledge, assessment and approval procedures); the file is submitted for

- consultation to the corresponding inter-ministerial advisory committee.
- for VET qualifications designed and delivered by the ministry of Education, the higher council for education (*Conseil supérieur de l'éducation*, CSE) is also consulted: the CSE involves representatives of students, parents and teachers and unions.

Certification processes under the Ministry of Higher education

Except for the higher technician certificate (BTS, EQF level 5) and the university bachelor of technology (BUT, EQF level 6), there is no standardised description of the content and duration of courses or the procedures for assessing students.

The higher education qualification system is exclusively regulated by an assessment process (which forms a quality assurance process), conceived as an evaluation of the quality of training content: the quality of training programmes in terms of aims and objectives, the level of education, the quality of the education teams, the job prospects of students. The main assessment bodies are:

- the high council for the evaluation of research and higher education for training programmes provided by universities and certain schools;
- the engineering qualification committee (CTI) for engineering courses and qualifications;
- the management training and qualification assessment committee for business and management schools (*Grandes écoles*).

Assessment is based on a set of criteria, notably the link with research, relevance to the training offer of the HE institution, and subsequent professional opportunities.

The decision establishing a (new) qualification is published in the official Journal of HE and Research. For engineering qualifications, a 'decision' is taken by the CTI for private engineering schools, and a notice is given for State engineering schools.

Certification processes in CVET

Professional sectors may create their own qualifications through two main bodies: the joint employment and vocational training committees and the observatories of trades and qualifications.

The joint employment and vocational training committees (CPNEF) (31) was created by employers and trade unions in 1969 and its scope widened to vocational training. Based on research on quantitative and qualitative data on trends in employment (32) they identify priority areas in sectors. Certain branches have delegated to CPNEF the responsibility for creating sector-specific CQPs/ certificates of professional qualifications. For a CQP to be registered to the national register of qualifications (RNCP) the request should be initiated by CPNEF and not the branches themselves.

Since 2004 (33) each industrial sector (one or several branches) must create its own observatory of trades and qualifications (OPMQ, *Observatoires Prospectifs des Métiers et des Qualifications*). OPMQs help businesses define their training policies and employees develop their skills (34). Their work focuses on:

- studies on topics associated with the management of jobs and skills in the sector (diversity and gender equality, training, ageing management, skills replacement, etc.);
- statistical databases on sectoral economics, jobs and workforce, basic or lifelong training;
- job maps or directories (job descriptions, job lists).

There is no fixed or mandatory methodology for establishing sectoral qualifications. A 2012 methodological guide produced by CPNEF for the development of certificates of professional qualifications/CQPs suggests:

- conducting a study on the need for a new qualification;

- listing the set of competences and skills (and if possible, relevant training content) a learner should possess to be awarded a vocational certificate for a given sector;
- developing assessment tools and processes;
- defining the process for implementing relevant training (including apprenticeships).

The results from OPMQ studies are used by both the inter-ministerial advisory committees (CPC) and the joint employment and vocational training committees (CPNEF) (see above) to identify training needs and sectoral skills requirements. France Compétences, as the new VET governance State body, support and promote the work on the observatories. In February 2023, France Compétences launched an online repository, the *Grande Bibliothèque*, which brings together the works and studies published by the joint observatories.

The national register of vocational qualifications (RNCP) is a centralised repository of all IVET and CVET vocational qualifications issued by public and private institutions and professional bodies. In the new governance setting (CVET 2018 reform), France Compétences monitors certification processes for inclusion in the RNCP and the specific register of qualifications complementary to a profession or attesting to basic skills:

- **IVET qualifications** awarded by the State (ministries, following assent of the corresponding inter-ministerial advisory committee, CPC);
- sector-specific **certificates of professional qualifications** (*certificats de qualification professionnelle*, CQP) developed by the social partners; these are not automatically registered to the RNCP; the professional body concerned makes a request (application form), subject to France Compétences approval; this is the only body that may request the inclusion in the RNCP register;
- other vocational qualifications, described as ‘qualifications voluntarily registered with the RNCP’, produced by training organisations, professional bodies and ministers without CPC backing. The registration of qualifications in the RNCP is subject to approval by the certification committee established within France compétences (*commission de la certification professionnelle*).

Qualifications in the RNCP register are nationally recognised and are classified by field of activity and level of qualification. Private training organisations have no obligation to register their professional qualifications in the RNCP.

Modularisation of RNCP qualifications

From 1 January 2019, it became mandatory that all RNCP vocational qualifications are structured into units/blocks of competences (*blocs de compétences*). A unit/block of competences is a minimum, homogeneous and coherent set of competences contributing to the autonomous exercise of a professional activity that can be credited. The measure aims to facilitate equivalences and bridges between qualifications. These blocks can be assessed through validation of prior learning. All newly registered qualifications in the RNCP are expressed in units/blocks of competences.

[27] *Opérateurs de compétences* (former OPCA, *organismes paritaires collecteurs agréés*).

[28] Such as: (a) consular schools placed under the control of the chambers of trades and crafts or the chamber of commerce and industry; (b) the National Conservatory of Arts and trades - CNAM (Conservatoire national des arts et métiers) or the national association for adult vocational training - AFPA (Association pour la formation des adultes); (c) private establishments awarding vocational qualifications and diplomas in their own name.

[29] following the 2018 reform of vocational training, the existing committees in place for each ministry, were reformed into inter-ministerial committees by [decree 2019-958 of September, 13](#)

- [30] Outside research bodies can be commissioned to pursue the work.
- [31] Commission paritaire nationale de l'emploi et de la formation professionnelle.
- [32] Backed up by the Employment and qualifications observatories.
- [33] The 2004 Law on lifelong learning and social dialogue.
- [34] In other words, in establishing their professional projects - *projet professionnel* in the national context.

CHAPTER 11.

Quality assurance

The [2018 reform](#) has put emphasis on transparency and efficiency through new obligations for all training providers using mutual funds to inform and monitor their training actions.

The flagship of the quality assurance system for training providers is the certification **Qualiopi**, set up by the Ministry of Labour. All training organisations, including apprenticeship training centres, have to be quality certified, as long as the training they offer is financed by public and mutual funds. The Qualiopi brand name can only be issued by certification bodies, following a national reference framework covering seven criteria and 32 indicators. Regarding IVET, providers applying to obtain or renew the [Lycée des métiers](#) (vocational high school) label, must have defined and set up an organisational structure that meets quality criteria in line with the [Qualéduc](#) tool, used for the self-assessment and continuous improvement of public IVET institutions.

France Compétences is the governance and monitoring body on VET implementation and financing responsible for the quality of vocational training and apprenticeship. It evaluates the actions carried out by skills operators (35), the evolution of costs, and can alert the State to possible malfunctions and monitors implementation of quality arrangements.

The methodology used for certification processes is a quality assurance mechanism in itself (36). The need for the training organisation to be accredited or recognised by the awarding authority is conceived as an important element of quality.

The Qualiopi state mark is awarded either by a certifying body accredited by the French Accreditation Committee (Cofrac), or by 8 bodies accredited (for the period 2023-2025) by France Compétences.

[35] OCPO (former OPCA) are joint bodies organised by professional sector managed by social partners. They distribute funds for training, support skills anticipation in SMEs and be involved in apprenticeship provision.

[36] For instance, ministries develop standards for professional diplomas in consultation with professionals/experts, define examination regulations, award diplomas, offer various types of training in its institutions, recruit, train and pay teachers, monitor the quality of training and reports on the results and resources used.

CHAPTER 12.

Validation of prior learning

Since the social modernisation act of 17th January 2002, validation of non-formal and informal learning (*Validation des acquis de l'expérience*) (VAE) has offered a third route to qualifications and vocational certificates, alongside initial education and training and lifelong learning.

In order to obtain accreditation, the applicant (self-employed, employees or volunteers) must submit a dossier and potentially undergo an interview with the jury for the relevant qualification, which then decides whether to award the chosen qualification fully or partially. The interview is used to complete and clarify the information contained in the application dossier. It allows the jury to check the authenticity of the file, to check the level of proficiency of all the skills required to obtain the (partial) qualification and to discuss the experience and practice acquired in respect of the activities or functions that the applicant has exercised or held.

Through VAE, anybody can obtain a full qualification or certificate based on his or her professional experience. All certifications listed in the national register of vocational and professional qualifications (RNCP) can be accessed via validation of non-formal and informal learning. This includes all formal qualifications issued by the State and those recognised by the social partners. A review of the VAE system is ongoing as part of measures taken in [December 2022](#) to improve labour market functioning and secure employment for all citizens. The aim is to create a modern public VAE service accessible online, simplify the requirements to initiate a VAE process and attune VAE tools to processes (for instance, increasing the duration of special VAE leave for employees from 24 to 48 hours).

