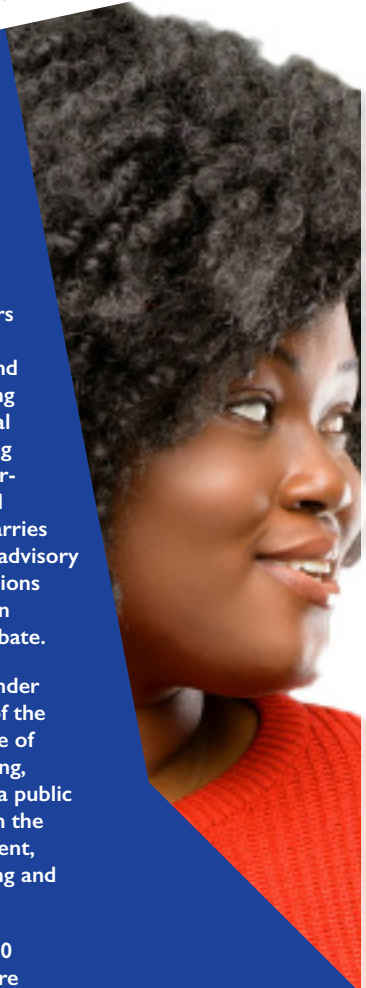




# VOCATIONAL TRAINING in FRANCE

## An answer to your questions



Centre Inffo offers guidance, apprenticeship and vocational training professionals legal expertise, training courses and tailor-made, specialised information. It carries out engineering, advisory and support missions and plays a role in leading public debate.

An association under the supervision of the Ministry in charge of Vocational Training, Centre Inffo has a public service mission in the field of employment, vocational training and guidance.

With a team of 80 employees, Centre Inffo is committed to providing its public and private clients with up-to-date expertise and a proven methodology to meet their challenges and projects.



This brochure provides a summary of the specific features of both initial and continuing vocational training, how to access additional information, and the main networks of French operators in the field of vocational training.

In France, lifelong vocational training is a national obligation. A coordinated strategy is defined and implemented by the State, the regions and the social partners. The State has given the Regions full competence for continuing vocational training. Initiated in 1982, this decentralisation process is to be put into perspective from 2018.

The field of vocational training in France is composed of two relatively autonomous groups:

- initial vocational training concerns young people with full-time school status up to the age of 16, and apprentices ;
- continuing vocational training concerns young people who have left or completed their initial training and adults on the labour market<sup>1</sup>.

France is experiencing a context of extending schooling to all ages, as well as an increase in the value of vocational training and the development of work-study programmes, under school status or within the framework of an employment contract (mainly through apprenticeship). In recent years, cooperation between schools and companies has increased and bridges have multiplied.

In addition, from the start of the 2020-2021 school year, 16-year-olds will be obliged to train until the age of 18. This training obligation can be met by several means: schooling, apprenticeship, continuing training courses, civic service, support or social and professional integration.

Efforts made for continuing vocational training and apprenticeship accounted for 1.1% of French gross domestic product in 2017<sup>2</sup>. In 2018, nearly 1,650,000 employees benefited from training, skills assessment or VAE, paid for by a joint body (see page 3), and nearly 800,000 jobseekers entered training<sup>3</sup>.

The training sector is undergoing significant development, which is also in line with European Union policy.

1. Article L6111-1 of the Labour Code

2. Source: Budget bill for 2020 - Jaune budgétaire Formation professionnelle.

3. Id.

**Centre pour le développement  
de l'information sur la formation  
permanente**

**4 avenue du Stade de France  
93218 Saint-Denis-La Plaine  
Tél 01 55 93 91 91**

**contact.europe@centre-inffo.fr**

# IVET - INITIAL TRAINING

gives the vocational education its full place...

French education is national, free of charge and mostly secular. Private sector enrolls one student out of five. At the start of the 2018 school year, the public and private education system as a whole will have 15.7 million pupils, students and apprentices<sup>1</sup>. In total, 22.9% of the population is enrolled in school.

## Initial training

It is compulsory from 3 to 16 years of age and offers young people general and vocational education. The education system, which comes under the Ministry of National Education, comprises three levels (primary, secondary and tertiary) divided into cycles (see diagram). Domestic expenditure on education is estimated at 157.2 billion euros in 2018. It has doubled since 1980 and represents 6.7% of GDP<sup>2</sup>.

## Three possible pathways

Three educational choices are offered: general, technological and vocational education. The last two award diplomas ranging from the CAP (Certificate of Professional Skills, EQF 3<sup>3</sup>) to the title of engineer (EQF 8) via the BTS (higher-grade technician's diploma, 2 years' study after high school diploma - EQF 5). They can be obtained at school, in the context of apprenticeships, or through the validation of prior learning. The diplomas are designed and renewed by the public authorities in consultation with employees' and employers' trade unions within the framework of Professional Advisory Commissions (Commissions professionnelles consultatives). All professional diplomas at levels EQF 3 to EQF 5 are organised in units that can be obtained in a disjointed manner. They are recorded in a national register<sup>4</sup>.