IVET qualifications are accessible in adult education for certification through VAE. Since the gradual restructuring of RNCP qualifications in units/blocks of competences (started in 2016 with those offered by the education ministry) (37) partial validation is also possible towards acquisition of a full certification. The need to design qualifications registered in the RNCP into units/skills of competences is compulsory since 2018.

Offering more IVET qualifications in a modular form depends on (high) demand for such qualifications in adult education. Newly registered VET qualifications in the RNCP are expressed in units/blocks of competences (38).

For more information about arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning please visit [Cedefop's European database](#).

[37] The vocational aptitude certificate (CAP) (EQF level 3); the vocational Baccalaureate (EQF level 4) and the advanced technical diploma (BTS) (EQF level 5).

[38] the national register of vocational and professional qualifications (RNCP) and the specific register (SR) are available at a [dedicated site](#) hosted by France Compétences.

CHAPTER 13.

Incentives for learners

The personal training account

The personal training account scheme is a personal right to training (CPF, *compte personnel de formation*) that can be used by any employee, throughout working life, to follow qualifying training. From 2019, the account is funded in Euro at the end of each year and by additional financing, also fixed in Euro. The amount of acquired rights is fixed by decree. Part-time employees have the same rights as full-time employees. The amount of the fees is EUR 500 per year to a maximum of EUR 5000 over a period of 10 years. Entitlements are increased for employees with low qualifications (at most, the end of lower secondary education certificate and no vocational qualification) (below EQF level 3 to EUR 800 per year to a maximum of EUR 8 000). Additional funding may increase the amount of one's CPF account credits, which can come from the employers, professional branches and OPCOs, and the Regions, among others (39).

The 2018 law for the freedom to choose one professional future set up a new mechanism, the personal training account scheme (CPF) for career transition (that replaced the previous Individual training leave scheme). An employee may use his CPF account to enrol in training actions intended to bring about change, including by benefiting from specific leave if the training is carried out, in whole or in part, over working time. The remuneration of the beneficiary of the [career transition project](#) is then paid by the employer (for firms employing 50 persons or more), who is reimbursed by one regional joint body (joint body regional committee called *transition pro*), or paid directly by the regional joint body if employed in a firm of fewer than 50 persons.

Training is initiated by the account holder through an online service platform and a mobile app, both managed by a public body, Caisse des Dépôts. CPF holders may search for, enrol in, pay for and evaluate their training actions without intermediaries. [Provisions](#) are in place to combat CPF fraud and to protect users from abusive solicitation by companies reaching out for clients. Since 2023, a new guidance service, the Skills passport ([passeport de compétences](#)) is available in the CPF platform for users to store and organise their training and skills gained and for professional development planning.

Training aids for jobseekers

There are many training aids for jobseekers. For example, the national Public Employment Service (PES) (Pôle emploi, renamed *France travail* in 2024) regularly buys training places in different training organisations. It selects and finances [training programmes](#) that support skills development at local level, in targeted sectors of the economy where there is insufficient demand for employment.

Individual training aid

The individual training aid ([AIF](#), *aide individuelle à la formation*) provided by Pôle emploi indirectly helps to finance vocational training. The training must have a direct professional aim (award a VET qualification, such as the higher technician certificate, BTS, EQF level 5, EQF level 3 vocational certificates or professional master degrees) and be between 1 and 3 years maximum duration. Depending on the cost of the training, Pôle emploi reimburses the costs directly to the training organisation where it takes place.

Targeted support for IVET learners

Two new programmes are in place for the acceleration of the adaptation of the training offer and to prevent drop-out and support students. The Employment Ambition Programme targets learners

who leave high school without a career solution, either a job offer or the possibility to pursue further studies. Learners can maintain their "student" status for a maximum of 4 months by re-enrolling in their original high school at the beginning of the next school year (40).

The [Open Rights Programme](#) aims is to offer a series of tailor-made solutions to VET learners at high risk of dropping out, thanks to the mobilisation of all the actors who can help them, inside or outside the high school (Epide, E2C, Afpa, National Civil Service Agency, etc.).

In 2023, within the Investment in Skills plan (PIC) investments, many programmes run at national and regional level to offer training solutions to young learners (EUR 2,492 million in commitment appropriations and EUR 2,594 million in payment appropriations). 2023 represents the last year of the first PIC cycle and a pivotal year of assessment and transition to a new programming cycle in 2024 within the framework of the reformed national PES (France Travail) services (41).

Support the transition of young learners to the labour market is a policy priority. The plan of EUR 1.4 billion launched by the government in 2021 to reduce recruitment pressures continues in 2022-23 with increased [financial support](#) to businesses and active involvement of sector (*branches professionnelles*) in monitoring skill needs.

[39] Decree 2018-1171 of 18 December 2018 regarding the arrangements for supplementing the personal training account credits [[Décret n° 2018-1171 du 18 décembre 2018 relatif aux modalités d'abondement du compte personnel de formation](#)]

[40] more information in [French](#)

[41] More information on PIC actions in 2023 in [French](#)

CHAPTER 14.

Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

The government provides public subsidies for companies, primarily small and very small, and for professional organisations, to promote training, employment and skills.

Public subsidies

The purpose of these [subsidies](#) varies. National credits can be granted for:

- encouraging and helping SMEs to anticipate their human resources management needs;
- public employment service support to jobseekers in accompanying economic change and securing career paths;
- training and adaptation agreements of the National Employment Fund (FNE-Formation). Vocational training measures are implemented to support workforce employability in a changing work environment;
- support for employees to adapt to new jobs due to technological innovation, technical developments or changes in the production sector.

Financial incentives to engage in apprenticeship

Regional or government subsidies encourage apprenticeship contract take-up, which is a major priority of public youth employment policy.

Since 2018 a one-off subsidy is available for small businesses (fewer than 250 employees) that recruit an apprentice, if this prepares for certification up to Baccalaureate level (EQF level 4 or less).

Another complementary financial incentive takes the form of an internship bonus; this is a subsidy granted to companies employing 250 people or more, if they go beyond the minimum threshold for employees on alternance training (apprenticeship and professionalisation) contracts.

From 2023, employers who recruit apprentice receive EUR 6.000 in aid for the 1st year of the contract for the preparation of a vocational diploma or qualification at or below EQF level 7. Large companies with 250 or more employees must meet additional conditions:

- they must have at least 5% of employment contracts promoting professional integration and
- at least 3% of employees being recruited under an alternating work-study training schemes (apprenticeship contracts and professionalisation contracts), and
- they must have increased by end 2024 the number of staff in alternating work-study schemes by 10% compared with end 2023.

In addition to these subsidies, apprenticeship contracts are fully or partially exempt from social security charges, the costs of training apprentice supervisors are supported by the skills operators (*Opérateurs de compétences, Opco*), and specific subsidies are granted for the recruitment of apprentices with disabilities.

Training aid for job creation

In some cases, an employer who hires a jobseeker who needs training to carry out the requested tasks may benefit from training aid financed by the national PES service (France Emploi).

Operational employment preparation (**POEI**, *préparation opérationnelle à l'emploi individuel*) is financial assistance allowing jobseekers to be trained in order to be able to respond to a job offer. This assistance may be granted to the employer who undertakes to recruit the jobseeker after the training period.

Targeted support to SMEs

Following the 2018 reform of continuing training/apprenticeship, the former joint collecting bodies (*organismes paritaires collecteurs agréés*, OPCA) became skills operators (*opérateurs de compétences*, OPCO), managed by social partners. Their new responsibilities include supporting companies and professional sectors to anticipate and create forward-looking management of jobs and skills. OPCO provide technical support to professional branches and a local service to small and medium-sized businesses in skills anticipation and apprenticeship provision (joint creation of vocational diplomas, definition of the cost of the contract for the intended RNCP qualification, payment for apprenticeship training centres). Skills operators manage two envelopes, the financing of alternance training programmes (apprenticeship contracts and professionalisation contracts) and the financing of the skills development plan for companies (42) with fewer than 50 employees.

[42] French employers can organise collective training for their employees. All these training sessions are presented in a specific document, the company's skill development plan (previously called training plans).

CHAPTER 15.

Guidance and counselling

Lifelong career guidance was established by law in 2009 . A public career information and guidance service (SPO, *service public de l'orientation*) is in place including online and telephone services (43); local career information and advice services are based on regionally approved partnership agreements backed by the Regional Council. The right to career guidance depends on different organisations and instruments, depending on age and individual status.

Career guidance in IVET

Throughout secondary education, an individualised vocational guidance service is offered to every learner to discover the world of work, professions and training pathways leading to (sectoral) skills and qualifications.

Parcours avenir, a support programme set up for pupils and their families, informs and guides education choices to ensure a smoother transition from lower secondary general education to upper secondary paths.

Since the 2018 reform, in grade 9 (last year of lower secondary), a preparatory vocational guidance subject is available to raise awareness of the upper secondary vocational pathway and apprenticeship opportunities offered. This teaching is extended to all pupils from the grade 7 (second year of lower secondary, *classe de 5ème*) from 2023-24.

Dedicated bodies such as the national office for information on studies and professions - ONISEP and the Youth information and documentation centre - CIDJ provide their services to young people.

The 2018 law gave the Regions the role to inform schools on professions and prepare documentation for pupils and students. ONISEP and the Regions collaborate to develop and distribute career guidance material to the young.

Career guidance for adults, employees or jobseekers

The public lifelong career guidance service guarantees universal access to free, full and objective information on careers, training, qualifications, outlets and pay scales and access to high-quality, network-based career advice and support services. Various systems support this, both within and outside companies:

- compulsory professional development interviews run every 2 years in companies, including (44) information on validation of non-formal and informal learning (VAE);
- the personal training account scheme, CPF (45);
- the professional development counselling service, CEP (46);
- career development interviews, career assessment reports, appraisals, etc., are used to evaluate career prospects.

These career guidance services are provided by career information and guidance bodies such as local support services, career advice institutions, employment and training centres, the Pôle emploi, and the joint collecting bodies.

The professional development counselling service (CEP) in place since 2013, is a free of charge service that supports career development and security for all individuals engaged into working life. It provides information on the work environment and the evolution of jobs in the territory, on the necessary skills to acquire and develop, and on available training schemes.

Counselling is provided by four national operators for specific audiences (disabled, managers, young people and jobseekers). Since 2020, employees are advised by operators selected at regional level, on the basis of the national specifications. The selection of these new operators has been orchestrated by France Compétences.

Public and private career guidance and counselling actors at national level

Public bodies produce quantitative and qualitative studies on employment and training: *France Stratégie*, the Centre for studies and research on qualifications (*Céreq*), the Centre for employment and labour research (*Ceet*), the national institute for statistics and economic research (*INSEE*) and the research and statistics management department (*Darès*). Results support public debate; they are used by public authorities and VET stakeholders developing and implementing VET policies at national and regional level, and by ministries and social and economic actors determining (new) labour market needs, IVET (including technological) policies and CVET training needs and policies (47).

Centre Inffo in partnership with the main career information and guidance providers (48) runs the national online 'career guidance for all' platform (*Orientation pour tous*).

The list of registered and approved training providers is available [online](#).

The '*offre-info*' portal is a national reference for training centres and training programmes run by the Carif-Oref network (49).

Public and private career guidance and counselling actors at regional/local levels

CARIF - Training management, resource and information centres operate in all regions collecting, producing and disseminating information on training options, entitlements and access to training. They assist local information providers in their role. The information sources they provide guide the general public, training providers and operators in career and training opportunities and processes in place.

OREF - Regional employment and training observatories provide regionally based systems for analysis and research on the relationship between employment, training and qualification requirements. Using data provided by their national and regional partners, they conduct research and provide expertise in order to anticipate economic changes and adjust skills to projected employment needs. They deal with training needs, job trends, the link between employment and training, sectoral approaches, professional mobility, and economic development.

The national CARIF-OREFs network was mandated in 2023 by the Ministry of Labour to support Apprentice Training Centres (*Centres de formation d'apprentis*, CFA) in the 14 tasks assigned to them by the Labour Code. A national programme for the professionalisation of CFAs has been launched offering webinars and learning kits. It is intended for directors, educational managers, coordinators and trainers and is being implemented by the CARIF-OREFs.

Please see also:

- guidance and outreach [France national report](#);
- Cedefop's labour market intelligence [toolkit](#);
- Cedefop's [inventory](#) of lifelong guidance systems and practices.

[43] a single national number (08 11 70 39 39).

[44] Following the 2018 Law for the freedom to choose one's professional future.

[45] Compte personnel de formation.

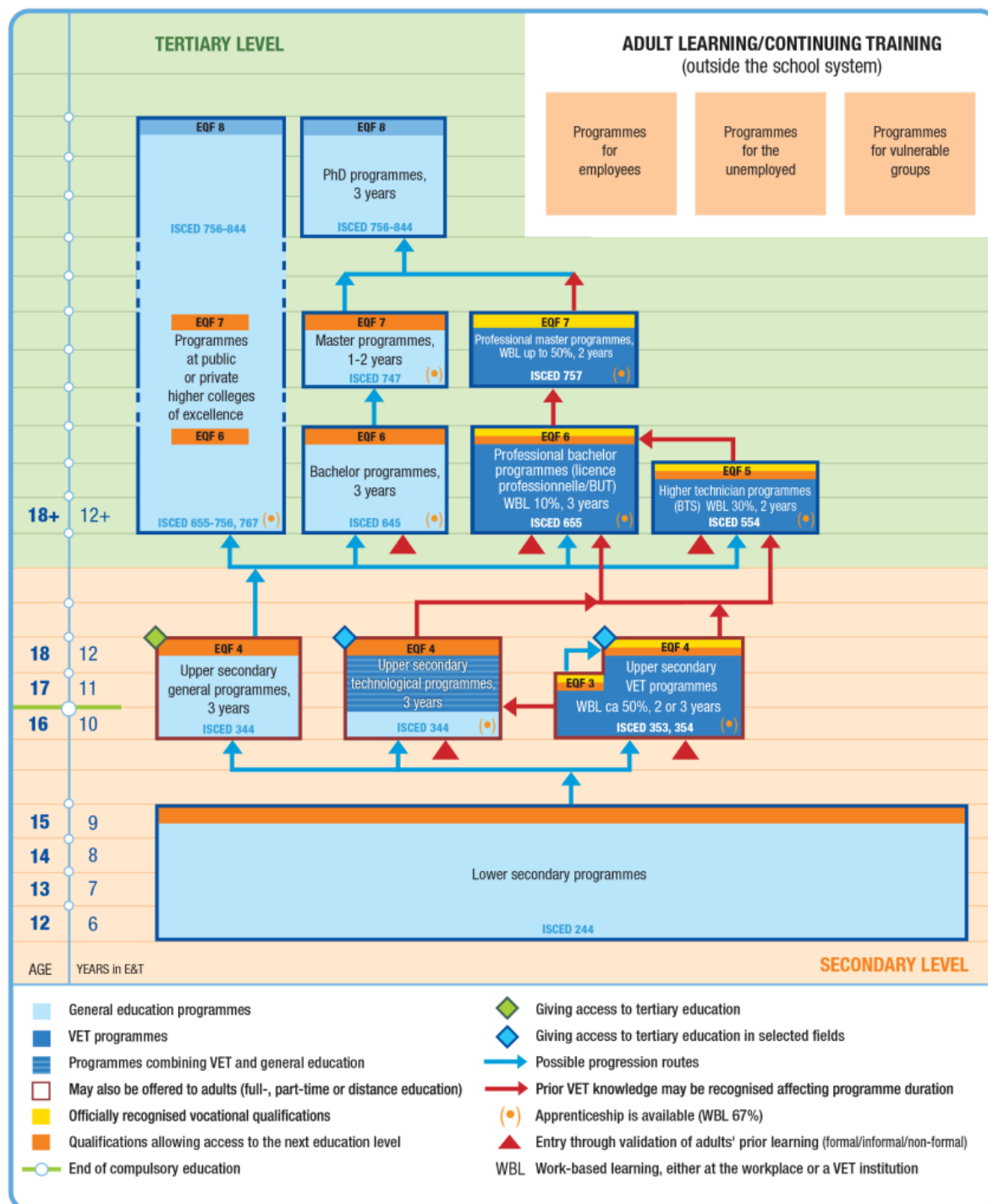
[46] Conseil en évolution professionnelle.

[47] See also Observatory of trades and qualifications (OPMQ - Observatoires prospectifs des

métiers et des qualifications) in Section 10. Shaping VET qualifications - design

- [48] Different ministries, the regions, the professional bodies, the CARIF-OREF, Pôle emploi, the national office for education and career information (Onisep) or the youth information and documentation center (CIDJ).
- [49] Training management, resource and information centres ([*Centre animation ressources d'information sur la formation*, Carif)-regional employment and training observatories (*Observatoire régional emploi formation*, Oref)]

Vocational education and training system chart



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop, & Centre for the Development of Information on Continuing Training (Centre Inffo). (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – France: system description. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions [Database]. www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/france-u3

VET Programme Types

EQF 4			
Upper secondary technological programmes, 3 years, ISCED 344			
Technological upper secondary programmes leading to EQF level 4, ISCED level 344 (baccalauréat technologique)			
EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	344
Usual entry grade	10	Usual completion grade	12
Usual entry age	16	Usual completion age	18
Length of a programme (years)	3		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 (education is compulsory until age 16). National and regional authorities have the obligation to provide training to learners aged and 16 to 18)	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?		Is it available for adults?	
ECVET or other credits	Information not available		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	Full-time education in VET schools;		
Main providers	• public and private education schools; • apprenticeship training centres (WBL 67%); • accessible through validation of non-formal and informal learning (for adults).		