## Agricultural education

It is placed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture. It offers a variety of vocational training courses, in initial, continuing or work-linked training, ranging from level V (EQF 3) to level I (EQF 8).

## Professionalization of higher education

Higher education offers general training as well as vocational training, from technician level (EQF5) to engineer level (EQF8). It is accessible to holders of the Baccalaureate, as well as to holders of the diploma of access to university studies (DAEU).

The «grandes écoles», courses of excellence, are managed by different ministries: National Education, Defence, Industry, Transport, Agriculture and Fisheries.

## Apprenticeship

The aim of the apprenticeship is to provide young people aged between 16 and 29 years with a general education, both theoretical and practical, to acquire one of the diplomas ranging from the CAP (certificate of professional skills) to the title of engineer.

The management of the apprenticeship system is ensured by the State (legislation), companies (financing), France compétences (market regulation – see below) and the social partners (definition of training costs per branch and prepared certification).

In 2018-2019, 448,100 apprentices are enrolled in an apprenticeship training centre, 20% of whom are in higher education. The number of apprentices continued to increase (+4.2%) until January 2020. The health crisis at Covid-19 stopped the progression in recruitment.

1. Source : ministère de l'Éducation nationale. Repères et Références Statistiques 2019.

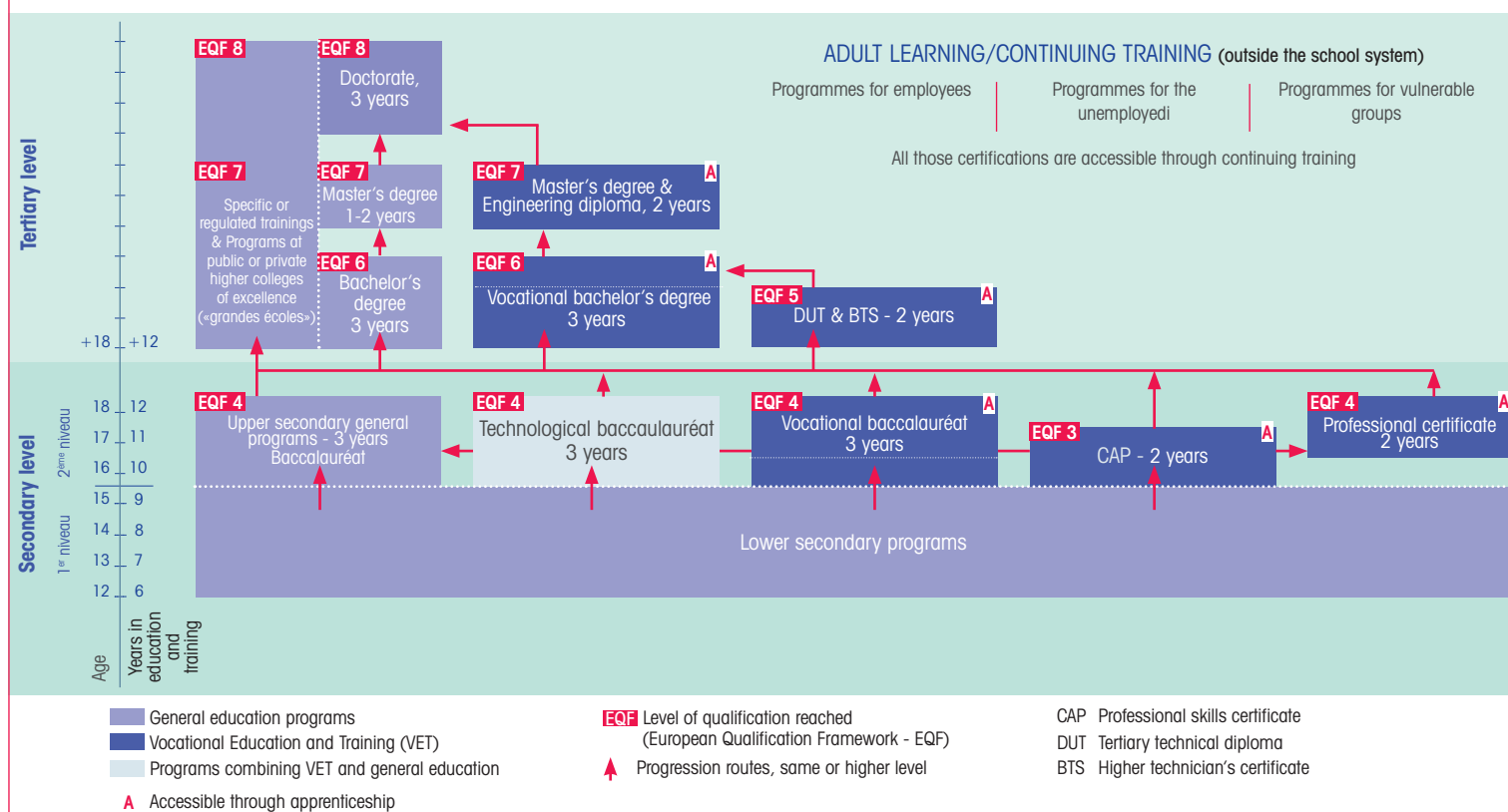
2. Source: Information Note 19.38 October 2019, Evaluation, Foresight and Performance Directorate, Ministry of education.