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	• WBL 0% in school-based programmes; • WBL 67% in apprenticeship training centres (in-company practice).
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• in-company practice (in apprenticeship training centres)
Main target groups	• young people between 16-18; • people over 18 in adult education.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	All learners having completed lower secondary general education, with or without the end of lower secondary certificate (<i>Brevet des collèges</i>) may move on to upper secondary general, technological or vocational pathways.
Assessment of learning outcomes	At the end of the training programme, learners take an exam to obtain the technological baccalaureate.
Diplomas/certificates provided	At the end of the training programme, learners take an exam to obtain the technological baccalaureate (<i>Baccalauréat technologique</i>). All IVET programmes are offered, assessed and recognised by the State.
Examples of qualifications	Information not available
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	The technological curriculum leads to the end of secondary education technological degree (<i>baccalauréat technologique</i>) (EQF level 4). This degree opens up access to tertiary level 2-year VET studies delivered in vocational schools to obtain a higher technician certificate (BTS, EQF level 5), and moving on to engineering bachelor and master studies (respectively, EQF levels 6 and 7). Those with a good high school record (<i>baccalauréat technologique</i> , EQF 4) may also access engineering studies (EQF level 6), on the condition they follow a preparatory class. Graduates with a technological baccalaureate may also enrol in a 3-year programme offered since 2021/22 in technological institutes, attached to universities (IUTs) to prepare a university bachelor of technology (BUT).
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	 All the qualifications developed by the State can be accessed via validation of non-formal and informal learning (VAE, <i>validation des acquis de l'expérience</i>). VAE is the third option to access formal (VET) qualifications, mainly in adult education.

General education subjects	 The first year (grade 10) is common with the general upper secondary stream (general subjects); in grades 11 and 12 students prepare mainly for higher VET studies (BTS and BUT). There are eight different specialisations in grades 11 and 12. In grade 12, learners may choose between four streams: • management and finance (<i>gestion et finance</i>); • marketing (<i>mercatique</i>); • human resources and communication (<i>ressources humaines et communication</i>); • information and management systems (<i>systèmes d'information et de gestion</i>).
Key competences	The key competences are included in the general courses that are defined (syllabi) and examined nationally (50).
Application of learning outcomes approach	Information not available
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	27% of all learners enrolled in upper secondary general and technological ISCED 344 programmes (grades 11 and 12), follow technological programmes in 2022/23(51).

- [50] Centre Inffo (2016). [Key competences in vocational education and training - France](#). Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.
- [51] [DEPP (2023). *Repères et références statistiques* [Benchmarks and statistical references]. [Sheet 4.09, p. 102](#)

EQF 3 (professional skills certificate, CAP); 4 (vocational Baccalaureate, BAC-pro, or BMA-applied arts certificates)

Upper secondary VET

programmes,

WBL ca 50%,

2 or 3 years

ISCED 353,354

Upper secondary vocational programmes in VET schools leading to EQF level 3 or 4, ISCED 353 or 354 (lycées professionnels)

EQF level	3 (professional skills certificate, CAP); 4 (vocational Baccalaureate, BAC-pro, or BMA-applied arts certificates)	ISCED-P 2011 level	353 (professional skills certificate, CAP) 354 (vocational baccalaureate, BAC-pro, or BMA-applied arts certificates)
Usual entry grade	10	Usual completion grade	11 (professional skills certificate, CAP) 12 (vocational Baccalaureate, BAC-pro, or BMA-applied arts certificates)
Usual entry age	16	Usual completion age	17 (professional skills certificate, CAP) 18 (vocational Baccalaureate, BAC-pro, or BMA-applied arts certificates)
Length of a programme (years)	2 (professional skills certificate, CAP) 3 (vocational baccalaureate, BAC-pro, or BMA-applied arts certificates)		

Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✓ (education is compulsory until age 16). National and regional authorities have the obligation to provide training to learners aged and 16 to 18	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✓	Is it continuing VET?	✗
Is it offered free of charge?	✓	Is it available for adults?	✓

ECVET or other credits Information not available

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

In schools (WBL 50%):

- classroom theoretical vocational learning;
- practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor;
- project work;
- internships in companies.

In apprenticeship training centres (CFAs) (WBL 67%):

- classroom theoretical vocational learning;
- practical training in the form of courses, practical work workshops, indoor and outdoor;
- project work;
- internships in companies.

Main providers

- public and private education schools;
- apprenticeship training centres (CFAs);
- accessible through validation of non-formal and informal learning (for adults).

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies

- WBL 50% in school-based programmes;
For students preparing for a CAP or Bac-pro under school-based status, the periods of training in the workplace (*Périodes de formation en milieu professionnel*, PFMP) are defined as follows: CAP from 12 to 14 weeks, representing between 16.7% and 19.4% of the teaching programme; Bac-pro: from 18 to 22 weeks, representing between 16.7% and 20.3% of the teaching programme ([Order of 21 November 2018, article 3](#)).
- WBL 67% in apprenticeship training centres (CFAs) (in-company practice).

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	In schools: • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies. In apprenticeship training centres (CFAs): • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies.
Main target groups	• young people between 16-18; • people over 18 in adult education.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	All learners having completed lower secondary general education, with or without the end of lower secondary certificate (<i>Brevet des collèges</i>) may move on to upper secondary general, technological or vocational pathways.
Assessment of learning outcomes	At the end of the 3-year training programme, learners take an exam to obtain the vocational baccalaureate. At the end of the 2-year programme, learners take an exam to obtain a professional skills certificate (CAP). As from 2020, learners who failed the final exam, may receive a certificate for the units/blocks of competences they have passed.
Diplomas/certificates provided	There are two programme cycles in the upper secondary vocational stream. In 2 years, learners may prepare a professional skills certificate (CAP, <i>certificat d'aptitude professionnelle</i>). In a 3-year programme, learners may prepare a vocational baccalaureate (BAC-pro, <i>baccalauréat professionnel</i>). All IVET programmes are offered, assessed and recognised by the State.
Examples of qualifications	• security officer (<i>agent de sécurité</i>) (CAP), EQF 3 • baker-pastry cook (<i>boulangier-pâtissier</i>) (Bac-Pro), EQF4 • cabinetmaker (<i>ébéniste</i>) (BMA), EQF 4 Up to 200 CAP specialities (<i>Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle</i> [professional skills certificate], EQF level 3); 100 BAC-pro specialities (<i>Baccalauréat professionnel</i> [vocational baccalaureate], EQF level 4) and 20 BMA specialities (<i>Brevet des métiers d'arts</i> [applied arts certificate]) are available.

Progression opportunities for learners after graduation

The professional skills certificate- CAP (*Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle*) (EQF level 3) demonstrates a first level of qualification to its holder as qualified worker or employee in a given employment sector. CAP provides direct access to employment and/or to upper secondary vocational studies (EQF level 4) in order to prepare for a *brevet de maîtrise* (BM - advanced diploma) or a vocational baccalaureate, or a BMA, either at school or through an apprenticeship.

The vocational baccalaureate (*Baccalauréat professionnel*, EQF level 4) is a qualification that allows successful candidates to enter a profession or several jobs. Access to tertiary VET in selected fields is also possible to prepare a higher technician certificate (BTS) in an advanced technician section in vocational schools. Prior VET knowledge may be recognised affecting programme duration.

BMA (*Brevet des métiers d'arts* - Applied Arts certificate) is a national qualification in a specific skill, which aims to preserve and pass on traditional techniques while promoting innovation. It is available to holders of a CAP in the same professional sector. The programme consists of vocational training specific to each BMA speciality, general education, and work placements lasting between 12 and 16 weeks. It gives direct access to employment.

Destination of graduates

Situation of the 2021 cohort of vocational school graduates in January 2022, 6 months after the end of their training, as a % of all leavers

Qualification level	Degree obtained	Study continuation rate	Leaving study rate	Employment rate	Permanent contract	Interim	Temporary contract	Professionalisation contract	Other contracts	Breakdown of leavers (%)
Professional skills certificate- CAP	Yes (76%)	57	43	28	37	17	40	3	2	
	No (24%)	34	66	16	34	24	36	3	3	
	Together	51	49	24	36	18	39	3	3	17.1
Vocational baccalaureate	Yes (78%)	60	40	40	38	18	38	4	2	
	No (22%)	31	69	30	38	27	32	2	2	
	Together	55	45	37	38	20	37	4	2	48.2

NB : data covers mainland France and overseas territories except Mayotte. They relate to leavers in 2021 from a final year of vocational training, six months after the end of their studies (excluding additional qualifications, which account for 2% of leavers).

Source: DEPP (2023). *Repères et références statistiques* [Benchmark and statistical references]. Sheet 7.37, table 2

Awards through validation of prior learning



All the qualifications developed by the State can be accessed via validation of non-formal and informal learning (VAE- *validation des acquis de l'expérience*). VAE is the third option to access formal (VET) qualifications, mainly in adult education.

General education subjects



Vocational programmes provided for pupils in *vocational lycées* (high schools) combine general education with a high level of specialised technical knowledge.

Key competences	The key competences are included in the general courses that are defined (syllabi) and examined nationally (52).
Application of learning outcomes approach	Information not available
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	The share of learners enrolled in upper secondary vocational programmes compared with the total number of VET learners (from upper secondary VET to master or equivalent level) is 41.4% in 2020/2021 (53).

[52] Centre Inffo (2016). *Key competences in vocational education and training - France*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.

[53] Eurostat educ_uoe_enra16 [extracted 8.10.2023]

EQF 5
Higher technician programmes (BTS) WBL 30%, 2 years ISCED 554

Tertiary VET programmes leading to EQF 5, ISCED 554 (BTS - Brevet de technicien supérieur - advanced technician certificate)

EQF level	5	ISCED-P 2011 level	554
Usual entry grade	13	Usual completion grade	14
Usual entry age	18	Usual completion age	20
Length of a programme (years)	2		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 (education is compulsory until age 16) National and regional authorities have the obligation to provide training to learners aged and 16 to 18.		
Is it initial VET?	 Is it continuing VET? 		
Is it offered free of charge?	 Is it available for adults?  Programmes are accessible to learners over 18		

ECVET or other credits Information not available

Other credit system: 120 ECTS (European credit transfer and accumulation system) points (54).

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	In classrooms (WBL 30%): • classroom theoretical vocational learning; • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies (1 or 2 for BTS programmes). In apprenticeship training centres (CFAs) (WBL 67%): • classroom theoretical vocational learning; • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies.
Main providers	• public and private education schools (Advanced technician certificate - BTS - <i>Brevet de technicien supérieur</i>); • apprenticeship training centres (CFAs); • accessible through validation of non-formal and informal learning (for adults).
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	• WBL 30% in classroom-based programmes; • WBL 67% in apprenticeship training centres (in-company practice).
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	In VET institutions: • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies. In apprenticeship training centres (CFAs): • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies.
Main target groups	• people over 18 in VET institutions; • people in adult education. Learners with an upper secondary technological baccalaureate usually continue their studies in tertiary VET programmes in selected fields. Those with a vocational baccalaureate may also access these programmes.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	All learners having completed upper secondary general, technological or vocational programmes may enrol in VET programmes at EQF level 5 in selected fields. Entry through validation of non-formal and informal learning is also possible.

Assessment of learning outcomes	At the end of the respective training programme, learners take an exam to obtain a VET qualification.																																										
Diplomas/certificates provided	Learners follow programmes in an advanced section of high schools preparing for an advanced technician certificate - BTS - <i>Brevet de technicien supérieur</i> ; All IVET programmes are offered, assessed and recognised by the State.																																										
Examples of qualifications	Bank - customer adviser (<i>Bank- conseiller de clientèle</i>) (BTS), EQF 5; Information on BTS diplomas across all fields is available online .																																										
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	While the purpose of the BTS is immediate entry into work, it is nevertheless possible to continue studying. • entry to the labour market; • pursuing a 3-year HE programme leading to a professional bachelor degree (EQF level 6); • access is also possible to: ◦ preparatory courses for the selective admission to higher schools of excellence (<i>Grandes Ecoles</i>) ◦ some engineering schools (after examination or interview or through admission of an application file).																																										
Destination of graduates	Situation of the 2021 cohort of vocational school graduates in January 2022, 6 months after the end of their training, as a % of all leavers <table><tr><th>Qualification level</th><th>Degree obtained</th><th>Study continuation rate</th><th>Leaving study rate</th><th>Employment rate</th><th>Permanent contract</th><th>Interim</th><th>Temporary contract</th><th>Professionalisation contract</th><th>Other contracts</th><th>Breakdown of leavers (%)</th></tr><tr><td rowspan="3">Advanced technician certificate (BTS)</td><td>Yes (88.1%)</td><td>46</td><td>54</td><td>56</td><td>43</td><td>17</td><td>36</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>No (11.9%)</td><td>32</td><td>68</td><td>49</td><td>47</td><td>21</td><td>29</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Together</td><td>44</td><td>56</td><td>55</td><td>43</td><td>17</td><td>35</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>34.7</td></tr></table> NB : data covers mainland France and overseas territories except Mayotte. They relate to leavers in 2021 from a final year of vocational training programmes, six months after the end of their studies (excluding additional qualifications, which account for 2% of leavers). Source: DEPP (2023). <i>Repères et références statistiques</i> [Benchmark and statistical references]. Sheet 7.37, table 2	Qualification level	Degree obtained	Study continuation rate	Leaving study rate	Employment rate	Permanent contract	Interim	Temporary contract	Professionalisation contract	Other contracts	Breakdown of leavers (%)	Advanced technician certificate (BTS)	Yes (88.1%)	46	54	56	43	17	36	3	2		No (11.9%)	32	68	49	47	21	29	2	2		Together	44	56	55	43	17	35	3	2	34.7
Qualification level	Degree obtained	Study continuation rate	Leaving study rate	Employment rate	Permanent contract	Interim	Temporary contract	Professionalisation contract	Other contracts	Breakdown of leavers (%)																																	
Advanced technician certificate (BTS)	Yes (88.1%)	46	54	56	43	17	36	3	2																																		
	No (11.9%)	32	68	49	47	21	29	2	2																																		
	Together	44	56	55	43	17	35	3	2	34.7																																	
Awards through validation of prior learning	 All the qualifications developed by the State can be accessed via validation of non-formal and informal learning (VAE- <i>validation des acquis de l'expérience</i>). VAE is the third option to access formal (VET) qualifications, mainly in adult education.																																										
General education subjects	Information not available																																										
Key competences	The key competences are included in the general courses that are defined (syllabi) and examined nationally (55).																																										

Application of learning outcomes approach	Information not available
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	The share of learners enrolled in programmes at this level compared with the total number of VET learners (from upper secondary VET to master or equivalent level) is 20.3% in 2020/21 (56).

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- [54] France compétences (2021). [Update of the referencing report of the French qualifications framework to the European qualification framework for lifelong learning and the qualifications framework of the European higher education area](#), page 68.
- [55] Centre Inffo (2016). [Key competences in vocational education and training - France](#). Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.
- [56] Eurostat educ_uoe_enra16 [extracted 18.10.2021]

EQF 6

Professional bachelor programmes

WBL 10%,

3 years

ISCED 655

Professional bachelor/ University bachelor of technology leading to EQF level 6, ISCED 655 (Licence professionnelle/licence professionnelle 'bachelor universitaire de technologie', BUT)

EQF level	6	ISCED-P 2011 level	655
Usual entry grade	13	Usual completion grade	16
Usual entry age	18	Usual completion age	21
Length of a programme (years)	3		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 (education is compulsory until age 16). National and regional authorities have the obligation to provide training to learners aged and 16 to 18		
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?		Is it available for adults?	 Programmes are accessible to learners over 18
ECVET or other credits	Other credit system: 180 ECTS (European credit transfer and accumulation system) points		

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	In full time university programmes (WBL 10%): • classroom theoretical vocational learning; • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies (22 to 26 weeks) In apprenticeship delivery (WBL 67%): • classroom theoretical vocational learning; • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies.
Main providers	• public universities (EPSCPs - scientific, cultural and professional public institutions (<i>établissements publics à caractère scientifique, culturel et professionnel</i>). They consist of universities and some 71 other establishments (mainly public engineering schools). Only EPSCPs may award bachelor and master degrees, therefore private universities may only award such diplomas if they have signed a partnership agreement with an EPSCP) • university technology institutes attached to universities (IUTs; they offer since 2021/22 a 3-year programme leading to the University bachelor of technology (Bachelor Universitaire de Technologie, BUT) • accessible through validation of non-formal and informal learning (for adults).
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	• WBL 10% in classroom-based programmes; • WBL 67% in apprenticeship (in-company practice).
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	In VET institutions: • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies. In apprenticeship delivery: • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies.
Main target groups	• people over 18 in VET institutions; • people in adult education.

Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	• learners with an upper secondary general baccalaureate may enrol in 3-year vocational bachelor programmes; • those with a higher technician certificate (BTS) (EQF level 5) may continue their studies to acquire a vocational bachelor in selected fields. Entry through validation of non-formal and informal learning is also possible.
Assessment of learning outcomes	At the end of the respective training programme, learners take an exam to obtain a VET qualification.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Professional bachelor (<i>Licence professionnelle</i>), EQF level 6, ISCED 655. University bachelor of technology (<i>Bachelor universitaire de technologie</i>), EQF level 6, ISCED 655 All IVET programmes are offered, assessed and recognised by the State.
Examples of qualifications	Digital marketing (<i>E-commerce et marketing numérique</i>), tourism and leisure sports (<i>Tourisme et loisirs sportifs</i>). Information on 173 professional bachelor degrees across all fields is available online. Information on 24 University Bachelor of Technology degree in the service and industrial sectors are available online.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	The professional bachelor degree was designed to allow people to move directly into a profession. It relates to European undertakings on the provision of a degree course that reflects the demands of the labour market in Europe and to the need for new qualifications between advanced technician level and advanced executive-engineer level. It enables students who wish to acquire quickly a professional qualification corresponding to clearly identified needs and jobs. • entry to the labour market; • pursuing a professional master degree (EQF 7).
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	 All the qualifications developed by the State can be accessed via validation of non-formal and informal learning (VAE- <i>validation des acquis de l'expérience</i>). VAE is the third option to access formal (VET) qualifications, mainly in adult education.
General education subjects	Information not available

Key competences	Information not available The key competences are included in the general courses that are defined (syllabi) and examined nationally (57).
Application of learning outcomes approach	Information not available
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	The share of learners enrolled in these programmes compared with the total number of VET learners (from upper secondary VET to master or equivalent level) is 12.1% in 2020/21 (58).

[57] Centre Inffo (2016). [Key competences in vocational education and training - France](#). Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.

[58] Eurostat educ_uoe_enra16 [extracted 9.10.2023]

EQF 7

Professional master programmes

WBL: up to 50%,

2 years

ISCED 757

Professional master leading to EQF level 7, ISCED 757 (Master)

EQF level	7	ISCED-P 2011 level	757
Usual entry grade	16	Usual completion grade	17
Usual entry age	21	Usual completion age	23 However, it is difficult to define an average age due to the fact that students can follow a double cursus, go abroad during 1 or 2 semesters, change professional plans or benefit from a year off for civic or international service, which shifts the age limit.
Length of a programme (years)	2 The duration of master programmes covers 4 consecutive semesters. It may be extended by 1 year if the student has to repeat 1 year of studies; or shortened by 1 or 2 semesters, when prior VET knowledge is recognised. Learners pursuing a professional master through continuing training schemes (training courses for employees and job seekers or schemes funded by the State or the region), may have their prior experience recognised (VAE). Depending on their personal and professional background, the duration or the programme is shortened by 1 or 2 semesters.		

Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 (education is compulsory until age 16). National and regional authorities have the obligation to provide training to learners aged and 16 to 18	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?	 The annual registration fees are 253 euros. The costs are set by the Ministry of Higher education, Research and Innovation (and not by the education establishments).	Is it available for adults?	 Programmes are accessible to learners over 18

ECVET or other credits 120 ECTS credits, spread over 4 semesters

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

In full time university programmes (WBL 50%):

- classroom theoretical vocational learning;
- practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor;
- project work;
- internships in companies.

In apprenticeship delivery (WBL 67%):

- classroom theoretical vocational learning;
- practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor;
- project work;
- internships in companies.

Main providers

- public universities (EPSCPs) (59);
- private higher education institutions;
- accessible through validation of non-formal and informal learning (for adults).

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies

- WBL 50% in classroom-based programmes;
- WBL 67% in apprenticeship (in-company practice).

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	In higher education institutions: • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies. In apprenticeship delivery: • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies.
Main target groups	• people over 18 in VET institutions; • people in adult education.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Master programmes are accessible to learners with a bachelor degree, EQF level 6. Access to a master degree is open to candidates holding a national bachelor degree, or a diploma conferring bachelor-level degree (60). Learners with a bachelor (EQF level 6) degree issued abroad may also enter master programmes, through validation of higher education studies (<i>validation des études supérieures</i>, VES) (61). Entry through validation of non-formal and informal learning is also possible. There are no age requirements.
Assessment of learning outcomes	The learning outcomes are assessed, either by continuous and regular control, or by a final examination, or by these two combined control methods. Assessment methods are adapted for those with special needs. To be awarded a master degree, learners must demonstrate good knowledge of a modern foreign language. For holders of a higher technician certificate (BTS, EQF level 5) a 12-16-week work placement and the completion of a supervised project are also necessary.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Professional master (<i>Master professionnel</i>), EQF 7, ISCED 757. The master degree has a dual purpose: professional (direct entry into the job market) and research (further studies in doctoral schools). The course content includes theoretical, methodological and applied (vocational) elements and, when required, one or more internships. It also includes an initiation to research and, in particular, the completion of a dissertation or other original research work. All IVET programmes are offered, assessed and recognised by the State. They are periodically and independently evaluated by the High Council for the Evaluation of Higher Education and Research

Examples of qualifications	Information not available
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	• entry to the labour market; • pursuing PhD studies (EQF level 8). The master degree provides access to high-level jobs for people with 5 years of education following the baccalaureate or access to PhD studies. Some regulated professions, i.e. professions which can only be exercised with certain qualifications, require a master degree.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	 All the qualifications developed by the State can be accessed via validation of non-formal and informal learning (VAE- <i>validation des acquis de l'expérience</i>). VAE is the third option to access formal (VET) qualifications, mainly in adult education.
General education subjects	Information not available
Key competences	They are detailed in the files of the National register of vocational and professional qualifications (RNCP) published on France Compétences agency website available online.
Application of learning outcomes approach	Information not available
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	The share of learners enrolled in professional master or equivalent level programmes (ISCED level 757) compared with the total number of VET learners (from upper secondary VET to master or equivalent level) is 5% in 2020/21 (62). Students enrolled in ISCED 757 programmes represent 20% of all students enrolled in a vocational master's programme or equivalent (ISCED 75)(63).

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- [59] EPSCPs are scientific, cultural and professional public institutions (établissements publics à caractère scientifique, culturel et professionnel). They consist of universities and some 71 other establishments (mainly public engineering schools). Only EPSCPs may award bachelor and master degrees, therefore private universities may only award such diplomas if they have signed a partnership agreement with an EPSCP.
- [60] Only the State may award national bachelor- (*grade de licence*) and master-level (*grade de master*) degrees in line with the bachelor-master-doctorate, BMD model (*licence-master-doctorat*, LMD) in place in the university sector. The [decree of 27 January 2020](#) relating to the specifications for university bachelor and master degrees sets out the criteria for a bachelor programme offered outside the university sector to be awarded the bachelor or master degree.
- [61] Article R. 613-33 of the Education Act
- [62] Eurostat educ_uoe_enra16 [extracted 10.10.2023]
- [63] Eurostat educ_uoe_enra16 [extracted 10.10.2023]

EQF 7

Qualified engineer
Master degree programmes
at public or private
higher colleges of excellence
5 years,
ISCED 756

Qualified engineer master degree leading to EQF level 7, ISCED 756 (titre d'ingénieur diplômé)

EQF level	7	ISCED-P 2011 level	756
Usual entry grade	13	Usual completion grade	17
Usual entry age	18	Usual completion age	23
Length of a programme (years)	5		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 (education is compulsory until age 16) National and regional authorities have the obligation to provide training to learners aged and 16 to 18.	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?		Is it available for adults?	 Programmes are accessible to learners over 18

ECVET or other credits Information not available

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• Full-time classroom programmes (<i>Formation initiale sous statut d'étudiant</i>); ◦ classroom theoretical vocational learning; ◦ practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; ◦ project work; ◦ internships in companies. • delivered as part of lifelong learning programmes (<i>formation continue</i>) (64) • classroom theoretical vocational learning; • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies. • delivered in apprenticeship (<i>Formation initiale sous statut d'apprenti</i>) (WBL 67%): ◦ classroom theoretical vocational learning; ◦ practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; ◦ project work; ◦ internships in companies.
Main providers	• public or private engineering schools accredited by CTI (65); • accessible through validation of non-formal and informal learning (VAE).
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	• WBL 16% in classroom-based programmes; • WBL 67% in apprenticeship (in-company practice).
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	In VET institutions: • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies. In apprenticeship delivery: • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies.
Main target groups	• people over 18 in VET institutions; • people in adult education (<i>formation continue</i>)
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	The 5-year programme is accessible to learners holding general baccalaureate (EQF level 4), ISCED 344. Entry through validation of non-formal and informal learning is also possible.