3. CEC : Cadre Européen des Certifications / EQF : European Qualification Framework

4. Le Répertoire National des Certifications Professionnelles (RNCP) : <https://certificationprofessionnelle.fr>

5. Source : ministère de l'Éducation nationale. Note flash : Les effectifs d'étudiants dans l'enseignement supérieur en 2015-2016

## VET IN THE FRENCH EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM



## ...and CVET - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING

It concerns people already in the labour force (private sector employees, civil servants, self-employed workers) or who are entering it (job seekers). The aim of lifelong vocational training is to enable each individual to acquire and update knowledge and skills that will support his or her professional development and to progress by at least one level of qualification during working life. It is a determining factor in securing career paths and employee advancement (Article L6111-1 of the French Labour Code).

Historically, training schemes have depended on the status of the beneficiary. The situation has changed since January 2015 with the implementation of the Personal Training Account, which entitles each employee to training rights at his or her own initiative (see below).

The Regions have general competence in the field of apprenticeship and vocational training; they develop their own training policy and implement a Regional Public Training Service (SPRF).

For their part, the social partners have an essential role to play, in particular in the choice of training policies for private sector employees and in the management of part of the funding provided by companies.

Vocational training providers are private, public or consular (see page 4). In 2017, more than 67,000 providers achieved a turnover of 14.9 billion euros<sup>1</sup>.

France spent 26.3 billion euros in 2017 on continuing vocational training and apprenticeships<sup>2</sup>. This funding comes mainly from firms (30%), the Regions (17.3%) and the State (14% + 22.5% for its agents), with the remaining 16.2% coming from other public actors and households.

### France compétences

Created on 1 January 2019, France compétences is a national public institution responsible for regulating and financing vocational training and apprenticeships.

Placed under the supervision of the Minister in charge of vocational training, its role is to:

- distribute the mutual funds to the various players in vocational training and apprenticeships;
- regulate the quality of training;
- make recommendations on costs, rules of funding and access to training;
- managing the National Directory of Professional Certifications;
- ensure the implementation of the reform on vocational training and apprenticeship.

France Compétences is also the national contact point for the European Qualifications Framework and the quality assurance system EQAVET.

### An obligation to participate in the financing of vocational training for the working population

The obligation for companies to finance continuing vocational training was simplified from 2015 and again in 2019. Private companies with 11 or more employees are subject to a contribution equal to 1.6% of the wage bill, and 0.55% for those with fewer than 11 employees.

This contribution must be managed by a national public body, France Compétences (see above). This institution distributes the sums collected among various organisations in charge of financing training schemes, including skills operators.

The keys to its distribution vary according to the scheme concerned: work-based training (apprenticeship and professionalization), Personal Training Account (PTA), skills development plan for companies with less than 50 employees, .... The law no longer obliges companies with 50 or more employees to draw up a skills development plan (see below). It does, however, introduce an obligation to ensure that employees adapt to their jobs and maintain their ability to hold a job..

### Employee training

Private sector employees have access to training either at the employer's initiative as part of the skills development plan, or at their own initiative as part of the personal training account or through work-based training. Similar provisions exist for public sector employees.

#### • The Personal Training Account (PTA) – Compte Personnel de Formation (CPF)

In order to promote access to vocational training throughout life, each person has a personal training account from the moment he or she enters the labour market until retirement, no matter of his or her status. This account contributes to the acquisition of a first level of qualification or to the development of his or her skills and qualifications.

The PTA, created in 2014, is open to anyone aged 16 and over. It takes the form of an account funded in euros each year, i.e. 500 euros per year, 800 euros for a low-skilled public, up to a maximum of 5 years.

The account makes it possible to finance certified training, skills assessment or VAE support actions. The person uses a smartphone application to choose and purchase the desired training course.

#### • The skills development plan

New name for the training plan, it groups together all the training actions for which the employer is responsible. This plan is subject to consultation with the Economic and Social Committee (formerly the Works Council). The employee is considered to be on a professional mission and continues to carry out his employment contract. The employer has two options: either the employee is trained during working hours and continues to receive his salary, or he is sent on training outside working hours.