Assessment of learning outcomes	Information not available
Diplomas/certificates provided	Qualified engineer master degree (<i>titre d'ingénieur diplômé</i>), EQF 7, ISCED 747. The title of 'qualified engineer', which has both an academic and professional quality, is protected and controlled by the CTI (<i>commission des titres d'ingénieur</i> - engineering qualification committee). Only institutions that are accredited by the CTI are allowed to award the title of 'qualified engineer'. All IVET programmes are offered, assessed and recognised by the State.
Examples of qualifications	Qualified engineer master degree (<i>titre d'ingénieur diplômé</i>) The list of higher education accredited institutions offering the qualified engineer master degree is published each year in the Official Journal of the French Republic and is available online.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	• entry to the labour market; • pursuing a PhD degree (EQF 8). Possessing the title 'qualified engineer' (<i>titre d'ingénieur diplômé</i>) allows a person to work as an engineer.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	 All the qualifications developed by the State can be accessed via validation of non-formal and informal learning (VAE- <i>validation des acquis de l'expérience</i>). VAE is the third option to access formal (VET) qualifications, mainly in adult education.
General education subjects	Information not available
Key competences	The key competences are included in the general courses that are defined (syllabi) and examined nationally (66).
Application of learning outcomes approach	Information not available
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	The share of learners enrolled in professional master or equivalent level programmes (ISCED level 756) compared with the total number of VET learners is 18,5% in 2020/21, but these data make no distinction between the various types of programmes at ISCED 756 level (67). Students enrolled in ISCED level 756 programmes represent 74.3% of all students enrolled in ISCED 75 programmes.

[64] The delivery modes for each accredited HE institution are available at: [the ENIC-NARIC gateway](#) to recognition of qualifications and the Ministry of Higher Education and

Research [website](#).

- [65] CTIs ([Commission des titres d'ingénieur](#) /Engineering qualification committee) was established in 1934. CTI role is to assess and accredit HE institutions that may award the title of qualified engineer, they main tasks include periodical assessment of all engineering programmes offered nationwide, define the job profile (and award criteria for the title) of a qualified engineer and award the relevant degree and the 'Quality label' award.
- [66] Centre Inffo (2016). *Key competences in vocational education and training - France*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.
- [67] Eurostat educ_uoe_enra16 [extracted 10.10.2023]

EQF 6 (3-year programmes); 7 (5-year programmes)

EQF 6 -7

Programmes at public or private

higher colleges of excellence

degree or certificate in

business and management (State-labelled)

3 years,

ISCED 655

Degree or master in

business and management (State-labelled)

5 years,

ISCED 756

Degree or certificate in business and management (State-labelled) leading to EQF level 6, ISCED 655 (Diplôme ou certificat d'école de commerce bac+3). Degree or master in business and management (State-labelled) leading to EQF level 7, ISCED 756 (Diplôme ou certificat d'école de commerce bac+5).

EQF level 6 (3-year programmes); 7 (5-year programmes)

ISCED-P 2011 level 655 (3-year programmes)
756 (5-year programmes)

Usual entry grade 13 or 15 (68)

Usual completion grade 15 - 17

Usual entry age 18 - 22 (3-year programmes)
18 (5-year programmes)

Usual completion age 21 - 23

Length of a programme (years) 3 - 5

Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 (education is compulsory until age 16)	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	Information not available
Is it offered free of charge?	 Public higher education is free	Is it available for adults?	 Programmes are accessible to learners over 18
ECVET or other credits	Information not available		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	In full time university programmes: • classroom theoretical vocational learning; • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies. In apprenticeship delivery (WBL 67%): • classroom theoretical vocational learning; • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies.		
Main providers	• elite business and management schools (<i>Grandes écoles</i>) (69); • accessible through validation of non-formal and informal learning (for adults).		
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	• WBL >15% in classroom-based programmes; • WBL 67% in apprenticeship (in-company practice).		
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	In business and management higher education institutions (<i>Grandes écoles</i>) (70): • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies. In apprenticeship delivery: • practical training in the form of courses, practical work, workshops, indoor and outdoor; • project work; • internships in companies.		

Main target groups	• people over 18 in <i>Grandes écoles</i>; • people in adult education. <i>Grandes écoles</i> are non-academic tertiary education institutions of excellence operating in limited fields (public administration, science and engineering, humanities and business administration). Access is possible through a very competitive and selective admission procedure (71). Business and management <i>Grandes écoles</i> are mainly private institutions managed by professional organisations. There must be accredited by the State to be able to award degrees and certificates that have national validity. The label is granted for a maximum renewable period of 6 years.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	There are several types of business and management schools (<i>Grandes écoles</i>): • some schools select students coming from 2-year preparatory schools (CPGE); • others accept also learners with a general baccalaureate (EQF level 4).
Assessment of learning outcomes	At the end of the respective training programme, learners take an exam to obtain a VET qualification.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Degree or certificate in business and management (<i>Diplôme ou certificat d'école de commerce bac+3</i>), EQF level 7, ISCED 655. Degree or master in business and management (<i>Diplôme ou certificat d'école de commerce bac+5</i>), EQF 7, ISCED 756. All IVET programmes are offered, assessed and recognised by the State (72).
Examples of qualifications	Degree in marketing and management (<i>Diplôme en gestion et marketing bac+3</i>); Degree in marketing, finance and international business management (<i>Diplôme de responsable marketing, finance et commerce international bac+4</i>); Master in management science (<i>Diplôme en sciences de gestion bac+5</i>). 182 State-labelled business and management degrees are offered nationally.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	• entry to the labour market; • move on to further studies, along the LMD model.
Destination of graduates	Information not available

Awards through validation of prior learning	 Among these VET qualifications, only the ones registered to the national register of vocational and professional qualifications (RNCP) are accessible through validation of prior learning (VAE).
General education subjects	Information not available
Key competences	 The key competences are included in the general courses that are defined (syllabi) and examined nationally (73).
Application of learning outcomes approach	Information not available
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	The share of learners enrolled in professional master or equivalent level programmes (ISCED 756) compared with the total number of VET learners is 18.5%, but these data make no distinction between the various types of programmes at ISCED 756 level (74).

- [69] *Grandes écoles* are tertiary education institutions of excellence operating in limited fields (public administration, science and engineering, humanities and business administration). Access is possible through a very competitive and selective admission procedure. *Grandes écoles* offering programmes leading to business and management qualifications are mainly private institutions managed by professional organisations. A State-approved qualification provides access to the LMD cycle (*Licence-Master-Doctorat*), whether in France or abroad. Higher education in French is free, but only the State may issue university degrees and diplomas. Private HE institutions must be accredited or State-labelled, through the CEFDG (*la commission d'évaluation des formations et diplômes de gestion*, <https://www.cefdg.fr/>). The label is granted for a maximum renewable period of 6 years.
- [70] *Grande écoles* are tertiary education institutions of excellence operating in limited fields (public administration, science and engineering, humanities and business administration). Access is possible through a very competitive and selective admission procedure. *Grandes écoles* offering programmes leading to business and management qualifications are mainly private institutions managed by professional organisations. A State-approved qualification provides access to the LMD cycle (*Licence-Master-Doctorat*), whether in France or abroad. NB: Higher education in French is free, but only the State may issue university degrees and diplomas. Private HE institutions must be accredited or State-labelled, through the CEFDG (*la commission d'évaluation des formations et diplômes de gestion*). The label is granted for a maximum renewable period of 6 years.
- [71] Upper secondary - *Baccalaureate* - graduates, pre-selected based on their school profile and grades, must undertake preparatory classes in a 2-year programme with eliminatory examinations at the end of each year).
- [72] Higher education in French is free, but only the State may issue university degrees and diplomas. Private HE institutions must be accredited (validity is for 6 years) by the State, through the Commission d'évaluation des formations et diplômes de gestion (CEFDG). The State-approved label is a recognition procedure conducted by the Ministry of National Education which gives the diploma the value of a national qualification. The label is granted for a maximum renewable period of 6 years. *Grandes écoles* offering

programmes leading to business and management qualifications are mainly private institutions managed by professional organisations. A State-approved qualification provides access to the LMD cycle (*Licence-Master-Doctorat*), whether in France or abroad.

- [73] Centre Inffo (2016). [Key competences in vocational education and training - France](#). Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.
- [74] Eurostat educ_uoe_enra16 [extracted 10.10.2023]

Professional qualification certificates
(CQP, *certificats de qualification
professionnelle*)

continuing vocational training

(lifelong learning) programmes

Professional qualification certificates (Certificats de qualification professionnelle - CQP). Professional qualification certificates may be acquired as part of an apprenticeship, in different continuing training programmes and through validation of prior learning. They are accessible through a variety of programmes designed for different learner group (the unemployed, employees, the self-employed, specific groups etc.).

EQF level	Not applicable	ISCED-P 2011 level	Not applicable
Usual entry grade	Not applicable	Usual completion grade	Not applicable
Usual entry age	People in adult education (over 18 who have left initial education and training)	Usual completion age	Not applicable
Length of a programme (years)	Information not available		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 (education is compulsory until age 16)	Is it part of formal education and training system?	Not applicable
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	 Continuing vocational programmes are lifelong learning programmes (<i>formation tout au long de la vie</i>) for adults.

Is it
offered
free of
charge?



There is a variety of training schemes preparing CQPs, mostly targeting jobseekers and employed people. CVET is mostly financed by employers' contributions; training courses are most of the time free for beneficiaries (or taken as part of the individual right to training (the so-called *compte personnel de formation* - CPF).

Is it
available
for adults?



Continuing vocational programmes are lifelong learning programmes (*formation tout au long de la vie*) for adults.

ECVET or other credits Information not available

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

Professional qualification certificates (CQP) enable employees to acquire an operational qualification. The credential may be granted by:

- a 'professionalisation contract' (one of the two existing alternance training programmes, with the apprenticeship contract);
- continuing training;
- through validation of non-formal and informal learning (VAE - *validation des acquis de l'expérience*) if the CQP is registered in the national register of vocational qualifications (RNCP).

The CQP are recognised by the collective or branch agreement it relates to; it is thus created and issued within an industry sector by a joint industry body, usually the CPNE (National Joint Employment Committee).

The CQP can only be accessed through lifelong learning programmes and training is usually provided by a body created and managed by the branch in question. As of 2019, these certificates are under the responsibility of *France compétences*.

Previously, CQPs were not attached to a level of qualification, but classified separately (when registered) in the national register of vocational qualifications (RNCP), by sector of activity. Since 2019, CQPs may be registered in the RNCP with a level or in the specific register (without level); the registration process is run by France Compétences.

Main providers	The training market is free. Professional qualification certificates (CQP) enable employees to acquire an operational qualification. A CQP, recognised by the collective or branch agreement it relates to, is thus created and issued within an industry sector by a joint industry body, usually the CPNE (National Joint Employment Committee) (Article L6113-4 of the Labour Code). • they can only be accessed through lifelong learning programmes and training is usually provided by a body created and managed by the branch in question; • accessible through validation of non-formal and informal learning (VAE - <i>validation des acquis de l'expérience</i>) is also possible.
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	Not applicable
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	Not applicable
Main target groups	In CVET, programmes target • young people not in initial education and training; • the unemployed (job seekers); • employees.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	CVET training offer is designed (and then financed) on the basis of the status (unemployed, job seeker, employee etc.) of the beneficiary. Programmes that lead to a CQP are available through: • professionalisation contracts (for young people, job seekers and people on basic welfare benefits); • the CPF personal training right scheme (employees, jobseekers and unqualified young people).
Assessment of learning outcomes	Information not available
Diplomas/certificates provided	Professional qualifications certificates (CQPs - <i>certificats de qualification professionnelle</i>).
Examples of qualifications	Information not available
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	• (re)entry to the labour market; • progress in own career; • career mobility.
Destination of graduates	Not applicable

Awards through validation of prior learning	All vocational qualifications registered in the RNCP (this includes all formal qualifications issued by the State and those recognised by the social partners) can also be accessed via validation of non-formal and informal learning.
General education subjects	Information not available
Key competences	
Application of learning outcomes approach	Information not available
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

Professional certificate/title

(titre professionnel)

continuing vocational training

(lifelong learning) programmes

Professional certificate/title (Titre professionnel). Professional certificates/titles are accessible through a variety of programmes designed for different groups of learners (the unemployed, employees) (see section learning form). They may be acquired as part of an apprenticeship, in continuing training and through validation of prior learning.

EQF level	3-6	ISCED-P 2011 level	Not applicable
Usual entry grade	Not applicable	Usual completion grade	Not applicable
Usual entry age	People in adult education (over 18 who have left initial education and training)	Usual completion age	Not applicable
Length of a programme (years)	Information not available		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 (education is compulsory until age 16)	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	 Continuing vocational programmes are lifelong learning programmes (<i>formation tout au long de la vie</i>) for adults.

Is it offered free of charge?

There is a variety of training schemes available to acquire a professional certificate/title, mostly targeting job seekers and employed people. CVET is mostly financed by employers' contributions; training courses are most of the time free for beneficiaries (or taken as part of the individual right to training (the so-called *compte personnel de formation*, CPF).

Is it available for adults?



Continuing vocational programmes are lifelong learning programmes (*formation tout au long de la vie*) for adults.

ECVET or other credits Information not available

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

The credential may be granted by

- apprenticeship;
- continuing training;
- through validation of non-formal and informal learning (VAE - *validation des acquis de l'expérience*).

The Professional certificate/title (*Titre professionnel*) is a State certificate designed and issued by the Ministry of Labour. It certifies that his holder masters the skills, abilities and knowledge necessary to perform a job. It enables the acquisition of specific professional skills to support employability and professional development of workers.

This qualification is made up of modules (75). From 1 January 2019, it become mandatory that all qualifications included in the national register of vocational and professional qualifications (*Répertoire National des Certifications Professionnelles*, RNCP) are structured into units/blocks of competences (*blocs de compétences*) (76), therefore these certificates are already compatible with the new arrangements.

They cover all sectors (building, human services, transport, catering, commerce, industry, etc.) and different levels of qualification (EQF levels 3 to 6).

Main providers	The training market is free. Professional certificates/titles are issued by the Ministry of Labour and certify that the holder masters the skills, abilities and knowledge necessary to perform a job. They enable the acquisition of specific professional skills to support employability and professional development of workers. • they can be accessed through lifelong learning programmes and training is usually provided by semi-public and public training providers like the National association for adult vocational training (<i>Association pour la formation des adultes</i>, AFPA) or the Consortium of local public education institutions (<i>Groupements d'Établissements</i>, GRETA); • they may be delivered as apprenticeships offered by apprenticeship training centres; • accessible through validation of non-formal and informal learning (VAE - <i>validation des acquis de l'expérience</i>) is also possible.
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	Information not available
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	Information not available
Main target groups	In CVET, programmes target • young people not in initial education and training; • the unemployed (job seekers); • employees.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	CVET training offer is designed (and then financed) on the basis of the status (unemployed, job seeker, employee etc.) of the beneficiary. Programmes that lead to a professional qualification are available through: • promotion or transition through apprenticeship programmes (for employees); • the personal training account scheme; • courses funded by the local job centres (for jobseekers).
Assessment of learning outcomes	Information not available
Diplomas/certificates provided	Professional certificate/title (<i>Titre professionnel</i>) Professional certificates/titles are listed in the RNCP which includes all nationally recognised vocational and professional qualifications.

Examples of qualifications	Driving school instructor (<i>enseignant de la conduite et de la sécurité routière</i>); fitters assembler in aviation (<i>monteur câbleur en aéronautique</i>); driver in building, civil engineering works (<i>conducteur de travaux du bâtiment et du génie civil</i>).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	• (re)entry to the labour market; • progress in own career; • career mobility.
Destination of graduates	Not applicable
Awards through validation of prior learning	All vocational qualifications registered in the RNCP (this includes all formal qualifications issued by the State and those recognised by the social partners) can also be accessed via validation of non-formal and informal learning.
General education subjects	Information not available
Key competences	
Application of learning outcomes approach	Information not available
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

[75] CCP: *certificats de compétences professionnelles*.

[76] A skills set is a minimum, homogeneous and coherent set of competences contributing to the autonomous exercise of a professional activity that can be credited.

References

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- [10] Cedefop (2019). *The changing nature and role of vocational education and training in Europe. Volume 6: vocationally oriented education and training at higher education level. Expansion and diversification in European countries*. [Case study focusing on France](#). Cedefop research paper; No 70.
- [11] Fournier Y., & Rakocevic R. (2023). [Objectifs éducation et formation 2030 de l'UE : où en est la France en 2023 ?](#), *Note d'Information, n° 23.20, DEPP*. [2030 vocational education and training objectives in the EU : where France is standing in 2023? Briefing note No 23.20, DEPP].
- [13] Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research (2023). [Repères et](#)

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- [19] DEPP (2023). *Repères et références statistiques* [Benchmarks and statistical references]
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