#### • The skills assessment

It is a service that allows employees to analyze their personal and professional skills in order to define a professional or training project. It can be carried out within the framework of the plan or a leave of absence.

### Validation of acquired experience

- For university entrance: VAE allows candidates who do not have the required diploma or title, but who can justify a foreign diploma, professional experience or informal knowledge, to access university training.
- To obtain a certification: any person who has been active for at least one year in a professional or voluntary capacity or who has exercised trade union responsibilities, a local electoral mandate or a local elective office related to the purpose of the diploma or title in question, may have the knowledge and skills acquired during this activity validated, in order to obtain all or part of this certification, i.e. to be exempted, in whole or in part, from some of the tests constituting it.

### Training for self-employed workers

Non-employees (farmers, craftsmen, self-employed workers, traders, and liberal professions) can also access training. They are obliged to contribute to the financing of their training by paying a contribution to a collecting body authorised by the State.

1. Source : Budget bill for 2020 - Jaune budgétaire Formation professionnelle.

2. Source : Id.



## Administrations

- ☐ Public service, administration portal  
[www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr)
- ☐ Ministry of Labour Employment and Inclusion  
General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training (DGEFP)  
[www.travail-emploi.gouv.fr](http://www.travail-emploi.gouv.fr)  
tel. : 33 1 44 38 38 38
- ☐ Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sport  
[www.education.gouv.fr](http://www.education.gouv.fr)  
Tel. 33 1 55 55 10 10
- ☐ Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation  
[www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr](http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr)  
Tel. 33 1 55 55 90 90
- ☐ Ministry of Agriculture and Food  
[www.agriculture.gouv.fr](http://www.agriculture.gouv.fr)  
Tel. 33 1 49 55 49 55

## Information on training and employment

- ☐ Pôle emploi (National employment centre)  
[www.pole-emploi.fr](http://www.pole-emploi.fr)
- ☐ Orientation pour tous - national guidance and training portal  
[www.orientation-pour-tous.fr](http://www.orientation-pour-tous.fr)
- ☐ France Compétences  
[www.france-competences.fr](http://www.france-competences.fr)
- ☐ Centre for the Development of Information on Lifelong Learning (Centre Inffo)  
[www.centre-inffo.fr](http://www.centre-inffo.fr)
- ☐ Regional animation and training information resource centres (Carif)  
[www.intercarif.org](http://www.intercarif.org)
- ☐ Youth Information Network  
[www.cidj.com](http://www.cidj.com)
- ☐ National Office for Information on Education and Occupations (Onisep)  
[www.onisep.fr](http://www.onisep.fr)

## To prepare a professional stay in France...

- ☐ The site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides a lot of advice for people wishing to come to France, and informs about the formalities to be completed  
[www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/venir-en-france](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/venir-en-france)
- ☐ The Euroguidance France portal provides information on the French system and the preparation of a study or professional stay  
[www.euroguidance-france.org](http://www.euroguidance-france.org)

## ... to come and study

- ☐ Campus France offers foreign students all the information they need to prepare their stay and higher education courses in France  
[www.campusfrance.fr](http://www.campusfrance.fr)
- ☐ The ENIC-NARIC France centre is the French information centre for academic and professional recognition of diplomas  
[www.ciep.fr/enic-naric-france](http://www.ciep.fr/enic-naric-france)

## ... to come and train

- ☐ Educagri, the French public agricultural education website, provides information on schools, diplomas and agricultural education, boarding school capacities, international cooperation  
[www.educagri.fr](http://www.educagri.fr)
- ☐ The Permanent Assembly of the Chambers of Trades and Crafts (APCMA) provides information on training in the craft trades  
[www.artisanat.fr](http://www.artisanat.fr)
- ☐ The network of French Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI France) provides information on all the schools managed by its network  
[www.cci.fr/web/formations](http://www.cci.fr/web/formations)
- ☐ The Groupements d'établissements de l'Éducation nationale (Gréta) prepare in particular for the 700 technological and vocational education diplomas of the Ministry of National Education, within more than 190 groupings  
[www.eduscol.education.fr](http://www.eduscol.education.fr)
- ☐ The National Association for Adult Vocational Training (Afpa)  
[www.afpa.fr](http://www.afpa.fr)
- ☐ The Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (Cnam), a public institution of higher education  
[www.cnam.fr](http://www.cnam.fr)
- ☐ The Network of Continuing Education Departments of French Universities provides information on the courses offered by region and fields of study  
[www.fcu.fr](http://www.fcu.fr)
- ☐ The Conférence des grandes écoles provides the list of grandes écoles by speciality and conditions of reception of foreign students  
[www.cge.asso.fr](http://www.cge.asso.fr)

